

S t r e e t S i g n s

Centre for Urban and Community Research



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photograph on front cover by Suzie Rendell

Introduction

*by Caroline Knowles,
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This edition of Street Signs shows the diverse working of the urban imaginary in poetry, reflection, scholarly articles, reviews and photography. It has drawn contributors from Canada, the US, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Singapore and Italy as well as an assortment of locals. In its pages are the literary and visual traces of long and short-haul journeys to China, Ethiopia, Mexico, Las Vegas, Camden Town, Deptford, the Yorkshire/Lancashire border, Morocco, Bogota, Manizales, California, Brixton in SW London, Chicago, Dubai, an eel stall in East London and a rooftop in New Cross. If we are the sum of our journeys, then this is what we are. If we are also how we travel then we go reflexively and with our cameras to lots of places for fieldwork, conferences and vacations.

Urbanists are not always this adventurous. In December I was at the International Sociology Association conference on urbanism and development in Tokyo only to find a huddle of well-known urban scholars staying in the accommodation inside the conference venue, limiting their interaction with one of the biggest and most exciting cities to a quick stumble around nearby Roppongi Hills. This is billed as Japan's largest urban development project: its 54 storey tower allows a glimpse of where this seemingly endless city at ground level actually ends. I chose my own Tokyo vantage point equally unwisely. Staying next Shinjuku railway station, where 2 million plus commuters are crammed into trains by station attendants, and dozens of exits open into a labyrinth of malls, walkways and streets at different levels, turned a routine journey between hotel and conference into a daily experience in dislocation. Tokyo is a great city: and I was permanently lost and not just in translation.

The last six months at CUCR have seen the launch of our Urban Edge series with workshops on the politics of tourist photography, London's 'country spaces', designing imaginary cities, and the Olympics and regeneration. Thanks to Ariadne van de Ven, Peter Coles, Gesche Wuerful, Tristan Fennell, David Kendall, and Santiago Escobar Jaramillo. This year's Urban Encounters Conference held in conjunction with Tate Britain on the theme of landscape was a sell-out. It was fascinating, thoughtful and visually stunning. Congratulations to Paul Halliday, Gabrielle Bendiner Viani, Paul Goodwin and Rachel Jones. We look forward to future collaboration between CUCR and the Tate.

CUCR is hosting a new MA Programme, World Cities and Urban Life, designed and led by Professor AbduMaliq Simone and starting this September. The stairwell gallery in Laurie Grove Baths now has its second photography exhibition, *Traces*, by award-winning Colombian photographer Manuel Vazquez, curated by Kimberly Keith. This will stay up through October and everyone is warmly invited to come and see it, particularly in conjunction with CUCR coffee mornings: an informal urban discussion forum on alternate Tuesdays at 10am beginning again on September 1st.

Our lecture series *Cities After the Crunch and After Oil* – speakers Bob Caterall, Adrian Atkinson and Eduard Mendieta – held in collaboration with City Journal raised important issues around sustainability. Future collaboration with City Journal and with the LSE Cities Programme and UCL Urban Lab on Olympic legacies are planned. We look forward to an equally active period as the new academic year swings into action.

Finally I would like to congratulate CUCR scholar and photographer Gesche Wuerful who is the winner of the Manchester National Juried Fine Art Exhibition 'Small Works 2009'. Gesche has now moved to the US but we hope she will continue to work with us.

For more information about the Centre, please refer to our website: www.gold.ac.uk/cucr/

James my next door neighbour

Written by Nick Dock

with photographs by Estelle Vincent

James was my next door neighbour for two and a bit years and a good friend. 73 years old, he's been renting the same one bed flat in South East London for the last 25 years. Spending his well earned retirement years lovingly nurturing his fine collection of pot plants and offering no-nonsense horticultural - and life - advice to every new tenant that passed through in his little corner of a quiet, leafy, Victorian square. At times I had to remind myself he was 73, with all his enthusiasm and energy. He was fond to say "I just tick along, Nick, you know me." And even fonder to say "Can't you just accept it for what it is?" if I was gloomy or having a difficult day writing. We visited Nunhead Cemetery a few days after I'd told him of my intention to leave the flat. Pass through. Sadly, we weren't particularly good company that day. Lost in our own thoughts, squabbling like kids among the slumbering statuary and the hot sun. I hope he's saying "I just tick along, you know me." to his new next door neighbour....

With James and the Dragline Silk

I see him now, only now. On that very day we went To Nunhead Cemetery. At the doorway, grave next door neighbour: James. Clad, not seldom in vest. Seldom, or too few. Like the pristine plots? Visible now, from the wet Yorkstone at the gates; Un-reachable by the Underground - bought for one pound by Southwark Council in nineteen hundred and seventy five.

A working cemetery? A park to play in? A nature reserve?
Watch the children decay while your dead play. While finally recognising -
A Mature Elm... Untouched by my attempt at wit. Untouched,
the terracotta tomb, Magnificent in the midday sun!
At the fork, unintended
we take a path,
seldom clad, yet
half-hidden
in the venous
clot of thicket. Not before:
"They shouldn't allow planes to fly,
over the airspace of cemeteries. Disrespectful";
"Have you noticed - there are lots of James's - here?"

Why fill the dead air Between us with such clatter,
anyway?

I am, at once, regretful - I want to apologise. Or I want to smile - to say

He is 73, James, if a day and then, through a gap the Dome of St. Pauls,
as small as a bud the size of a fist. If a day - and what a day!

Yet deeper, sink I and he, into the cracked foreboding woods.

Deeper yet, toward the tumbled graves.

And tombs, upright.

A fork of light falls

A tongue of ivy forms.

A hooded figure slumps,

picking cob-webs from the
sundered statuary. I turn, And James, breathless, still now.

Some paces behind, contrapposto.

Or a study of concessions, accrued NO. That is cruel.

And he is pointing; banana in his left hand, Ready. To sermonise

on a plant, neither of us know ; "I might not know what it's called, Nick

But i know how I'd look after it"; (It needs for little care, shade,

the odd dapple of sunlight...) "Not unlike the cemetery Yes! But disgraceful how it...

(I bite my tongue) Can't you enjoy it for how it is?

No. Disgraceful. I wouldn't want to be buried here.

Are you going to eat that banana, here?

No. Hate the bloody things!

Yes! You liked them a minute ago -

No I don't, didn't.

Yes you do ... can I have it then?

No."

Turning, awkwardly

into the bight of a young spiders

first, hopeful thread, that has caught - wait -

or is it, my little friend, is that, and this, but St. Theresa's washing line?

- and I leave this place for a moment...

Through the scullery to the courtyard;

as she hunches over the hours,

spent, picking hunched knots and

Dangling threads to the wind -
hoping one might make it. One of the children.
And maybe one does, and the whole earth shakes
and Time is still. No. Time to get to work.
Scuttling, to and fro, fastening, binding, the silken-staves,
To great girders of straws NO. That's not good, enough.

James has left the plant and is stroking the bud of a
spider's
Abdomen; much to my horror:
"Why are you so scared of it?"

And I talked of it, but not of that, it.
The it.
The sense that I am never there, or present
Until here. Until I am
Removed. As you read this.
As he won't. As we were there, together. Keeping others'
company, that day,
any other day. We meet
throwing threads between the houses. The rote, the rent
and the washing line:

The Dragline Silk.

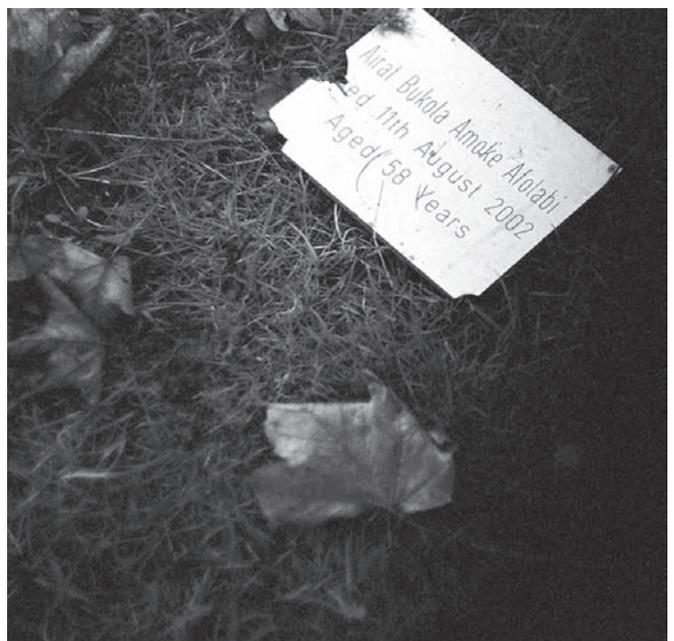
Lovingly tended or left undone - the
regrettable or just plain forgettable.
Wrought of semi-precious ruminant -

The frame; the late changes; the later staves that just -
might catch James and I; elements just
among the tumbled graves and the midday sun.

"Oh, Like The Living Dead NO.
Don't be -Yes. Perhaps.
Well, more, like a working cemetery.
Oh. No, I envy you. I fear only death, now. That's all."
And so we agree on one thing this day.
As we exit in silence, past the tomb of the Scottish
martyrs.

I hear him now. And know him. And yet I saw him only
once after that.
And why, that day, and the conversation
Remembered, decorated with a series of childish, if
somewhat comic, estoppels.
Which rile me now as I did him then, in that rare, hot
midday sun.
I saw him only once after that. Dear James.

At the doorway, clad, in his vest.
It was difficult. Although, predictably so.
Unlike the print only he liked on my wall back then
and the question of The train and if it really is,
hurtling forward -
Or back on itself.
The only visual clue being:
the billowy smoke from its furnace - its Dragline Silk
painted over now.



Basin Stone, a malleable cultural object

Steve Hanson

A person's sense of belonging to a locale isn't straightforward any more, if it ever was. Their subjectivity, sense of self, is created across all kinds of spaces. Huge geographical distances are negotiated by communication technologies as people move physically through multiple communities, in an ever more mobile modernity. Our sense of self is less attached to a single place. It is un-fixed.

This theoretical re-positioning of locality and belonging in a globalised world is central to my research. Yet recently I have been drawn to a landmark which forced me to re-think the ways in which locality and belonging are also un-fixed within any given locality. This is about cultural objects and their malleable meanings.

Basin Stone, high above the border town of Todmorden, is a geological feature perhaps best known as the historical meeting point for Lancashire and Yorkshire Chartists⁽¹⁾. This knowledge is mainly represented via the idealistic painting of one such meeting in 1842, by A.W. Bayes, which now hangs in Todmorden Town Hall, and has also appeared on and in books relating to Chartism (ibid). Marx and Engels visited Chartist meetings in the area and went to nearby Blackstone Edge to view the factories from afar⁽²⁾. William Holt resurrected it as a radical object in the 1930s⁽³⁾.

My uncle died recently, suffering a sudden heart attack. His house on the moors overlooked Basin Stone on the opposite side of the valley, so some of his ashes were scattered around it. Since then, family members regularly return to the site, often on key calendar dates, Christmas, birthdays, etc. They leave things on Basin Stone. My uncle was very keen on red wine and small plastic bottles of it have been found there, as well as Christmas cards to my uncle and coins, one and two pence, although I'm unsure whether these have been left by my relatives or other people.

Basin Stone has become significant here, not because of Chartism, but of one person's deeply felt meaning - in absence - for a particular family group. Yet thinking metaphorically of the valley, of its industrial past and post-industrial present, it is possible to join the dots to my uncle and his wider family, to their working lives in textile mills, engineering firms and their contemporary struggles to exist with less of these economies in a post-industrial Western Europe. Some are successful, others less so.

This can be tracked back, through Marxism, to Chartism. Of course, these narratives may or may not be important to the practice of leaving objects of commemoration, offerings, around Basin Stone. In fact, from what I can gather, they are not very important at all to those involved.

The chaos of the landscape in formation, in this case, glaciation, wind and weather erosion, gave rise to specific cultural conditions which humans then have to negotiate. The industrial revolution was partly linked to these cultural conditions. Lancashire had the damp air for cotton manufacture, Bradford further north for wool⁽⁴⁾. This wider 'cultural materialism' was something I began to see when researching a trip to the grave of Raymond Williams⁽⁵⁾. Williams also addressed cultural practices within a historical landscape in his 1958 essay *Culture is Ordinary*⁽⁶⁾. Basin Stone is an example of humans re-arresting meaning via the accidents of their own formation. They totemise it, to use a now-controversial term.

Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, in *The Hidden Injuries of Class*⁽⁷⁾ argue that rituals of sacrifice often manipulate time. Sacrifices are made to the gods for the past wrongdoings of the tribe. Sacrifices make amends. The offerings at Basin Stone also attempt to manipulate time, but I'm reminded of the way Freud accounts for the phenomenon of trauma. Anxiety, as a psychological function, attempts to put in place some kind of speculative worry relating to a chaotic world in which there is much that may go wrong. Trauma is a 'dysfunctional' version, anxiety arriving too late.

Typically, trauma occurs when anxiety wasn't allowed to function, when a painful or disturbing event occurs suddenly, unexpectedly. Trauma is an attempt to close the stable door when the horse has bolted. But I would argue that the trauma here is perfectly functional, operating as ritualised attempts to ease the intensity of emotional pain within the landscape. To dissipate it in walking, in the leaving of offerings. The kinds of self-sacrifice Sennett and Cobb describe, putting aside one's own desires to save for children, grandchildren, were also made by my uncle for a future time, a time in which he cannot be present. These rituals of place and belonging serve to perpetuate the memory of him in his absence.

All of this stimulates my own thinking around the plural nature of cultural objects and their surrounding dis-

courses of belonging, identity and cultural memory. It provides an excursion of metaphorical thinking, although the circular mental journey I have outlined here can only ever be a totem of my own. What they do around Basin Stone, I also do through my account of it.

Nadia Lovell writes of how belonging is structured through 'the mobilisation of objects...'(8). She adds to this 'concepts of origin'. Via the work of Jeanette Edwards, she argues that present in 'northern English communities is the very malleability of such an enterprise and its direct positioning in the constitution of present history and territorial memory.' It seems clear to me this is happening around Basin Stone. This complex of cultural meaning is performative (9). Not only are personal narratives played out around it, but also the well accounted-for creation of place through history and historical artifacts (10). This process is not objective, but a construct, a negotiation with the real only.

The business of subjectivity-creation is a slippery one. Identities are constructed and re-constructed in narratives and are hard to pin down. Deleuze & Guattari's nomad subject (11) makes and re-makes her or his self in multiples modes, within multiple contexts. This extends to the way in which lives are played out in an increasingly mobile modernity.

Yet cultural objects such as Basin Stone are themselves malleable in meaning. Structuralism, especially semiotics, has shown that meaning is 'arbitrary'. Meaning is not innate, it is not fixed in the amber of objects or signs, it is constantly made and re-made from without. Content and context endlessly dance around each other. The same could be said about locality and belonging, place, identity and their relationships with cultural objects.

Of course, one of the most common mistakes in understanding structuralist and post-structuralist accounts of meaning is to assume that because signs and objects make meaning 'arbitrarily', significance is suddenly drained, or is entirely voided. This is not the case. The emotions that are mobilised here, through ritualised, symbolic activities, are real, tangible and intense. Meaning is vividly experienced, and human, even though care must be taken in creating accounts of how that occurs.

The reason 'capital aitch' History is not taught as it once was is tangled up with how it became viewed as white, male and middle class, an agent of empire. Structuralism and post-structuralism are partly the assassins of History. Yet I see Basin Stone as plural. Prismatic. A totem of History as much as of his story, or of anyone else's for that matter.

- (1) Chase, M. (2007) *Chartism, A New History*. Manchester University Press
- (2) McLellan, D. (1973) *Karl Marx, His Life & Thought*. London: Macmillan
- (3) Mitchell, A. and Holt, W. (1969) *The All Or Nothing Man*. Leeds: Yorkshire Television. The other force which alters the landscape in this cultural artefact is nostalgia.
- (4) Heywood, M. Heywood, F. & Jennings, B. (1996) *A History of Todmorden*. Otley: Smith Settle
- (5) Hanson, S. (2008) 'Border Country – a visit to the grave of Raymond Williams' in *Street Signs Magazine*, Spring 2008. London: Goldsmiths Centre for Urban and Community Research
- (6) Williams, R. (1958) 'Culture Is Ordinary' in (ed., Higgins, J., 2001) *The Raymond Williams Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell
- (7) Sennett, R. and Cobb, J. (1972) *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. London: Faber & Faber
- (8) Lovell, N. (1998) 'Introduction', in *Locality and Belonging*. London: Routledge, and Edwards, J. 'The Need for a "Bit of History": Place and Past in English Identity' in the same volume.
- (9) Pearson, M. (2006) *"In Comes I": Performance, Memory and Landscape*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press
- (10) Wright, P. (1985) *On Living in an Old Country*. London: Verso
- (11) Deleuze & Guattari (1988) *A Thousand Plateaux*. London: Continuum



Flip-Flop: dialogues, lifeworlds, journeys

Written by Caroline Knowles with photographs by Michael Tan

Artists create new fields of vision. Sociologists explore how the world is constituted. This exhibition comes from the static created between them. It traces the biography of a flip-flop sandal: one of the millions of tiny circuits composing the global world of now. Flip-flops transport us into the world of Chinese factories and into the lives of urban migrants who leave the countryside for the factories in order to 'live beyond our planting'. From these factories flip-flops journey on in all directions in containers on trucks and ships that navigate the highways and byways of global distribution systems. The flip-flops in this exhibition travelled through the territories of Somali pirates and 'war lords', through a shifting matrix of routes etched by 'contrabandists'. And on to the markets of Addis Ababa and the feet of an elderly woman who generates her own matrix of routes around the city: mostly on foot. Like other urban Africans she walked barefoot for the first decades of her life, and she ducks and weaves around the city assembling elements of daily survival in a city where residents' needs exceed formal provision.

An insignificant object reveals the operation of global networks and the lives that work and animate them. Flip-flops take us to the heart of China's phenomenal export-led growth and its footprint across Africa. They illuminate the lives and troubles of those who make them and those who wear them, unfurling plastic's flesh and humanity, its private troubles and public issues. Objects have social lives and are entangled in social lives. But footwear is seminal in the mechanics of mobility through which our world is constituted. It is through our feet that we are in touch with the ground on which our lives are lived. Flip-flops expose fundamental inequalities in globalisation. A beach accessory for some, the flip-flop is also the world's cheapest shoe, a step-up from barefoot. A billion people worldwide still walk barefoot.





Kamikazes of Hope

Sylvia Meichsner and Jaime Rivas Castillo

Photographs by Sylvia Meichsner

The director of a migrant's shelter in the Mexican-Guatemalan border town of Tapachula, a catholic priest, considers the Central American migrants who have to cross several borders illegally before finally reaching their destiny in the US or Canada 'kamikazes of hope': according to him, they would persistently invent and reinvent reasons for hope that keep them going – in spite of the long catalogue of risks they have to face throughout their journey. Those include assaults by authorities, locals and staff members on the cargo train running from Southern Mexico to the Mexican-American border (1) that is the main means of transportation for migrants who travel on the roof or hanging in between the coaches like bats. Two of them died one day before Christmas in an assault: The offenders, armed with guns and machetes, had covertly been travelling within the train. As it slowed down in an unpopulated area they stepped into action (2).

Besides this, migrants can be expected to be asked for bribes at different points of the journey and count on a broad range of physical and sexual aggressions. A spokesperson of the local NGO Sin Fronteras A.C. states that women, adolescents and the continuously growing number of migrating children are the most vulnerable group among the migrants.

Three women from Honduras, for example, are now living together in the small Southern Mexican town of Huehuetán where they first met. Initially supposed to be nothing more than one transit point among others on their way to the North, this location turned out to be the final destiny of Marta, Teresa and Cristina (3). The plan of migrating to the US was dropped due to their lack of money and an overwhelming fear of further aggression. Teresa had been assaulted while travelling with the cargo train. Cristina witnessed, at the restaurant where she works, how young migrating Guatemalan women had been trapped into prostitution through false promises.

But not all women compromise their initial plans because of unpleasant experiences and circumstances in the way Teresa and Cristina did. Most of them keep on pursuing their dream, in spite of having experienced severe sexual violence exerted by youth gangs, fellow travellers, officials or other individuals they came across in their journey. With stunning perseverance these risks are taken as the hope for a better life at the other side of



the Mexican-American border fence provides strength and inspires imagination.

Or, as a 55 year old peasant has put it who continued his journey after several failed migration attempts that subsequently brought him back to his native country:

I am not afraid of anybody around here; I make my way in peace of mind. I aim on entering the United States – “be successful or die” is what I say.

(Francisco, migrant from El Salvador, Southern Mexico)

For bolstering success, these 'kamikazes of hope' partly draw on folk saints for assuring protection in their enterprise. Holy Jesús Malverde, Holy Death and Holy Juan Soldado are only three of the numerous saints that are not accepted by the Catholic Church, but contribute to the spiritual resources undocumented migrants tend to make use of. Especially Juan Soldado, whose chapel is within walking distance from the busy Mexican-American border crossing point San Ysidro in Tijuana, is referred to for providing support with undocumented migration.

Rumour has it that people who intend crossing the border into the United States without proper paperwork, as well as those whose business is channeling them, pray “Juan Soldado, help me across!” at his grave prior to the planned crossing attempt. And indeed, the numerous acknowledgements at both the inner and outside walls of his chapel seem to prove that his intervention works fairly well.

But the inscriptions referring to migration understand “success” in terms of the sheer accomplishment of the initial plan of crossing. Little is said about the migrants' experiences throughout their journey, thus the burdensome silence is kept.

(1) Source: the National Register of Aggressions towards Migrants which is a joint effort between the network of shelters of migrants, the National Commission of the Human Rights of Mexico and some academic institutions (<http://www.cndh.org.mx/progate/migracion/centro.htm>)

(2) 'Mueren dos migrantes centroamericanos en asalto a tren en Chiapas' in: La Jornada, 2008-12-24 (<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/ultimas/2008/12/24/mueren-dos-indocumentados-centroamericanos-en-asalto-a-tren-en-chiapas>, access date 2009-03-26)

(3) All names have been changed in order to preserve anonymity.



Sunday 6th April 2008 12:00

Keeping the flame burning

Alex Rhys-Taylor

A Sunday at Petticoat Lane Market in late April, 2008, which despite the unseasonal cold, remains relatively busy; at least busier than Saturday which, in adherence to the rhythms laid down by the erstwhile Jewish community, renders the streets of the market ghostly. A black taxi cab with a small St George's flag in the back window turns into the street that Tubby Isaac's sea food trailer rests in. The driver parks his car carefully in a spot just past the burger van that sits opposite Tubby Isaac's. Kicking the door open, he slowly eases himself out. He is of medium build, about 5ft 8 and wide only at the point where the buttons on his jacket visibly strain under the task of holding back his gut. He wears small metal rimmed glasses of medium thickness and is about 45 years old, although having been sitting in his cab for hours looks considerably older making a short hunched walk from the car over to the stand. Aside from myself and the three couples that had stopped to ask for directions to Brick Lane and Spitalfields, the stand had been empty for about 20 minutes. The driver shuffles towards the stand, spine still curved. However, upon reaching it, he places two thick hands on the steel counter in front of him, and in one deep inhalation, rolls back his shoulders and smoothly lifts his chin towards the vendor, who stands about half a meter above his eye line.

"Alright there Tubby. Still killin' them Chinese?" (1)

The vendor (Paul, not Tubby) faintly smiles a smile to suppress a double cringe, an attempt to create distance from a distasteful joke that, if overheard, stands to cast both the teller and receiver in bad light. In this case the joke is at the expense of 21 Chinese migrants who drowned farming cockle beds in northwest England in the winter of 2004.

Paul nods a 'Hello,' with his eyebrows raised, before adding "You know that those Chinese were farming exports to Spain?"

I nod and scribble.

The customer seems not to have listened, or chose to pretend he has not. He glances over the vendor's shoulder at the fuzzy news footage playing on the small portable television that sits at the back of the stand. The footage is of the Olympic Torch relay, through London for the Beijing Games, and the camera focuses on the wrestling to the ground of pro Tibetan protesters. "I see that they're re-movin' the pirate DVD sellers off the street again..."

A small laugh is exhaled from the chest of the vendor towards his customer.

"I'll 'ave a medium bowl of eels to eat here, and a dressed crab to take 'ome please."

Paul warms to the customer a little more.

"Hundred pound, minimum spend today."

This time a more substantial chuckle is shared.

Having been handed the eels in a small porcelain bowl over the high counter, the customer places it on the steel shelf at his waist and pours chilli vinegar over the eels until the bowl overflows. He picks the bowl back up, and hunching over it with a small plastic fork, starts shoveling the eel pieces one by one into his mouth, at first spilling jelly and vinegar from the over full bowl onto the grimy pavement beneath him. For the next five minutes the only noises he makes are satisfied grunts and snuffles, breaking only to straighten his back and glance over the vendor's shoulder to the crackling footage on the TV screen each time he needs to spit out an eel bone, before re-hunching over the bowl.

A couple, male and female, walk past the stall, and pause briefly behind the cab driver guzzling his eels.

The male half of the couple points enthusiastically at the display of molluscs and herring and says something inaudible. The woman curls her lip and tugs at her partner's elbow. They walk away. Having sucked all of the flesh from the eel, and spat out the bones into a cardboard box beside the stand, the cab driver murmurs deeply, "Thanks Tubby see you next time," before glancing back up at the television and remarking: "They'll get a shock when the torch comes down here... They'll all be crowding round it for some heat, or to light their reefer."

The largest laugh so far erupts between the vendor and his customer... I also try not to laugh, to remain removed from the exchange, but my shuddering shoulders give me away. At this last laugh, the customer picks up the blue polythene bag in which the dressed crab is wrapped, turns, and walks back to his cab, his arm aloft in the air. "See ya Tubby" he says, over his shoulder. "Yeah, see ya," says Paul, eyebrows once again raised. The customer eases himself back into the hermetically sealed security of his cab and, engine on, turns a famously tight circle in the road and drives back off the way he came.

(1) In February, 2004, Yu Hui, Chen Muyu, Guo Nianzhu, Lin Zhifang, Xu Yuhua, Wu Jianzhen, Wu Hongkang, Xie Xiaowen, Lin Guohua, Guo Binglong, Zhou Xunchao, Lin Guoguang, Cao Chaokun, Guo Changmau, Yang Tianlong, Lin Lishui, Wang Minglin, Lin Youxing, Chen Aiqin, Zhang Xiuhu and Wang Xiuyu were killed picking cockles in the tides of Morcambe Bay, Lancashire. The notorious tides were however, only the executors, their fate being determined initially by closures of several cockle fisheries around the coast in 2003, a response to bacterial control measures. This in turn led to a sudden scramble for Morcambe Bay's cockles which had previously only been sporadically fished. Realising the likely high price to be paid for cockles in Europe, Spanish owned dredging and cargo boats were quickly dispatched to start cleaning out the cockle beds on an industrial scale. However, under restrictions that deemed such large boats unsuitable for the bay, fishing 'gangs' were soon mobilized to dredge the molluscs up, loading them onto the boats which were now used as carriers. While

there had always been a small group of locally born cockle pickers and fishermen in the bay, competition arrived in the form of Chinese and Eastern European cockling gangs. Un-policed in the pre-dawn sands of an increasingly deserted stretch of coastline, conflict and sabotage ensued between the gangs and local residents for two years. Whether or not such conflict directly resulted in the deaths of the Chinese cockle pickers remains an unanswered question. The owners of the company in charge of the vessels were charged but these charges were quickly dropped. A Chinese gangmaster was successfully charged with negligence and subsequently lost his license. Details of the deaths and the charges are widely available through the mainstream press. For a very interesting account of the shift in fishing practices at Morecambe bay that occurred two years before these deaths see Jeffrey Andrews, 'Sands of Change, Portrait of the Cockle fishery in Morecambe Bay November 2002 - October 2003' *Shellfish News* (16 2003), p.21-24.



Secondary thoughts...

Simon Pennec

Created from an empty site to the east of London, Void Spaces present an insight into the terrain-vague and emptiness of the city. These spaces - urban voids, non-spaces or interstitial gaps - are assumed to lack function, people, aesthetic experience and difference. The apparent abstraction of the landscape, away from the figurative representations of landscape photography, not only highlights the changing nature of urban spaces, but also places oneself into a realm of conflicting states.

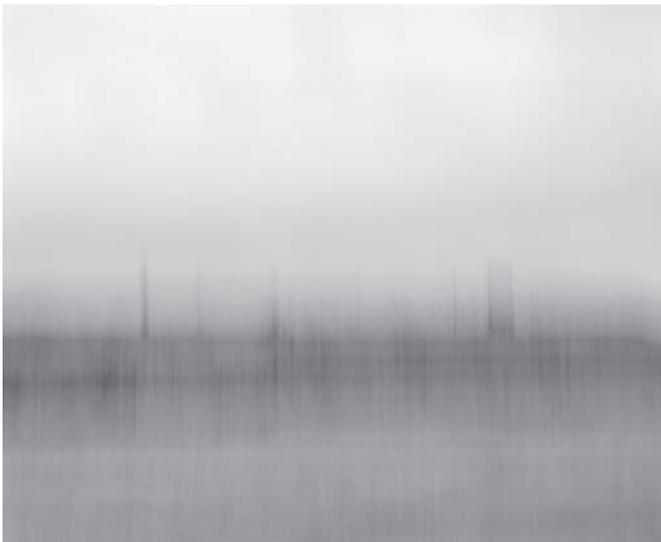
Bernard Tschumi (1) recalls that "by restricting visual and physical perception to the faintest of all simulations, we can turn the experience of the space into something altogether different". Abstraction is understood as an act of distortion with a dual purpose: simultaneously simulating and dissimulating, thus placing the act of looking itself as a central dynamic in the photographs. Void Spaces seeks what we cannot see, and as a mechanism of perception, the photographic aesthetic intends to consider personal representations and metaphors of the city. The photographs therefore challenge the materiality of the urban and disrupt our primary reading of space as a geographical location. As a central object, the city is

represented as a limitless, immense space from which originates a body of impressions. Bachelard (2) asserts that it is through immensity that intimate space and world space blend. Between emptiness and immensity, one wanders through the images, recollecting a sense of spatial experience.

Immersed within the spatial and temporal changing nature of the city, one finds oneself placed into a realm of experiences, an act of looking and contemplation. Through this lens, the immensity of the terrain-vague, can be seen as a place and event in which the subject moves from the reality of everyday life in the city and enters the nonparamount reality of the enclave, thereby experiencing different modes of spontaneity, and self-experience.

(1) Tschumi, Bernard (1996) *Architecture and Disjunction*. MIT, 5th edition.

(2) Bachelard, Gaston (1957) *La poétique de l'espace*. PUF, Paris.



The Hand of Fatima

James McHugh

'Maps are a futile compromise between information and knowledge. They require a good dose of fiction to bring them to life.' Iain Sinclair ⁽¹⁾

As opposed to its neighbour Algeria's long drawn-out struggle with French colonial forces, Morocco was under a French protectorate for a relatively short period between 1912 and 1956 - and it almost seems easy to see why. It is a well-rehearsed argument that the powers of vision over a particular space enable claims to be made upon that space, of being able to 'know' and hence govern it. With its heavily congested, labyrinthine towns and cities, the process of mapping Morocco out for colonial administrative or judiciary purposes must have seemed impossible. Much of the architectural change actually carried out during French rule, under the auspices of General Lyautey, took the form of the construction of 'Villes Nouvelles' outside of the historical medinas. However, with their bland concrete grid-stylings there is little of interest there, so the majority of tourists and stimulation-seeking Moroccans gravitate towards the old medinas. Entering within the city walls of cities such as Fes, Meknes, or Marrakesh is a bewildering experience to say the least.

So I arrived in Marrakesh on a still-sweltering early evening in May. A certain bravado about being a seasoned 'botaniser of the asphalt' from four years of London life made me reject the offer of an airport transfer and hope to find the Riad Massine hostel with only the help of a 15-year-old street map. I wasn't to realise that street names are largely redundant here, and even when they are there is little agreement over their spellings, whether they are displayed in Latin or Arabic alphabet, and the additional confusion caused by the general replacement of old French street names (a process of re-writing Morocco's brief but still widely-resented period of occupation). Almost three hours of wandering preceded, down the narrow souks leading off the central square, still enraptured by the market stores' complete assault on the senses, of spices, embroidery, carpets, teapots, jewellery, baked bread, motorbikes and people, continuous activity in all directions, demanding an attentiveness surpassing anything required by the hustle and bustle of London street-life. Flickers of hope would rise as I felt I was getting closer to my destination but alas would descend as rapidly as they came. As you walk further down the souks you begin to notice the tread of the street under your feet wither away, the smells become more visceral and the buzz and threat of

motorbikes being replaced by lumbering donkey-carts, and the quick realisation strikes that you are entering into more deprived parts not suited for freshly-arrived solitary English tourists.

Nigh-on giving up I was approached by two lads of about my own age but larger stature who were intent on helping me, not out of the kindness of their hearts, but with the intent of making a few dirhams. And who can blame them in a city of massive unemployment and swarms of clueless tourists, I was rightly ripe for the picking. And so we took off, I offered them a few cigarettes on the way out of camaraderie but I soon realised that in addition to the swiftly setting sun, the streets we were traversing were getting darker and darker. Enough was enough, I stopped in the middle of a cramped dark alley and began to turn around, they seized my hand and exclaimed, "We're not the mafia! We're not the mafia!" Little reassured, but increasingly weary, I followed. We soon approached an ornate wooden door with a bronze hand on it. This was the ubiquitous Islamic symbol of the blessed hand of Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed said to ward off 'the evil eye' and protect the houses' inhabitants from danger. Not inclined to religious matters usually, this was a surprisingly comforting presence, delimiting that elusive and vulnerable threshold between private and public, as inside beckoned my destination and the promise of a bed for the night at the Riad Massine.

Whilst the navigation of such cities seems to depend on an alternative cartography, it is not one that is reducible to the level of sheer informality or entropy. Yes, much does depend on a folk knowledge of the ebb and the flow, the warp and the weft of the city's congested arteries, but in fact such medinas take a largely standardised and functional pattern in the history and cities across North Africa. The succession of stalls follows the same order, and the narrow juxtaposed lanes are functional in shielding against the harsh rays of the day's sun, whilst the greatest domestic pride lies within the interior of the house. This gives rise to a very different experience of urban navigation and furnishes very different lessons and skills of getting to 'know' a city, encompassing and collapsing both fiction and structural form, an experience which has the ability to shock you out of your comfort zone but can also bestow some incredible sensual pleasures.

⁽¹⁾ Sinclair, Iain (1997) *Lights out for the Territory*. Granta books, p.142

Photographing in Bogota

Paul Halliday and Santiago Escobar

During May 2009, Santiago Escobar Jaramillo and Paul Halliday were invited to give a key-note presentation at the International Festival of the Image in Manizales, Colombia. Before the festival, they met in Bogota, and spent two days making images around the capital's streets. They write here about their experiences of walking, their different ways of interacting with the city, and the central role that technology plays within the production of the urban visual imaginary. Paul Halliday is a photographer / filmmaker and cultural sociologist based at CUCR, interested in urban photography, film ethnography and art practice. He is currently the course leader of the MA Photography and Urban Cultures. Santiago Escobar previously trained as an architect before studying Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths College and is now based in Bogota where he works as an architect / photographer / artist and is a visiting fellow at the CUCR.

Bogota: Paul Halliday

As I walked around the streets of Bogota with Santiago, we had a number of lively conversations about the practice of urban photography, and the talk continually returned to the problematics of 'knowing a place'. Also, as Santiago was working with a digital camera, and I with a 35mm film camera, he was able to access the images immediately, whereas I was faced with a different set of temporal and spatial considerations. Firstly, working with a small-format camera produces a set of readings on the part of people one encounters in the street - the 'public' - that is fundamentally different from photographers working with a professional-looking digital SLR. My sense was that people in the street tended to notice Santiago's camera more, and this is a phenomenon that I have also observed whilst working with a digital SLR in London, often involving the question 'are you from the press?'

The point I am making here is that a discussion of 'place' and a photographer's 'place within place', needs to also examine the cultural role of 'technos' within both the social construction of 'the real', and the interactive, performative construction of lived-in space. Many of the academic discussions around the impact of digital media cultures on media and arts practice, tend to

miss a fundamental truth as experienced by urban photographers, and this is that technology brings with it a number of what the American sociologist Howard Becker call 'affordances' (1). An 'affordance', within Becker's conceptual framing, is the ability to utilise the apparent capacities of an object or social phenomenon that will 'allow things to happen'. One might apply this concept to how street photographers develop and work with such 'affordances'. For instance, I work with small cameras (preferably one) with a limited range of lenses.

During the various walks with Santiago - a trained architect, and fount of local architectural history and knowledge - I pointed out some of the images that I would have made had I brought a long-lens digital SLR, and I expressed the perennial fear that analogue photographers have around images being over or under-exposed; and the nail-biting wait that one has to endure to see if there is a correspondence between what one has 'seen' at the point of recognising a potential image, and the hard reality of how this mental and aesthetic construct has translated across to the film itself.

On the one hand, I envied Santiago's ability to check the camera's histograms for a graphic representation of his exposures; and the ability to sit in the quiet comfort of a café, sipping latte and editing his images in the field. However, on the other hand, I wouldn't give up the magic of handing over the films to the lab technician, walking around central London for an hour, and then sitting in a café with the reference prints, experiencing moments of elation suffused with moments of dejection, disappointment and even despair on realising that an image that one was certain would be extraordinary at the time of making, turns out to be anything but. A recognition of the interface between technology and urban photographic practice is highly relevant for a sociological understanding of how images are created, and how the photographer interacts with his or her environment in order to produce images that resonate with cultural meanings.

(1) Becker, Howard S. (1982) *Art Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California



Bogota: Santiago Escobar

It has been a year since I finished the MA in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths, and since then I have been applying some of the core ideas that the course presented. It is easy to think that street photography has similarities to walking because when you walk you look in all directions and react to the city's dazzling encounters, you also look up and react to the geometry of a building against the blue sky; or you look straight to the floor where urban life has its foundations; or just stare at people's routines of socialisation. For me, street photography is more than that: it is the way in which you react visually to your emotions, activities, relationships, senses, memory and imagination, whilst inhabiting space in the urban life.

To walk the city with Paul Halliday was, besides interesting, an exciting experience that allowed me to see how he made sense of the city. And this is where everything matters. Everybody negotiates space and time in different ways, and it is fundamental for a photographer to understand how others look at their city. Therefore, the photographer can understand better the particularities of looking and in that sense produce a body of work that can be transmitted clearly or at least, awake curiosity. Paul has different approaches to subjects and objects mainly because – I think – he wants to be invisible (his small camera is always helpful!) and not to be calling attention to himself, as this will change the nature of the interaction. He takes photos from eye level, giving a reference of scale and location and imprinting a very strong sense of reality, a very strong sense of aesthetics.

During the walk I was always paying attention to his method of reacting, approaching and photographing, as I wanted to have a better comprehension of my own work. I think Paul and I have different ways of approaching the city, from different angles, mainly through considering scale and the imaginary ways of representation. For me, geometry and colour are understood as volume or forms that give shape and significance to the images. Geometry is always about directionality, proportions and

order; while colour includes texture and temperature of light as weights that enter into dialogue with subjects and objects. Subjects and objects appear with the same importance and hierarchies are not present in my work..

Thus, geometry and colour are there as catalysers that allow the eye to travel around the image, and to do justice to aesthetics and meaning. Rather than the photographer who remains still around a city that moves, in my work the frame modifies while the city remains fixed. The images photographed in Bogotá are intended to be satirical about the chaos in the city by giving order to its immutable appearance but at the same time, asking the viewer to think twice after looking at them, and to reconsider what is meant by the real city, and what role the photographer has in communicating such a city.



PRIVATOPIA

Suzie Rendell

Across America, and increasingly across the world, millions of people are choosing to 'opt out' of the public sphere, moving into gated residential areas. Also known as 'enclaves' 'fly-in communities', 'gaters', 'yuppie-slums' and 'golden ghettos', gated communities have grown in popularity. Evan McKenzie first used the term Privatopia in an article entitled *Morning in Privatopia* (1) which describes the growing trend of private residential government. Instead of living towards a utopia, gated communities offer living inside a private utopia, free from the fear and threats of the wider society.

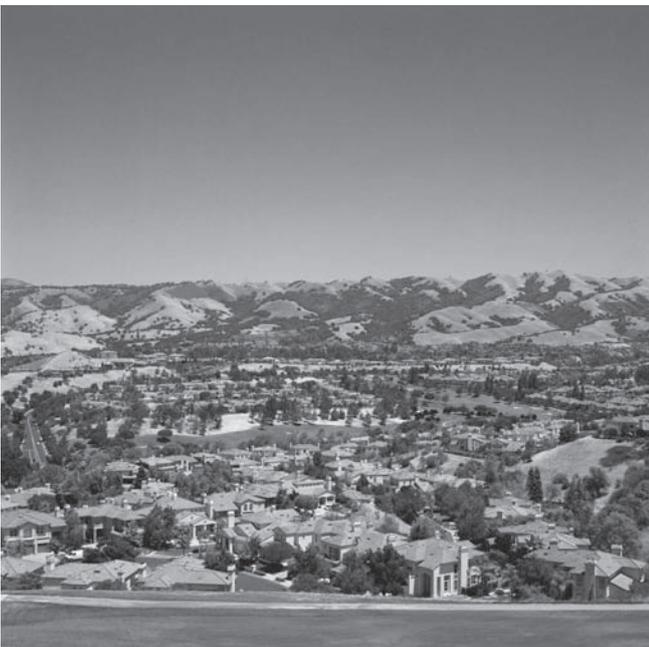
These forms of developments become 'off limits' to those living outside, with physical barriers, gates, fences and walls, preventing the use of public roads, parks, schools and local amenities. Physical boundaries restrict access to a seemingly 'private world'. Space becomes simultaneously both public and private. Gates and fences around neighbourhoods represent more than simple physical barriers. They manifest a number of tensions not only outside of the enclave walls, but also equally within them. Space becomes political in its construction; areas are manufactured and houses are regulated by strict 'codes of conduct'.

The photographs were taken within the exclusive Silver Creek Valley gated community, located within the wealthy boundaries of Silicon Valley, California. Surrounded by rolling hills and two major freeways, Silver Creek

Valley is 10 miles away from the nearest city, San Jose. Security guards control the gates and access is limited only to invited guests. Encircled by immaculate houses, which are distributed evenly and agreeably across the landscape, the community presents itself, regimented within surreally empty streets. The uniformed roads perform as a transitory flow of isolation between the gates and beyond. The golf course, swimming pool and racket club serve as the beacon of the American dream, the outward appearance of success without inconveniences.

The utopian ideal is enacted through the saturated sterility of the landscapes, the uniformed spaces creates an almost 'Disneyfied' aesthetic. Fragments of conversations within the community forum disrupt the utopian persona, contradicting the very construction of the perfected space. Through the dialectic of the photograph and the text there exists alternate spaces that interrupt the conceptual design of the narrative.

Communitary transforms into a conflicting site of interest between the management, homeowners association and the individual. Space becomes a commodity, a site where investments are protected from the uncertainty of the world 'outside', but paradoxically are in a constant state of threat from the 'inside'. Although the construction of gated communities defines the globalised space in which they inhabit, the performative spaces within them,



as individual communities, are in constant flux creating their own spatial, cultural and political identities. Below are extracts from the Silver Creek gated community forum. Originally the work was presented in a book and some of these texts were printed alongside the images.

#135 Subject: Re: Cannes Place Speed Bumps
Date: Tue Feb 29, 2008 2:39 pm

We also chose to live in Silver Creek Valley for good reasons. We have only recently, and reluctantly, concluded that the gates should go. We use Courtside Gate as our primary entrance. Early on, things were much simpler at this gate, even with construction traffic. But as the Community filled, problems developed, not only at the gate, but also throughout, as increased vehicle traffic proceeded (and does proceed) undisciplined. The solutions that have been attempted for solving these problems (they have a long and ill-considered history) seem to us, actually to have aggravated the situation.

For gated community residents, to suggest removal of gates was almost brazen. But the recommendation did, we feel, meet criteria set down above. It does not solve all problems, but it does address internal matters with respect to motor vehicles. Our suggestion to do away with the gates was based on the belief that Silver Creek Valleys streets could then be made public, offering police jurisdiction and

removing the need for speed bumps, which don't seem to be working.
James and Mary

#137 Subject: Re: Cannes Place Speed Bumps
Date: Wed Mar 1, 2008 12:00 am

Just a novice guessing but I took the 'trouble' to be the fact that there would no longer be (even if only by cosmetic standards) the deterrent to those 'less desirable' factions to stay out of our community. The San Jose police department has more important issues at hand than having to enlist manpower to patrol our community. Trouble as in: the swastika at Silver Oak school last month, the 'White Power', swastika and other prejudicial graffiti at Meadowlands last weekend. Do we want to have to deal with this at Silver Creek Valley?

Sorry to be blunt but a majority of the people in this e group moved here FOR THE GATES--let's move on to how we can better our community by making residents and our guests or employees follow the guidelines that were made perfectly clear when we all purchased in this beautiful place!
Jenny

(1) The term *Privatopia* was first coined in an article: McKenzie, E. (1998) *Morning in Privatopia*, Spring issue, *Dissent Magazine*, which then prompted the book: McKenzie, E. (1994) *Privatopia* Yale university Press



Las Vegas Quest: Looking for the Unusual

Elisa Bignante

The catch-phrase used in Las Vegas TV commercials is: 'What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas'. But, as I wandered around this one-of-a-kind city isolated from the real world in the Nevada desert, my mind changed that slogan to 'What happens in Las Vegas can only happen in Las Vegas.'

In March of 2009, we spent a week in this bizarre, but utterly fascinating city, attending the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). As a geographer attracted to visual methodology in capturing the feel of our world, and as an untrained amateur photographer, I decided to take part in the AAG workshop, 'Using Photography to Investigate Urban Landscape', led by Caroline Knowles and Paul Halliday.

At first, I thought we might spend all day in a class discussing photographic techniques. But such was not the case. Before I knew it, I was out on the streets of Las Vegas with the colleagues Iashvili and Scott Allen. Our assignment: to develop a photographic project about the Las Vegas Strip. 'The Strip' is a nickname given to Las Vegas Boulevard, a very long expanse of roadway on which the majority of famous Las Vegas hotels/casinos are located.

After some discussion, my classmates and I decided we were going to photograph 'the unusual' aspects of Vegas and use that as our theme. But, before long, it became apparent that while Las Vegas consists of things we would consider unusual anywhere else in the world, they are quite normal here... even expected. Some of the most extravagant hotel/casinos here are copies of Rome, Venice, Paris, New York, Monte Carlo, and even Egypt. The Las Vegas identity, such as it is, is partially shaped on the identities of other famous places in the world, twisted into its own unique personality. The real and unreal become intertwined, and eventually, the unreal hybrid is accepted as normal. While at the Venetian Hotel/Casino, I overheard one woman remark after seeing the canals and gondolas inside the hotel, there is no longer any need to visit the real Venice. As an Italian, intimately familiar with the charms of the real Venice, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. The unreal was accepted as real. When you walk up and down the Las Vegas Strip, you will find a man-made volcano that erupts every hour; floating pirate ships where battles are enacted at regular intervals; a large

lake with numerous water spouts that becomes a huge musical dancing fountain... and the lights, millions of them up and down the strip, all designed to bring you inside for more entertainment.

In this fast-moving, 24-hour city, there are always new hotels and casinos being built. Giant construction cranes dot the Vegas skyline, huge palm trees are brought in by the truck load in large planter boxes, and the architecture always aims to surpass the last great hotel built here. One wonders what fantastic displays each new hotel will add to the Vegas experience. But, one must never forget that all these wondrous sights are designed to bring you into the casinos where the real money is made. Once inside, you are almost trapped into staying, which is the master plan of course. Mirrors are everywhere, designed to make casinos look even larger than life and to help you get lost; there is an absence of exit or directional signs, and walkways that meander among hundreds of slot machines and gaming tables. Looking for a restaurant? Just wander around, you will eventually find one, but perhaps not the one you were looking for. When you ask directions for the exit, hotel employees ask why you want to leave. They have you in their control and don't want to let go.

For years, Las Vegas' reputation was that of a city run by organised crime. And that was mostly true. Then, to change its reputation after that era ended, Las Vegas tried to bill itself as a town with something for everyone, especially families. Casinos were built with family entertainment in mind. Some are still here, places like Circus Circus and Excalibur still reach out to families with all kinds of extraordinary entertainment. But recently, after the presumed failure of that plan, Vegas changed direction and went back to its roots. To put it succinctly, Vegas once again became 'Sin City.'

At the heart of this reputation is the availability of women, of all shapes and sizes, all available for your pleasure. Images of beautiful women with fantastic bodies are everywhere. Trucks haul large double-sided signs up and down the strip, 24 hours a day. The sidewalks are filled with men and women passing out trading cards and brochures promising sexual services in your room in 20 minutes. Heather, Darla, Trish, Tracy and others are all waiting for your call. Often, these advertisements wind up decorating the downtown

landscape as they are tossed away by disinterested and shocked visitors. Beautiful women also play a large role inside Casinos. Scantily-dressed cocktail waitresses serve drinks and keep your eyes busy while you gamble. In one hotel, these waitresses will suddenly move to a small elevated stages in the casino, remove most of their clothing and start dancing. It is interesting that many gamblers don't even bother to look. In the end, our quest for the unusual in Vegas came up mostly empty, but it cannot be considered a failure. On the contrary, we were quite successful in discovering the strange truth that things that might be considered unusual or weird in the rest of the world, are quite normal here. And it doesn't take long for a visitor to fall into that mindset.



Approaching Las Vegas: Life in the desert

Nicholas Bauch



1. The Mojave Desert. Off Highway 127, near Baker, Calif.

Introduction

The road leading into Las Vegas moves from desert to city. I use this abstracted transect to relate my vision of how space in this peculiar region has been organised. The process of ingression allows me to create a regional context for the images presented here, not leaning too heavily on either category 'desert' or 'city'. Using a thematic transect as a method for creating meaning in the Las Vegas region emerged inductively from my tendency to photograph the vernacular. While in Las Vegas and the network of pathways surrounding it, I sought to create images that were unexpected, or non-representative of one of the world's most represented places. Two (perhaps opposite) sub-points emerged from this: linearity and circulation. Both became visible, but were expressed differently as I approached the city. The photographs in this essay are aimed at future travelers to the region, reminding them that there is more to Las Vegas, and any place for that matter, when one is willing to suspend expectation.

Linearity

As one moves from the desert to the city, the organisation of space becomes more marked. While this may seem obvious, it is not always true in rural to urban transects. At sites of industrial agriculture, for example, fences and straight crop rows are the norm, made visible by the one-mile square patchwork of farms in the central part of the United States. Then there is precision agriculture: demarcations in the fields can be so precise as to necessitate the farmer's use of a GPS to track which sections of which rows require fertilizer, water, and other inputs (1). These are cases of strict spatial organization, akin to what we may find in a classically defined urban setting, with its right angle streets, gates, and other means controlling the flow of goods and people. As one moves from the Mojave Desert into Las Vegas, the role of linearity increases dramatically when compared with this increase in other metropolises. It is in part what accounts for the sentiment that Las Vegas appears to sprout out of the desert. This is not to ignore, of course, the fact that lines, property, and laws abound in the Mojave Desert, a place that is so tempting to see as a wilderness (2), it's just that they're not as visible and forced.

What do these lines do to Las Vegas? Image 3 contains a view of buildings on Las Vegas Boulevard ('The Strip'). Faint reminders of an expected Vegas remain: the Barry Manilow concert advertisement, or the feathered set of tin beams on the Hilton. But this image does not relay a sense of excitement as a city booster may prefer. Instead, it takes the viewer to the Strip's backside, where functionality, directionality, and work reign. The concrete yard is a hot, tired reminder of the flashy nights for which the city is known. Lines frequently refer to rules, dictators of appropriate action. Controlling 'beyond the red line' in image 4 seems to be the whim of a potentate. Lines express agency; once drawn, their ability to carve out space and exclude, deter, and own is unsurpassed. Even in the desert, stepping over the flower in image 2 was transgressive. To cross the shoulder of the dirt road felt like breaking the rule of the line.



2. Concrete plain behind the Riviera Hotel and Casino, off Las Vegas Boulevard, a.k.a. The Strip.



3. Behind the Riviera Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas Boulevard.

Theoretical Interlude

Concepts from regional geography were helpful in packaging this tour of non-represented Las Vegas into a coherent narrative. Anssi Paasi outlines three ideas of 'region' currently in use (3). One he calls pre-scientific, implying that region is a practical choice required for collecting data, but which has no conceptual role. GIS often operates in this fashion thanks to the simplicity of using available data layers. Two is discipline-centered, an approach in which regions are regarded "as objects... formal or functional classifications of empirical elements." Three is critical approaches, practitioners of which "combine questions of political economy with subjectification and identity formation." While elements of all three approaches are present, this photo-essay is most clearly defined by the discipline-centered approach.

This is a project that takes Las Vegas and its surroundings as a starting point for analysis, with the assumption that it is the region itself which classifies the empirical elements as being related. Proximity is given classificatory privilege over categories of observation and analysis which favour similarity. This view is an attempt to communicate the importance of regions as holistic places of habitation. I hope the photos here say something about my interest in visioning cities always as materially and discursively connected to their surroundings. It is the process of moving through space - choosing places to stop that doubly fulfill my version of a vernacular aesthetic and my quest to portray a regional Las Vegas - through which I have organized these scenes into a single unit. Using this methodology, taking pictures requires the photographer to engage with a region in all of its guises, from vernacular to spectacular, and everything in between.

Traveling with a camera has always been in some ways what urbanists today might term a postmodern experience because it can result in the bundling of disparate scenes, histories, and meanings into a single collection of images (4). If landscape is 'a way of seeing,' as Cosgrove has argued (5), then I propose that region is a way of being. To live regionally is to move through space, to enter in and out of places, but to do so with a profound sense of acceptance. Places can bound and categorize (6), while regions bleed-let these places into a pool of life where coincidence is quotidian.

Circulation

Traversing the Mojave Desert moving east by northeast towards Las Vegas, then riding on the valley's edge of the Shadow Mountains before the final approach to the city, I was struck by the oasis-like aura that the city projects. Seldom do cities of this size emerge the way Las Vegas does, yet this apparent disconnectedness is a myth. As much as it is problematic to interpret the surrounding desert as a wilderness because of its apparent non-linearity, it is equally problematic to interpret Las Vegas as a self-sustaining region because of its apparent isolation. Its sustenance relies on the constant circulation of materials to maintain itself in a particular form amenable to its greatest industry: tourism (7).

Circulation, therefore, refers to an ecology of matter - a constant in/out flow of food, sewage, trash, water;



4. The Mojave Desert. Off Highway 127, near Baker, Calif.



6. The Mojave Desert. Semi trucks on Highway 127, near Baker, Calif.



5. On Las Vegas Boulevard.



7. Las Vegas Boulevard.

people, money, cars, airplanes, etc. This ecology is true of any urban region. What makes Las Vegas unique is that these flows are directed and shaped into a manifestation of the exotic. A short list of animals who call The Strip their home, for example, includes lions, white tigers, African penguins, dolphins, and nurse sharks (8). Transforming the desert into a set of specific environments where each of these species can survive (which is, of course, to say nothing about their quality of life) is a collective feat of architecture, civil engineering, and the technics of ecology.

Witnessing circulation on a large scale, from the hinterlands of Las Vegas to the city, can appear to be banal (see image 7). What Las Vegas does to this experience that other cities cannot, however, is overlay a sense of wonder onto the scene. What if there is a shark inside the semi truck as its reflection gleams off the sand ocean?

On a smaller scale, image 8 bears the infrastructure of circulation visible to pedestrians on the Strip. Surrounded by scenes of what we are trained by media to see and understand as the reality of Las Vegas, this unexpected hydrant with its clumsily-connected piping is a reminder that movement – of water in this case – is essential for the production of the apparent stability of Las Vegas Boulevard.

Conclusion

I have tried to articulate my personal vision of a regional Las Vegas based on my interest in the vernacular aesthetic and what it can tell us about places. I have teased out two themes from this motivating force that clarify the ways Las Vegas is connected to its surrounding environments: linearity and circulation. Contributions from regional geography help frame this project. Historically regional geography has been



8. Standing at the Wynn Hotel and Casino, looking west at the roof of the Fashion Show Mall on Las Vegas Blvd. The people are gazing at the Wynn building.



8. Shipping facility near the Wynn Hotel and Casino, near the intersection of Sands Avenue and Koval Lane.

bound with travel writing and its tendency to represent regions “as distinctive zones set off from other regions, whose essential nature – at once a matter of ‘identity’ and ‘authenticity’ – is to be conveyed through both a narrativization of space (plotting the author’s tracks) and an aestheticization of landscape (the author’s word-pictures)” (9). I have retained components of this impulse here, such as the narrativization of space and (as any photographer-geographer must) the aestheticization of landscape.

But I have parted from the objectifying and colonial implications tied to this history by suggesting that regions can be thought of as a way of being rather than an object of analysis. That is, to live regionally, and more accurately, to be a regional geographer; we can use the medium of photography to explore the networked ecological characteristics of ‘circulation’, as well as the privatizing characteristics of capitalism that visibly mark the landscapes of cities, as seen in ‘linearity’. Moving through the space of a city with a camera forces us to reckon with what Levy calls co-presence, a term that describes the simultaneity of disparate scenes as a way to manage the challenges of distance (10). The coinciding of these scenes is filtered and visually edited by the photographer to create a narrative about a region. The act of moving and photographing, then, is another way to give meaning to a set of places that are connected by their proximity.

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Blogging Las Vegas: Fear and Geography at the AAG conference

Emma Jackson

Navigating the AAG

Where to start with the weirdness of Las Vegas? It's like a dusty Butlins with Margaritas on a mission to extract money from you. But at least it's honest about it. And there's lots to do for free as well, fountains, pirate ship battles, light shows etc... It has a funny effect on a person, that I can tell already.

Walking to the Riviera – location of the films *Casino* and *Fear and Loathing*... and now the Association of American Geographers annual conference – it is obvious who are the geographers. Facial piercings and 'Don't mess with Texas' lunchbox, not a geographer. Backpack wearing man in body warmer, geographer. There are a lot of beards about.

The subsections of geographers also have different looks. Today we got to the conference at 8am for a panel on Migration and Belonging. Casting my eye around the room I realised there had been a mistake. No women, lots of beards. 'These aren't the migration people.' I whispered to Ms Jones. Sure enough someone flashed up a Powerpoint about Swiss Census Data. It was the wrong room.

There are 6000 people here, 4000 of which are presenting. This means there are about 60 panels going on at any one time. The timetable is the size of the Yellow Pages and deciding what to go to can be difficult. It's tempting to go to all the things I know nothing about such as 'The Clustering of Extreme Weather Events with Respect to their Relationship with the Planetary Scale Circulation'. When perusing the timetable you only really have the titles to go by. It's very important to have a snazzy title. The best ones we have found so far are 'Geographies of Mars', 'Cannibals and Culinary Justice' and my personal favourite, 'the Morality of Cheese'. I am in the lucky position of being in the pre-breakfast slot (8am) on the last day of the conference. They'll be queuing up I bet...

Invisible Las Vegas

Las Vegas is dazzling and awful and great all at the same time. While getting lost in casinos and enjoying the glitz you get little peeks into how this space is made. We had a great taxi driver, he should be speaking at the

conference. He knew all about the deals going on, the selling of hotels and the building of new ones. He drew our attention to the staff car parks. Behind all the major hotels there are huge staff car parks. The taxi driver said that for every hotel room the hotel/casinos employ two people. "You don't see it", he said, "but these places are 24 hours. It takes a lot of work to keep them clean". He's right, so much of the labour is invisible.

It is fairly obvious that the extremes of the USA, good and bad, are distilled in Las Vegas. Today I went to a session at the conference called 'The Right to the City: Las Vegas'. It was so very necessary to have a panel that related the huge conference to what's going on outside. The most remarkable contribution came from a doctor who works for an organisation called 'Volunteers in Medicine of Southern Nevada'. The doctor recounted a story of what happens when a healthcare system is based on making money. She explained how the influx of doctors that came when Las Vegas was enjoying a boom seem to have now run for the hills. This is compounded by the slashing of healthcare provision by the state. In the US, one in seven people have no health insurance. In Southern Nevada this is one in three. In the face of all of these problems, she is involved in a program that is trying to set up clinics for the uninsured. Although the doctor was clearly trying to be hopeful in a difficult situation, her voice broke when she told the room that as well as abolishing all antenatal services, the Republican administration has also cut the chemotherapy program. The doctor said afterwards that she felt empowered to hear what other people were saying on the panel. An activist (who isn't listed in the program so I'm not sure of the name of the organisation) described a successful campaign to improve conditions and improve the communal space in two different areas of Los Angeles through using them (in a Jane Jacobsesque way, I thought). He talked about 'living your rights rather than asking for them' and the importance of practising the right to the city rather than just talking about it. Neil Smith placed the discussion in a more general context of the economic downturn and called for more imagination among the Left about what could happen next.

Then I sat in the car park eating a burrito from the taco truck behind the hotel – across the car park and towards the giant Barry Manilow – that caters for the builders (and now, temporarily, the younger and more skint academics) in the baking sunshine.

Queens of the Desert

Driving out of Las Vegas as the gated communities and outlets such as 'Mad Man's Army Surplus' give way to red rocks and cacti, it's hard to shake the feeling that it could all be fake. I won't believe it's real until I touch a rock, I say. I briefly want to run off into the middle of it. Until Greg starts talking about rattle snakes and lions (oh my), anyway it looks spiky out there. I have a healthy fear of nature. I'm with Werner Herzog, it might be in harmony but it's a harmony of collective and constant murder. And therefore I tread carefully. We get out of the car to verify that it's not a painted backdrop. It's actual nature but soon afterwards we are back into the land of the fake, at the mock Wild West town called Bonnie Springs. We get our fortunes told by an animatronic miner, look at the guinea pigs in the petting zoo (you couldn't move for petting zoos in the Wild West, you know) and eat mac and cheese in the bar. Unfortunately, we have missed the last hanging (they do a hopefully fake – hanging three times a day).

We head back to Vegas and prepare for an evening downtown at the Beauty Bar. When we arrive there it turns out there is a gig on. We are promised 'awesomeness, grooviness and oneness'. We are a little sceptical about what 'oneness' will involve but decide to give it a whirl. The Beauty bar is done out like a 1950s beauty salon but we proceed to the area outside where the stage is set up. There is a bar there where a tall drag queen is making cocktails. Ms Jones asks for her recommendation, "You'll like this", she says. "I forget the real name, I call it the oooooohhh shiiiiit". She pours Jaegermeister and some other things into a cocktail shaker. This sets the tone for the evening. The stage is set up with columns topped with flaming griffins – they like flaming things in Las Vegas – lots of drums and a harp. All of these things plus the promised 'oneness' means we are not that surprised when women in blue robes start dancing across the stage. After a while we go inside.

We are quiet happy chatting when Greg notices a woman is staring at us. The woman is wearing long shorts and looks like a tourist who has stumbled into this den of weirdness. She walks over and addresses me, Ms Jones and Tina. "Are any of you beautiful ladies, erm, actually ladies?". Now doesn't seem the time to go into the performative nature of gender so we shrug and say "pretty much". "You can't possibly be real ladies?", she shakes her head. She then sits down next to Ben and has a long chat, culminating in her accusing him of being the devil. We move back outside and catch the end of 'the oneness'.



View from the street

Caroline Knowles



Ricky lives on the streets of Las Vegas. He is settled into a patch of sidewalk on Las Vegas Boulevard South at the junction with Sahara. He doesn't move around much. He sits on the ground leaning against the wall of a giant gift store with a strip of cloth across his lap and a square black wooden box beside him in which he keeps his dollar bills and valuables. He lives from a plastic pot where people drop loose change. There are regulars who stop to greet him and add their small-change to his pot. Las Vegas is the city-as-party, although not so much at Ricky's end of the strip. People walk the street sipping cocktails all day long, drawing pathways between casinos under the gaze of private security guards, examining cards advertising beautiful women 'delivered directly to you in one hour'. In the economic downturn, Las Vegas has one of the highest rates of mortgage foreclosure in the US. People smash up their houses then hand over the keys to the bank. Small acts of defiance. This isn't Ricky's problem. He didn't have a house anyway. But he was attempting the family thing.

Moved here from Washington D.C 17 years ago. Wanted to start a family with my girlfriend and son. Lifestyle change. Moved here to be with them. Couldn't get work. The lawnmower unions tax you for casinos and houses and things we're supposed to get taxed for, with all the paperwork and so on. Staying alive is the issue. Who wants to get involved just to make someone else's life rich and famous? That's why I chose the life I chose. The lawnmower unions make people into food in a big way. Construction's big here too. Big dog unions run that too. I go into casinos sometime. The Stratosphere and the Sahara. I wash dishes there. Sometimes they give me chips to play. Security eats for whatever reason it does. Dogs. You know I mean men? Dog food. Turns you into dog food. Lifestyle. Its not really for me to say if this is right or wrong. They did it the way they wanted to; to protect themselves. Construction of a



whole city isn't what is supposed to happen. They had to do something. Where is the blueprint?

Where IS the blueprint for this unsustainable desert-party city? Lit up on electricity and alcohol 24/7: offering time out from the rest of life. Whose life? And why do they look so sad staring at slot machines at 4am? How long can they party? How long can Las Vegas party? What will happen to Ricky?

View from the slots

Ron is 74 but looks a decade younger. A retired salesman, Ron comes to Las Vegas from Chicago twice a year with his wife to indulge his passion for video-poker. He plays at the Riviera because he likes the slot machines there best. But he stays at Circus Circus just across the road on the other side of the strip because it is cheaper. He starts early like he used to for work. At 9am his card is charged and he is ready to play in this eerie timeless twilight world of tinkling machines and flashing lights. His wife lingers at the hotel. An ideal retirement: anticipation of a day of leisure alone in front of a machine.

I come for two days at a time to catch different sites and do a couple of shows and do a bit of gambling. I play for an hour or a couple of hours. It depends what else is on the agenda. I like to play the poker machine. Not all the slot machines, the poker machine. Because your decision influences what you get. You decide which cards to keep. It's a bit of skill and a lot of luck. It's the potential to win that makes it exciting. I've won a few times in the past. You can win \$217 on this machine. It's a lot like sales - a bit of skill and a lot of luck! It's hard to know how to spend time when it all stops. When you don't need to work any more and there isn't a lot to do all day. The days are long. And lonely: just the two of us. The excitement, and the extra money, is something to look forward to.

Facing our Own Maps

Sireita Mullings-Lawrence

Railton Road in Brixton has formed a rich heritage for both the people at the margin and the centre of society. A demand for equality has resulted in a space acquired on the once imaged war (1) front for the engagement of visual activism and demonstration, where people interrogate lived experiences whilst articulating social issues through their visual work. Known today as the 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning, ironically the space occupies a somewhat quiet street. The northern end sees Atlantic Road extending from the heart of the hustle and bustle of the now quiet market place to the southern end, which meets Herne Hill. The long road bears a locale that adheres to the communities' multicultural description, with shop windows that spill their multiethnic foods, fashions and hairstyles, paved with memories of tension and resistance. What lives on is the random person entering and leaving a house with a few cars passing through, heading towards either Brixton or Dulwich. There is a canopy of silence that provides the feeling of a peaceful and quiet place. Just before the bending corner to Herne Hill train station you will see a black building with a relief in bold metallic font reading the 198 Contemporary Arts and Learning. Be careful not to bump into the group of young people, excited, coming through the door as they set off. They are either the photography or graphic design group, eager to gather material for their next project.

We have arrived at the door of my research site, a place that enables young people living in Brixton and its surrounding areas to be able to explore both a historic and contemporary lived experience through their engagement in various creative projects. The projects allow young people to contest their ideas of popular issues affecting young people through artistic media, namely graphic design, photography, illustration and new media.

'Facing our Maps' brought young people currently attending the '198' to identify key areas in their roaming space, centred upon the places they have visited, explored or have had some sort of memorable experience. The symbolic point of exploration started with where they lived. They were asked to identify their areas using Google Maps. Once they had located the area they lived and its surrounding streets they were asked to print them off and identify a street that has a story. "Mark a street that you really like, a street that you don't like and a street that you may be afraid of, mark a

street that you remember someone has told you about and mark your home."

Shortly after they were asked if they were ready to discuss what they had done so far:

Scarlette: Come to think of it nothing happens on my street.

Eli: Are you mad? You live in Peckham bare fings happen in Peckham.

Scarlette: Like wot?

Eli: Oh my gosh Ron, she don't know what's gwaning on her own endz.

Scarlette: I just moved there recently...I don't even hang out in that area.

Sireita: Where did you live before? Scarlette tell us about where you used to live. (Stephanie turns to her computer to input her old post code in Google maps)

Eli: You got bare gangs that live in Peckham and you don't know any of them.

Scarlette: It's not my fault I don't know about the rubbish you know. She never said we should show where all the gangs live, she said tell us about our area E! (Stephanie emphasises Eli's name, showing his pressure irritates her)

Ron: Yea she did just move there recently, here is who he's on about. (Ron logs on to Youtube)

Eli: You need to know them Steph for your own sake.

I had taken a note of Ron's Youtube link and went to find out what the others had come up with. Kemmi has just arrived in the UK from Sierra Leone; she has a good grasp of English, although she does not say much she makes sure to sit with Jason, who she feels most comfortable with. She looks at Jason's map as he tries to do what he has been asked, but he is quite conscious of Kemmi hovering over him. He noticed I was about to ask him how he is doing and urges Kemmi to go and do the task she has been asked. When I asked Jason to help Kemmi he got upset saying "I am trying to figure out what happens in my own area, how can I tell Kemmi what happens in hers?" Moachi cried, "this is hard." "I will be with you in a minute", I tell Kemmi. Moachi is 19 of Nigerian parentage. She looks at her unmarked map saying "on one hand I could say that nothing happens around here on the other I guess I could show you all sorts of negative things." I found it hard to read what was going on in Moachi's map. I asked her if she could make her marks bigger.

Sitting next to Moachi was Gertrude. Gertrude has recently moved from Mexico and lives in Streatham. Like Scarlett she has no concept of the 'negative' things happening in her area and feels a little pressured by the conversation between Scarlett and Eli to create a significant and interesting mark. She was encouraged to think about the memories that live on her street. Whether they were hers or the memories of someone else she had spoken to. She remembers a guy fell in a hole nearby and the nice houses in Well Close and marks both streets. A heavy curved line appeared on Andy's map. I asked him to remove his headphones and tell me about the map. "Dats Hackney, death mile, if they catch you there and you're not from the endz you'll get shanked." Who are they? "I don't know" Andy replied "Are you afraid of going there?" "No...kinda...I just don't have any reason to go there really."

Left in the room was Sean and Robert, I knew they both had a lot to say about the postcode issue, however I was mindful of having them dominate/influence the process further than Eli had already done. Besides although they are frequent young people at the 198 they were not officially a part of this session. They had just dropped by to finish up some work for their course. Shortly after finishing they were asked to present their maps and tell us about each mark. Then they had to choose a coloured pen and mark a key place on each other's map. It was interesting to see Jason mark Kemmi's map with 'a good and bad area' and when asked how he came to this conclusion he replied "It's true, ask Eli". The task was designed for them to generate digital renditions of superimposed portraits of themselves against their maps.

Further discussion took place amongst the older members of the group and according to Robert it was the gangs who were causing areas to be unsafe. Religion was also noted as an issue where Mary lived and she described Muslim boys who constantly harass her because, although her family goes to mosque, she wears heavy metal t-shirts and no hijab. Scott expressed that he felt very uncomfortable when he first moved to Tulse Hill and thought he was not liked because he was white and concluded as time went by people on his estate got used to him. "It's not necessarily a black/white thing it's a 'my area' thing". The rest of the group seemed to agree as Robert added "turf wars are definitely mixed", "and there is this Turkish crew in Elephant" added Moachi.

The continued dialogue amongst the group revealed the ways colours and names were understood. Gang members were ridiculed for being contradictory, the young people questioning how it was that on one hand the concept of gang is based on challenging the authority

yet, ironically, they use colours imposed by the council to identify with such as blue borough for Lewisham and green borough for Greenwich. There was debate as to which gang was associated with what colour bandana. The discussion allowed Moachi to rethink her own experience with a group she encountered in Wandsworth who were friends of her brother, wearing blue striped hoodies and blue bandanas, yet Robert was convinced that she could not have seen them in Wandsworth as both Wandsworth and Clapham are coded with yellow. Names such as PDC, is abbreviated for several other groups Poverty Driven Children, Peel Dem Crew, Prevent Dem Coming. There are said to be over 169 gangs in London (2). However the group pointed out that one gang may have multiple identities.

Though the project initially began as an identity and space sharing exercise, the completed works rendered a layer that was rarely discussed amongst the young people and in some cases not spoken of at all. Their images not only reflect the veins or roads that shape and construct individual identities through lived areas but they amplify single ideas; heard in sounds of fear, memories, and myths about a particular spaces that form seminal lines on the cartographers map that were in some cases informed by the virtual. The decoding of these mental maps is reworked through visual marks, informed by experience and knowledge of a space, the imagination of the space may be lived, mythical or sceptical.

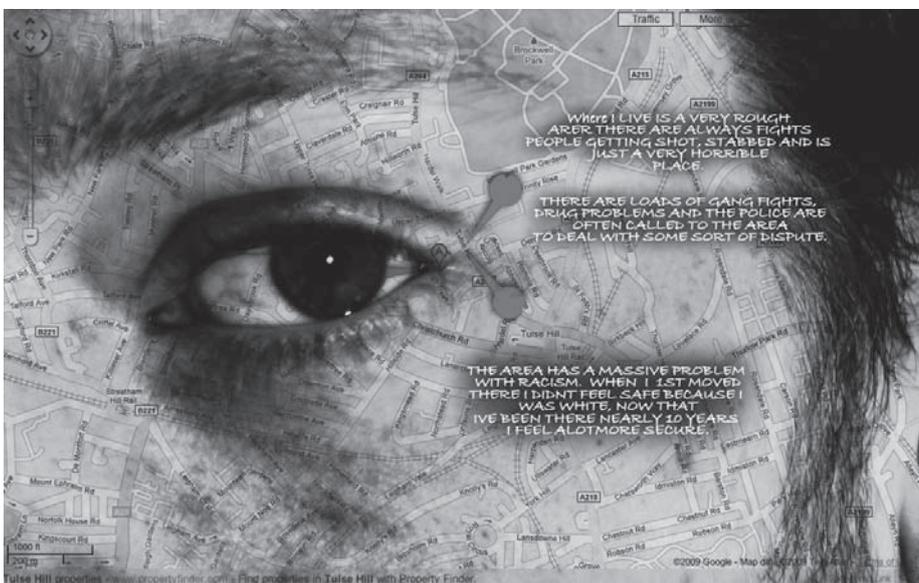
Where some maps had no marked territory, they spoke of places untrodden, telling a different kind of story from those who had experienced or heard about a place. Interestingly there was no mention of fear in relation to the place they were creating their work, the 198. Although there was mention of gangs in the Brixton area who made people feel threatened. The young people who have formed part of the WOS project represent only a small fraction of young people across London who are reluctant, and in some cases afraid, to visit other towns and neighbouring boroughs. Each project presented mixed views on spatial scepticism and spatial fear with an underlying issue of the postcode war presenting a common theme.

What is apparent in their work is the recurring theme of gangs, territory, safety and dangerous spaces and as a result, many young people are internalising their own liberty. The safe zone is rapidly becoming reduced beyond postcode to a restriction by roads or estates. This is highlighted by Cohen who states "Young people are creating complexed forms of urban space ignited by aspirations of belonging" (3). Youth experiences are no longer specific to racial or religious danger.

The above highlights new ways of thinking about young people and their transforming realities as evidenced in the following: "I used to think it was because I was white but now I have lived there for over 13 years it's because they didn't know me." An important question in sociology concerns the relationship between the arts, multiethnic young people and their individual and collective outcomes. The outcomes often present themselves as rich stories that amplify the muted voices of young people. Whether such narratives are augmented or silenced is a separate discussion as they hold windows to the social construction of youth attitudes, beliefs and ideas. Les Back points out, "these stories have consequences as they open up the social

landscape and make potential action and behaviour possible." (4)

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From the Black Boy Series

Michael Keith interviews Ingrid Pollard

Ingrid Pollard has had a connection with the Centre for Urban and Community Research since becoming external examiner on the Photography and Urban Cultures MA programme. More recently she has been a visiting artist and fellow, developing projects that interrogate representation of landscape and cartographies of cultural difference. In well received work she has developed portfolios of images that undermine the metonymic connections between a black presence in Britain and a racist urbanism through highlighting the uneasy tensions between city and rural settings, the traditions of pastoral thought and the everyday experience of Black British citizens venturing into the countryside. She has also questioned the play between identity, the coast, and the insecurities of border thinking. More recently she has explored the intimacies of family relationships through photographic representation of treasured objects. And in a project that she has been continuing at CUCR she has questioned the ways in which pubs named 'the Black Boy' sustain the uneasy accommodations and contests of prosaic British multiculturalism through pub signs that are in Pollard's terms 'hidden in a public place'. In an interview conducted in 2008 Ingrid talked about this work and the way in which photographic work could mediate a discussion of the everyday uncertainties of racialised meaning.

Ingrid began by describing the roots of what has become a twenty year project in a journey to Swansea in the mid 1980s.

Michael Keith (M): Do you want to just start by saying how you got interested?

Ingrid Pollard (I): I was going to the seaside driving down to the Gower Peninsula and at Swansea there was that Black Boy. We drove down and I noted it and we went down to the beach and I saved two photos for when we were coming back up past it, I photographed the sign and they had a board outside with all these cocktails you could buy but they all had kind of really racist names like Jungle Bunny Orange and this and that pineapple drink so that was a bit weird, so I just kind of noted that. It was all a bit scary and they had a bar.

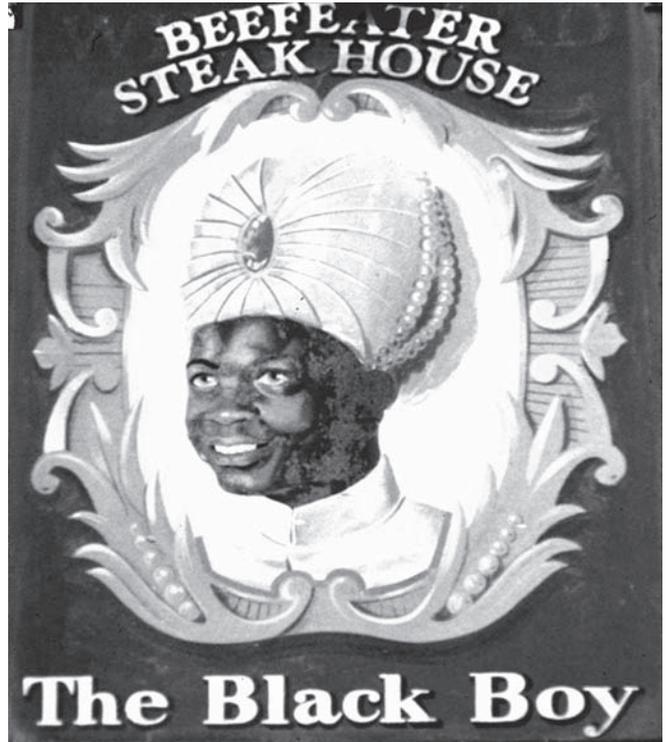
M: Did you go in?

I: No it was too scary. And they also had this bar that was outside in the shed and it was called 'Black Boys in the Barn', they were 'going to town' with the name and the connotations.

The start of the project was a cataloguing of a form of racist symbolism, a concern with the manner in which material

which might be considered straightforwardly offensive still had a hold on particular markets. One example was the use by the Beefeater Steak House of the Black Boy name and the signage they used.

M: So it was kind of overtly racist, basically.



I: Yes, how they used it commercially, the sign. I understand the symbolism, what that means historically. But that sign with the boy wearing a jewelled turban.

M: The jewel at the heart of the turban?

I: The black boys were used as symbols to show that whoever owned them was rich. I think that's it and part of that whole idea.

M: You decorate your possession?

I: Yes your servant and I think it's also some allusion to princes. You can't just be an ordinary black person you have to be exoticised either way as a slave or a prince or something noteworthy.

Over time this interest began a process of painstaking documentation of the use and place of Black Boy signs.

I: I just wondered if there was any more, started looking through the Yellow Pages and found a few more and it kind of built up from there.

M: When did it become a conscious project then?

I: It was probably the mid-nineties perhaps. I listed them all and gradually I linked them by county so I could go and photograph them.

But as the project developed Ingrid began to find that what was acceptable to display evolved, the meaning of the 'Black Boy' moved on whilst the limits of the cruder forms of racism became demarcated. Ingrid began to become more interested in the ways in which pub owners and customers thought about the signs. Over time it became increasingly common for the offence that the signs evoked to be masked or reinterpreted through frames of reference that normalised the sign of the black boy in terms that at times reinvented troubling histories.

M: *Did you go and speak to people very much?*

I: Some of them I do and some of them I don't, the pub owners, the locals? ... I have been accompanied by other people who are much more friendly and open than me and just chat with people, but I've also been in to many of these pubs where, you open the door and the piano player stops playing and sometimes, they look at me ... You mention black people in the sign and they get a bit cagey, so it depends how friendly I feel really. There was one time I went to a pub in Hull and the guy I met obviously knew a lot about it, but he just wouldn't tell me anything which is perfectly fine. He'd done his research but he just wouldn't tell me anything and that was it ... Inside in the bar behind they had lots of references, poems, people had written about slavery, they had this painting, one of a Rasta guy wearing denim on a beach scene, so lots of things inside which interesting.

M: *Was this within a kind of abolitionist frame?*

I: Yes, because the pub was just down the road from the old Wilberforce Museum. It's on the same street as it. But then the sign looks like someone from the Pacific islands rather than Africa.

Over time Ingrid became more interested by the ways in which the sign, local folklore and rationalisations of the sign's presence became increasingly plastic as local people generated new stories around the signs. In this sense both the photographs themselves and the very act of recording their presence could generate an engagement with place that made these stories visible.

M: *In your book Hidden in a Public Place (1) you talk about unwrapping the stories of particular localities...*

I: A lot of people say the signs may be named after a real person who lived nearby, perhaps a pub landlord rescued a runaway slave. You never quite know who that person is. Or if you try to trace it back it isn't based on a real person really. In north Wales the sign I found is supposedly named after a documented local person who actually existed sometimes called Jack Black.

I went to his gravesite, a real black person who was brought to the area from Africa. by a local house steward. I've seen the house where his family lived, he married a Welsh woman (his descendants still live in the area). He lived and died on the farm where he was brought too from Africa. He was a real person. I don't know what his real name is but he was named after the farm where he lived. But they linked him with the pub even though the pub is much older than him. So people grasp local history and attach it to the pub in the same way that they attach chimney sweeps and miners to the name to get around the racialising of the sign. Even if there is a carved sign of a black boy on a wall, within the fabric of the pub, outside the sign is a chimney sweep.

M: *However, interestingly Ingrid has chosen not to speak to the producers of these images, the painters of the signs.*

I: I've deliberately chosen never to speak to the sign painters because then it gets too personalised and you can't look at it as a reflection of kind of UK or an English understanding of the black body or the black face and



what that means because it gets too personalised. It can become about one individual's interpretation of the sign, his history and it's very difficult to work with it as a research tool then. I would have had to speak to all the many, many sign painters.

M: But these sites themselves become – if anything – more interesting.

I: Now I've started an overnight stay if they've got a hotel attached. I stay in them as I've started videoing inside. I travel but never meet this person – the black boy. I've constantly just missed him, but all that's left is his picture or a name or the street sign Black Boy.

M: Or a trace?

I: Yes. Something, there is. There is a vacant pub I went to near Oxford, at a junction near the main street, up on a hill, but it's derelict and you can see, an impression where the sign would have been, the large Black Boy name but it's just on the brick work, alongside the empty holder for the sign.

This is one of the most interesting dimensions of Ingrid's work. The interest in the intertwining of local stories, artistic genre, social context can disturb the taken for granted worlds into which the signs are inserted. So the displacement of racist caricature in some of the pub signs by alternatives that are ostensibly less offensive at times unpacks alternative histories. In abolitionist representation the black subject was frequently characterised through a Christian trope of salvation.



M: There is a sub-literature about the representations of the black body in an abolitionist framing.

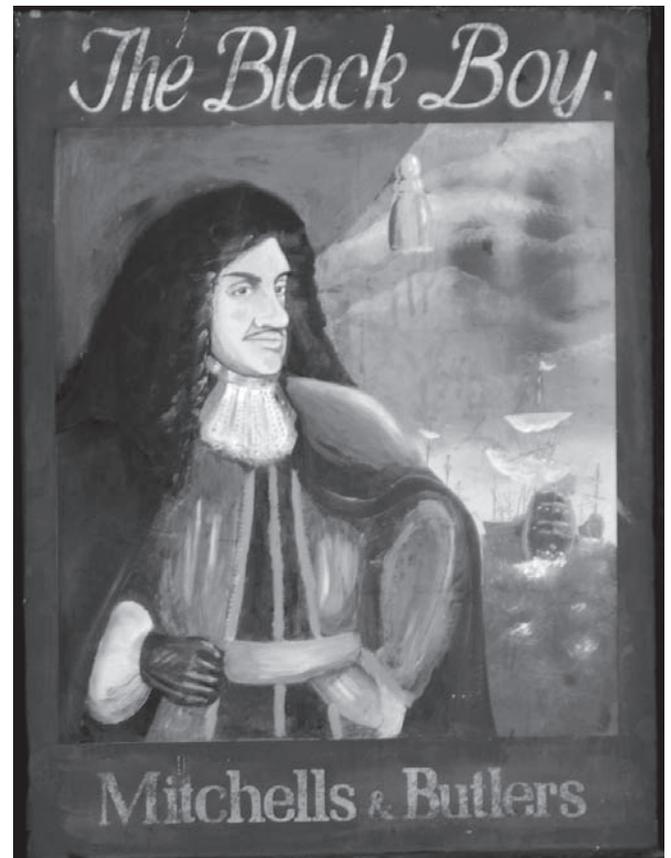
I: Yes in the National Gallery is a painting of Queen Victoria and Albert, she's receiving a Zulu king and she's giving him the Bible, he's wearing an animal skin cloak and he's got all the paraphernalia of an Africanised chief. But he's on his knees in front of her receiving the Bible. The angle of his look confuses, is he looking at Queen Victoria or God, it's someone who's superior.

M: So the look up is a subjectification rather than a look to heaven?

I: Even though in the abolitionist type stained-glass image in Preston, he's looking heavenward, he's being given his personhood (without a name) at the same time but it's a subjugated personhood. That's how I understand it, the sign that's outside the same pub is just a scary Moorish figure. I mean it's a step up from all the caricatures. Another type is the worker that appears all the time, with a handkerchief round the neck, the manual worker.

M: It's almost like the fragility of civilisation, the clothes...

I: This is the good Negro, this is the punished Negro, you know, or there's the worker. Kind of a different version but it's based on a racialised figure. I'd like to know who actually painted and installed the stained glass. I'd have to do the research into when the pub was built and the connection to the Moorish figure outside and what that was about.



M: I was just thinking in terms of the work that you've done in the past about the place of the black body in the rural landscape, the urban landscape and so on. And you've talked about being influenced by Doreen Massey as well. Are there particular things that that trigger your thinking?

I: It has been really useful to think of Massey's thoughts about the meaning of places through the convergence of certain elements through time. So usually it's the market road, the church nearby, the main road going from town to town. And I think that black people have been passing through there for the past, at least, five hundred years. It can be the main thoroughfare through the town. It's about commerce, these signs are indicators of tobacco coffee, sugar and rum. That's part of their symbolism, there's nothing complicated about that. This one has got the tobacco roll. It's got the feathered headdress again which is to do with Native Americans, connected to the Pocahontas story, being able to buy tobacco. Similar to those Indian chiefs outside tobacco, in America stores. It's a bit like that because it's standing on there.

M: So when you look one of these places up and then you shoot off there in the car or the train or whatever to go and have a look, what's your thought process as you approach it? Is it like reading the other parts of the landscape?

I: I'll have the address, then unless I've got a map of the town I have to try and find where it is basically. They tend not to be in places like Liverpool which are enormous cities, they're in smaller places so I'll just head for the centre of town. I'll look for what looks like the main street, whether that main street has moved. Usually if there's a big church nearby or there's some shops, it's going to be near all that. It's going to be in the centre of somewhere because it's going to be near commerce. The pub, because it's old, is going to be on the main thoroughfare because of travellers going that way. Even if the main town, the main road has moved, it's become an A road or a motorway. If I read the old maps I can kind of see where they're going to be in relation to the areas that they're in.

Pollard's work is striking because of its ability to hold the everyday signs of British culture in a gaze long enough to unsettle an easy moral positioning. In 2008 the poet Lemn Sissay broadcast a radio programme (2) considering the origin of the pub name of the black boy, considering the role of empire, slavery, chimney sweeps and the alleged dark skin of Charles II, when hiding from Cromwell. Sissay was upset by both the defence of the pub's name but also became concerned with a search for a singular truth behind the pub's etymology.

M: Oh really, he was cross? You must have been more cross? About him doing your project after you were doing it for twenty years!

I: No, he was so cross about the pub sign.

It felt like a writer's response. He wanted to find the one reason why these pubs were called Black Boy, that's what he was looking for. I thought, I could have told him he's never going to find it.

M: Have you got a podcast of that programme?

I: On a cassette tape. He met with lots of people; the programme was great on research, of talking heads, authorities. He went to lots of pubs. He went into one in West London, he met a black guy in there who just thought the name was kind of a joke, that it's just fun. He thought it was named after local mill workers nearby, people who went in there got covered with flour so that when they came in, they called them Black Boys because they were covered with flour; these fanciful ... it's just making up a narrative. He was cross, then he spent quite a long time investigating the runaway slave story. All the sort of stories that I had come across. In the end I felt he was totally offended by the name because it demeaned 'black men' and therefore him personally, because he is a 'black man'. He couldn't get away from how disturbed he was by the name, he just wanted them to disappear.

M: How do you feel? Not the same?

I: It's tricky, well I think if they disappear it's a way of pretending that black people arrived here in the nineteen fifties, they haven't completely been part of English culture for hundreds of years. I think this is further indicated by the ages of the pubs, they are all really, really old, earliest recorded in 16th century.

And in capturing perhaps the spirit of her powerful work Ingrid emphasises the importance of not unpacking a singular history or erasing the offensive but instead coming to terms with the unsettling ways in which past and present coalesce over a pint of bitter.

M: So there's a kind of historical memory?

I: Yeah, whether they had a connection to commerce or they're named after a real person. That's not what's important for me. It is the fact that it is a very legitimised part of English history going back a long way, and it is right there, right in your face.. There is a big enormous two metre high picture of a black person in the middle of this town and no one's noticed it. It feels like, 'how are we going to get around that?' It's enormous, you know, these are big things these signs, it's sort of bizarre.

(1) Pollard, I. (2008) *Hidden in a public place* London: IMP Press; ISBN 978-0-9559672-0-7

(2) *The Mystery of the Black Boy* ; Monday 24 March 2008 11:00-11:30 (Radio 4 FM) Lemn Sissay explores the demise of the Black Boy as a name for a pub.

Why do you want to go there? Saved by a Lion in Pilsen, Chicago's Barrio Mexicano

Michael Edema Leary

Near by is the Latin Quarter, where creative and rebellious spirits resort... [in] the Black belt life was free and disorderly [there is hope in] the mission... the artists' colony and radical centers.
(Burgess 2002 [1925]) (1)

Ernest Burgess, one of the key Chicago Sociology School researchers, is talking about 1920s Chicago. Thinking about the city quarters instigated my Pilsen mission. Since seeing years ago the famous 1920s Chicago map of ethnic districts, with its 'Little Sicily', 'Deutschland' and 'Black Belt'(2) the city's diversity has been a source of fascination. Why not, I thought, see some of Chicago's 'cultural quarters' whilst visiting the city for a conference in 2008? Barrio Mexicano sounded good, I would be able to practice my Spanish, *hablo bastante bien*, and enjoy some wholesome real food. Camera in pocket I set off.

It's a baking hot day. Should have taken the bus as the Mexican-American hotel receptionist advised, 'tome el bus numero 168'. Thought I knew better and took The El. Outside the subway station, wind blows burning, spiky dust in my face. It all looked so simple on the city map, now I'm standing on a deserted street with only a constant stream of speeding cars for company. Chicago's main Mexican-American district, is around here I know but where? Looking up at the massive railway viaducts and 'freeway' flyovers, which have taken on a rather threatening air, I realise that if its here it's not close enough to walk on a stifling afternoon. It's one of those, 'whatever possessed me?' moments.

Chicago, like the rest of the USA, has been attracting newcomers for several centuries. The late 19th century witnessed phenomenal growth of the physical city and its population as it became a centre of manufacturing, meat packing, railways, and of course in the 1920s, industrial scale organised bootlegging crime. Al Capone had an office in the city's outrageously Greco-Roman-Modern London Guarantee Building. The World's Columbian Exposition (known popularly as The Chicago World's Fair) was held in the Windy City in 1893 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of 'Christopher Columbus' in the 'New World'. In the competition between cities to host the Fair, Chicago promoters were so unstopably vociferous a New York journalist accused them of talking and talking and talking - so windy - the name stuck.

It's noticeable that some of Chicago's cultural quarters are definitely on the tourist trail and are mentioned by the bus-tour-guides: Chinatown, Little Italy and Greektown. Chinatown was interesting but the other two rather bland. No tour guide mentioned 'Little Mexico', but then it's not called that. It is called Pilsen and is located in Chicago's Lower West Side, close to downtown. The name derives from a Czech restaurant named City of Pilsen. The district today, with a population of about 44,000 is much more than a strip with a few restaurants. Best of all for the tourist it's reachable, so I thought, via the city's Elevated Railway - The El. Secure in this knowledge I expected to clock up effortlessly another cultural quarter.

So, I'm stood under the freeway, Pilsen is nearby but where? Few people are around and those that are don't seem to speak English (or Spanish). There's a gas station, they'll know where it is - they didn't. A large white van pulls in for gas. He'll know.

"Excuse me, can you tell me where Pilsen is, you know the Mexican district?"

"Pil what?"

"The Mexican neighbourhood, I know it's quite near here."

"No, I don't know it."

The delivery man begins to walk away, then turns and asks.

"Why would you want to go to the Mexican area anyway?"

I realise it's a fair question in what is still a segregated city and reply.

"Because I'm a tourist, that's what we do."

Without another word he goes to pay for his gas: more walking under the massive freeways. A taxi is approaching; it'll be worth the few dollars ride. He stops; I get in and ask to be taken to Pilsen the Mexican district. He looks blankly. Barrio Mexicano, I say, it's quite near here. He doesn't know, neither does his controller, so it's back to walking. In the midst of all the transport infrastructure and industry is a surprise, a tiny new housing estate with well kept, colourful, little front gardens. Alas there is still nobody to ask. Another surprise: from a converted industrial unit Latino music floats on the air from the patio of an unlikely restaurant. Well I tried to find Pilsen but now its time for a beer and to retrace my steps. At a table on the patio I order a cold Guinness, but hang on



the waitress is speaking Spanish, she'll know *dónde está*. She explains it's too far to walk, but she can order a taxi. Inside the manager phones and asks, where are you going to in Pilsen? I say I don't know, any bar will do, but the taxi driver needs an address. So the waitress suggests I go to un buen restaurante called Nuevo León on 18th Street: the taxi is prompt.

"I'm going to 1515 West 18th Street please". OK. We arrive but it's a long street so I say I'll walk from here. And what a delight: sheltered from the wind, it's warm and at last I'm enjoying the cultural experience. Having spent three weeks in Mexico in 2006 of course I'm an expert on authenticity and it's all here: kids playing in the streets, or selling chewing gum and biros, old folks chatting, sing-song Spanish lingo, guys hanging around in cowboy hats and boots, a wedding disgorging from a church, little taco stalls and huge murals. It seems the City Council has recognised the cultural legitimacy of the area: there are large, round, shiny brass 'Aztec Calendars' embedded in the sidewalk. But the highlight is Nuevo León, its door is a teleporter: Salsa is playing in the dining room containing about twenty Formica tables staffed by women wearing gaudy green and white lacy dresses. I sit near the window. Magically, food arrives unordered: little plastic bowls of fresh guacamole, salsa, nachos, red-hot pickled carrots, jalapenos and a jug of water. It's a busy place with families and couples indulging in a late lunch, chatting in Spanish (well Castellano really). I order catfish and rice. It sits on

a big plastic plate with all the trimmings and is delicious. Staff are friendly and are happy to answer my questions in Spanish. Nuevo León has been around for about 40 years and is still run by the Gutiérrez family who founded it. The restaurant is named after their province of origin in Mexico and all food is prepared on the premises.

It's great just listening and watching. But all too soon it's time to go. Walking back to the hotel is out of the question so I ask the waitress to order a taxi. With nothing much to do but wait, savour the atmosphere, talk to anybody who'll listen and look out of the window, I see different things. The street is lively and interesting but it's full of litter and generally has a run down air: cars are mostly oldish. But what is disturbing is the metronomic regularity of the passing police car: huge, blue and white it passes every ten minutes, vigilant cops inside. Is there a big street crime problem? It doesn't feel like it. After several more phone calls it takes the taxi an hour to arrive. Going back to the hotel the driver says he has no problem coming out to Pilsen.

Back at Goldsmiths, Pilsen's complexity emerges. The area through time has been home to several different communities. In the late 19th century booming industrial jobs attracted newcomers to Chicago. Pilsen became home to many Czech and German workers employed in building the city's expanding transport system. Mexicans and people from other parts of Central and South

America arrived after World War II to work in the city's extensive manufacturing plants. It is now apparently a 'low-income but cohesive Mexican-American neighbourhood', and is described positively by the conservative Chicago Chamber of Commerce as 'an authentically Mexican neighborhood': a true Chicago Barrio (3). The van driver's incredulity is understandable considering the degree of Chicago's ethnic segregation. Pilsen, for example is 93% Mexican-American. Pressures on the area become apparent too. Like many places where visibly identifiable newcomers settle, it is subject to negative stereotyping and gentrification pressures because of its relatively low land values and central location. A number of unique church-based community organisations offer active resistance (4). It seems there is a dual discourse regarding Pilsen: one is about a poor, high crime area suffering racial tension "with a factory-era aesthetic that makes it a relic in a post industrial city" (5). The other argues that:

18th Street is not the cleanest street, but it is vibrant with the smells, facades, and the feel of a Mexican community. In a stroll, one encounters the richness of Spanish voices, the sense of heritage, the array of Mexican shops and restaurants that unify the neighborhood. (6)

That's a view with which I can empathise. Yes I had a touristic experience but it was so powerfully positive that I'm looking forward to my next visit. Next time I'll follow the locals' advice and take the bus.



(1) Burgess, E.W. (2002) [1925], 'The Growth of the City' in *The Blackwell City Reader*, eds. G. Bridge & S. Watson, Blackwell, Oxford.

(2) Massey, D., Allen, J. & Pile, S. (1999) *City Worlds: Understanding Cities*, Routledge, London. quoted in, Wilson, D. & Wouters, J. (2004) 'Successful protect-community discourse: spatiality and politics in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood', *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 36, No. 7, p. 1173-1190.

(3) Grossman, S.F., Cardoso, R.M., Belanger, G., Belski, J., Corethers, T.C., Pettinelli, M.E. & Redd, M.A. (2000) 'Pilsen and The Resurrection Project: Community Organization in a Latino Community', *Journal of Poverty*, Vol. 4, No. 1&2, p. 131-149.

(4) Wilson, D. & Wouters, J. (2004)

(5) Carlos Diego, Art Activist, quoted in Wilson & Wouters (2004)

Camden's Changing Perspective: A Ten Minute Walkabout

Leeroy Murray

As a kid growing up in Camden Town in the 1960s, the buildings within a ten minute radius were intimately known to me; buildings and streets that impressed walking patterns on my mind. The physical structures and layout created an ambiance, a feeling of pleasantness, strangeness or a shudder and desire to pass through quickly. In a way, I had psychologically absorbed the community layout. The residue of feelings have clung to the fabric of my being. The neighbourhood's mix of contrasting lightness and darkness still impose the same unsettled feelings.

Here I share some of my impressions of the changing street scape 30 years on, and the effect of the physical evolution of the neighbourhood on my inner landscape.

The south-facing view across the roof tops from the third floor main bedroom window of our council flat has generally remained the same for nearly 50 years. Although Hawley Road below has changed from being a quiet, hardly used road, to the main north west busy bus and car route into central London. This bedroom in which I'm standing originally belonged to my elder brother John, when we first moved here in 1959. After he moved on to university, my father, also named John, took over the room. It's been ten years since they both died; now I have the privilege of looking out of this same window and watching Camden's fully loaded life in motion. I've named my eldest son John. He is eight. The views he will have from our flat windows will not be the same views I grew up with.

The houses opposite have lain empty for some time awaiting possible demolition. It's rumored that a casino, hotel and dense housing are planned for the stretch of land from here back to the canal with little thought given to the impact on the locals.



When I was growing up, many of these places were 'doss houses', with single rooms occupied by lonely Irish navies, working on London's roads, railways and construction sites. After a long day of hard labour, they crossed the road to drink in their local boozer at the corner of Hawley Road and Kentish Town Road, called the Moreton Arms. Although basic in decor, the many pubs situated on street corners throughout Camden Town offered greater homely comfort than the homes of their drinkers. Friday and Saturday pub nights were hampered by 'curfew' type drinking hours (6:00 pm to 11:10 pm). Fighting outside of these pubs was common. Passing the Sunday morning's blood blotches on the pavements left one hoping that no one was seriously hurt. Today, the elegant Quinn's pub offers refuge to a more leisurely class of people.

Above the roof tops helicopters, planes, trains and cranes are evident in lively motion. My childhood saw London Midland Services run their steam trains service from Richmond to Broad Street along this line. They rumbled past clanking and hissing through the night, accompanying the imagery of my dreams.



As a late 19th century railway line, it was lucky to have survived Beeching's mass closures of passenger services in the 1960s. The current service operated by London Overground is greatly expanded, signifying the growing importance of London's railways for passengers and freight.

In the distance, but only a five minute walk, are the mushrooming satellite dishes of Music and Television's (MTV) brash studios in Hawley Crescent. The studios are opposite the recent Open University's red coloured block, an interesting addition to the area which has yet to make its influence felt. The studios are also situated adjacent to the 'Elephant House', built in 1900 for the former Camden Brewery bottling stores.



The elephant head plaque is above the building's entrance on Kentish Town Road. Directly facing the Elephant's House's stepped doorway was the Aerated Bread Company (ABC Factory), founded in 1862 by Dr. John Dauglish and set up to exploit his patented 'carbonic acid gas method' of fermentation which reduced the production time of bread. Arising from its chimneys was the comforting smell of baking bread seeping into the streets of Camden. Demolished and replaced in the late 1980's by a Sainsbury's outlet, the same five minute walk now takes you past the unfriendly dull metallic construct of a fenced car park. A walk that can never be done quickly enough.

Below the hovering arm of a crane are the square towers perched on Rowton House men's hostel, situated on Arlington Road five minutes away. Opened in 1905, it was the last in a chain of hostels built in London by the Victorian philanthropist Lord Rowton. Known locally as the 'doss house, with its 1140 rooms for a 1000 working men, it maintained its Victorian regime forbidding alcohol and forcing men to be out of their beds by 9 am. Walking past its entrance in the morning, when the place was emptying of its temporary clients, you could smell the institutional whiff of carbolic soap wafting through the heavy swing doors.



A life time resident of the 'doss house, was Johnny Onions whom I met while working on the vegetable barrows in Inverness Street. Johnny was about 60 and freelanced for the other 'barrow boys'. He was orphaned and told me that he had never known his family name and had never been out of Camden. He was named Johnny Onions, because he originally only sold onions. I spent two weeks working with him on his pitch outside the old Plaza Cinema on Camden High Street. Each morning he would set up his temporary vegetable stall with wooden boxes piled high. He was small and stocky with a cloth cap, greasy black trousers and a knotted wool scarf. He swore continuously. Many a time I winced at his dialogue with customers; yet, never did I hear them complain about his language. He said he liked staying at the Rowton House because it had everything he needed... a small room, table, lamp and bed and access to a bathroom.

I worked on the stalls in Inverness Street around 1963 for a month for Ted Chandler. His family had owned their barrow pitches in this colourful 'fruit and veg' market since the beginning of the century. The barrow boy's banter was at times poetic, uplifting the mood of the lady shoppers and their smirking children.



The market almost reached a point of dying out in the late 1990's with the opening of large supermarkets. However, its contribution to the community was recognized by the Council and around the year 2000 it was refurbished. The street's entrance has an overhead sign telling us that this is Inverness Street Market. Against the onslaught of the international brigade of businesses setting up in Camden, is Young Ted Chandler; who inherited the stall from his father. At 50, Young Ted, whom I knew as a boy, stands a lone survivor from a bygone era of barrow boys, continuing to ply his family's trade.

My north-facing kitchen window gives an entirely different perspective from the bedroom's. This looks out onto the more tranquil common grassy 'square' of the estate with its children's playground, sheds and parking spaces. It used to feature communal washing lines for those who dared use it and muddy grassed surround, deeply scarred by cars driving across.



My years from 1959 to 1964 were spent walking to and from home to Haverstock Comprehensive School along gloomy Chalk Farm Road, a 15 minute walk. I could never have envisioned this run down depressing area ever becoming popular. My school route was marked by the usual string of shops serving a poorer neighbourhood. A dreary machine shop, cafe, pawn brokers, antique emporium, pubs, a betting shop and Mrs Dobb's who ran the only second hand clothes shop. On the opposite side near Chalk Farm Tube station was the then largely forgotten 1846 built Round House. It was a railway engine shed for the London and North Western Railway. By 1856, with larger locomotives introduced the Roundhouse became redundant.

In 1869, it was taken over by W.S. Gilbey of Gilbey's Gin and run as liquor warehouse until about 1930. After many empty years, the Roundhouse is now a Grade II listed building. Put to good use in the 1960s and 1970s it played host to Jimmy Hendrix, the Doors and many more punk and glam rock bands.

Today, after its £30 million re-development opening in 2006 initiated by philanthropist Sir Torquil Norman, the Roundhouse is run as a charity contributing significantly to Camden's neighbourhood. For entertainment it offers regular music gigs, a variety of theatre programmes including plays from the Royal Shakespeare Company, and a restaurant. More importantly, it is a state of the art creativity centre for young people aged 13 to 25. Along with the Roundhouse developments, Chalk Farm Road has become a buzzing walkway with restaurants offering international cuisine, bars, music venues, homeopathic body shop, fitness studios, specialist bike shop, natural food shop and vintage clothes shops. The remaining pawn and betting shops now benefit from a multicultural clientele.

A vast 'bazaar' type market industry has blossomed around Camden's Regent Locks. It attracts several million visitors a year. Hundreds of colourful temporary and permanent stalls bring visitors into contact with an unimaginable array of worldly merchandise including exotic foods. Walking the calming waterways is an added attraction of the area.

Nearby at the top of Hawley Road 2 minutes from our flat, is the Hawley Arms pub. One of the most uninviting locals of my early years with its sawdust floors and lone drinkers. Today, it has earned an international reputation from visiting celebrities. Its decor is plush, the music lively, with punters bulging out of the pub's doorways.

In February 2008, I watched with horror at the flames from the Hawley Arms rising above the roof tops. The clothing market stalls had caught fire, destroying many buildings including part of the Hawley Arms. No one was hurt. It was restored and opened a year later to the delight of its regulars. To celebrate its survival, and to assure people that Camden Market was open and thriving, the iconic bridge was repainted, showing on the left the familiar logo now coupled on the right side with a backward spelt CAMDEN TOWN.



From my third floor windows I see the signs of change. Looking over the roof tops and down into the streets of Castlehaven and Hawley Road, Torbay Street and Kentish Town Road. These streets are a living part of my memory. The changes, too rapid at times to absorb. In fact the streets no longer belong to me. I'm simply an observer someone who can't but help walk with memories and wonder at the new buildings, shops and bustle of the fourth most popular tourist spot in England.

Skills Exchange: Relational Encounters and Urban Change

Alison Rooke

Last month I went to the Tate Triennial exhibition *Altermodern* curated by Nicholas Bourriaud. While I was there I watched a video in a darkened room where the artist Marcus Coates, dressed in a shiny blue Adidas tracksuit, with a stuffed hare's head popping out of his zip-up top and a headdress made from a skinned Badger, performed a shamanistic ritual in front of an Israeli mayor concerned about the future of the local youth in the face of the continuing violence in the region. The mayor and his interpreter look on in a state of bemusement as the artist calls out incantations, asking for guidance about this situation from a series of animal spirits. Coates shamanic performance draws on a complex imaginary world to find empathy with his human subjects and their dilemmas. He translates the behaviour of a bird he sees - a plover - while the interpreter translates the conversation between the artist and the mayor. "The Tale of the Plover", a bird who pretends to be injured in order to draw prey away from its nest, offers an animal metaphor for the defensiveness at the heart of the Palestinian Israeli conflict. While on first viewing this appears to be a humorous piece, Coates, who could be read as the 'Borat' of the art world for the unknowing, shows us something about the possible role of the artist as a translatory and agentic force in society. In his shamanic practice Coates is temporarily someone or something else. However, the Mayor's deadpan reaction to his performance speaks to the possibilities and tensions inherent in artistic practice which sits between creative attempts to communicate and the potential failures of these exchanges.

Rather than being confined to the studio much of contemporary art is concerned with and located in social contexts, working with social actors. Here the practices of the artist, the sociologist and ethnographer often overlap. Each of these practitioners face the challenges of access, establishing rapport, gathering the raw materials or 'data' for subsequent analysis and representation and informing future social policy and practice. Furthermore, artists and theoreticians alike face ethical dilemmas questions of confidentiality, anonymity, trust especially when working with more vulnerable or marginal sections of the population.

Recently contemporary art theorists have turned their attention to community-based and participative arts inspired by social issues and have begun to interrogate some of the questions raised by such

encounters (1). Coates' work is a strong example of the Relational Aesthetics, discussed by the celebrated Nicolas Bourriaud(2). In his seminal text, Bourriaud argues that some of the most innovative contemporary art can be understood not as an artistic object or product, but rather as a form of social exchange and encounter, producing what he describes as a 'relational aesthetic'. The significance of such relational art is the process of participation rather than the production of art objects per se. The relationality of such work is found in both its inter-subjective character and the collective elaboration of meaning that these encounters produce. This relational art frequently takes place in social settings rather than the 'white cube' of the art gallery. One of the important functions of relational aesthetics is to offer a break from everyday life and the modes of communication and participation it structures. More specifically, relational art represents a branch of artistic practice that is largely concerned with producing and reflecting upon the interrelations between people and the extent to which such relations - or communicative acts - need to be considered as an aesthetic form. Social relationality is central to the Skills Exchange project. This project, led by London's Serpentine Gallery with CUCR as academic partners, brings together internationally renowned artists, older people and the agencies and individuals working with them to investigate the questions raised by such encounters. The research focuses on the processes which marginalise older people through preconceived attitudes which hold the meaning of being older in place. This may be through the micro politics of interpersonal encounter or the policies which reduce the possibilities of agency and participation in processes of gentrification and re-housing.

At present, the project takes place over four sites and each of these is concerned with the experience and meaning of home and neighbourhood and the process of urban change. Tom Hunter is a photographer who has a strong track record of working with communities in Hackney. Tom, accompanied by CUCR Intern Laura Cuch, is working with elderly residents and Age Concern on the Woodberry Downs estate in North Hackney, an area undergoing a great deal of change. Many of these residents moved from the slums of the east end when the estate was first built. The estate is now being developed with 'double density' meaning twice as

many residents will live in the same space. In weekly sessions, elders work with Tom Hunter recollecting their memories of the area and working creatively to tell their own stories of the estate and working collaboratively on a short film.

In Camden, North London, Marcus Coates, accompanied by CUCR Intern Ananda Ferlauto, continues to explore the role of the artist as a social agent and the role of the artistic imagination. Marcus Coates is working with the emotional and imaginative in the context of a hospice which works with the dying. Here where people are at the end of their lives, as their physical and spatial world shrinks. Marcus's dynamic art practice where the artist is an agent of experience. Marcus is concerned with the role of dreams and the imagination. One of the themes in this project is exploring through performance the skills of dreaming and imagining at the point of dying and saying goodbye.

One of the themes central to the work of the London based multi-media artist Barby Asante is providing participants with a space of self expression and the performance of identity and the negotiation of skills in the process of working together. Barby, accompanied by CUCR Intern Cristina Garrido, is working with a group of local people in South London who are living in the shadow of Heygate Estate which is being demolished as part of the Elephant and Castle regeneration masterplan. Barby's project is concerned with the significance of markets for older people. The project brings local people together to find new ways of archiving the past and recovering memories of what is lost and quickly forgotten in these processes, to create work in response to the closure of the Heygate Estate and the East Street market. This will include participants creating their own stall on the market where they will give away and exchange some of the more traditional fare which has disappeared from the market in recent years.

Markus Miessen's architectural practice is concerned with the limits and possibilities of participation. Markus has been working with residents at a care home while making propositions for interior modifications based on conversations with the design firm Abake. CUCR Intern Katey Staton has been following the project's development.

Finally, a partnership with Abbeyfield Trust sites around the country will address the need to re-define appropriate modes of 'experimental communal living' which is the original ideal of some of their older peoples housing built in the 1970s.

CUCR will be working closely with Janna Graham, Projects Curator; and Catherine Hawes, Project Producer at the Serpentine, to examine the significance of the processual aspects of these projects rather than any cultural artefacts produced. Paying attention to the relationship between aesthetic production in these spaces of relationality and the wider political production of older people's habitation in our rapidly changing city. We are concerned what holds the various roles in these encounters in place, while asking what are the attitudes and expectations surrounding 'art' and the artist. We are interested in the ethical and micro-political dynamics of 'participatory art' encounters, as artists move out of the studio to carry out their artistic practice in the social world? Can the artist be an empowerer? What do artists take away from these encounters? Do such encounters open up the possibility of agency for participants? Are artists becoming the new cultural intermediaries in the process of urban change as it impacts on communities? Is community art something that is 'done to communities? Or can it be space for questioning the terms of these engagements? The project will culminate in a carers congress in the Autumn organised by the Serpentine, followed by a conference at Goldsmiths where the significance of the project and the research process will be interrogated.

With thanks to Ben Gidley, Janna Graham and Cristina Garrido.

(1) Bishop, C. (2004) *Antagonism and relational aesthetics*, October 110: 51-79.

Downey, A. (2007) *Towards a politics of (relational) aesthetics*, Third Text, 21(3): 267-75.

Kestler G.H. (1995) *Aesthetic evangelists: conversion and empowerment in contemporary community art*, Afterimage 22.

(2) Bourriaud, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Dijon: Les presses du rebel.

Always Let the Road Decide

Text by Ruby Russell

Photographs by David Kendall

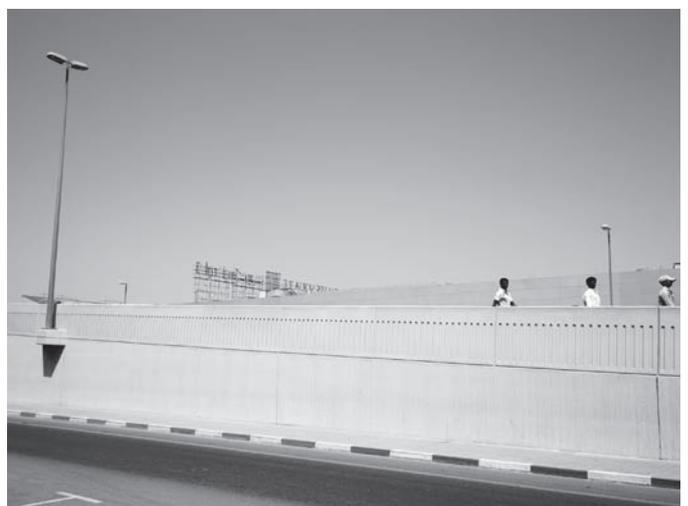
Dubai is a Global city, a metropolis that is in many ways defined by its international status. The architecture of the city is designed to enhance this status: luxury hotels, artificial beaches and gleaming financial centres. The layout of the roads presents a carefully controlled illusion of wealth and power, screening off areas of visible poverty and guiding visitors on a tour of the city's most impressive modern constructions.

Yet behind this carefully constructed façade, poorly paid migrant workers with limited rights make up three quarters of the city's population. This is the flip side of 'Dubai the Global City'. Many of them work in the construction industry, directly engaging in a physical shaping of the city that makes no concessions to the patterns and requirements of their own lives.

What struck David Kendall was the use of roads - in a city designed to be navigated by cars - by workers for

whom owning a vehicle is an economic impossibility. In his photographs fences and roads brutally divide the physical space. The free-roaming pedestrians who follow and traverse these axis are faceless, hidden agents, represented almost diagrammatically. They navigate the city on their own terms, track alternative trajectories and subvert the city's official design.

In the context of this hugely complex and dynamic urban system, these photographs act as an eye in the centre of the storm, a quiet, still place for reflection. Our attention is drawn to the interaction between officially sanctioned uses of space and those dictated by the daily lives and inevitable needs of individuals and communities. Focusing on these human-scale patterns of movement allows for a uniquely tangible comprehension of the city as a locus of infinitely complex and globally connected processes.



Postcard From Anear

Sayed Hasan

Standing on the roof of the New Cross Inn you can see all over London. From room 16 I can see the small window into Alison's office at Laurie Grove Baths. As I turn my temporary room into a camera obscura the image of Warmington Tower slowly moves upside down and the wrong way round across the wall. From tower to tower, the connection between the outside and inside world is exteriorised in front of me. The phantasmagoria of the public and private overlap as the light from a small hole pierces two possible worlds with a single beam of sunshine. I climbed up a ladder through the sky light on the third floor corridor; I wasn't the first. If I hadn't seen other people do it, I wouldn't have thought to take a picture of myself naked on the roof, and felt the fresh air blow on my skin. It was a private moment, but I needed the help of a stranger. The distance I stand away from the world is a measured exposure, however; I can't control how people see me. I woke up in the night and screamed. It took me a whole day to realise I did scream. I woke myself up with an unrelenting roar. 'Are you all right', Elisa, asked me. I was fine, Lois seemed

more disturbed than me. His ear plugs couldn't muffle my cry. I can't tell you why I yelled, there was a weight on me and I had to repel it. Did Lois throw himself off a building in a dream, and land on me as I lay below him. I pushed the baleful force away from me with all my strength.

Space is a matter of give and take, but sometimes you have to use force, and jostle with the people you share a room with. Locked doors are no good when three other people have a key. Empathy and granting one another small favours can make a difference to a day. I went with out my own toothpaste for two days and consciously tried to follow the same grooves the owner used to elicit the dental gel, that was left by the washbasin. Yeah, I'm a sneak. I took a couple of cotton buds in an open wash bag underneath my bed when the urge to clean my ears took hold of me. I gave as well as took, revealed shades of myself and tried to shut doors so no one could enter. It seems easier telling you all this from a distance, as I listen to my own echo.



'Put People First'

Paolo Cardullo



'Put People First' demonstration, Trafalgar Square, London March 2009

REVIEWS

The Right to the Lumpen-City

Alan Bourke

We live in an era in which the human causalities of capitalism and global conflict struggle to be heard amidst the clamour for property and profit in the neo-liberal city. Jettisoned to the liminal spaces of citizenship and survival, the inhabitants of the Lumpen-city are those who occupy the marginal spaces of urban life. Be they pavement squatters in Mumbai, disadvantaged youth in Toronto, sex-trade workers in Machala, pan-handlers on the mean streets of London, or scavengers amidst the discards of a wasteful consumerism in Istanbul, the citizens of the Lumpen-city are the entrepreneurs of the informal economy. The residents of the Lumpen-city embody a duality in terms of being active in the enactment of a myriad of subproletarian strategies of survival, and yet rendered vulnerable and passive through the circumscribed dictates of representational inscription. They are continually captured and positioned within the semantic tropes of research and scholarship. If the right to the lumpen-city are those of citizenship and inclusion, it is also the right to (self)representation.

During the spring of 2009 a group of activist-scholars gathered at York University, Toronto, for the collective orchestration of Lumpen-City: Discourses of Marginality/ Marginalizing Discourses, an interdisciplinary conference organized to interrogate the poetics and politics of research and representation. Organised by a group of post-graduate students in sociology and environmental studies, our task was to set out to trouble the theoretical tropes habitually evoked in the analysis of urban exclusion, and to muddy the waters of method. More importantly, we sought to interrogate how such exclusionary discourses could be challenged and resisted. We invited scholars working in the field to present work and collaborative alliances which explored the manifold challenges of survival and acts of resistance engaged in by those who reside in the marginal spaces of the city. Scholars shared with us narratives of marginalization and exclusion. Ecuadorian sex-workers are not merely the silent recipients of post-colonial state sanctioned

violence, but also of hegemonic masculinist discursive violence. Those forgotten by the Green Revolution have their exclusion re-inscribed by normative citizenship regimes on the streets of Mumbai. The homeless of Berlin have their lack of attachment to property re-inscribed as a lack of attachment to society. For the subproletariat inhabitants of the lumpen-city, the city is a geography of exclusionary and marginalized spaces. The global city projects a carnivalesque façade of multiculturalism and celebratory gesture of cosmopolitanism in which they are not invited to partake.

The Canadian and international scholars who descended upon Toronto are committed to the unsettling of hierarchical frameworks of analysis which, often quite inadvertently, are complicit in the very patterns of systemic exclusion they seek to expose. The theory and practice of representation, inscription, and authorship became acts subject to critical interrogation. By positioning the urban outcast in representational space, both researcher and researched enter a discursive space of mutual constitution. Inevitably, we use concepts, paradigms, and theories to do so, which confers upon our work the recognition and legitimacy of scholarship. Yet, many of us working in scholarly settings experience a recurrent tension between academia and activism. We approach the conventions of fieldwork and writing with both affection and disdain. A variety of disciplinary norms and institutional configurations often relegates activist work in the community to that of a lower status. In the act of subjecting the conceptual and methodological repertoires of our respective disciplinary heritages to critical scrutiny, we sustain a critical praxis of emancipatory intent. It is the path we have chosen and yet it is strewn with ill-fitting signage and bad directions.

*Audio files from the conference are available at:
www.lumpencity.com*

TRACES

Text by Kimberly Keith

Photographs by Manuel Vazquez



Detail view of image from series 'Traces' by Manuel Vazquez, 2009

'The intent of this project is to place the observer as a witness of "spectacle" where the mechanization of movement and transport are the protagonist of places where loneliness and similarity are accentuated.'

Manuel Vazquez

Newspapers, billboards, magazines, websites - we are constantly surrounded by photos. Photography is accessible to most people, both as a participant and an observer. Many of us habitually digest visual material instantaneously. Yet once a photograph is placed in a gallery setting its context begins to shift, to change - it becomes art. In *Traces* Manuel Vazquez asks us to bear witness to the spectacle of the commonplace, to observe the pedestrian, and to contemplate our routine existence in the city. In order to access the accentuated ordinariness depicted in his work we must leave behind our familiar modes of consumption, whilst in contemplation of the quotidian.

Vazquez creates his photographs in non-places familiar to the observer, such as airports, train stations and tube stations. These non-places are full of people in transit who pass through, en masse, in order to make their way towards specific destinations. When spaces are overcrowded one can feel anonymous, yet one is simultaneously under scrutiny in the non-place. Surveillance, isolation, and anonymity combine to create a paradox under the lens of the cctv camera, and Vazquez evokes this paradox through his photography. In those non-places identity can be ascertained at all times - 'they' can identify you from the visual traces you leave behind. As Walter Benjamin once noted "to dwell means to leave traces", and in that sense no one can ever be truly anonymous.

Traces could have been captured anywhere – exemplifying imaginings of the nameless global city. The subjects are frozen, separate, anonymous side-by-side – they are ghosts. 'They' are 'we' and loneliness and similarity are palpable in their sharp focus. The images are cool - atmospherically and psychologically cool. The depth and intensity of the black background sucks us in – it is the void, it is the abyss. Tension arises from the juxtaposition of the familiar and the hyper-real, and the ensuing discourse surrounding this juxtaposition creates the spectacle of the non-place.

An engagement with discourse, between the literature and the object during production and between the viewer, the object and the theoretical during exhibition, is of concern to Vazquez throughout his work. During production he performs as a cctv camera, capturing what passes in front of his fixed lens rather than moving to catch specific subjects or moments. This process led him to an investigation of the theoretical implications of surveillance, which then informed an exploration of the flow of people through public places and a reckoning of how they were constantly 'under the spotlight'; the result of which was *Traces*. Vazquez began this body of work in Madrid, Spain where he worked in the Atocha train station (where the 2004 Madrid bombings occurred), which "has a unique lighting situation, because it has beams of light that people cross all the time, and so technically it was a good location to develop the idea... [it was] like an installation – put in some beams of light and cameras and a final image is created with the people that enter the space" (Manuel Vazquez). He was manipulating without manipulating and staging without crafting the subjects in his images; thus materializing a discourse on surveillance. Exhibiting Vazquez's work at the Centre for Urban and Community Research offers an opportunity for discourse between object, subject and viewer, inviting us all to experience the challenge and the reward of *Traces*.

Manuel Vazquez's series entitled Traces is on display at CUUCR until October 2009.

URBAN EDGE WORKSHOPS SPRING 2009

Urban Edge: 1:72 One-to-Seventy-Two

Workshop led by Santiago Escobar

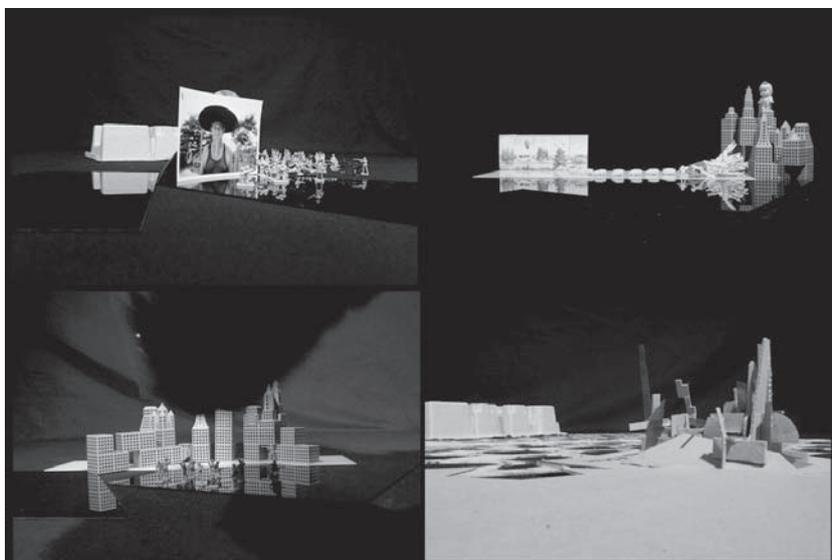
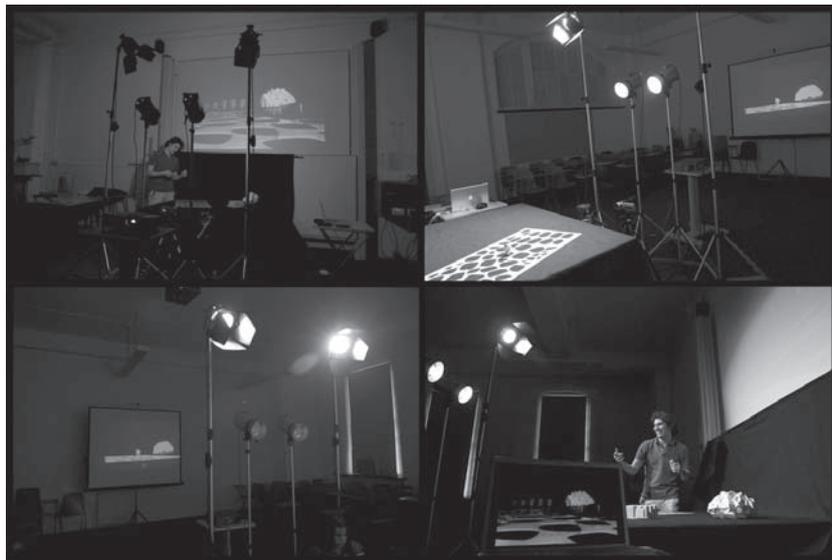
This workshop used scale-figures, models, screens and a variety of materials to compose scenarios that were constructed in reality but at the same time projected (representations) onto a screen or wall. The process was reversed and the representations of those models acquired a new reality, a photograph, an image.

The workshop approached the city from a different angle mainly by considering scale and imaginary ways of representation. In opposition to the general acceptance in architectural and urban photography that the city is a given component and it lies in the photographer's art to capture its essence, I position the city as flexible and the

photographer as the fixed component. Rather than the photographer moving around the city that remains still, in my workshop the city modifies while the photographer remains fixed.

Playing with scale and the possibility of alteration turns the active-passive dynamic on its head, raising questions about the reality of the city and interpretations of space. This invited the practitioners to think about the negative form of the city, in terms of empty space versus shape.

The workshop was held in January at CUCR. Marjem Lübbers assisted and Alan Stanley provided technical support.



Images by Glenn Mottershead, Beatrice Jarvis, Bob Jarvis and Mauro Vargas

Urban Edge: Islands and corridors, the urban biosphere *workshop lead by Peter Cole*

The second seminar in the Urban Edge series, run by Peter Coles at the end of February, invited participants to explore the relationship of people to 'nature' in an inner-city area (Deptford) using photography. The seminar consisted essentially of two walks, with time for discussion before and after. The first traced the Ravensbourne River from Brookmill Park, to Deptford Bridge, where it becomes Deptford Creek, and then on to the Thames. The second walk, the next day, was co-led by ecologists from the Creekside Educational Trust (1), and enabled participants to get down into the mud of Deptford Creek at low tide. We all followed the same walks, but, as the following images show, we didn't all see the same things.

The 'edge', where 'urban' London gives way to the 'rural' has long been fuzzy, not least because the city has expanded steadily over the centuries. But the boundary between 'urban' and 'nature' is even fuzzier. 'Nature' is everywhere in London, from cracks in the pavement to rooftops, parks and rivers. Metaphors abound: Victorian cemeteries can be conservation 'islands' where rare plants and animals thrive. Rivers and disused railway lines can be 'green corridors', allowing plant seeds and animal species to migrate and maintain sustainable populations.

In his fascinating book, *London's Natural History*, which is in some ways a gloomy account of the 'biological sterilisation of London' over the centuries, R S R Fitter also pays tribute to nature's resilience. "Even where human activity has created wholly artificial habitats, a flora and fauna have in the course of centuries adapted themselves to conditions sometimes totally unlike anything normally found in Nature"(2). More recently, American ecologist, Charles Peters, speaking at a conference on the Urban Biosphere in New York in 2003 (3) gave the example of "a vacant lot with 35 minutes of sunlight a day," calling it "an interesting niche." And the built environment can also simulate natural

conditions, so that a cathedral or Big Ben can, to all intents and purposes, be a cliff face for a peregrine falcon. Indeed, since the peregrine was reintroduced to the wild in Pennsylvania in the 1990s, after being wiped out by pesticide use, the largest populations on USA's east coast are now in urban areas, with several pairs nesting in Manhattan, where the abundance of food – notably pigeons – is very attractive.

No peregrines on our Urban Edge walks, but, on previous walks with students from the Photography and Urban Cultures MA course, we have seen a kingfisher, egret and a grey heron in Brookmill Park, a few yards from railway lines and a housing development. But these walks aren't really about 'nature spotting' so much as exploring the interface between humans and the natural environment. Getting down into the mud gave us an opportunity to see how abrupt the interface can be, with juxtapositions that Marcel Duchamp would have enjoyed. A dead squirrel alongside a wooden-handled saw; tiny crabs scuttling between golf balls; a rare plant clinging to a crumbling wall. And there's stuff for Inspector Morse, too. A photograph of an Indian guru (that didn't disintegrate, because it was printed on resin-coated paper) – was it part of a ceremony, with the Ravensbourne standing in for the Ganges? To be continued...

An exhibition of selected photographs from this walk was shown in the Kingsway corridor, Richard Hoggart building, Goldsmiths, 20-30 June 2009.

(1) www.creeksidecentre.org.uk

(2) Fitter, R.S.R. (1945) *London's Natural History*. London, Collins.

(3) Coles, P. (2004) *Sprawling cities can coexist with thriving ecosystems*. Update. New York Academy of Sciences. January/February pp 6-8.



photographs by Luke Moody



photographs by Marco Caterini



photographs by Tine Bloom

For all news, events, seminars and conferences organized by the CUCR please refer to website:
www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr/html/news.html

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MA IN WORLD CITIES AND URBAN LIFE

The Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR)

From Lagos to La Paz we are faced with cities that defy the sense of urbanity and urbaneness that lies at the root of the 'urban'. What do cities look like which don't look like cities? How are core assumptions about urbanization themselves "urbanized"? What do various actors, from states to local organizations to transnational networks do to stretch, take apart, and reassemble urban life in ways that are not conventionally rural, urban, peri-urban, or regional? How does the actual lived experience of increasingly heterogeneous and networked urban spaces redefine core assumptions about urbanization? What happens to the idea, the practice, and the limits of the city when it shifts, as is the case across the Global South, from a planned convergence

of productive forces to a disjunction of disparate forces?

What do you study?

The course intersects literature from urban planning, architecture, cultural and postcolonial studies, subaltern urbanism, global studies, digital media and design, urban ethnography and sociology, environmental studies and sustainable technologies, geopolitics, governance, and economic development.

The program consists of three core courses:

- * *Remaking Urban Life: from Dakar to Guangzhou*
- * *Inventive Methods for Researching the City*
- * *Navigating Urban Life*

And an option selected from any department in the college.

MA IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND URBAN CULTURES

The Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR)

The MA in Photography and Urban Cultures has been developed in response to the increasing interests in urban theory and the visual representation and investigation of urban life and the physical environments of the city.

Who is it for?

Photographers, visual artists and media practitioners, as well as those with a background in social sciences, interested in exploring the creative interplay between cultural research, urban studies and photographic practice. You should have a degree or equivalent in a relevant area.

Structure

A combination of written and practical work to include a research dissertation and a portfolio of photographs and final exhibition. It can be followed either full-time or part-time. Next available entry point: October 2009.

The MA is run by the Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR), a national and international leader in research on urban and community life. CUCR is multi-disciplinary and focuses on issues such as citizenship and cosmopolitanism; social exclusion and cultures of racism; sport, popular culture and music; regeneration and wealth creation; issues of crime and community safety; technology and new patterns of digital culture.

MPhil / PhD in Visual Sociology

Goldsmiths, University of London

Our programme offers you the opportunity to combine written sociological argument with film, sound, or photographic material. We provide researchers the space in which to re-think both the conduct and form of contemporary social research, in a college environment animated by visual arts and design. The Visual Sociology programme builds on the success of our MA in Photography and Urban Cultures and contributes to Goldsmiths' leading position internationally in visual research and analysis

You will carry out research in an area that interests you and prepare a written thesis in combination with a video, a soundpiece or a series of photographs. Written and multi-media components of the thesis will form an integrated

whole. The use of multimedia will enhance and evidence your analysis, interpretation and understanding of social phenomena. The written component of the thesis will engage with multi-media components and be set within a substantive research topic and its wider social context. Your practice will be supported by a programme of audio-visual training workshops as well as expert supervision in your chosen area of research.

To find out more, contact:

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Further information and how to apply: UK and EU students: Admissions Office, telephone 020 7919 7060 (direct line), fax 020 7717 2240 or e-mail admissions@gold.ac.uk; Overseas (non EU) students: International Office, telephone 020 7919 7700 (direct line), fax 020 7919 7704 or e-mail international-office@gold.ac.uk;

For further information about the Centre: Please call 020 7919 7390; e-mail cucr@gold.ac.uk or visit www.gold.ac.uk/cucr/

CUCR Occasional paper series

- Margarita ARAGON
Brown Youth, Black Fashion and a White Riot, 2007
- Brian W. ALLEYNE
Personal Narrative and Activism: a bio-ethnography of "Life Experience with Britain"
- Mette ANDERSSON
The Situated Politics of Recognition: Ethnic Minority, Youth and Identity Work.
- Les BACK, Tim CRABBE, John SOLOMOS
Lions, Black Skins and Reggae Gyals
- Andrew BARRY
Motor ecology: the political chemistry of urban air
- Zygmunt BAUMAN
City of Fears, City of Hopes
- Vikki BELL
Show and tell: passing, narrative and Tony Morrison's Jazz
- Eva BERGLUND
Legacies of Empire and Spatial Divides: new and old challenges for Environmentalists in the UK
- Tine BLOM
Dostoyevsky's Inquisitor: The Question of Evil, Suffering and Freedom of Will in Totalitarian Regimes
- Bridget BYRNE
How English am I?
- Ben CARRINGTON
Race, Representation and the Sporting Body
- Stephen DOBSON
The Urban Pedagogy of Walter Benjamin: lessons for the 21st Century Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3
- Ben GIDLEY
The proletarian other: Charles Booth and the politics of representation
- Paul GILROY
The status of difference: from epidermalisation to nano-politics
- Michael STONE
Social Housing in the UK and US: Evolution, Issues and Progress
William (Lez) HENRY
Projecting the 'Natural': Language and Citizenship in Outernational Culture
- Colin KING
Play the White Man: The Theatre of Racialised Performance in the Institutions of Soccer
- Larry LOHMANN
Ethnic Discrimination in "Global" Conservation
- Ben LOOKER
Exhibiting Imperial London: Empire and City in late Victorian and Edwardian guidebooks
- Hiroki OGASAWARA
Performing Sectarianism: Terror, Spectacle and Urban Myth in Glasgow Football Cultures
- Garry ROBSON
Class, criminality and embodied consciousness: Charlie Richardson and a South East London Habitus
- Flemming RØGILDS
Charlie Nielsen's Journey: Wandering through Multi-cultural Landscapes
- Fran TONKISS
The 'marketisation' of urban government: private finance and urban policy
- Danielle TURNEY
The language of anti-racism in social work: towards a deconstructive reading
- Gordon WALKER and Karen BICKERSTAFF
Polluting the poor: an emerging environmental justice agenda for the UK?
- Louisa THOMSON
The Respect Drive: the Politics of Young People and Community
- please refer to www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/cucr for downloads and further information.

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