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The Psychogeographies of Site-Specific Art

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Abstract

Contemporary efforts at urban revitalization have encouraged an increased production of site-specific public art events that temporarily inhabit popular city hubs. These “pop up” interventions range from loosely assembled happenings to the more institutionally supported all-night art festivals like *Nuit Blanche*. This paper examines the types of geospatial memory produced and inscribed through small-scale, participatory, site-specific urban art events. It considers how this work participates in forms of placemaking which both enact provisional and iterative forms of assembly while also marking the psychogeographic remains of space. Taking up examples from *SensoriumM* lab (Montreal) and *Mobile Art Studio* (Kitchener), the paper suggests how public art may be used to elicit performance-based and participatory geospatial media that maps residents’ embodied and historied relationship to urban space.

Keywords

Installation, Performance, Public art, Psychogeography, Site-specificity

Introduction

Contemporary efforts at urban revitalization in North America and Europe often use public art as a branding exercise to signal the presence of a creative class. These efforts reflect a desire for newness, a transformation away from the bleak late twentieth-century image of urban decay, toward a consumer-friendly space easily circulated across social media. The promotion of cities through public art events take many forms. These include small-scale, grassroots activities performed by artist collectives and city inhabitants,¹ local business-run pop-up shows in underutilized industrial spaces, and nationally-funded annual art festivals that take over entire

downtown cores for a night or a weekend.² A broad, interdisciplinary conversation exists on the role of urban public art within the discourse promoting a creative class, especially within municipal strategic plans (MacGregor, 2012; McKim, 2012; Zebracki, 2012; Peck, 2005; Evans, 2003; Klingman, 2007). A shortcoming of Richard Florida's original use of the term "creative class" (2002), however, is that it focuses on creativity as an index of future economic prosperity, and therefore reduces any sense of art's critical functionality (MacGregor, 2012: 104). This shortcoming suggests there is a need to better understand "the emergence and formation of creative processes in [the] local ecologies of knowledge" in so-called creative cities (Cohendet, Grandadam & Simon, 2010: 92).

Beyond their role as markers of a city's creative class, public art informs the local ecologies of knowledge they operate within. In order to understand public art's impact on local ecologies we need to assess how they map spaces as meaningful for those who inhabit them. This understanding helps make a critical distinction between different strands of new genre public art (Lacy, 2008; Lippard, 1984). For Miwon Kwon (2002), new genre public art emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a creative process that challenged the modernist aesthetics of monument-building by focusing on "ephemeral processes or events...temporary installations...[and] participatory collaborations." However, despite new genre public art's original development in the form of "politically-conscious community events" for public audiences, Kwon (2002) cautions that this type of work "may, at the same time, capitulate to the changing modes of capitalist expansion." This is the case for many instances of contemporary public art events that are tied to corporate sponsorship. While promoting access and exposure to art is an important mandate for sponsored festivals, the oftentimes competing priorities of municipalities, sponsors and audience expectations can overdetermine the art on display as indistinguishable from the spectacle that enframes it (MacGregor, 2012: 111; Zebracki et al., 2010; Zebracki, 2012: 119; O'Flynn, 2012; Sandals, 2015; Hampton, 2016). Increasingly, these events provide spectacular aesthetic spaces for optimal social media sharing, and exist alongside extended access to consumer spaces like bars, restaurants, and cafes.³ Larger public art events, like *Nuit Blanche*, have raised concerns over making creative expression a mere vehicle for economic interests (McKim, 2012: 133; MacGregor, 2012: 109). Regardless of their scale, urban public art events produce forms of creative mapping

that serve to index the entanglements between people and their lived environments (Zebracki et al., 2010). Such mappings are found in the social media documentation of art events and how they circulate in the event's afterlife. However, they can also exist as a formal strategy within public art that elicits participation as part of the work itself.

While much has been written on corporate-sponsored, large-scale public exhibitions, I am interested in exploring this second mode of mapping as a formal strategy in smaller public art events which share a focus on site-specific, socially-oriented content situated in direct collaboration with audiences. As Gwen MacGregor notes, smaller-scale public art pieces offer a more intimate space for the engagement of diverse audiences – a counterpoint to the larger, more heavily funded projects within large-scale festivals like *Nuit Blanche* (2012: 113). The intimate nature of small-scale public art often moves away from spectacle and underscores the multi-layered relationships that audiences may hold to a place. By recognizing this complexity, the work opens audiences up to provisional and contingent sites of community formation (MacDonald, 2014). This re-inscription of the art space as a site of community adds additional associations to that place for participants. This mode of participatory mapping offers a counterpoint to the spectacle enabled by larger-scale public art festival culture.

This article examines two smaller-scale examples of contemporary public art in Canada. The first, *Midsummer Mile End Tour* (2013), was developed by Natalie Doonan for her research-creation lab SensoriumM in Montreal.⁴ SensoriumM offers participatory art performances, often in the form of public tours throughout various Montreal neighbourhoods. Founded in 2011 by Doonan, the collective has run over twenty different performance tours in that time. These performances make space for “unsettling staid narratives” and create dialogue among participants and artists (SensoriumM, 2011). The *Midsummer* tour included: several stops on local streets to identify edible plants and their non-edible counterparts; visits to areas that are good for foraging food from dumpsters; tips on how to get free roasted sesame seeds from local bagel bakeries; and areas full of cherry and Saskatoon berry trees. The tour was constructed through a series of informal research walks by Doonan and her

collaborators. Each walk was paired with a theoretical text as a way of moving through the text and space concomitantly, mapping the meanings of both together. The tour was accompanied by a free publication distributed to participants, which included a map of where to forage in the area and notations on the potential plants to be found and their uses. The intention of the map, like the tour itself, was to enable participants to add to the knowledge it contained and to additionally create their own map, inscribing the space with their own lived knowledge of how to forage in a largely gentrified and commercial urban space. As curator and dramaturge, Doonan orchestrates the performative urban tours in collaboration with local artists, activists and scholars, situating “the city and its environs” as “the field for peripatetic and culinary investigations” (Sensorium, 2011). The tours are constructed as “unscripted, exploratory research” that “evolves into a fluid script” which artists and audiences ‘co-author as [they] walk’ (Doonan, 2015:58). *Midsummer Tour* opened up a variety of conversations around the pros and cons of eating foraged weeds in urban spaces, the concern for ingesting unintended toxins in such areas, the rules of harvesting that avoid stripping the local eco-structure, and where to find the fields being unofficially occupied by neighbourhood gardens within the Mile End area.

The second example, *Reconstruction* (2016), was produced by the creative research lab Mobile Art Studio (MAS) that I founded in 2014. MAS is a transitory lab that brings contemporary art into public space in order to foster community engagement with issues of social justice. MAS creates ad hoc, pop-up mobile art events that place projection-based performances in dialogue with city-sponsored festivals, events, and public institutional spaces. MAS looks at how spaces contain layers of affective and discursive meaning that are sometimes overwritten by dominant spatial narratives. It thus invites audiences to participate as “makers” and to imagine new renditions of their lived spaces. The pop-up format opens institutional spaces up to performances that serve to challenge the consumer-driven activities of many art festivals. It elicits audience to document moments of tension and ambivalence toward urban gentrification.

Reconstruction was exhibited at *Night\Shift* in November 2016.⁵ It comprised a site-specific performance that encouraged public audiences to build a mixed-media replica of the well-trod city blocks connecting the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo,

Ontario. The physical structure of the work recreated a construction zone in reference to the ongoing construction of a light-rapid transit system. It invited audiences to re-make the city landscape into a playful choreography of live animation, projection and sound centered around twenty-four 4x4ft cardboard screens held up by wooden frames. The city-blocks being re-created were made up of collaged photographic images of popular city street sections. These collaged images were enlarged and projected by overhead transparency projectors onto the cardboard screens. Viewers were prompted to pick up black Sharpie markers and trace the projected images onto the blank cardboard screens. Once the city block was traced onto the screen, it was turned away from the overhead projector and toward a space where viewers could use multiple colours of markers to intervene on the recently traced city images. Participants in this “graffiti” section populated the traced city blocks with various characters and slogans, renamed street signs and repurposed landmark buildings, collaboratively reimagining their lived, everyday spaces in creative and personally meaningful ways. Once screens were completed with graffiti they were moved into a geographically accurate ordering of the corridor from downtown Kitchener to Uptown Waterloo. The movement of the city image from photograph and projector, to graffiti, to reconstructed corridor unfolded in a tightly choreographed performance led by MAS artist-facilitators who wore generic construction costumes (hard hats and reflector vests) and adopted the roles of architect, builder, graffiti artist, construction crew, and foreman. A soundscape of city construction sounds added a backdrop to the choreography and gave the entire event a sense of fluidity and motion that propelled audience participation.

Midsummer Tour and *Reconstruction* both pay attention to rapid urban development and the ambivalence this produces in city residents. *Midsummer Tour* operates around the Mile End neighbourhood of Montreal. Defined by official Montreal tourism promotions as a “famed” and “quintessential” Montreal enclave that is “hip, trendy, and artsy” (Tourisme Montreal), the area has seen rapid gentrification over the last ten to fifteen years. Historically, it was a starting point for many successive waves of immigration it more recently became home to Ubisoft’s Canadian headquarters (Dejardins, 2014). Similarly, the region of Kitchener-Waterloo, where *Reconstruction* was installed, is currently undergoing rapid development transforming from a failing

factory economy to a central start-up hub within Canada, a distinction cemented with the opening of Google Canada headquarters in 2016. Collectively, the city's growing pains and uncertainties around the rapid gentrification of formerly working-class neighbourhoods are palpable within conversations in public space.

As two examples of small-scale, contemporary urban public art, *Midsummer Tour* and *Reconstruction* speak to tensions between municipal messaging about growing neighbourhoods – which are often constructed in-line with urban designers and marketing campaigns – and the role of public art within such transformational spaces. These are sites where, as Joel McKim suggests, “tangible infrastructure and immaterial media collide,” opening up questions as to the role of art in such space, and more specifically, “what constitutes meaningful spatial intervention and what, in the end, is merely spectacle” (2012: 131). While Mile End and Kitchener-Waterloo do not share significant overlap in their histories of gentrification, they do both house the headquarters of two major technology hubs within Canada. My interest is in the similar methods employed by SensoriM and MAS within these specific spaces. Both collectives share a conceptual interest in the work of Henri Lefebvre, Guy Debord, and Michel de Certeau, and employ situationist tactics, including walking, as formal methods for mapping the psychic lives of city space (Lefebvre, 1974; Debord, 1957; de Certeau, 1984). In addition, both collectives use performance-based, research-creation practices, relying heavily on notions of iterative, performative gestures as sites of meaning making while advancing affect and embodiment as central operating principles for the collective remapping of space. Through these overlaps, SensoriM and MAS incite conversations of gentrification at the level of everyday life, while formally providing a valuable link between new materialism and more long-standing theorizations of space.

Tactical Interventions and the Psychogeography of Urban Public Art

Reading Lefebvre's, Debord's, and de Certeau's theories of urban space, the city comes into view as a collection of loosely assembled sites contingent upon the temporal, iterative flow of residents shaping their environments. Important to my study of site-specific public art is the fact that each author situates creative action as a potentially resistant and recuperative site of spatial production within the dialectic

between people and built environments. For de Certeau, the quotidian actions of urban inhabitants, such as walking, resist the “gigantic rhetoric of excess” of the disembodied concept city (1984: 91). This view of both bodies moving through, and undoing built spaces is both phenomenological and performative. These everyday acts of bodily “doing” are iterative gestures through which residents alter their understanding and use of city space repeatedly over time.⁶ A new materialist frame suggests that our bodily acts as artists, audiences and critics are in an ontological interrelationship with built environments and spaces (Barad 2003: 802, 814). Similarly, de Certeau and his peers recognizes how the performativity of bodily movements shapes city space, suggesting there is an inextricable link between human action and built environments; they are not separate, but rather mutually informing.

New materialist theorists usefully expand on notions of spatiality found in the earlier work of de Certeau, Lefebvre, and Debord, by situating the matter that makes up our lived spaces with a vibrancy and agency that helps explain our affective and embodied connections, attachments, and responses to space. What this combined dialogue on the interrelationships between art, audiences, and space opens up is a view of urban public art’s potential to “express the complexity and the limitless simultaneity of cities” (Hudson, 2013: 256). Public art often gets at the resonances of this complexity by hailing audiences as witnesses to the layered temporalities and political and affective significations contained within a specific space (MacDonald, 2015). It offers an understanding of the space as being full of multiple possible narrative and intimate practices that allow us to move through our lived spaces in more agential, relational, and convivial ways.

The link Sensorium and MAS establish between the work of earlier theories of space and more recent discussions within new materialism is found in the attention the collectives pay to the matter of the site-specific spaces they inhabit. This link can also be seen explicitly in Doonan’s characterization of her public art performances as “assemblages of human and non-human bodies” (2015: 53-54). Elsewhere I have characterized the creative process undertaken by MAS as a “multi-mangle” of relations between bodies, art materials, representation, and environments (MacDonald and Wiens, forthcoming). In both instances, a variety of actants

converge to mark spaces with provisional meanings that expand understandings of what the space is or can be. They situate site-specific public art as a web of “deeply connected” elements including “collective memories, social relations, and built structures” as they are “expressed in material culture” (Darroch and Marchessault, 2014: 3). As spatialized aesthetic assemblages, public art events respond to our desire for intimacy amid our increasingly urbanized and globalized city cultures (Schmid, 2008: 27). This application of performativity to body-space relations points to the value of participatory creative practices within the context of urban public art. The new materialist principles found in the work of Sensorium and MAS align in particular with discussions of lived space (cf. Lefebvre), tactics (cf. de Certeau), and psychogeographic mappings (cf. Debord).

In *The Production of Space* (1974), Lefebvre shifts conceptually away from studying things in space to consider instead the practices that produce space. He categorizes these material, psychic, affective, and temporally layered practices in a three-dimensional dialectic between the perceived, conceived, and lived. These elements are separate but connected “in interaction, in conflict or in alliance with each other” (Schmid, 2008: 33). Similar to de Certeau’s emphasis on quotidian practices and new materialist principles outlined above, lived space indexes the interrelatedness of people, the social, and the built environment and for Lefebvre has value insofar as it is “expressed...through artistic means” (Schmid, 2008: 40). This valuing of creative practice in spatial production complicates the more static binary established between bodies and cities (Grosz, 1994). Foregrounding the significance of the creative act, Lefebvre speaks to Certeau’s notion of the tactics within city space. Tactics construct city space not as an “object of a (reified) knowledge,” but rather “*the place of a recognition*” (De Certeau, 1998: 13, emphasis in original). This emphasis on creative practice situates art or aesthetics, in their relationship to the everyday body, as central in recognizing lived spaces as more than containers of capitalist exchange.

The intimate public art events of Sensorium and MAS employ tactical practices to identify the affective meanings within city space. They offer creative actions that divert spaces away from the reifying practices that produce conformity and abstraction (de Certeau, 1984: 29). Doonan’s work resists the concept city as her tasting tours build on everyday practices of walking, consuming, and dwelling in city

space. These practices are turned, through her curation, into creative action. They are performative in the sense that they change the conditions of how those spaces being toured are understood. Walking tactics were also part of *Reconstruction's* conclusion, where the screens of city images were reassembled into the familiar main street corridor encouraging audiences could moves up and down the restructured blocks. What they revealed was a reimagined narrative of the city that resonated with the desires and frustrations of residents. While the installation corridor looked different from the actual city layout due to the participant's graffiti interventions, it was intimately recognizable to city inhabitants, suggesting how spaces reflect our lived experiences beyond their institutional functioning.

Sensorium's and MAS's use of tactics can be read as psychogeographic mappings that delimit spaces for audiences, artists, and researchers to collaboratively consider how their everyday lives are informed by the materiality of institutional structures, built environment, and ephemera that connect them (Smith, 2010: 103). Psychogeography, an overarching concept for the creative practices devised by the Situationist International (including *dérives*), examine the material, physical, and psychic realities of space that draw us in, invite certain affects and associations, and inform our memories. Psychogeography, as a form of mapping, frames and inscribes the tensions and potentials of a space through 'images of play, eccentricity, secret rebellion, creativity, and negation' (Marcus, 2002: 4). These principles of psychogeography clearly align with the public art practices of Sensorium and MAS. The specific ways in which Sensorium and MAS work across different media (performance, projection, print, illustration) to engage public participation emphasizes the types of dialogic relations at play within site-specific art. I therefore situate these events as forms of psychogeography, in a way similar to how it was imagined by the Situationists. For instance, both Sensorium's food tours and MAS's pop-up interventions are performances that also produce "situations," which are defined by Debord as "playful creations of an active life prefigurative of a utopian remaking of social relations" (Smith, 2010: 104). In the work of the Sensorium, the making of a situation is achieved through tasting tours of Montreal neighbourhoods. In MAS, the lure of pop-up events is foregrounded as a means of drawing public audiences to participate as "makers" of their environment, reimagining the spaces

they move within through accessible forms of low-tech mediation. The urban aesthetic practices both collectives employ provide residents and artists the means to transcribe memories, impressions, concerns, and attachments to their everyday spaces. The outcomes of the public art events become a living archive, situating the spaces as both historically layered and fluid, contingent sites of shifting and evolving meaning.

Both collectives employ tactics in their psychogeographic mappings of space that formally elicit a sense of affect and embodiment within participants and audiences in order to performatively frame space as a point of collective gathering. Indeed, one function of Sensorium's and MAS's tactical placemaking is that they harness space for modes of performative assembly (Butler, 2015). In these public art events, bodies gather in spaces for the purpose of oftentimes participatory aesthetic experiences that illustrate affective interrelationships between bodies, art, and space. Such acts of assembly reveal the conditionality of participation, and thereby gesture toward the potential transformation of space through the immersion of materials, structures, and bodies (Lefebvre, 1984). For instance, in *Reconstruction*, the practice of remaking the city together enabled the public to share a collective coming to terms with residents' memories and attachments to the city space during a crucial moment of transformation. Setting up a flexible space for the public to creatively express their lived experience of this time period encouraged an alternative means of dialogue between residents on the redevelopment directly impacting their lives. The work of Sensorium and MAS are closely related to urban interventions by Toronto-based groups like Mamalian Driving Reflex, as both produce performance interventions that critically explore social relations within site-specific spaces. Methodologically, work done by Mamalian Driving Reflex also exemplifies a psychogeographic impulse centered around walking tours as a mode of contemporary urban public art.⁷

The dialogue between materials, spaces, and participants in both *Midsummer Tour* and *Reconstruction* open up a better understanding of how public participatory art practice transforms 'our perceptions of – and relationships with - urban space' in order to reveal and critique the dominant structuring forces of our lived environments (Toft, 2016: 50). The projects performatively investigate the inter-animating layers of history, culture, and matter that make up the spaces we live in through

phenomenological and performative inquiries. As public art, they produce situations (and resulting archives) on how our lived experience of spaces inflect our sense of self, our migrations and mobilities, our encounters with development and gentrification, and our civic responsibilities to one another.

Conclusion

If, as de Certeau and Lefebvre suggest, space holds multiple forms of spatial production, it is useful to further consider the impact of our everyday practices and aesthetic constructions as urban inhabitants. How are cities and inhabitants shaped by these forms of intra-relatedness? And what role do aesthetics play in highlighting this relational production of space? The work of Sensorium and MAS outline how public art can usefully negotiate different modes of meaning-making in the city, specifically as encouraged through collaborative and creative practice tied to bodily experience. Importantly, the mobilities and flows of urban inhabitants contained within them an ability to exceed the official views of what constitutes urban landscape. Expanding on de Certeau's interest in the tactical role played by ordinary practitioners, both collectives reveal the valuable role of aesthetic practices in building provisional modes of creative assembly. What creative practice offers in these instances is a specific space and a concrete practice for reading, assessing, and revising the text of the city space in ways that allow citizen-practitioners to remain embodied, embedded makers of the city. Smaller-scale forms of public art in urban spaces create modes of placemaking that mediate between the concept city and the flow of everyday life practices. It takes both relations out of their usual context, and defamiliarizes the spaces in particular ways that force a certain kind of reading and participation on the part of the audience/urban resident. It further becomes a valuable site for analyzing the psychic and affective resonances of space and offers an opportunity to think further about the interrelatedness of people, space, and the meanings they ascribe to one another.

Katve-Kaisa Konturri suggests we situate art *not* "as an object of knowledge" but rather as "something that challenges one's way of being in the world by suggesting new kinds of becomings" (2014: 47). Such a position, informed as it is by new materialism, asserts that aesthetic form is "filled with incipient potential for

movement” that includes art’s “two-way bodily capacities...of being affected and...to affect” (2014: 52). This two-way capacity to engage audiences affectively is formally tied to a “*micropolitics*” within the affective properties of the work (Konturri, 2014: 52, emphasis in original). These micropolitics are present in Sensorium’s and MAS’s shared interest in “making public,” or in how they create intimate spaces of exchange for public audiences and enact critical dialogues around the spaces they operate, encouraging participants to imagine those spaces differently (Doonan, 2015: 52). This micropolitics of making place offers a re-inscription of the concept city that challenges and contests it from the ground level of corporeal beings in creative action.

Within this analysis of both collectives, I am mindful of Martin Zebracki’s (2012) cautioning that an assessment of public art’s accountability to its public is required beyond the view of artists and their institutional supports. His concern being that both parties have an interest in defining public art as wholly accessible and “socially inclusive” for their own benefit (Zebracki, 2012: 118). As such it is worth assessing, as Zebracki puts it, “how ‘public’ is public art?” (2012: 119). Taking into consideration, the specific audiences and supports of these two projects, these are reasonable concerns. Despite their intentions, these works index a particular audience within their formal structure. Based on documented conversations within *Midsummer Mile-End Tour* video archives, participants seem to have joined the tour based on their well-versed interest in issues of food scarcity, gentrification and alternative modes of urban consumption. While certainly passers-by could join the tour in progress, they were made up of people who, first, responded to the outreach materials (thus self-selecting their alignment with the tour’s interests), and who, second, held a certain amount of economic and job security to participate in a daytime event during working hours. In the case of *Reconstruction*, the fact that it was housed within a larger, municipally supported urban art festival means that while it aimed to attract a diverse population, the reality was the majority of audiences actively identified as “art-goers” drawn to the lure of the all-night art festival in their mid-sized city. They again elected to make their way to the downtown core in search of art experiences and thus felt comfortable traversing art world spaces that may be inaccessible to others. Further, the participatory nature of both projects, while

engaging some audiences, would be potentially alienating for other spectators and residents.

My position as director of a public art research lab risks reading both collectives' work from a "bird's-eye doctrine" that may fail to critically address "the everyday social realities" surrounding public art and how it affects audiences of differing social positions (Zebracki, 2012: 121). One response to Zebracki's concerns is to place questions of accountability and inclusiveness in public art at the forefront, asking artists to center such questions of inclusiveness as a defining mandate of the artwork's form. It is worth exploring what it would mean to devise public art events that take the social positions of their audiences as central to the work itself in ways that meaningfully open up productive conversations within its publics. My forthcoming research on intersectional feminist modes of creative placemaking aims to address just this. Doonan's more recent work on nursing, parenting, and publicness also seems to move away from more broad-based engagements with space to thinking through the specificity of different subjects and their lived experiences.

What *Mile End Tour* and *Reconstruction* offer are examples of an urban public performance art that employs a bricolage aesthetic that manipulates and diverts spaces, using existing official space for creative and interventionist uses, diverting spaces reified by official planning – a reusing of the space for creative ends (de Certeau, 1984: 35). Tactics use official resources within space for personal use, thus producing "a degree of *plurality* and creativity" and by extension, new forms of agency (de Certeau, 1984: 30). The creative element of tactical practices situates them within the realm of aesthetics as a way of life, an ethics tied to a politics of *practice* as living. We can see the presence of such tactics in the work of Sensorium and MAS. Both center on the everyday practices of walking. In *Midsummer Tour*, through the guided walk around Mile End, and in *Reconstruction*, through the walks participants take down the cardboard screen corridor that they have helped to reconstruct through their own interpretations and desires. If we take seriously the performative strain within de Certeau, these actions mimic the everyday, but through their aesthetic form they write, or perhaps more accurately rewrite, the urban text by

opening up a reflective and reflexive component to the action. The performances frame these everyday tactics *as* critical reflections and collaborative dialogues about the dominant narratives of each space.

There is in both *Midsummer Tour's* and *Reconstruction's* enactments of tactical walking a sense of what Jill Dolan calls the utopian performative, an element of performance that “provides a place where people come together, embodied and passionate, to share experiences of meaning making and imagination that can describe or capture fleeting intimations of a better world,” thus offering a “broader, more capacious sense of a public, in which social discourse articulates the possible rather than the insurmountable obstacles to human potential” (2005: 2). What these moments offer then is a “hopeful feeling of what the world might be like if every moment of our lives was as emotionally voluminous, generous, aesthetically striking, and intersubjectively intense” (Dolan, 2005: 5). If, as Dave Colangelo (2016) notes, “[w]e are beginning to expect the same things from public art that we expect from almost anything in our world: that we can have a conversation with it,” we may further wonder what the desire for such dialogue is, and where it stems from. The draw that pulls us to urban public art is its status as a creative action that disrupts the flow of our everyday life as urban inhabitants as well as the dominant narratives inscribed within our city spaces. Urban public art often invites us in, bodily, to be witness to the spectacle, or to be a co-creator of the practice or event. Either way, we find ourselves drawn to a public assembled around the art, drawn to the promise of an experience that may alter and remap our corporeal-affective relationships to the spaces we inhabit, grapple with, and mutually shape day to day.

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Notes

- ¹ See: City Leaks <https://twitter.com/cityleaksmelb>; Partizaning <http://eng.partizaning.org/>; Playground <https://impromptuplayground.wordpress.com/projects/>; Candy Chang <http://candychang.com/work/>;
- ² See for example: Nuit Blanche (Paris, Toronto, Tel Aviv, Edmonton, Chicago, Melbourne, San Antonio, Lima, to name a few); *En Lumiere* (Montreal); White Nights Festival (St. Petersburg); Stockholm Urban Art Festival; Vivid Sydney; Open Walls Baltimore.
- ³ One recent example, the 2016 in/future Festival of Art and Music was held at the unused grounds of Ontario Place, a former entertainment complex, concert ground and amusement part on Toronto's waterfront. The two-week festival included musical acts, live performance, film screenings and curated art installations alongside craft beer and food tents, and DJ nights, with corporate sponsorship from AirFrance and Staropramen Beer. The festival had a successful social media presence, the hashtag #infutureto has generate over three thousand posts on Instagram to date with a large majority featuring the iconic Cinesphere dome that is a centerpiece of Ontario Place. <http://www.infuture.ca/>
- ⁴ See: Midsummer Mile End Foraging Tour <http://www.lesensorium.com/2013/08/midsummer-mile-end-foraging-tour.html> ; Reconstruction <http://nightshiftwr.ca/reconstruction-mas/>
- ⁵ For more information about *Night\Shift* see <http://nightshiftwr.ca>; for documentation of *Reconstruction* see <https://www.instagram.com/mobileartstudio/>
- ⁶ The concept of 'doing' here refers to performance theory's foundational assertion that words, or performative utterances, 'do things' (Austin, 1962). This initial assertion has been extended greatly in the performative turn to include the performativity of gestures, identities, objects, creative acts (Derrida 1972, 325-327; Parker and Sedgwick, 1995).
- ⁷ See for instance their touring project *Nightwalks with Teenagers* <http://mammalian.ca/projects/#nightwalks-with-teenagers>.

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