Edited by Pedram Dibazar and Judith Naeff

Visualizing the Street

New Practices of Documenting, Navigating and Imagining the City

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1.　Introduction: Visualizing the Street

Pedram Dibazar and Judith Naeff

Abstract

Now that we walk in urban surroundings saturated with digitally produced images and signs – with our GPS-tracked and camera-equipped smartphones in our hands – we document, navigate and imagine the urban street in new ways. This book is particularly interested in the new aesthetics and affective experiences of new practices of visualizing the street that have emerged from recent technological innovations. The introductory chapter argues for a focus on the *practice* of shaping both images and places, rather than on an image or a place as an end product, in studying the contemporary intersections of the visual and the spatial productively. In doing so, it seeks to complement the recent studies of visual culture that pay particular attention to new technologies for the production and dissemination of images with an urban studies perspective concerned with the social production and cultural mediation of space. The introduction highlights a number of key issues at stake in the proposed scholarly approach; issues that are dealt with in the concrete case studies explored by the following chapters in this volume.

Keywords: visualization; visual studies; urban studies; practice; street; digital

Today, images have attained new social functions and cultural meanings, because of the wide availability of digital image-making and image-sharing technologies. Equipped with cameras, GPS and the Internet, devices such as smartphones have transformed the way images are made, disseminated, interpreted and used. This book is concerned with the influence of such new forms and practices of visualization on the social production and cultural imaginaries of the street. It revisits the street – embracing a long scholarly tradition concerned with such elements as design, politics and everyday

life – and seeks to provide critical viewpoints that enrich contemporary scholarship on the street with a focus on new forms of its visualization.

Of particular interest to our investigation in this book are the politics of aesthetics and affect at stake in these changing practices of visualizing the street. We argue that, in the experience of the contemporary street, the spatial and the visual converge on multiple levels. On a manifest level, images complement the spatial as they create urban façades and shape the visual appearance of the streets. The 21st century urban experience is hugely influenced by the proliferation of signs, billboards, advertisements, posters, stickers and graffiti in and around streets. These images – whether big or small, detailed or sketchy, in print or on screens – provoke emotional responses that are crucial to the expansion of dominant urban policies, such as creativity and gentrification, and the counter-hegemonic responses to them (Lindner and Meissner, 2015). On another level, digital visual materials have become embedded in the embodied experience of the contemporary street, as one walks through it equipped with smart devices. To navigate in the street these days, we rely on interactive maps that show us routes and position us in them, and we ceaselessly complement our direct experiences of the street with images and information we find online. Digital technologies' capacity to gather data and transform codes into legible signs and images, and vice versa, is crucial in this respect. The swift ways in which we navigate multiple interfaces to read, use and modify those visualizations that render information and data flows understandable has become inextricably entangled with how we perceive our surroundings. In other words, while walking through the city with smartphones in hand, we simultaneously spatialize virtual data flows by visualizing them on physical phone screens, and visualize space by creating different forms of images – such as photographs, maps and videos – and disseminating them online through various apps.

In combining the visual with the spatial, this project seeks to complement the recent studies of visual culture that pay particular attention to new technologies for the production and dissemination of images with an urban studies perspective concerned with the social production and cultural mediation of space. Contemporary scholarship on new technologies of visualization (Larsen and Sandbye, 2014; Verhoeff, 2012) suggests that, today, the practices of mapping, photographing, filming and editing are accessible to anyone who carries a phone and is connected online. This development highlights the performativity of visualization, stresses the immediacy of networks of communication, democratizes the processes of production and circulation of imagery, and destabilizes old hierarchies of

aesthetics. At the same time, new technologies of image processing have also contributed to the expansion of a visual culture that is produced and distributed professionally, and which is partly responsible for shaping the visual experience of the contemporary street. Although responding to different sensibilities, there are striking similarities between these various registers of the everyday visual experience of the street. The digital means of production of street imagery – never delivering a clear end product and always in circulation between material and virtual networks – and the fleeting glance with which consumers relate to that imagery, point to a distinctly performative visual language.

In this introduction, we argue that, to analyse such new forms of visualizing the street, we need to move away from studying images and space separately; we need to take into account the ways in which images are produced, disseminated and consumed spatially. To do so, we propose to focus on practices that shape those images and spaces, rather than on images or places alone. It is by bringing the practice into the centre of attention that the visual and spatial intersect in a methodologically appropriate way for studying the recent developments in spatial visualization. The essays in this collection therefore build on recent developments in practice-based media studies (Couldry, 2012; Moores, 2012), visual culture studies (Rose, 2011; Favero, 2014) and sociology (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012) to analyse visualization as social and cultural practice. This way of thinking allows for meanings, feelings and social relations to be made and remade constantly in everyday practice, in ways attentive to the dynamics of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic visibilities in and of the street. Connecting practices of visual documentation, navigation and imagination, we argue that new ways of making and using images heavily influences the ways we perceive, imagine, and live contemporary streets across the world.

The Street

As a critical concept, 'the street' builds upon an extensive scholarly tradition interested in notions of the public, the everyday and the bottom-up (e.g. Fyfe, 1998). A space of circulation – of goods, people and ideas – the street forms the privileged space for the theorization of a particularly urban condition for encounters between strangers (e.g. Watson, 2006). Such encounters are embodied and marked by differences and inequalities. Even though most circulation in the streets unfolds in the unnoticed rhythms of the everyday and the habitual, the possibility of mixing and confrontation grants this

social space an unpredictable and uncontrolled nature. It is in this capacity that 'the street' is often employed in the context of public dissent. It denotes the space in which public expressions of discontent, outrage or grief unfold. Moreover, the street connotes a community characterized by diversity and tied loosely, often temporarily, by a set of common interests. These common interests often relate to urban settings and facilities or are articulated as such under Lefebvre's notion of 'the right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996).

The role of visual culture in contestations over space is analysed in Chapters 2, 5 and 9 in this book, focusing on cases from Hong Kong, Istanbul and Athens. Indeed, images have played a significant role in constructing imaginaries of revolt and protest (Didi-Huberman, 2016). The visual documentation of public dissent and conflict have played a crucial role in shaping common understandings of those events in the eyes and minds of the public from the mid twentieth century onwards. With the availability of handheld devices to nonprofessionals to make and share images of conflicts, recent years have witnessed a surge in the quantity and velocity of such images. This has given rise to the celebratory notion of 'twitter revolutions' and 'citizen journalists', fitting in a longer tradition of viewing technological advancements in telecommunications as a democratic promise of expanded social and political agency. In the context of the Arab spring, such images of the revolutionary street, as Mark Westmoreland argues, made 'image-making practice both threatening and powerful' as the streets became hyper-visible under the ever-present gaze of a multitude of witnesses (2016: 243-244). Amateur visual eye witness accounts of the political street, Westmoreland suggests, formed 'both documentation acts of police violence and affirm[ed] the agency of mass political subjectivity' (2016: 244). He goes on to argue that there is an interesting relation between spatiality and visuality in this case, in that, by occupying urban space, Cairenes were able to both reclaim their streets and their images (Westmoreland, 2016: 244). The Arab Spring is thus a powerful example of the way in which the practices of image-making and placemaking converge.

Yet, as several chapters in this book show, the potential democratization through digital image sharing is never without complications. Wing-Ki Lee (Chapter 2) describes how the grassroots appropriation of images and spaces is in turn re-appropriated by astroturf derivative work; Simon Ferdinand (Chapter 7) points out that, no matter how creatively we appropriate data, their availability will always also make us vulnerable to forms of surveillance and control that inhibit subversive practices; and Simone Kalkman (Chapter 11) considers how local initiatives that also serve the interests of global corporate partners risk overshooting their mark.

The street's potential for disorder also means that the street is highly subjected to surveillance and control. Indeed, many of the technological innovations that form the basis of the social and cultural developments discussed in this book were initially engineered for surveillance purposes. From satellite images to drones, subjecting streets and street life to a view from above and arguably the practice of mapping itself have traditionally been entangled with the desire to manage and control the erratic and dynamic sociality at street level. In conceptualizations of the struggle over urban space, visuality, perspective and ways of looking have played an important role. Michel de Certeau's distinction between the view from above – associated with the strategies of crowd control and urban planning – and the view from below – associated with the tactics employed in the hustle and bustle of everyday life – has been of paramount importance in this respect (de Certeau, 1984). While acknowledging the entanglement of attempts to render urban space legible with desires to control it, the chapters by Simon Ferdinand (Chapter 7) on artistic renderings of GPS tracked movement, by László Munteán (Chapter 4) on drone footage of destroyed Syrian cities, by Rob Coley (Chapter 8) on fictional imaginaries of smart cities, and by Simone Kalkman (Chapter 11) on mapping the Favelas, also question all-too-easy dichotomies between the view from above and the view from below and seek to disentangle both its phenomenology and the more complex power structures involved in attempts to make visible and comprehensible the contemporary street. Thinking about the street thus inevitably requires engaging with the politics of visibility, and thinking through practices of visualization in and of the street – the focus of this book – necessitates engaging with the tensions between control and dissent that have been crucial to urban studies more broadly.

From Image-making to Visualization

Only two decades ago, making a visualization of an urban space – a drawing, map, computer generated rendering, photograph or video – demanded equipment, preparation, and professional know-how. Today, in most parts of the world, the production and instant circulation of images has become an inconspicuous part of our everyday routines. With our camera-equipped smartphones in our pockets, producing, editing and sharing images has become as ubiquitous as consuming them. We have unwittingly become visualizers on a daily basis. The old notion of the passive consumer, who was thought by the 20th-century cultural theorists to be subject to monopolizing

regimes of mass culture, has been replaced in the 21st century by a more complex notion of an active participant, caught in a more dynamic field of interaction across multiple networks of circulation, (re)production, editing and appropriation.

To refer to the visual material in such a pervasive and broad field of production and circulation, we use the word 'visualization'. Under visualization, we imply all the different forms of digital content that go beyond the traditional manifestations of visual materials. These include, for instance, images whose visual content is marked by geotags and hashtags, or maps whose cartographic content includes interactive indications of individuals' locations and movements. In addition to the visual material, visualization suggests a process and practice. Unlike vocabularies such as image-making or map-making that imply a more restricted outcome – an image or map – and a more specific notion of the aims and schemes of the practice, the concept of visualization embraces a breadth of forms and patterns, which we find helpful. Visualization, moreover, is better equipped with addressing data-processing techniques, where any visual material could be regarded as a particular representation of and an outcome of abstract data processing, which, even if not manifest in the visual material, is almost always implicated in the technologies of their production and dissemination (Manovich, 2011). In the following, we review some of the social functions, technological formats and affective registers of the new practice of digitally visualizing spaces and localities.

One of the most immediate impacts of the ubiquitous technologies of producing and circulating images has been on the ways we *use* images. For instance, we use visualizations to convey a message while chatting online; we send images of where we are and what we do to mark a simultaneously visual and spatial presence. In such visualizations, we often do not pay much attention to the image itself, its composition and visual signs. Rather, the image performs a particular kind of social function. Mikko Villi suggests that images sent from and received by camera phones function as 'authentication of the sender's presence, the "I am here now"', and create a 'synchronous gaze', an 'act of seeing together' which the sender and receiver experience at the same time, and which is fundamental to the creation of a sense of mediated presence (2015: 8). Along the same lines, Mizuko Ito coins the term 'intimate visual co-presence' to denote the practice of personal camera phone use, in which 'the focus is on co-presence and viewpoint sharing rather than communication, publication, or archiving' (2005: 1). The function of such images is premised on the spatiality – I am *here* – and temporality – I am here *now* – of their nearly instantaneous production, circulation and

consumption. They are consequently rarely looked at after the moment of sharing. Martin Lister observes this immediacy and different ways of looking that it entails in other contexts within the surfeit of images in digital cultures, where he believes a new relation to the image is produced that is predicated on a culture of not gazing at, but overlooking, the image – and sometimes even not looking at it at all (2014). These new relations to the image sometimes instigate new practices and social functions too. For instance, on photoblogging, he writes, 'photographs matter not so much as finite products (and neither does the blog), but because they provide the occasion for taking photographs: for walking, for wandering, for being alert to opportunities, for being "in the moment"' (Lister, 2014: 19).

Likewise, Larsen and Sandbye claim that 'increasingly, everyday amateur photography is a performative practice connected to presence, immediate communication and social networking, as opposed to the storing of memories for eternity, which is how it has hitherto been conceptualized' (2014: xx). Thus, we could argue that the production and dissemination of images has shifted from a future-oriented documentation of reality, to be seen later as evidence of the past, to the immediacy of sharing our subjective experiences now; from an observational mode of recording to a performative mode of immersion. The shift in function of amateur photography has found particularly suitable mediations in social media platforms. The title of the first part of this book, 'Documenting the street on social media', deliberately evokes an internal friction, in the sense that, while all chapters in this section deal with forms of recording, documentation, storage and archiving, the velocity and ephemerality of their circulation on social media also makes these terms superfluous, or at least profoundly alters their meaning.

Another example of practices in which visualizations play a significant role is navigation in space. In orienting ourselves in the contemporary city, we use a variety of visualizations. We smoothly switch from maps to street-level footages, and from satellite photos to marketing images of local services, while also shifting through a variety of signs and images in the physical space, often deliberately aestheticized with figures and pictures for commercial ends. We have thus come to consume an ever-greater number and variety of images. In this book, we pay attention to the multiple ways in which visualization works and the particular form of images and visual material that we use. The dynamic process of computation and visualization, in which images are translated into codes and codes are rendered visually to make them comprehensible, form a significant concern of this volume. This two-way translation process between data and images is especially critically assessed in the second part of the volume, 'Navigating Urban Data Flows'.

These new *functions* of images have also come with new image *formats*. Significantly, the images we consume today can rarely be interpreted as one unified and definitive image with only visual content. Geotagging has added a layer of informational data to digital photography, firmly anchoring images in space. Memes often consist of text-and-image, and hashtags not only add a layer of interpretation to images, but also a mode of virtual navigation. Google Street View is composed of still photographs, but they function as maps too, and we can navigate through them in a way that aesthetically resembles video games. Gifs are moving images, yet lack the narrative quality of video. Between the capturing quality of the photograph and the dynamics of the video, the gif file has opened up a new visual genre of infinite repetition. Even still photographs, with the ubiquity of digital editing, rarely find the stasis of a clear end product, endlessly enhanced, reframed, published and appropriated across various media. The old binaries between still and moving image, as Ingrid Hölzl (2010) writes, still hold to some extent, but their relationship has become more complex. To go beyond such a binary, she suggests to consider photography and film as 'synthetic "image states": they both display aspects of stasis and movement' (Hölzl, 2010: 106).

It could also be said that new forms of visualization fit into a broader trend, in which cultural value is less and less based on the signifying content or stylistic form of images and more and more on the quantity and velocity with which they transmit information (e.g. Keen, 2007; Steyerl, 2009). Such an emphasis on images as data might suggest a continuous 'waning of affect' (Jameson, 1991: 10). But new practices of visualization create new affective ecologies, such as the 'intimate co-presence' discussed above (Ito, 2005: 1). New practices of visualization have transformed the ways we read and understand images and have generated new emotional responses. We do not merely look at images, but most of the times do several things at the same time when seeing digital images. We see the image and read the hashtag, for instance; we look and scroll down or swipe over the screen; we see a collection of images at the same time or browse through them in quick succession; we switch perspective; we zoom in and out. Aaron Shapiro points out that 'using Street View in practice entails a lot of this toggling back and forth between the aerial and the street-level' (2017: 4). The fleeting, distracted glance and the quick change of attention from one system to another marks our new way of looking. It seems ceaseless and smooth in our everyday use, but involves a continuously violent disruption of the gaze.

If we review the particular affect produced by innovative visualizations of the street introduced in the chapters of this book, a striking parallel

emerges. In studying amateur photographs of suburban houses, Megan Hicks (Chapter 3) perceives in the peculiarly furtive rhythmicity of consuming Instagram's inflexibly orthogonal frame the strange reappearance of the repetitive aesthetics of modernist high-rises – the architectural style that remains conspicuously absent from such images. Discussing the imagery produced around a London street market, Karen Cross (Chapter 10) describes how the strategic reuse of older styles of photography, typesetting and other forms of visualization evoke a sense of uncanniness. Rob Coley (Chapter 8) argues that speculating about the future relation between humans and technology confronts us with the fact we share our streets with 'a weird ecology of agencies' that we cannot visualize. Thus, tracing the strange, the uncanny and the weird throughout the three sections of this book demonstrates not only how temporal disjunctures of new practices of visualization produce affects of defamiliarization in space, but also how media and technology sometimes interfere with the meanings we construct in ways that go beyond our comprehension and control.

In conclusion, visualizations in and of the street are characterized by performative gestures that entail sharing and navigation. Rather than a definite image of which the value is constituted by its visual signification, infinite processes of (re)editing and (re)appropriation produce what could be called synthetic 'image states' of which meaning and value continue to change across multiple performative instances of making, sharing and receiving (Hölzl 2010: 106). Our seemingly smooth but ultimately fragmentary navigation through such image states via multiple interfaces can evoke a variety of emotional responses, including enchantment and disaffection. We have gestured towards two affective registers in this respect: the intimacy of online sharing and the uncanny (re)emergence of what initially escapes our perception.

Space, Bodies, Technology

To understand how the street is visualized, we need to take into account not only the politics of the media through which space is visualized, but also, conversely, the ways in which these visual media are spatialized. This means, first of all, that we remain attentive to the complex ways in which images travel through multiple networks. Wing-Ki Lee (Chapter 2) provides a particularly sophisticated analysis on derivative work related to Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, as it traces the various transformations of images and their meanings in their online trajectories. Yet, images are

not limited to the visual translations of data flows on our screens, they also find material expression in the urban environment. From huge billboards to dilapidated shop signs and from authorized beautification projects to subversive graffiti, visual culture plays an important part in how we experience the streetscape – even if other senses also play a part in the physical realm. Indeed, the photoshopped images circulating online in Lee's analysis find their way back to the streets in the form of large prints pasted on cardboards or as stenciled murals.

Simon Ferdinand (Chapter 7) and Aslı Duru (Chapter 5) point to the significance of embodied movement through the streets of London and Istanbul, respectively. The performative immediacy of claiming the right to the city through embodied presence in both case studies is given more durable form through practices of visualization. Visualization in these cases constitutes the recording of a trace of physical presence and practice in space. Nanna Verhoeff and Karin van Es (Chapter 6) point to ways of visualizing the invisible data flows that run through our urban environments, and emphasize the political stake of making these visualizations available in public space, embedded in the materiality of our everyday surroundings. Ginette Verstraete and Cristina Ampatzidou (Chapter 9) and Karen Cross (Chapter 10) explain how the right to the city is also played out in contestations over aesthetization and beautification projects, which entail different ways and forms of imagery. These chapters demonstrate the complex ways in which the visual appearance of the street in its physical manifestation is entangled with virtual visualizations of it.

The affect produced by new practices of visualization, some of which have been discussed in the previous section, rely largely on new forms of embodiment that digital technologies instigate. Digital devices, interfaces and apps have become extensions of our bodies; we increasingly see, hear, calculate and communicate through them. With the use of digital technology, we gain knowledge about our bodies and environment, we track ourselves and turn into, what Deborah Lupton calls, quantified selves, with our data profiles following us everywhere (2016). In addition to quantifying the world around us, we also feel the world differently through digital devices. As Mark Shepard suggests, 'today, the "feel" of the street is defined less and less by what we can see with the naked eye' (2011: 21). The discourse of smart cities and sentient futures pays particular attention to the embodied forms of everyday interaction with, and through, digital techniques of data visualization. This phenomenological aspect of technological innovation is central to László Muntéan's (Chapter 4) investigation of the sublime effects of drone visibility. The body-technology relation and the issue of human

perception are also at the heart of the three chapters collected in this volume under the title 'Navigating Urban Data Flows'.

A productive case study to think through the intersections between virtual imagery and urban space is the digital renderings of architectural projects. Such computer-generated 3D visualizations not only have become the dominant visual language within the discourse of professional urban design and architecture – such as professional architectural journals, city planning and real estate projects – they are also a prominent feature in urban space and the public sphere in the form of large-scale posters on walls and urban surfaces, and small scale prints and images in magazines and websites. In a series of articles on the digital visualizations of urban redevelopment projects, Gillian Rose, Monica Degen and Clare Melhuish (2016) argue that, in order to understand these images, one needs to consider the conditions of their production. One has to understand the labor that has gone into producing these seemingly easy visualizations, to consider the network and process of their making. They propose to use Actor Network Theory for the study of these images because its emphasis on networks, mobility and agency allows us to challenge the picture-perfect completion that the visual content of the images seems to suggest:

> What examining the labour of creating these visualizations suggests, is that they are far from being near-magical, seamless, pristine images of glossy urban futures. Instead, they are rather more like sites of debate and disagreement, which shift and change as different designs are inputted, different sorts of views desired, and different sort of audiences anticipated. And if they could be seen like that, the seamless views of urban living that they offer could also be challenged, by being seen as networked. (Rose et al., 2016: 116)

They suggest that, by considering how these visualizations imply multiple, sometimes conflicting, practices, we not only understand the labor gone into their making but also are better equipped to question these images' 'strategic erasure of their processes of production' critically (Rose et al., 2016: 111). Here, Actor Network Theory is complemented by close analysis of both visual content, that is, the type of social reality depicted and the choices made in terms of composition, framing, lighting and perspective, and the affective qualities, i.e. the shiny, glossy, happy atmosphere of the images. Interestingly, the authors suggest not only to study these three aspects of architectural renderings critically – how the images are produced, what they show and what emotional response they (seek to) evoke – but also to interrupt their intended

affective atmosphere by locating 'visualizations whose glamour is in some way defective, and then to share that deglamourization with various audiences' (Rose et al., 2016: 113). In other words, Rose, Degen and Melhuish argue that exclusionary visualizations of the street could be countered by circulating other visualizations, those that capture faded, torn and inconspicuous versions of these CGIs in our everyday urban reality, confronting the envisioned futures with the messy and more inclusive nature of real streets. To understand these images, Rose, Degen and Melhuis suggest that the details of the practices that have led to their visualization should be taken into consideration. This type of practice-based research, attentive to the intersections between spatial and visual regimes, is what we argue for in this book too.

In line with the argument made in this introduction, the scholarly approaches of the chapters collected in this volume have at least two things in common. Firstly, they appreciate the inextricable entanglement of the (virtually) visual and the spatial. Secondly, they pay attention to *practices* of visualization and its related aspects of embodiment, materiality and affect. The chapters speak to each other in a variety of ways and show considerable thematic and methodological overlaps. In this introduction, we have traced some of those recurrent notions and suggested key points of convergence between chapters. To highlight our approach to visualizing the street as *practice*, however, we have ordered the chapters according to the following overarching themes: documentation, navigation and imagination. These themes are to help readers navigate the chapters through our conceptual approach, and they are not meant as distinct categories as most of the chapters relate to more than one of them. The following section outlines the main content of each part and each chapter.

Documenting Streets on Social Media

The first part of the book explores diverse examples of street images circulating on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. The images discussed in this section capture streetscapes with the aim of documenting a significant historical event, registering transient acts of defiance or archiving the status quo for the future. Despite their divergent concerns, the four chapters in this section share an interest in the politics of circulation and the affective register of visual consumption on these media platforms. Paying particular attention to the aesthetic qualities of their case studies, all four chapters critically assess the affect produced by such documenting and sharing.

In Chapter 2, 'Derivative Work and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement: Three Perspectives', Wing-Ki Lee starts from the conspicuous absence of any visual reminder in the streets of Hong Kong of the 2014 street protests that came to be known as the Umbrella Movement. In response, the author turns to the virtual archive of hyper-mobile images on the Internet, in particular the derivative work of photoshopped, re-edited and re-appropriated images surrounding these street protests. Interestingly, Lee moves beyond a celebratory description of the peculiar subversive aesthetics of amateur image appropriation to consider its historical resonance with state-authorized visual censorship in mainland China, its immoral use by conservative and patriarchal Internet users, and its re-appropriation by state actors. Thus, the chapter raises questions about all-too-easy dichotomies between oppressive and subversive visual regimes.

Chapter 3, 'Strange in the Suburbs: Reading Instagram Images for Responses to Change', provides a reading of Instagram feeds that form visual archives of Australian suburban façades. Megan Hicks argues that, when standing alone, these images do not evoke any particular feeling. Yet, in the flick-flick-flick of the Instagram feed, the images become haunted by their deliberate exclusion of the rapid increase of high-density apartment blocks in suburban landscapes. Especially those photographers who succeed to frame the suburban decorative details in symmetrical compositions, in the orthogonal frame of the app, uncannily evoke the repetitive geometry of the very high-rises that threaten to erase the captured landscape but remain conspicuously absent within the frames.

From the repressed anxieties in Australian suburbs, László Munteán takes us to the overt horror of the war-torn streets of Syria. Chapter 4, 'Droning Syria: The Aerial View and the New Aesthetics of Urban Ruination', critically assesses the aesthetics of Russian journalistic aerial footage captured by drones hovering over Syrian cities in war. He not only criticizes the way in which its mode of production is implicated with the Russian war effort, but also dwells on the specific phenomenology of droning and how it is geared towards continuing a long tradition of *Ruinenlust*, thus questioning the ethics of not only the mode of production and the aesthetic composition of the footage, but also of its mode of reception as a YouTube hit.

In Chapter 5, 'The affective territory of poetic graffiti from sidewalk to networked image', Aslı Duru opens up the intersection between space and visual culture to include poetry. Duru investigates the #siirsokakta movement that emerged in the wake of Istanbul's Gezi protests. 'Siir sokakta' means 'poetry in the street' and refers to the widespread practice of scribbling or spray-painting lines of poetry in public space, then

capturing the lines with a camera phone and sharing it online using a shared hashtag. The chapter considers the relations between poetic text, image and urban space from a historical perspective, and reflects on the methodology of walking ethnography. Duru argues that the peculiar geography of the #siirsokakta movement asks for an expansion of this method to include browsing ethnography, pointing out their parallels and intersections.

Navigating Urban Data Flows

The chapters in the second part of the book are concerned with practices of orientation and navigation. We use images to navigate virtual geographies of information spatially, and, conversely, we use visualizations of those very data flows to navigate the social and physical space of the city. The three chapters in this part of the volume are interested in the politics and aesthetics of this translation process between data and image, between real and virtual space. A shared concern in the chapters gathered in this section are the limitations of the visibility and legibility of the environment despite, and often precisely as a result of, technological advancements.

In Chapter 6, 'Situated Installations for Urban Data Visualization: Interfacing the Archive-City', Nanna Verhoeff and Karin van Es take creative media installations as a starting point, in order to propose a set of conceptual approaches to visual interfaces that provide access to a layered urban reality of data flows. Interestingly, the navigation of immaterial data is translated into exclusively spatial concepts. Verhoeff and van Es's concept of 'performative archaeology' elegantly expresses the tension between the vastness of the informational geography that escapes our perception in the urban environment and the temporality of instantaneity, both as the nature of data flows and of the instance of their uncovering.

In Chapter 7, 'Cartography at Ground Level: Spectrality and Streets in Jeremy Wood's My Ghost and Meridians', Simon Ferdinand analyses the GPS-tracked walking performances and their visual renderings by the artist Jeremy Wood. Producing cartographies that trace his erratic or choreographed movements in space, Woods plays with preconceived ideas about what cartography is or should be. Using technology that registers space using satellites, his artworks present us with a visual rendering of space that is profoundly embodied. Ferdinand proceeds to argue that Wood's art exposes slippages in digital mapping's pretentious worldview of existential security provided by precisely calculated locations.

In the Chapter 8, 'Street Smarts for Smart Streets', Rob Coley argues that the aesthetics of smart cities, as of yet largely speculative, reveal how humanist assumptions that the human subject has privileged access to seeing and visualizing reality are in crisis. He explores two very different fictional accounts, a television series and a novel, that are dark, unsettling, and 'weird' in their questioning of subject-object relations and argues that these darker visions form a necessary critical counterpart to the more utopian visualizations in the areas of design and urban planning. The detectives that form the protagonists of these fictional narratives are increasingly bewildered by the fact that the urban territory in which they try to navigate remains largely illegible to them.

Imagining Urban Communities

The third section of the book addresses the ways in which visualizations of the street serve to forge associations and construct narratives and imaginaries of urban communities. The chapters in this part tease out the contentious dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that are invariably part of the processes of visualization. They pay particular attention to the ways in which the visual plays a role in the struggles over the right to the city, which can no longer be considered apart from the claims to agency in hegemonic visual regimes.

In Chapter 9, 'Chewing Gum and Graffiti: Aestheticized City Rhetoric in post-2008 Athens', Ginette Verstraete and Cristina Ampatzidou contrast two different types of urban imaginaries and the politics of their visualizations. First, they offer two examples of what they call a post-political stance that seek to develop a pristine urban environment of which all traces of poverty and crime are removed, so as to attract new capital investments and tourism. These are contrasted with two examples in which a crack opens in these sanitized urban spaces, from which a notion of the political emerges. Through these case studies, they demonstrate the volatile dynamics of appropriation and co-optation at stake in these DIY visualizations of the street.

In Chapter 10, 'The Uncanny Likeness of the Street: Visioning Community through the Lens of Social Media', Karen Cross analyses the aesthetics of social media visualizations of a UK volunteer-led 'alternative' market. Considered within the context of larger processes of gentrification and their concomitant socioeconomic tensions and struggles, the chapter considers the uncanniness of retro aesthetics in what seems to be a genuine attempt to envision a sense of community in South East London.

In Chapter 11, 'On or Beyond the Map? Google Maps and Street View in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas', Simone Kalkman discusses the hybrid configuration of local actors and global companies involved in digitally mapping Rio's favelas. Historically excluded from cartographic visualizations, these initiatives seek to generate visibility, recognition and opportunities for the favela streets and their communities. However, Kalkman also highlights a number of pitfalls. In marketing the new mapping of the favelas, it is in the interest of commercial actors like Google to perpetuate the oversimplifying imaginaries of Rio as a 'divided city'. Kalkman argues that, especially those initiatives that fail to create some form of contact zone, whether online or in urban space, seem merely to reproduce the exclusionary binaries they claim to address.

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