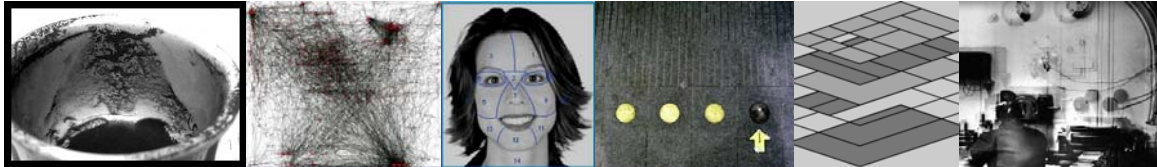


Geo-Genealogies: Tracing the Possible Lineages of Locative Media



Presenters:

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Abstract:

In today's proliferation of locative media projects, various practices or "tendencies" can be identified: from audio to visual, from entertaining to educational, from gaming to experiencing, from recycling to curatorial. Rather than offering a categorisation of existing practices, this paper aims to "locate" locative media in a broader media historical context, pointing out connections with literature, early cinema practices (such as Hale's Tours) and early telecommunication systems (such as Marconi's wireless telegraphy). The objective is not to reconstruct the prehistory of locative media, but to understand and conceptualize crossroads, crossovers, intersections, divergences, etc. among contemporary practices.

"Geo-genealogies" is a first attempt of tracing the possible cultural and media technological lineages of locative media. We will briefly chart the following five "tendencies": 1) geo-tagging; 2) geo-mapping; 3) cultural or psycho-geography; 4) annotation; and 5) location-awareness. Geo-tagging (e.g. Flickr, Yellow Arrow, location33, "You Are Here") is concerned with collecting and labelling, with recording and preserving memories, and can therefore be put in the family of the photo album (from analogue to digital, from deluxe paper to computer folders). Geo-mapping, with its traces, trajectories and choreographies (e.g. Amsterdam RealTime, "GPS Drawing"), has its ancestors both in literature (from Borges and Calvino to Auster and Haddon), cinema (from early phantom rides to travelogues and road movies) and science/medicine (from Marey's physiology to plastic surgery). Cultural or psycho-geography (e.g. Urban Tapestries, [murmur], .walk) is the practice of layering and wandering, with or without sound, with or without ghosts - a practice that can be linked to wireless telegraphy, early radio and the idea of haunted media. Annotative locative media projects renew the tradition of storytelling; you leave notes, "geo-notes," and participate in creating a new story. It is a combination of the message-in-the-bottle and Chinese whispering: "geo-notes" are intercepted, transformed, translated, misinterpreted. Finally, the most locative tendency of locative media is the location-aware/site-specific practice. In this practice the main playground is the city: the city as game (for gameplay, treasure hunt, etc.) or the city as text (for curating monuments, urban screens, emplacements, displacements). The city as text allows us to reconnect with the first practice of geo-tagging: the city as site of memories and memory recording.

In various existing locative projects these five "geo-genealogies" somehow converge or interconnect. Instead of analysing existing projects, we will conclude our paper by presenting our own, yet-to-be-realized, locative project, entitled **Siting Maps in Cups**, which takes the city of Istanbul as a backdrop with its vast network of cafes and coffeehouses. Based upon the age-old tradition of reading the complex patterns from coffee grounds in a demitasse cup of Turkish* coffee (tasseography), **Siting Maps in Cups** imagines the cup as an interface. Revisiting the ritual of the cup, that is, the reading between the coffee sediments and the white porcelain - an act of translation - the project illustrates how we see others and explores ideas that are not usually verbalized in everyday language.

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* Also known as Greek, Armenian or Arabic coffee. The coffee is prepared by boiling finely powdered roast coffee beans in a pot (a long handled brass or copper pot) usually with sugar, and serving it into a cup, where the sediments settle. It is quite common throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Caucasus and the Balkans, and in their expatriate communities and restaurants in the rest of the world.

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Bios:

Tina Bastajian (kinostudio@aol.com) is a Los Angeles born Amsterdam based award-winning film/video artist who has exhibited internationally at festivals, galleries and museums. Screenings include: the San Francisco International Film Festival; ArteEast-CinemaEast, NYC, The Amos Anderson Museum, Helsinki; Armenian National Cinémathèque, Yerevan; Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; Ann Arbor Film Festival, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and the Beirut International Film Festival. Her recent video essay *Garden Dwelling* was featured in the 2007 BristolDocs symposium, *The Ethnic Self: First Person Plural*. In 2005 she was the recipient of the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) scholarship to attend the University of Amsterdam, where she is researching film/video preservation and archival issues that pertain to the moving image, and has collaborated on the locative research project *Mobile Amsterdam Past/Forward* that was recently presented at "Imagined Futures" research group at the University of Amsterdam. She curated *Electric Cinema Redux* (based on the 1970s Amsterdam underground film venue Electric Cinema) in collaboration with the Nederlands Filmmuseum for the 2007 International Film Festival Rotterdam. The daylong programme converged issues of preservation, "liveness," spectatorship and the immateriality of expanded cinema.

Wanda Strauven (w.strauven@uva.nl) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Media Studies at the University of Amsterdam, where she directs the Film Studies programme and teaches Film Theory and Media Archaeology. She is the author of the award-winning book *Marinetti e il cinema: tra attrazione e sperimentazione* (Udine: Campanotto, 2006) and has edited two anthologies: *Homo orthopedicus: le corps et ses prothèses à l'époque (post)moderniste* (with Nathalie Roelens) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001) and *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006). Since 2004, she is a regular guest lecturer at the MAGIS Gradisca Film Studies Spring School (Gradisca d'Isonzo, Italy), dedicated to cinema and contemporary visual arts. Her research interests include: early and avant-garde cinema, futurism, wireless telegraphy, media art history and synaesthesia. At the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), she co-directs, with Thomas Elsaesser, the research project "Imagined Futures," that aims to develop new models of historiography, rethink the possible futures of film and film studies, and investigate the cinema as new public sphere in today's media art and beyond.