



SITUATIONS OF ENCOUNTER: PLAYFUL GAZES IN *STREET ART DETOURS*

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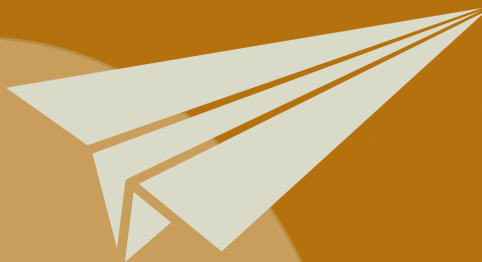
ABSTRACT

STREET ART DETOURS (STREETARTDETOURS.COM) IS A CROWD-SOURCED, LOCATIVE ART PROJECT THAT USES 'DETOURS' – CREATIVE STORIES AND EXPERIMENTS – TO FIND IMAGINATIVE WAYS TO EXPERIENCE PUBLIC SPACES. PRIMARILY RELYING UPON STREET ART IN MELBOURNE AS A POINT OF ACCESS, THE PROJECT WAS THE FINAL ASSESSMENT IN A STREET ART SUBJECT TAUGHT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE. THIS PAPER OUTLINES THE IMPLICATIONS OF THAT PROJECT, AND IT REFERENCES THOSE DETOURS CONTRIBUTED BY STUDENTS TO ARGUE IN FAVOR OF PLAYFUL PARTICIPATION'S ACADEMIC BENEFITS. IDENTIFYING STREET ART'S ENCOUNTER AS A CINEMATIC EVENT THAT IS SIMULTANEOUSLY IMAGINATIVE AND PERSONAL, THE PAPER POSITS AUDIENCE EMPOWERMENT AS CRUCIAL TO THE STUDY OF STREET ART. IT CONCLUDES THAT THE PRACTICE'S SUBJECTIVITY, IN ADDITION TO THE PERFORMATIVE ASPECTS OF ITS EXPERIENCE, NECESSITATES STREET ART'S CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT.

DISCLAIMER: THE AUTHOR OF THIS PAPER INITIATED DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROJECT, AND IN THE PROCESS OF FINALIZING THE WEBSITE EDITED SOME GRAMMAR AND COPY FOR STUDENTS IN THEIR DETOURS.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

JOSEPH ISAAC IS A RECENTLY-RETURNED FULBRIGHT POSTGRADUATE SCHOLAR FROM AUSTRALIA WHOSE RESEARCH INTO GRAFFITI AND STREET ART WAS COMPLETED IN AFFILIATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE AND THE RESEARCH UNIT IN PUBLIC CULTURES. HE RECEIVED HIS B.A. IN ART HISTORY FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.



The Digitization of Street Art

In the spring of 2015, audiences in the Italian town of Gaeta encountered a 404 error message during the Memorie Urbane Street Art Festival. Visitors traveling along 'Via Mariano Mandolesi' were surprised to discover that, upon arriving to the event, they could not access a mural that had been created by the French artist MTO. Despite assurances that the image was "loading" and to "please wait", it was ultimately unable to be found for the duration of the festival. A nearby billboard explained the circumstances behind the event. Boasting a May 22, 2020 newspaper article headlined "Computer Says No", the billboard documented what it described as the "First Case of Artistical Censorship by Google Corp". Google Street Art, it seemed, had decided to omit the 125-meter-long mural from its collection, and its virtual exclusion of the image had, in turn, corrupted the physical artwork.

The installation, titled *We Live on Google Earth*, was "meant to criticize Google's plans to catalogue street art from around the world" (Neuendorf, 2015). It took issue with the tendency of archives like Google Street Art to replicate the physical artwork through an online platform, arguing that "street art's inherent perishability is a crucial part of its global appeal and must be maintained" (Neuendorf, 2015). Indeed, since its proliferation in the early 2000s, street art has undergone an increase in popularity that has been echoed by a corresponsive increase in the number of archives related to its documentation. However, many of these efforts have taken the form of ocular-centric representations, rather than analyses. Relegating images and objects to static representations, archives have typically contradicted the evolving conditions of public spaces by treating the artwork as an image instead of an experience. Street art becomes a virtual experience devoid of the context which drives its physical encounter, and its digital consumption through projects like Google Street Art effectively sets the practice on a path through which the events of May 22, 2020 appear nothing short of inevitable.

Of course, given street art's personal relationship with its spectator, archives should hardly be criticized for their failure to capture the breadth of variables which surround the artwork's encounter. From its moment of situation in a public space, street art undergoes an unpredictable process of degradation and change that makes the artwork's existence impossible to replicate. A variety of factors related to precipitation, time of day, and the schedules of nearby pedestrians work together to create a performative display of an artwork in flux, one whose attachment to these surroundings contradicts the suggestion of street art as a purely physical object. Playful participation therefore proves itself to be a necessary component of street art's documentation and study, and it is from this creative pursuit of engagement that the project *Street Art deTours* (streetartdetours.com) was initiated (Fig. 1).

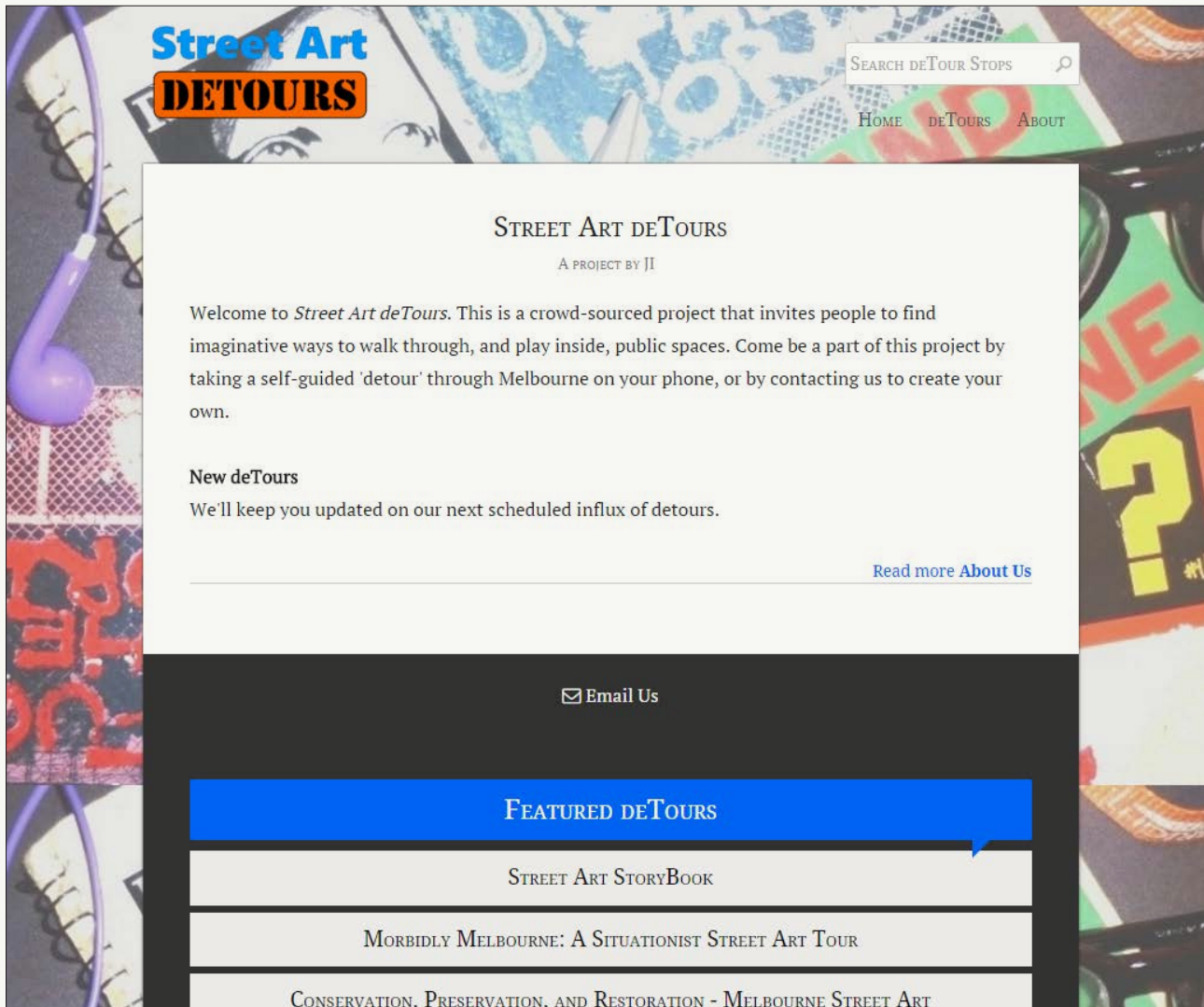


Fig. 1 Excerpt of *Street Art deTours* homepage

Understanding *Street Art deTours*

However, in order to adequately analyze those qualities, which distinguish *Street Art deTours* from the traditional archive, it first becomes necessary to consider the similarities shared between the two approaches. Continuing the efforts of earlier databases like Google Street Art (streetart.withgoogle.com) and the Sydney Graffiti Archive (sydneygraffitiarchive.com.au), *Street Art deTours* collates a wide array of information in order to create an online collection of artworks not otherwise available to the public. Due to the often undocumented character of street art, contributors to the project relied on imagery, audio, and/or video that they themselves provided, in many cases supplying personal items that recorded their interactions at each street art site. Students contributed to the initial installment of data for the project as part of their final assessment in “CCDP20001 Street Art”, an academic subject taught at the University of Melbourne (in conjunction with the Victorian College of the Arts) during Semester 1 of 2015. The lecturers for this course, CDH and Lachlan MacDowall, assisted this author in the conceptual design of the website as part of his Fulbright year abroad, but the sixty students who participated in the project remained solely responsible for the creation of content. Reflecting “a scholarship and pedagogy that are collaborative and depend on networks of people and that live an active 24/7 life online” (Kirschenbaum, 2013, p. 202), the website allows students the opportunity to create original research into street art within the

greater Melbourne area. As such, their contributions enable the project to operate as a type of visual record for the city's graffiti and street art, in that many of the artworks featured by the website face almost certain erasure in the months after their capture.

But to describe the website as constitutive of an archive or a digital humanities project would be an unsuitable and limiting label. In contrast with resources like the Sydney Graffiti Archive, which rely upon a "reflexive and interpretative framework developed to afford an effective reading of the material assemblages of graffiti writing and urban art modes framed in situ" (Edwards-Vandenhoeck, 2015, p. 80), *Street Art deTours* treats its content with a subjectivity that discourages the imposition of metadata on the street artwork. Information related to the date of a photograph, the name of an artwork, or the name of an artist are considered irrelevant by the project, which takes great effort to minimize the autonomy of the street artwork. Its primary purpose identifies itself as contemporary engagement, rather than documentation. Incorporating locative technology, users curate tours that offer thematic ways of experiencing graffiti and street art based on one's personal relationship to the city and its images. Each contributing author is instructed to geo-locate their position in relation to their chosen artwork, rather than record the position of the artwork itself, creating an interactive experience that allows content to resonate with its relevant audience. But these are not "tours" in the traditional sense of the word. They are meant to be games, stories, and other creative practices that avoid speculating what an artwork says, or its larger meaning. Instead, they use a coherent narrative to autobiographically relate that image back to the city and the viewer.

Indeed, the project's substitution of emphasis from artworks and artists to the interested spectator inverts the informational model of 'tours' in favor of 'detours': geo-located experiences composed of roughly five stops whose imagery and content are entirely curated by those authors that have chosen to contribute them. Whereas archive images are restricted to the time and place of their initial encounter, the images within *Street Art deTours* are merely presented as references to the participant's own travel through his or her chosen detours. They are illustrative as opposed to authoritative, representative of the detour author's gaze and meant to be compared with the follower's own experience of each street art site. The website's interactivity therefore contradicts the purely virtual experiences of the archive, and its interest in geo-location similarly discredits its affiliation with digital humanities projects, which typically avoid over-investment "in any one specific set of texts or even technologies" (Kirschenbaum, 2010, p. 197).

Perhaps the most accurate label that could be afforded *Street Art deTours* would be that of a locative 'street art' project - reminiscent of those early artists during the 2000s that "saw locative media as having the potential to reinvigorate interactive art by using it to critique the established conventions and ideologies of public space" (Leorke, 2014, p. 134). Much of the ideology behind locative media was underpinned by the Situationist International, a 20th century art collective fascinated with "the banal, everyday acts of urban life that could be subverted in a radical redefinition of everyday experience" (Flanagan, 2009, p. 195). Proponents of the group recognized the city's potential as a source of playful adventure. They strongly advocated in favor of audience empowerment, whereby "the participant became the artist, constructing the art experience" through their engagement with the urban environment (Flanagan, 2009, p. 197).

Inspired by "play's ability to empower, build community, and foster collaboration and cultural change" (Flanagan, 2009, p. 197), the project organizes itself around the experiences of its detour authors as well as its detour followers. In addition to offering audiences the opportunity to become a detour author (through establishing contact with the project via email) or a detour follower (through simple access to the project URL), *Street Art deTours* encourages its users to tailor their detour experiences to their own needs and desires. Although a predetermined order structures the progression through any detour, there are few other rules which affect either detour group. Authors are free to attach conditions related to factors such as time of day (one student's detour used the darkness afforded by night to 'reinvent' tourist locations typically seen during daylight hours [Ref. A]), and followers are equally free to disregard or alter said guidelines. Physical engagement therefore identifies itself as crucial to the project's experience. As noted on the website homepage, *Street Art deTours* "invites people to find imaginative ways to walk through, and play inside, public spaces", and it goes on to stress that interested

users should “come be a part of this project by taking a self-guided ‘detour’ through Melbourne on your phone.” Audiences can travel across locations with the aid of geo-located coordinates attached to each detour stop, pursuing a path that is either entirely their own or that follows the route suggested when one selects ‘Show Locations on Map’ and opts for ‘Directions’ to be provided.

In fact, the only strict instructions provided to project users appear during the upload of content by detours authors. Though students were advised to use five stops in order to structure their detours (the primary motivation of which was to ease their ability to structure a story with a beginning, middle, and end, with two stops bridging those elements together), they were ultimately told that they could abandon this approach if they felt it conceptually necessary. Similarly, while students were encouraged to take their own photographs, audio, and video, they were informed that they could instead use online content so long as it was properly cited. Of course, factors related to file size and the capacity of the server remained obvious concerns, and this author’s decision to change the final website from Omeka.net to the more flexible Omeka.org midway through the semester resulted in added barriers for the project.

Thus, technology appears the sole hindrance for *Street Art deTours*, many of whose limitations can ultimately be traced to the project’s adoption of the Omeka content management system (CMS). As a CMS specifically designed for museums, archives, libraries, and scholars with little-to-no coding experience, there were few alterations that could be made to the process through which students contributed their information. After registering a free ‘basic’ account with Omeka.net, authors then shared their images (jpg/jpeg files), audio (mp3 files), and video (mp4 files) with an Omeka.net work site created for the project (Fig. 2), after which the content became migrated to the final *Street Art deTours* website by the author of this paper.



Fig. 2 Excerpt of *Street Art deTours* Omeka.net Work Site

Though an unavoidable facet of the project’s design, the constraints imposed by Omeka challenged this author to think critically, and oftentimes creatively, about each element of the website’s content strategy. Conflicts between conceptual design and user experience arose often during the planning stages of the project; however, the self-reflexivity prompted by these issues often led to productive evaluations for the project. Indeed, like those problems faced by locative artists during the early years of location-based gaming, much of *Street Art deTours* became shaped by the limitations of its content management system. As discussed by Leorke:

[Before] the release of the iPhone and Android and their respective app distribution services... designers and their players repurposed already existing technologies for the[ir] project[s], often relying on whatever was available and suitable, or customizing or designing their own tools. In this

sense, there was a kind of symbiotic relationship between the design of the game and the material constraints and limitations of the devices used, each informing the other. (Leorke, 2014, p. 137)

In the end, this author's organization of the project around Omeka ultimately aided, rather than hindered, the development of *Street Art deTours*. In one such example, the use of a Curatescape theme in conjunction with the CMS enabled the project to operate through a responsive website that prioritizes smartphones over desktop computers. Much of the benefits of this layout come through the narrow focus Omeka maintains towards its cultural objects. In contrast to other open source content management systems, Omeka markets itself as a CMS that allows its users to create narratives centered on the collections that they themselves contribute. Consequently, *Street Art deTours* includes very little content outside of those artworks and stories contributed by students in "CCDP20001 Street Art", and it is through Omeka's collection-first approach that the performative aspects behind the project's detours become apparent.

Subjectivity in the Street Art Gaze

On examination of the detours currently featured on the website, the project's content appears more akin to a series of creative experiments, rather than informational projects. Each detour challenges the impression presented by archives of street artworks as objective objects, and it posits street art as an extension of its passing spectator. In the variability of the artwork's material shape and circumstance of encounter, it becomes impossible to ascribe any one meaning or narrative to the artwork. It bears an inherent subjectivity explicitly tied to the experience of public space, and it proves, according to CDH, that "street art is really something halfway between art and mountain climbing" (CDH, 2013). In his experiment of street art's relationship with digital images, CDH photo-shopped "street art images into photographs of physical locations" in an effort to make its "cultural production more efficient" (CDH, 2013), thereby challenging the viewer to identify the difference between this image and that of a 'true' street artwork. He concludes that, much like photo-shopping one's self into an image of Mt. Everest, "the real point is that you climbed the mountain, not that you got a photo" (CDH, 2013).

Following this thread of street art as performative in its encounter, detour authors were encouraged to be imaginative rather than journalistic in their approach to street art sites. By virtue of the project's attachment to a second year breadth subject sponsored by the University of Melbourne and the Victorian College of the Arts, students approached the topic from a varied host of backgrounds related to their interests, their majors, and their personal experiences.

In one such example, one author tailored her project towards her academic research, identifying her primary audience as classicists who, "as experts in a dying field, are invariably looking for ways to make other people enthusiastic about Greek and Roman literature" [Ref. B]. Titled "The Metamorphoses: Examining a Roman Poet's Magnum Opus Through the Unorthodox Lens of Fitzroy Street Art", her detour overlays the suburb of Fitzroy with the poetry of Ovid. Street art becomes appropriated as a 'visual tool' that explores transfiguration, gender fluidity, and other themes identified within the Roman poet's work, as the author incorporates her own gaze into the detour's five street artworks.

The detour begins with the stop "Madness, Bacchic or Otherwise", imposing the subject of temporary psychosis over a laneway mural that bears an inscription from Hunter S. Thompson's novel *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Fig. 3). Reading "you took too much too much", the author describes the textual source as "one of the most hallucinogenic works to emerge from the early 1970s" [Ref. C], and she situates the image's "sedate, pastel-heavy colour palette" alongside the motivations of madness which drive Philomela, Procne, and Hades in *The Metamorphoses*.

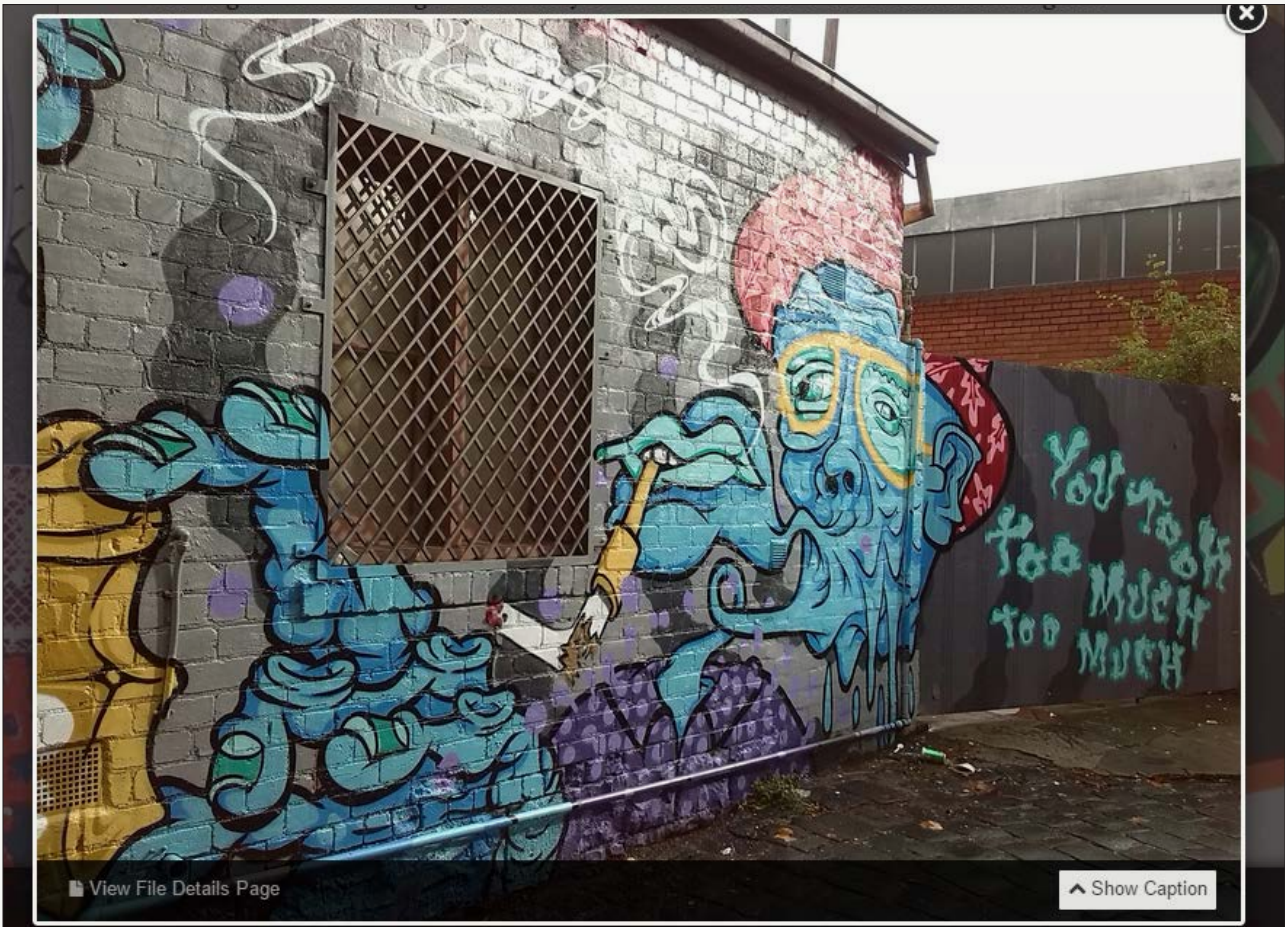


Fig. 3 Enlarged image from the “Metamorphoses” detour stop “Madness, Bacchic or Otherwise”

While there is no explicit reference to Ovid discernible in the snapshot provided by the author, her observations should nevertheless be considered as valid as those elements immediately visible. In sharp contrast with the museum object, there is little that can be factually understood about a street artwork: there is no curatorial text located at its place of residence, and no authority is present to answer questions that one may have about the work which stands before them. Any interpreted knowledge about an artwork is drawn entirely from its encounter with the spectator, a theory of perception whose subjectivity recalls Heidegger’s “phenomenal characterization of knowing as a being in and toward the world”, wherein knowing is not “objectively present” in human beings, nor is it “ascertained externally like corporeal qualities” (1996 [1953], p. 56). Rather, it is at once “inside” (p. 56) and “taken in by the world” (p. 57), and “in order for knowing to be possible as determining by observation what is objectively present, there must first be a *deficiency* of having to do with the world and taking care of it” (p. 57). In this instance, the street artwork located at the first stop of the “Metamorphoses” detour assumes a meaning at once specific to, and reflective of, its narrative author, and “on the foundation of this *interpretation* in the broadest sense, perception becomes *definition*” (p. 58).

This definition, of course, does not apply to the physical artwork but instead refers to the discourse that its encounter elicits, an analysis unique to the detour author’s gaze. In opposition to the photo archives that surround the street art movement, there is no effort of objectivity in the artwork’s documentation. Participants are free to make any alterations to their photographs should it be thematically requisite, and in the second stop of the “Metamorphoses” detour, titled “Rape, and the Commodification of the Female Form” (Fig. 4), the author features just such an example of this manipulation.

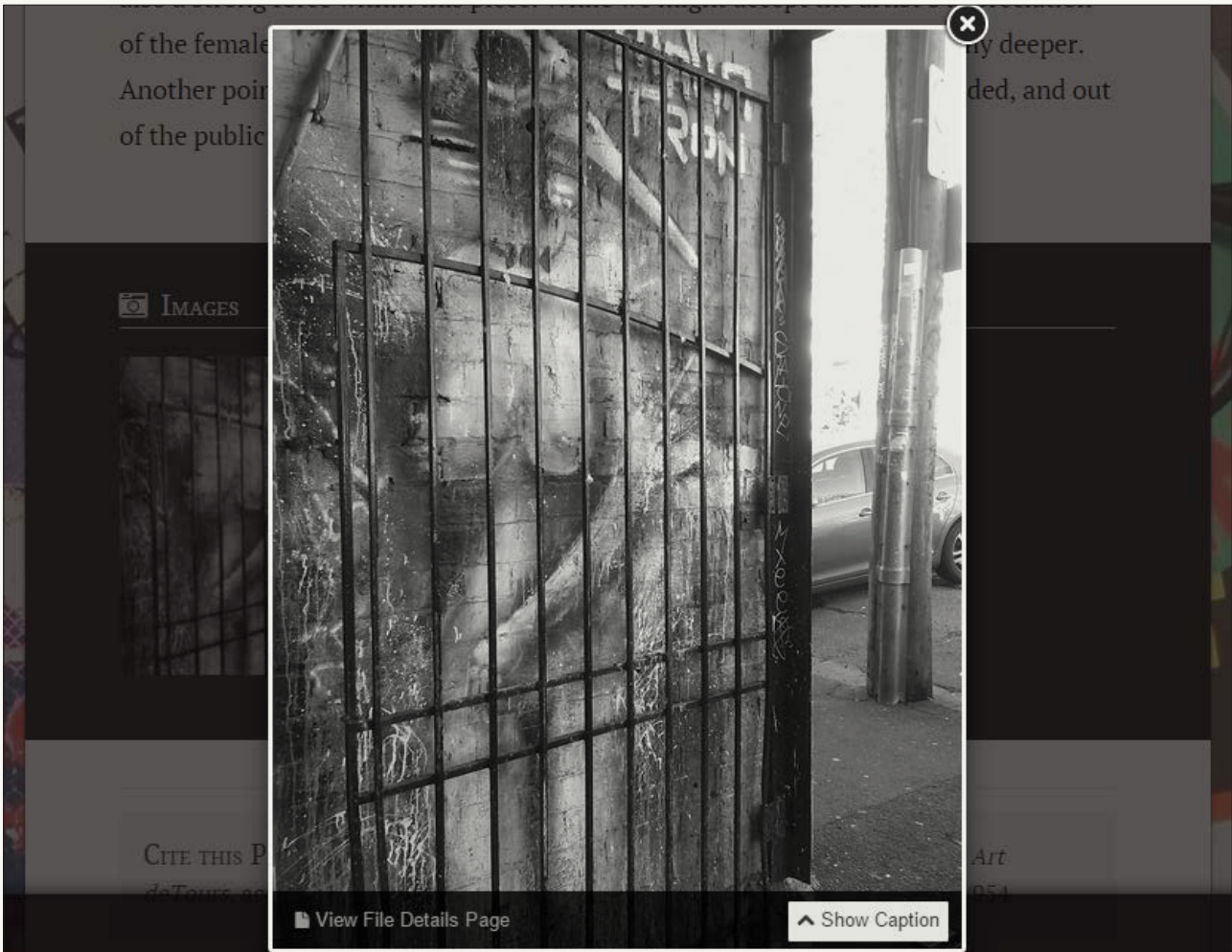


Fig. 4 Enlarged image from “Metamorphoses” detour stop “Rape, and the Commodification of the Female Form”

Located a short distance away from the preceding laneway mural, the detour stop displays a monochromatic image of a nude female figure with the head of a bird, trapped behind a linear array of bars both “secluded, and out of the public eye” [Ref. D]. The photograph’s circumvention of color, alongside its other aesthetic judgments, prioritizes its author’s integrity of vision over the object of her gaze, assigning the image a perspectival verisimilitude that illustrates her observations. For the detour’s author, “the depiction of the female form in contemporary street art” and “the predominance of male artists” connect strongly with the sympathy and ‘delight’ that accompanies male descriptions of sexual violence against women in *The Metamorphoses*, and her photograph reinforces those elements which facilitate the mural’s interpretive fruition. The author’s image exists not as an extension of the artwork, but as evidence to its relation of encounter, a perception whose ‘definition’ is the culmination of her methodology of being.

By virtue of this specificity of character, the project’s detours reaffirm their experience as something imagined: a series of events to be appreciated, rather than imitated. From its time of placement in the changing urban landscape, the street artwork undergoes an immediate process of degradation which prevents any replication of encounter such as that which is available in a museum or gallery space. As seen in the detour “Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration – Melbourne Street Art”, this applies most clearly in spaces which feature a regular turnover of appearance, an example of which is found in stop four at “Hosier Lane” [Ref. E], or in those materials which surrender more easily to the elements, among which include the “Alexander Mitchell Paste Up Down Russell Place” at stop two [Ref. F]. As a consequence of this ephemerality, an artwork’s physical status is often

closely tied to the privilege of its technological gaze, a perspective that, as documented in stop five of the detour “Instagram as Container and Platform: A Digital Street Art Tour” [Ref. G], eventually replaces the street artwork through the latter’s inevitable erasure.

A street artwork therefore conforms itself to the memory of its initial engagement, a recollection that is, in turn, shaped around the conditions of its spectator’s identity. In some cases, these striations create a literal barrier of gaze: in the detour titled “Latrinalia Tour (aka Bathroom Graffiti)”, impressions of latrinalia are influenced by the author’s selection of female restrooms across the city. Seen most clearly in the ‘hot pink’ aesthetic which marks “Stop 4: University of Melbourne Union House” (Fig. 5), the detour illustrates that any experience of bathroom graffiti is dependent on not only the participant’s self-identification of gender, which informs exposure to content, but also on their acclimation to their surroundings. In those instances of transgressive intrusion (the presence of a man in a women’s restroom for example), reactions to bathroom graffiti would be influenced by one’s knowledge of presence in a space to which they do not belong, a feeling likely to be supported by the unsolicited responses of those unknowing bystanders. There exists, for the “Latrinalia” detour as well as others, an aspect of ‘psychogeography’ in the spectator’s movements, where “the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, [impact] on the emotions and behavior of individuals” (Debord n.d. [1955], para. 2).

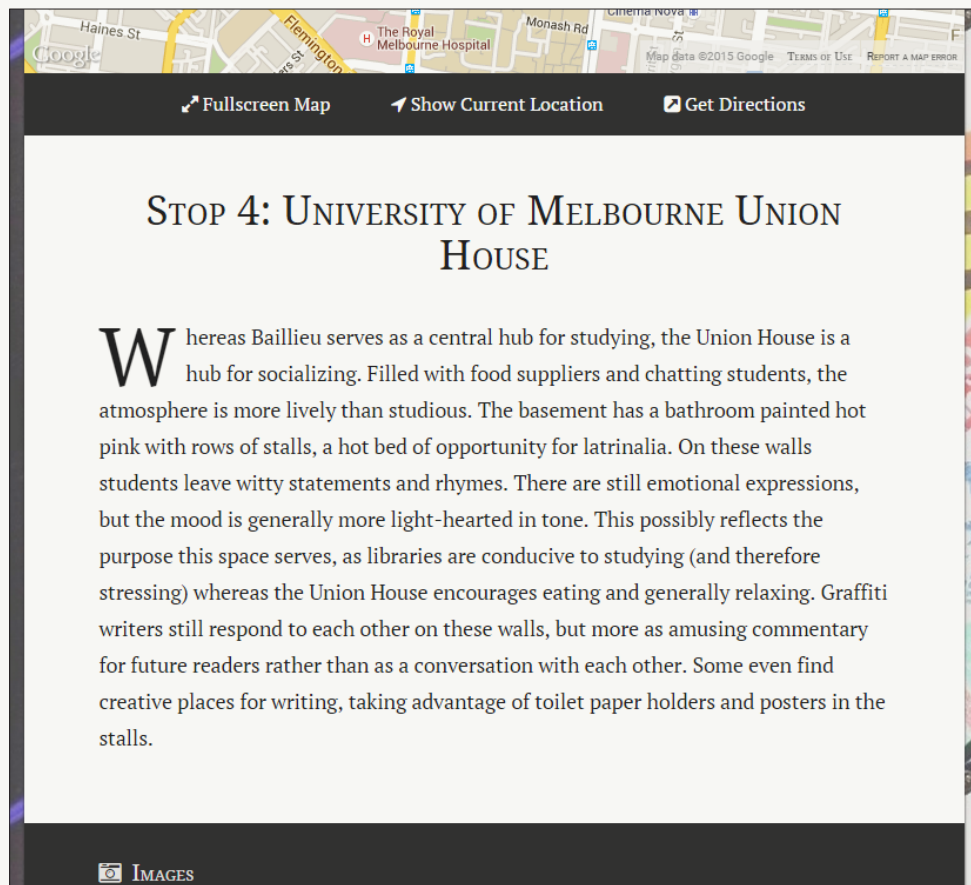


Fig. 5 Snapshot of “Stop 4: University of Melbourne Union House” from the “Latrinalia” detour

But the environment’s influence is not singular in direction. It relies as much on its occupant’s behavior as it does the ‘laws’ which compose its structure, and in the absence of any regulatory oversight, the “Latrinalia” detour marks its engagement as subject to the discretionary actions of its observer. It is in this acknowledgement of possibility that the project expands its scope of playful participation to include its users as well as its authors,

encompassing an assortment of circumstances specific to gait, time of movement, or even selection of bathroom (for instance, one could compare latrinalia across restrooms in all four levels of the University of Melbourne Baillieu Library, found at stop three of the “Latrinalia” detour [Ref. H]). This imagination extends, of course, to the other detours featured by the project. Completing the “All Wom*n’s Art Tour: Exploring and Discussing Women in Public Space” would be a remarkably self-conscious experience if non-male participants decided to alter their clothing or behavior to study the reactions of passerby [Ref. I]. Similarly, taking “Street Art StoryBook” [Ref. J], wherein the author uses street art to provide an imaginative storyline that runs through the city, would likely elicit a far different response were participants to dress up in costumes inspired by their favorite literary characters from childhood (to say nothing of the endless opportunities for other rules to be added).

The Performance of Spectatorship

The variability of interactions prompted by the project thus posits its detours as street artworks in their own right. They are experiments that not only create new forms of engagement between participants and public spaces, but which also use those participants to overlay the city with the performance of their movements. By disrupting “the privileged position currently occupied by vision” in the traditional street art archive (Young, 2012/2013, p. 81), the project challenges its users to consider the artwork as something more than just an image. Street art, by its very encounter, is a cinematic event, one that “is always already able to ‘arrest’ us” in much the same way as a film or motion picture” (Young, 2012/2013, p. 82). Though Young focuses exclusively on film in her relation of the cinematic image to the body, her observations bear considerable overlap with the circumstances that surround the street artwork’s situation. The spectator may be unable to witness the totality of degradation that befalls the situational artwork, but their exposure to that artwork is affected by the cycles of life that occur within public spaces. As discussed by Young: “In encountering the cinematic image, *seeing* is only one dimension of the spectator’s relationship to it—just as important are hearing, feeling, remembering” (p. 81). She goes on to explain that “we need to think of encountering the image as a hugely complex moment which manages to incorporate the imagined physicality of the image, its sounds, smells, look, touch, our memories, our projections—a *haptic* encounter” (p. 81). Street art is composed of far more than its tangible delineation, in that its very engagement with audiences allows each spectator to serve as an extension of the artwork’s performance.

The meaning derived from this encounter, of course, relies much more upon the viewer than the physical artwork. In our review of *Street Art deTours*, it becomes apparent that what ultimately distinguishes the project is its appropriation of street art as a medium with which to connect detour authors with detour followers. Its definition of street art is thus fairly ambiguous. While some authors created detours that were guided and inspired by some genre of street art, such as murals, stencils, or stickers, many students opted instead to use a theme that connected their five stops together, with others avoiding any mention of such artworks at all.

The experience of each detour therefore echoes the structure of an imagined walk through the suburbs of Melbourne and, in one detour example, the city of Geelong. In many ways, the detours parallel the video walks of Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, in that detour followers experience an augmented version of the reality that defines their surroundings. In the example of Cardiff and Miller’s *Alter Bahnhof Video Walk*, participants of the 2012 project borrowed an iPod and headphones in order to follow a series of events that had been previously captured inside of a train station in Kassel, Germany. As users compared the iPod screen and narrated voice of Cardiff with the immediate space of the present-day station, they were beset by “a strange confusion of realities” where “the past and present conflate” (Cardiff and Miller n.d.). The memories of Cardiff’s travel intertwine with the present-day movements of pedestrians in the station (Cardiff and Miller, 2012), and while the user co-exists with his fellow passersby, he does not occupy the same plane of their reality. He drifts through the thoughts of someone else’s recollections: looking back, yet unable to achieve complete immersion.

Like the *Alter Bahnhof Video Walk*, the detours highlighted by *Street Art deTours* “guide us through a meditation on memory and reveal the poignant moments of being alive and present” (Cardiff and Miller n.d.). Followers

of the street art project are able to experience the city both as it is and as it once was, comparing how they understand each detour stop with how its author originally envisioned its encounter. Thus, the detours themselves can never expire; they can only evolve alongside the city as its urban landscape changes. Our next detour for review, "When Darkness Calls: the City as the 'Urban Uncanny'", illustrates this point vividly in its omission of street artworks and transposition of the 'uncanny', that which "'others' the familiar through appearing as its distorted double', over urban spaces approached between dusk and nightfall [Ref. K]. Repurposing Deleuze and Guattari's theory of the rhizome, the author acknowledges the interconnectivity of detour authors and followers by adopting what she describes as a "rhizomatic structure" in her movements through "the uncanny landscape" (Fig. 6), where "any point...can be connected to anything other, and must be" (1987 [1980], p. 7).

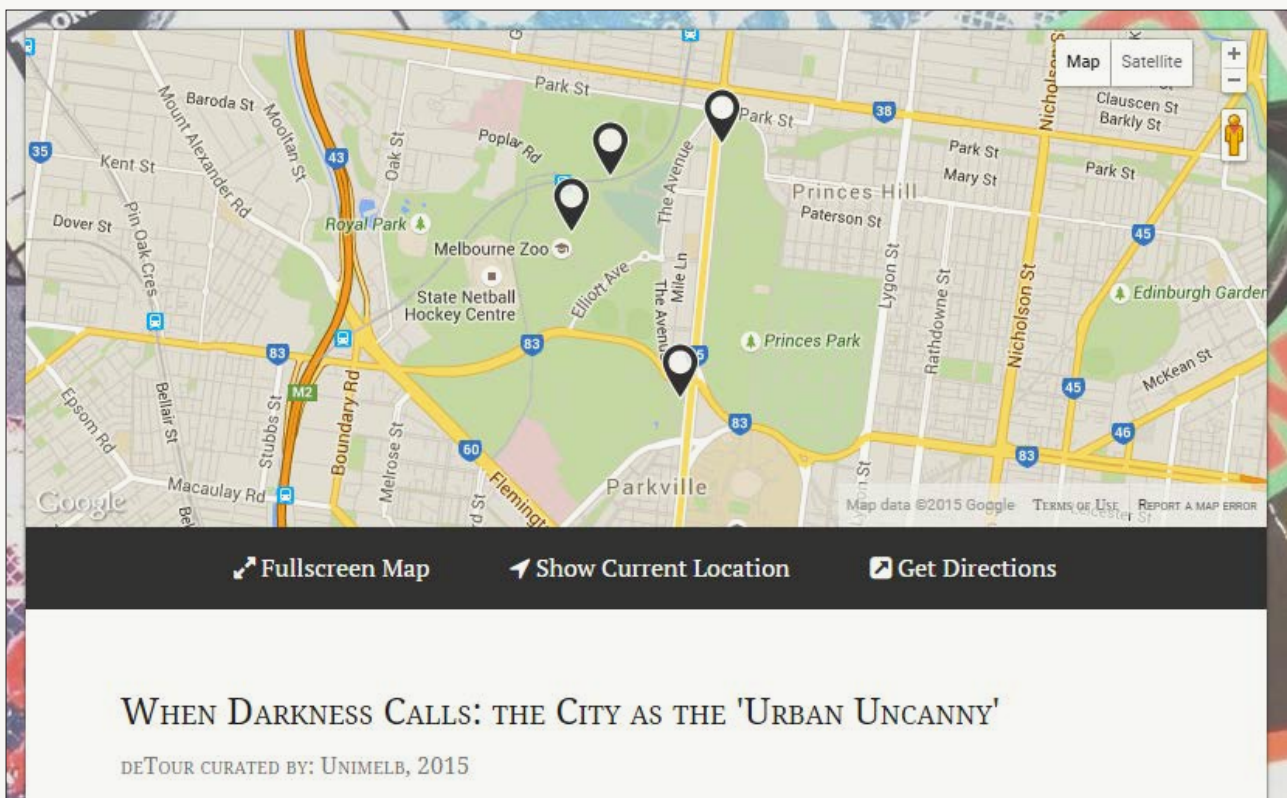


Fig. 6 Screenshot of the five locations on the "Urban Uncanny" detour

Avoiding any mention of street art or the situational object, the detour author emphasizes the viewer's gaze in order to "explore how urban spaces produce ambiguity and affect." She begins and ends her detour "in the spatial form of a tunnel" during the liminality of approaching sunset, unearthing the "corporeal affects at the level of uncertainty, fear, anticipation and intrigue", which accompany the uncanny and its shadows [Ref. K]. As documented by photographs such as that found at the detour stop "One Acquainted with the Night" (Fig. 7), the object of her gaze is not any "One as subject or object, natural or spiritual reality, image and world", but is instead the "multiplicity" of its "determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 8). Like Deleuze and Guattari's evocation of Ernst Jünger's analogy of puppet strings, "the actor's nerve fibers...fall through the gray matter, the grid, into the undifferentiated" uncanny, whose temporal evolution marks its experience as an "assemblage" of connections as opposed to a series of "points or positions" (p. 8). The detour itself "may be broken, shattered at a given spot" for reasons which include a location's inaccessibility or sunlight's inevitable decline, "but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines" of encounter (p. 9).

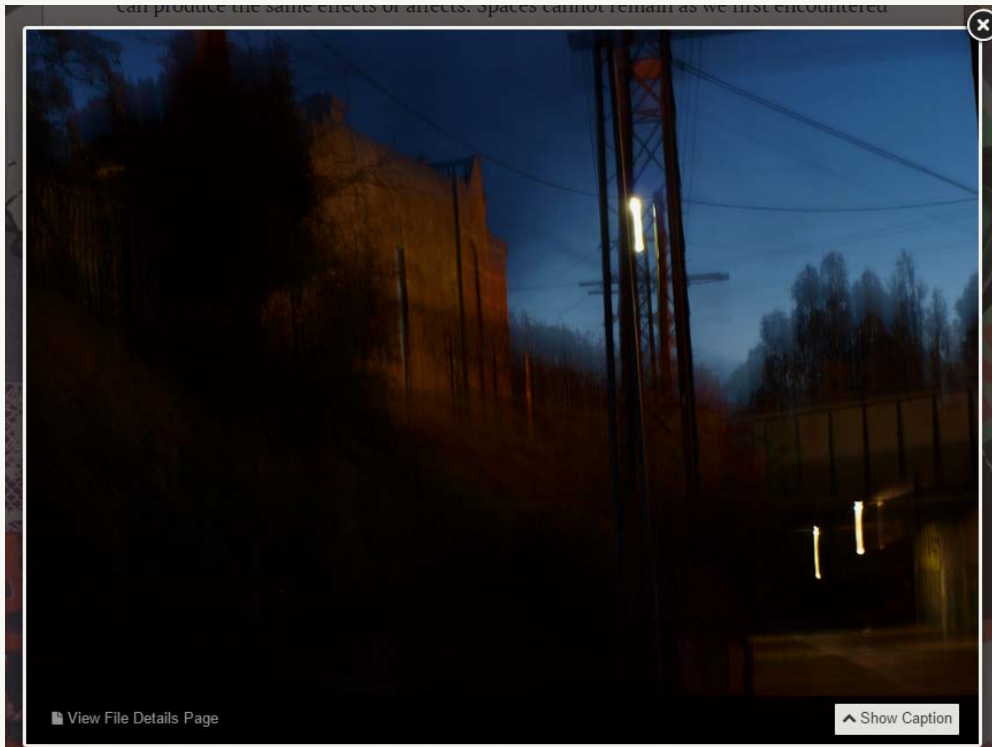


Fig. 7 Enlarged image from the “Urban Uncanny” detour stop “One Acquainted with the Night”

The analogy of the rhizome as “made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions” is one which can ultimately be expanded to include the entirety of other detours featured by the project (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987 [1980], p. 21). In spite of the linearity promised by the detour’s five-stop structure, any selection of artworks by authors relies upon the precedence of their earlier, more disorganized travel through the city. Locations otherwise isolated from one another become unified through their purpose of visit, and in the detour’s completion, participants enable a juxtaposition of their own familiarity with the urban landscape against that of the relevant author. Returning for a moment to the “Urban Uncanny” [Ref. L], the author’s acknowledgement at her final location that “there can be no one fixed narrative about the urban uncanny in the context of the night” distinguishes her detour as “a map and not a tracing...entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (p. 12). Much like the project’s other detours, rather than “reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself, it constructs the unconscious” for its participants (p. 12), who, despite exposure to the same guide of narration, draw their own interpretive inferences from a “knowing [that] is initially and really ‘inside’” (Heidegger, 1996 [1953], p. 56).

This observation becomes especially evident in those ‘maps’ unable to be literally traced. In the detour titled “A Derive Adventure”, the author “focuses on how your surroundings affect your emotional outlook” [Ref. M], creating a video that details her *dérive* (or drift) through the city as she places stickers at each location. The author’s expressions of mood during the video are specific to her time of travel (Fig. 8), and any attempts to replicate her movements would neutralize the very purpose of engagement which defines the detour’s psychogeographical perspective. Such a literalized approach to the project reiterates Deleuze and Guattari’s criticisms of the tracing that “when it thinks it is reproducing something else it is in fact only reproducing itself” (1987 [1980], p. 13). Ultimately, it is with this ideology that *Street Art deTours* reveals its success as contingent upon a mantra of rediscovery, wherein spaces unnoticed through habit and alienation become newly activated by the playful gazes of its users.

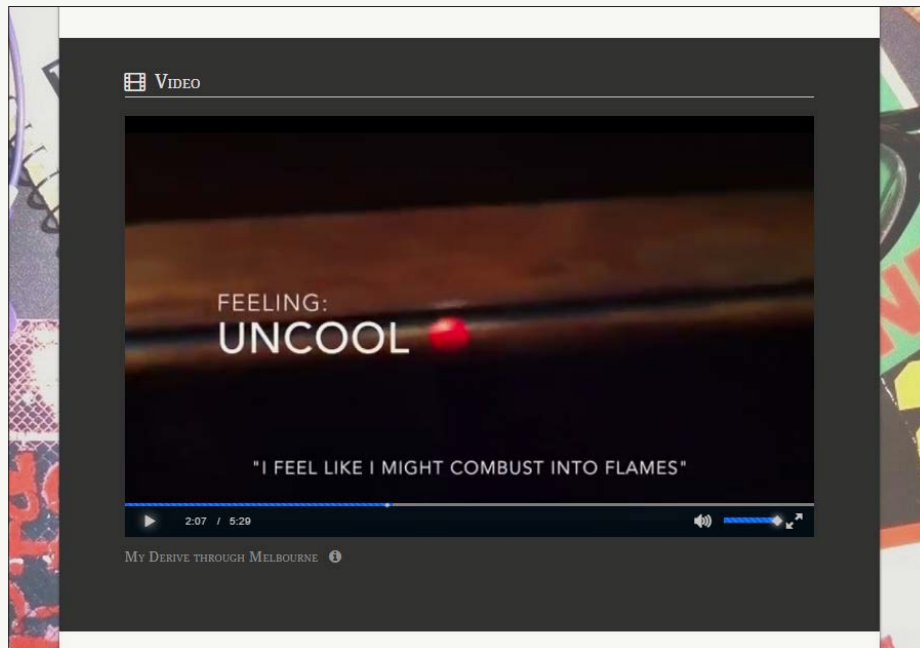


Fig. 8 Video-still from “A Derive Adventure”

Conclusion: Reflections for the Future

While not every detour features as clear a versatility of experience as some of those featured here, the primary goal of this paper has not been to offer an assessment of *Street Art deTours*, but to understand its implications for street art’s academic pursuit. However, it would be foolhardy to review the project without consideration of its problematic elements. Of course, not everyone has a smartphone, and not everyone has the opportunity to enjoy extended periods of ambulatory leisure. Lack of access to technology and spare time can easily be unaffordable commodities for many participants, and this exclusivity, while unavoidable given the constraints of the project’s goals, should be remembered.

Perhaps a less well-known problem concerns the project as just another in a long series of technological interventions into everyday life; like the telephone and television, the website has the potential “to reduce people’s independence and creativity” (Debord n.d., [1961]). In a manner similar to that of a game, technology attaches rules and conditions to its use; any deviation diminishes the intended function of that game, and its success deters the invention of any creative alternatives. This stagnation is a well-documented aspect in the short history of locative media, sharing its roots with what Leorke describes as the rise of the “global app economy”, where “commercial imperatives...push location-based games more toward generic, standardized formats that can be endlessly replicated and reproduced” (Leorke, 2014, p. 145). Though it is the intention of *Street Art deTours* to initiate a conversation rather than dominate it, it stands to reason that any success would likely impact the structure of similar projects within the future. One need only look as far as the archive in order to understand the likelihood of such an event, as most online projects devoted to street art’s appreciation have avoided any real efforts of audience empowerment. Like patrons in a gallery space, we are instructed to look and appreciate but never to touch, and certainly never to alter. There is but one perspective offered, and no mention is made by the archive of the subjectivity that governs the street artwork’s encounter in public space.

Playful participation in *Street Art deTours* thus posits a necessary interruption of this narrative of conditional gaze, and it facilitates identification of those audience-specific elements inherent to street art’s context of situation. Just as we should not be limited in our appreciation by that which is immediately visible, we should also not be afraid to consider our own performance of viewership in street art’s investigation, and it is only in our freedom to imagine that we can finally move beyond the image into the substance of the street artwork.

Acknowledgements

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Additional Image References

This tour explores the transformational power of nighttime to reinvent several tourist street art hotspots into spaces of contrast, mystery, depth and interactivity. During the day, these spaces are frequented by tourists, artists, and pedestrians and are full of life and colour. At night, many of these spaces are stripped on their vibrancy, and the focus shifts onto the detail of the space, the stark contrast between light and dark, and the heightened effect of other senses, particularly sounds and smells.

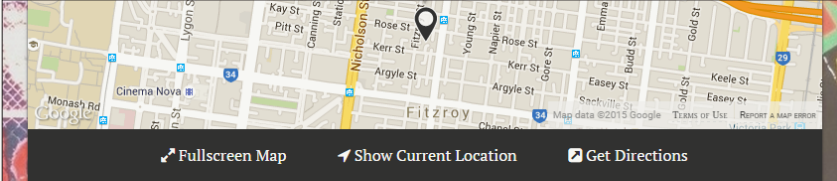
Ref. A *Excerpt of 'CBD Street Art at Night' description*

THE METAMORPHOSES: EXAMINING A ROMAN POET'S MAGNUM OPUS THROUGH THE UNORTHODOX LENS OF FITZROY STREET ART

DETOUR CURATED BY: UNIMELB, 2015

Classicists, as experts in a dying field, are invariably looking for ways to make other people enthusiastic about Greek and Roman literature. This tour will attempt, in a rather unusual manner, to utilize Fitzroy's street art as a visual tool to explore some of the more intriguing themes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, from madness to transformation itself.

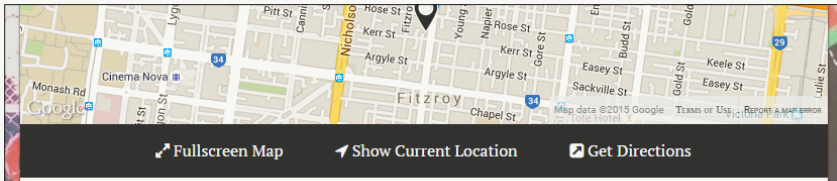
Ref. B *'Metamorphoses' detour description*



MADNESS, BACCHIC OR OTHERWISE

Madness plays a key motivational role throughout the *Metamorphoses*. Temporary psychosis is utilised by the poet to excuse many of the most heinous crimes, from Philomela and Procne's vengeful infanticide to Hades' abduction of the innocent Persephone. These instances of short-lived insanity derive from diametrically opposed sources: the former are possessed by the Furies, and the latter is struck by Cupid's arrow. There remains, however, a further fount of madness – the god of madness himself, Bacchus. This god's peculiar brand of insanity is almost always that induced by wine, music and other hedonistic pursuits. The influence of Bacchus' drug-induced lunacy is joyfully obvious in this particular piece. The design is inspired by Hunter S. Thompson's classic novel, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. This text might reasonably be considered one of the most hallucinogenic works to emerge from the early 1970s, which is certainly no mean feat. Also worthy of note is the ironic juxtaposition of its rather heady subject matter with the sedate, pastel-heavy colour palette. This aesthetic choice serves, interestingly, to create a rather temperate depiction of human mental extremes.

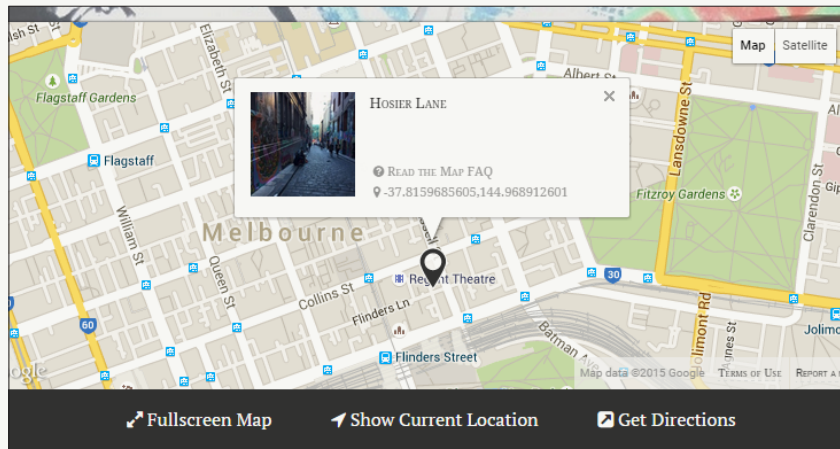
Ref. C Excerpt from Stop 1 of 'Metamorphoses' detour



RAPE, AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF THE FEMALE FORM

The undeniably frequent presence of rape in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* remains a deeply problematic theme outside of its historical context. Nonetheless, its prevalence renders it impossible to ignore. The same might equally be said of the depiction of the female form in contemporary street art, especially given the predominance of male artists. In both instances, the perspective of the artist is obviously crucial. But is it easy to discern? The answer, sadly, is a resounding no. While the poet has been argued to feel some sympathy for female victims of sexual violence – scenes of pursuit are often written from their perspective – he nonetheless takes a painful vicarious delight in recording their radiance in distress. Ambiguity is also a strong force within this piece. While we might accept the artist's appreciation of the female form, it is difficult to imagine that their approbation goes any deeper. Another point of similarity between the two works is their setting – secluded, and out of the public eye.

Ref. D Excerpt from Stop 2 of 'Metamorphoses' detour





HOSIER LANE

Given the great cultural value of street art and recognition of the movement, there has been great discussion in recent years to protect the art produced. In 2008 Australia's National Trust along with Heritage Victoria suggested listing some of Melbourne CBD's laneways as heritage sites.

In many respects the creation of sites dedicated to street art are enhancing the art form and simultaneously encouraging a longer life for it. Illegal works in isolated areas tend to be quickly targeted by council and efficiently removed. Given the estimated \$400 million of government money that is spent on cleaning up graffiti, it seems logical to dedicate that money to maintaining designated laneways for the use of street artists.

Hosier lane is one such laneway, now known as a badge of cultural diversity. These laneways have become outdoor galleries and are a destination people can visit to view works of great calibre and talented artists. It is an uncensored, expressive gallery where no statement is too risqué. The creation of legal street art sites act as a promoter of the artists, but equally preserves the art form and the works itself. Given the unwritten rule 'go over, go better', a level of respect is exercised in these areas allowing great pieces of art to remain relatively untouched.

 IMAGES



Ref. E Stop 4 of 'Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration' detour



ALEXANDER MITCHELL PASTE UP DOWN RUSSELL PLACE

Alexander Mitchell's paste up of hands and a serpent off Russell Place is a beautiful large-scale work that has deteriorated to some degree due to the natural elements. The extensive damage to the piece makes it very difficult to return it to its original condition when considering restoration. Thus, the paste up is left to erode naturally.

The process of restoration is to return a work to its former or original condition. In the realm of street art it might mean the removal of tags or defacing graffiti or in this case the repairing or replacement of paper. Following this, conservation by a Perspex covering or a seal may be applied to protect the work. However, the restoration of artworks requires the commissioning of a restorer or conservator, which comes at a great cost.

Given the fast pace and ever changing nature of street art it would be far too costly to expect works, no matter how loved, to be constantly maintained. Some artists are able to preserve their works by keeping the original designs or stencils in their studios. These are often closely protected, as artists fear theft and thus forgeries of their works.

Mitchell, along with a number of other Melbourne street artists, is represented by Backwoods Gallery in Collingwood who sell original works and prints. In working alongside a commercial gallery, artists are able to prolong the life of their works and series by allowing pieces to enter the commercial art market.

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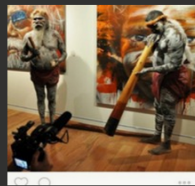


Ref. F Stop 2 of 'Conservation, Preservation, and Restoration' detour

STOP 5

Instagram has become such an effective way for artists to have their work seen that many artists put more weight on capturing an image of their art for Instagram and allowing their work to circulate through that digital platform than to have people walk by the piece and see it in person. In fact, street artists sometimes erase their own work after photographing it in order to create something new on the same space. The final product thus becomes an image meant to be consumed via this social media platform rather than on the street, begging the question of what the significance of creating this image on the street is in the first place. Perhaps there is a level of artistic validation awarded to creating the art on the street which audiences ultimately regard as essential for the image to have value. Thus, media history has shaped street art as the production of digital content just for Instagram has to many artists become more significant than for the art to be encountered by a real audience in the street, positioning walls that street art is created on as simply a backdrop for creating digital content. Propelling this change is a higher level of accessibility of an image on Instagram and to an increased audience than art on the street. Instagram functions as a global curator by transcending geographical borders, thus functioning as both a container and a platform to propel street artists work into the culture. This last stop is the Instagram account of one of Australia's leading contemporary artists who uses Instagram to promote his work, art galleries and website. As we are at the end of our tour, feel free to browse his account!

IMAGES



Ref. G Stop 5 of 'Instagram' detour

STOP 3: UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE BAILLIEU LIBRARY

University of Melbourne's central library, Baillieu, certainly receives the most foot traffic. This makes it an ideal place for students to have conversations with each other through their latrinalia. Students also commonly use this library as a platform of self expression. There are the typical "I heart so-and-so" messages, but more commonly are admissions of negative feelings. One student admits, "I feel so anxious all the time I'm hiding in the toilet." Regardless of the fact that the original writer may never see responses, dozens of people scrawl nearby, encouraging professional help or treatment. This graffiti serves as a platform for unloading emotions that the writers feel uncomfortable acknowledging in through other means. In an age of online surveillance, true anonymity is rare, but the bathroom remains an unlikely sanctuary for those struggling with the less glamorous aspects of life.

IMAGES

Ref. H Excerpt from Stop 3 of 'Latrinalia' detour

ALL WOM*N'S ART TOUR: EXPLORING AND DISCUSSING WOMEN IN PUBLIC SPACE

deTOUR CURATED BY: UNIMELB, 2015

This walking tour is designed for all women. It attempts to insert women's narratives into public space, examine if street art is egalitarian in terms of gender, and analyse the particular representations of women in public space and if these representations transgress social discourses on femininity.

Tour Rules:

- Ideally, all participants would include non-men, though feminist discussion is open to any other persons who wish to participate
- All participants must should in discussion at each stop regarding how gender has impacted their access to/behaviour within public space
- The voices of people of colour must be respected and listened to on this tour, their experiences and narratives must not be invalidated
- All participants should be respectful of the anecdotes, emotions and opinions of other participants, especially during discussion
- There is a high value put on the ability to listen
- The walking tour should be considered like a mobile safe-space for women, as such discussions about abuse should be forwarned, and bullying at any level will not be tolerated.

Ref. I 'All Wom*n's Art Tour' description

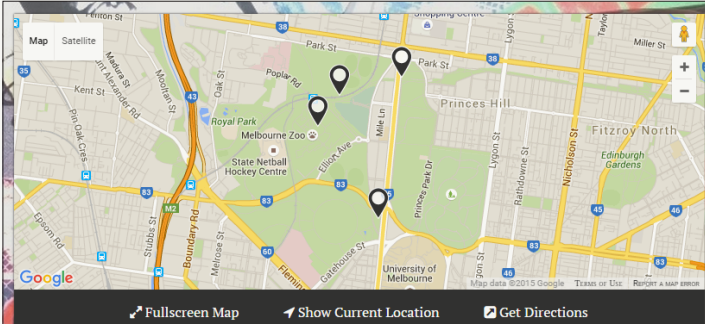
STREET ART STORYBOOK

deTOUR CURATED BY: UNIMELB, 2015

A group of year five school students gather at flinders street station to begin their walking tour. As a part of the Art curriculum at their school they are participating in a tour aimed at broadening their understanding of not only the iconic locations in the city of Melbourne but also the method of street art and its focus within the zeitgeist of the 21st century.

The tour is aimed at capturing the attention of the students through an interactive story telling. Each stop and artwork is a part of a greater narrative that encompasses the entire tour, creating a story line throughout. This keeps the students interested and allows them to engage within the works, through applying meaning.

Ref. J 'Street Art StoryBook' description





WHEN DARKNESS CALLS: THE CITY AS THE 'URBAN UNCANNY'
 deTOUR CURATED BY: UNIMELB, 2015

Taking a rhizomatic structure to explore how urban spaces produce ambiguity and affect, this tour offers a reading of the city that resists the tropes of linearity and ocularcentrism. Staged during the liminal time between dusk and nightfall, the tour enters the world of opacity and shadows and provokes a subjective encounter with the 'urban uncanny'.

Urban spaces are regularly practiced according to their authorized civic teleology. Through conventionalised and constant use, these spaces become not only familiar to their residents, they generate shared meanings around the idea of a 'living' or 'lived in' city. Certain spatial clusterings (gentrified precincts or 'quarters', parks, historical sites, transport networks) become expressive of a city's 'character', 'uniqueness' or 'authenticity' and work together to script dominant narratives of 'place' as known, legible and familiar. Yet these spaces can be read against the grain through an encounter with the ambiguous, disavowed or liminal urban environment.

Urban spaces have a shadow-side or counter-force which unsettles their normative spatial meaning and reveals itself through what Anthony Vidler describes as the 'urban uncanny'. The uncanny 'others' the familiar through appearing as its distorted double. At once recognisable yet bizarre and unfamiliar, Derrida notes that the 'play of the double' in the uncanny evokes an 'endless exchange between the fantastic and the real' (1994, 268). In 'misrecognising' spaces and making them strange, the urban uncanny situates itself in the lacuna between manifest and latent spatial meanings. In this context, the urban uncanny can be described as a performative space which produces corporeal affects at the level of uncertainty, fear, anticipation and intrigue. In suggesting that normative perceptions of urban spaces are contingent upon vision and familiarity, this tour scaffolds an alternative experience of the city by exploring the 'sensations, affects, intensities' (Grosz 2008, 3) foregrounded when the spaces we thought we knew become strange to us, and in turn estrange us.

LOCATIONS FOR deTOUR

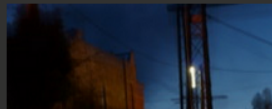
- 1 TOWARDS DARKNESS**
 The tour begins with the idea of 'transition' in the spatial form of a tunnel and the liminal time between dusk and nightfall. This starting point is designed to symbolically transition the participant from the habits of their daily routine into...
 
- 2 THE BUILDING IN PIECES**
 Recalling a similar gothic fascination around the 'ruin' in the 19th century German Romantic tradition, in the modern city the uncanny surfaces in the disquiet conjured by the 'unreason' of abandoned urban sites. There is an unknowable...
 
- 3 MISPLACING SITE**
 In the previous step, the choice to transgress interior space contra...

Ref. K Excerpt of 'Urban Uncanny' landing page

ONE ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT

This tour began with a transition into the uncharted territory of shadows, shifts and spectres. The tunnel is used once more to transition the participant out of the uncanny landscape, back into a known context of ordered, visible and transparent urban space. The return to the tunnel makes visible how no two spatial encounters can produce the same effects or affects. Spaces cannot remain as we first encountered them, and their meanings – familiar, unfamiliar and intangible – are produced in state of flux. During the course of this tour, as much as the participant has not ‘seen’, they themselves have been part of this ‘unseen’ landscape and perhaps experienced a freedom from being unnoticed in the visual field of others. As a subjective and shifting force, the uncanny likewise remains hidden in the shadows, resistant to constant visibility. To this end, there can be no one fixed narrative about the urban uncanny in the context of the night. It is multivalent and ambiguous. Rather, through practicing the city in a gesture of uncertainty, the participant has been, as the poet Robert Frost once wrote, ‘one acquainted with the night’.

 IMAGES



Ref. L Excerpt from Stop 5 of ‘Urban Uncanny’ detour

A DERIVE ADVENTURE

DETOUR CURATED BY: UNIMELB, 2015

This tour focuses on how your surroundings affect your emotional outlook, and most of the tour takes place in the NGV. I chose to make this a derive tour as it is much more about the tourist and how they react to their surroundings rather than the surroundings themselves. This tour involves expressing your feelings in a measured and controlled way and then physically marking them on your surroundings. For example, I used different coloured stickers responding to different levels of comfort.

Ref. M ‘A Derive Adventure’ description