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Pedestrian

Meta E. Gary

"PEDESTRIAN"

by

META GARY

Under the Direction of Paige Taylor

ABSTRACT

PEDESTRIAN is inspired by my daily walking routines and my relationship to the spaces in which I walk. Through additional instruction-guided walks with volunteers, this project examines the seemingly mundane travels of walkers and their relationship to and absorption of the space around them, and encourages a reconsideration of the environmental everyday into a venue for play and discovery.

INDEX WORDS: Walk, Everyday, Quotidian, Situationists, Psychogeography, Fluxus, Relational art, Pedestrian, Installation, Mapping, Decatur, Georgia, EveryTrail, Play

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1 INTRODUCTION

We know this town: we walkers, we bikers. We know the bumps in the roads and at

what points to cross the street to avoid the aggravated dog or low-hanging branches for which we

must duck. We know for how long to breathe in the sugar-coated air riding past the cookie fac-

tory on LaFrance Street before holding our breaths as we ascend the next hill past the waste

treatment machine.

This timing is crucial. Ask anyone.

Walking and biking offer ways of experiencing a path that are unmatched by any other

means of travel. Senses are heightened and excited. The physical association of being in a space

transforms it from a distant, flat landscape into a world ripe for exploration as the body changes

its position as an onlooker to that of becoming a part of the space.

Inspired primarily by the Situationist conception of a city and my immediate self-

identification with their glorified notions of the walk, and reclaiming and reorganizing of com-

mercial and unnoticed public spaces, *Pedestrian* explores my own personal notions of recogniz-

ing and redefining my physical everyday by way of Guy Debord's theory of psychogeography

and reductive design, while incorporating a social aspect of participant input and interaction with

strangers in the spaces through which we move.

2 THE GROUNDWORK LAYERS

2.1   The Situationists

The avant-garde group, the Situationist International, was founded in Paris at the end of

the 1950s and was constructed on the fundamental view that our world, especially the physical

layout and functionality of urban spaces, promotes a false "spectacle" aimed toward feeding capitalism. In the Situationists' most prevalent literature, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord condenses the central concern of the book, and the Situationists as a whole, in the first paragraph, as he warns that "all that was directly lived has become mere representation"(12). The cities that once breathed and thrived with its inhabitants' lives and creativity were now mere vehicles for commercial promotion disguised as everyday life.

From Charles Baudelaire's passionate flaneur to Andre Breton's accounts of unexpected discovery in *Mad Love*, Paris carries a history of intentional walking and urban exploration.   To combat society's spectacle, Debord, along with like-minded companions, conducted derives. These derives, long drifting walks through the city, "involve[d] playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects" (Debord, *Theory of the Dérive*), and were designed to reclaim the city from the stronghold of the spectacle. By moving through the city in ways that were perhaps not intended by the city's plans, the city now becomes a platform for playfulness and freedom from the spectacle's stifling of human desire.

As they walked and carried out these intentional derives, the SI members developed a study called "psychogeography". In "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography", Debord begins by equating it with a "materialist perspective that sees life and thought as conditioned by objective nature" and then defines the study as "precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals". Debord's description of psychogeography includes the phrase "precise laws and specific effects", which seems a bit too absolute, given the practice's inherent subjectivity and inconclusive nature. Even Debord goes on to admit that the definition is "charmingly vague", insomuch as the term can be applied to any practice that encourages a similar "spirit of discov-

ery". Therefore, psychogeography seems to be applicable to any noticing and organizing of a

space's emotional or intellectual influences. In the case of the Situationists, though, psychogeog-

raphy served the function of establishing their own authority over their own space by way of re-

definition. Tom McDonough, in his introduction to *Guy Debord and the Situationist Interna-*

tional, describes the underlying purpose for psychogeography:

> "That peculiar neologism, "psychogeography", conveyed exactly this desire for rational
> control over ever greater domains of life… it was a way of systematizing, of consciously
> organizing, what the surrealists had still experienced as random, as the marvelous. No
> less than moralizing functionalist architecture, so despised by the situationists, their urban
> ideologies were devoted to reshaping the subject, to, in fact, envisioning an empty subject
> modeled by the influence of the surroundings." (McDonough xii)

For the Situationists, urban space was a place of tiny adventures, and by discovering the inherent

"marvelous" qualities of the cities that encouraged those adventures; they were able to reshape

the perception of their own everyday space. They sought to not only explore, but to redefine

their commercialized environment into a useable platform for play and constructed situations. In

doing so, the SI members focused not on physical pre-planned geography, but more so on the

emotional and psychological effects that particular geography had on its inhabitants. In other

words, they sought to pinpoint geographical areas of different psychological impact and map

them accordingly, even to the point of weeding out areas with no worthwhile emotional value.

Figure 01, *The Naked City,* Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, 1957

Situationist maps typically consisted of existing city maps cut and reassembled to illustrate the important areas with a series of crisscrossing arrows indicating the sequence with which one would be best suited to follow the map and navigate between the highlighted regions. They remapped Paris and other cities with a SI faction according to these psychogeographical findings. In his Theory of Derive, Debord gives an example of a limited path taken by a student in Paris. He references a study by Chombart de Lauwe in *Paris et l'agglomération parisienne* as an example to show a passive, unadventurous routine of movement through a student's familiar space in which her "itinerary forms a small triangle with no significant deviations, the three apexes of which are the School of Political Sciences, her residence and that of her piano teacher." (Debord). The result is an even triangular path, thus reducing her perception of Paris to a tiny space with no deviation in route. His solution to the habitual is to incorporate chance and play into a derive, creating infinite possibilities of paths and encounters in the everyday.
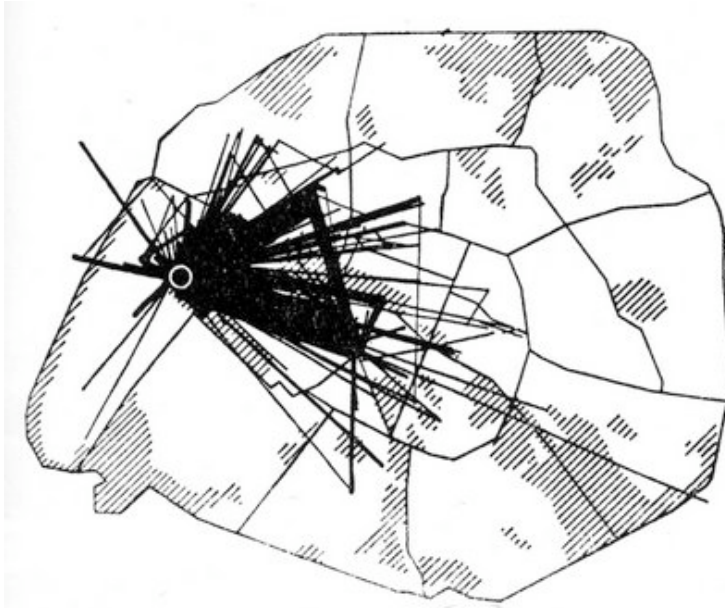
Figure 02, *Tracing the journeys made in one year by a Parisian student district XVI*, Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, 1952

2.2   Fluxus

Occurring slightly later than the Situationist formation, the early 1960s brought about the Fluxus movement, which was founded on similar ideals of highlighting the ordinary as a statement away from the capitalist-driven art market, as well as promoting the accessibility of art by incorporating it into life. A common theme within the movement was instructional scores, which are instructions written by the artist to instruct either the artist himself or an outside participant to engage in an activity, that then becomes part of the art. One of the primary achievements of Fluxus instructional scores is to draw attention to the common and combine art with everyday life. By adding intentionality and focus to commonplace events, walking to work, for example, the participant now becomes an active component of the practice as they are both mentally and physically absorbed in it. Routine thus evolves into less routine practice, and is transformed into a venue for chance, another defining component of all Fluxus pieces.

Inherent in the instructions, is an element of chance due to their lack of artist-viewer control. Although instructions are provided to the participant, thereby exerting control over the participant, despite the instruction's level of specificity, ultimately the performer has control over the interpretation. This element of ambiguity between the instruction-maker and the instruction-performer results in a further blurred definition of who is the artist and who is the viewer, for the performer takes on role of artist as the instructions are carried out. Likewise, the instruction's creator assumes a passive viewer role while the performance takes place while also maintaining the original role as controller.

< shadow piece >

Make shadows — still or moving — of your body or something on the road, wall, floor, or anything else.
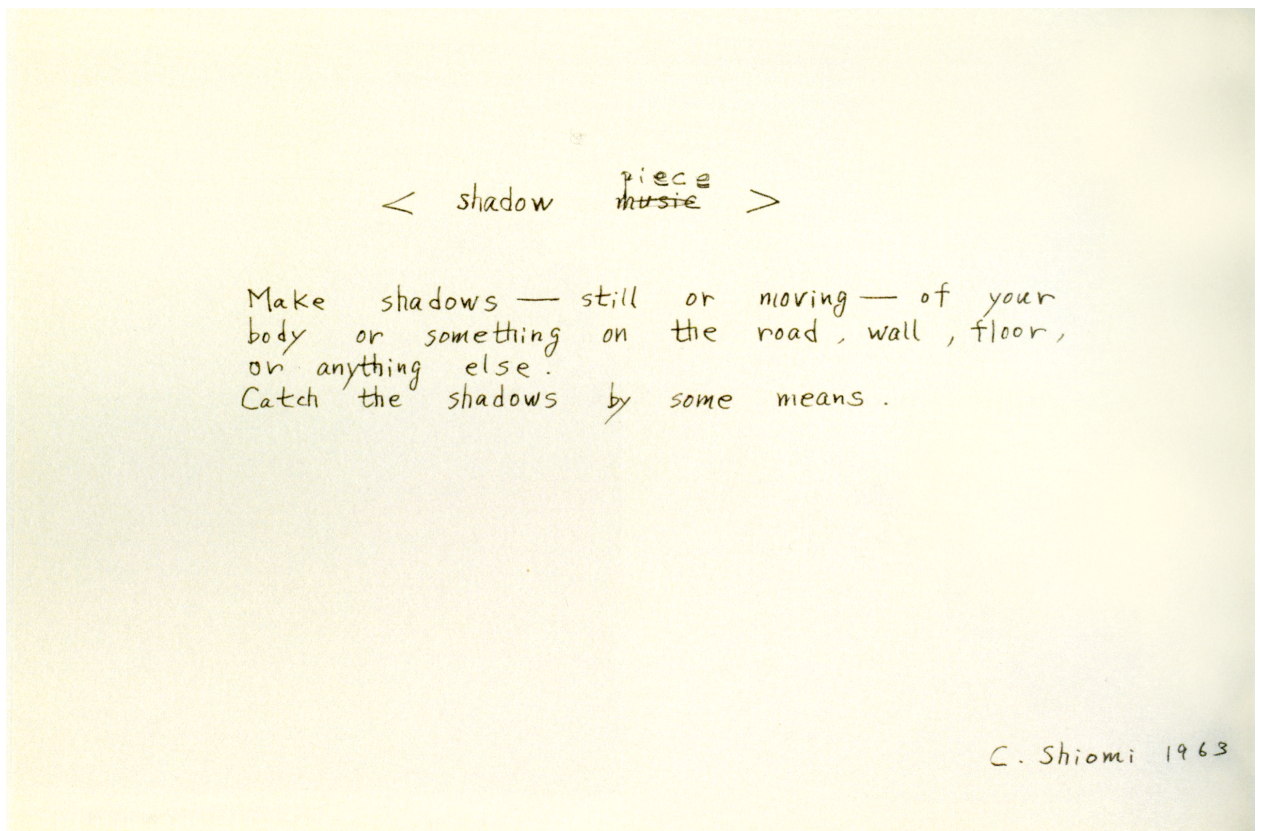Catch the shadows by some means.

C. Shiomi 1963

Figure 03, *Shadow Piece,* Mieko Shiomi, 1963

Additionally, like much Situationist theory, through drawing awareness to quotidian practice, Fluxus works had an aim to highlight the commonality and to escape traditional gallery art

commercialism. Along with their contemporaries, the Conceptualists, who's focus was achieving decommodification of the art object and its aesthetic in favor of the existence of ideas, Fluxus artists avoided art as fetish commodity and focused more on commonality of routine and practice. In Craig Saper's essay, "Fluxus as a Laboratory", he examines the community effects of Fluxus, adding that it emphasized "socio-poetic interaction and encouraged epistemological experimentation among participant-users" (Saper 136). The art created as part of Fluxus encouraged group collaboration outside of a gallery and focused on interaction of artist and participants as well as participants with other participants. It is a means of "organiz[ing] social networks, networks of people learning. These networks are based on an interactive model of art rather than on the traditional model of art as one-way communication from sender to receiver" (Saper 136). In the interactive model, participants create a different result than that which comes about from a single artist. When creative power rests within "a linked or networked community rather than locating it in the mind of a sole genius in the form of a single artist's inspiration" (Saper 139), the original "artist" relinquishes power to the public and joins the group in collective creation. This ideal of commonplace group collaboration rather than elevating the skilled or trained artist builds upon the Marxist model glorified by the Situationist of elevating the proletariat to a level playing field as opposed to the tiered system of capitalism. Likewise, Fluxus applied the concept to the art world and attempted to maintain art outside of the scope of commercial galleries and museums, but rather keep the work out in the streets or within their self-created co-ops and workshops.

Between 1960 and 1964, during the emergence and height of the Fluxus movement, Dutch artist, Stanley Brouwn created a series entitled *This Way Brouwn*, in which he approached strangers and asked them for directions to another place in town. He asked each person to draw

a map and thus the series of maps comprised the art piece. Although the artist had no intention

of following the maps provided, the maps themselves offered an insight on common perceptions

and communications about space. In his essay, *Topological Pathways of Post-Minimalism,* Eric

de Bruyn discusses the context of Brouwn's piece and its separation from the gallery and muse-

um art venue. "Once out the door and onto the city streets, this subject entered into a metastable

force field of shifting and intersecting social networks of power"(39). Because his work dealt

with people's perception of space, it only made sense to conduct the work within the space being

discussed. Additionally, Brouwn's rejection of formal gallery space in favor of the public venue

ran parallel to the Fluxus ideals emerging at the time.

Figure 04, *This Way Brouwn,* Stanley Brouwn, 1964
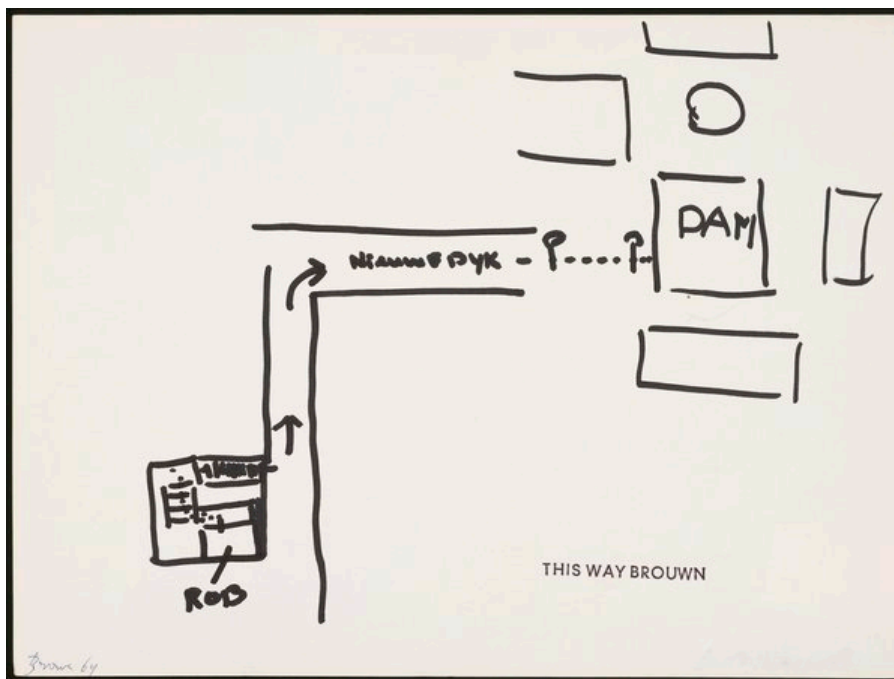
In particular, Brouwn focuses on the map and our interaction with our physical surround-

ings. As we exist in our everyday surroundings, we develop a notion of its placement in relation

to ourselves and other places and objects. These notions are often individually unique and, like

the Situationist psychogeographic maps, rarely follow the same lines as traditional geographic

cartography.

> "We can decipher only a web of intersecting lines and connecting nodes, which add up to no more than a fragmentary rendering of the urban network of streets and squares. We can't tell for sure, but some of these drawings might actually contain the same set of directions even though they seem to bear little formal similarity. What we perceive, in other words, is a kind of mental image of an individual's intuitive grasp of the city environment, but this mental representation of urban space is prone to all kinds of deformation and augmentation. These cognitive maps picture the pathways between urban locales, irrespective of the actual physical distance that separates them or their relative position in a geographical sense. In contrast to the gridded, metrical scale of the topographical map, these drawings portray the urban environment as a vectorial field of direction and movement. In short, the *This Way Brouwn* series depicts a topological, rather than a Euclidean conception of space…They delineate a directional field of bodily movement within the habitual environment of the city, and in this capacity the drawings indicate but do not fully figure a more intensive mode of spatial experience than the rectilinear grid of a map ever could." (de Bruyn 41-42)

Brouwn's work is clearly in line with the Situationist collection of reappropriated and rearranged Paris maps. His collected maps more accurately depict how we see and interact with space, rather than a geographical gridded rendering and he calls their similarities and differences to the viewer's attention. However, Brouwn's piece flips the traditional role of the artist and places it back onto a participant. As with much Fluxus work, *This Way Brouwn* involves multiple layers of instructions- Brouwn instructing the stranger to draw the map and the stranger instructing Brouwn which way to go. This "ideological aspect of collaborative and communicative practice in art" (de Bruyn 48) was influenced by the previous avant-garde and became a fundamental theme in Fluxus works as well as an influence for subsequent movements.

2.3   Relational Aesthetics

Nicholas Bourriaud first coined the term "Relational Aesthetics" in his 1998 book, *Relational Aesthetics*. He defines relational art as "art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space" (Bourriaud 14). In an attempt to create and emphasize human relationships, rela-

tional art focuses on interactions on both small and large-scale levels, wherein it is these relationships and interactions that produce the art. These "micro-topias" exist within and in opposition to the larger sphere of separation resulting from technology and commodification. Bourriaud bleakly asserts our lack of social connectivity as a byproduct of rapidly increasing technology.

> "The superhighway may well actually help us to travel faster and more efficiently, yet it has the drawback of turning its users into consumers of miles and their by-products. We feel meager and helpless when faced with the electronic media, theme parks, user-friendly places, and the spread of compatible sociability, like the lab rat doomed to an inexorable itinerary in its cage, littered with chunks of cheese" (Bourriaud 8).

Like Debord's description of the passive existence in the Society of the Spectacle, Bourriaud outlines a similar surrender to commerce through technology.

Conversely, it should be noted that in his book, *Telematic Embrace* (2003), Roy Ascott attributes the term "distributed authorship" (Ascott 65) to his 1983 internet piece, *La Plissure du Texte*, referring to the collective creation of a work of art by various contributors. As with the classic art model of the exquisite corpse, Ascott's internet piece was a form of artist and author collaboration through electronic connections, and thus celebrated networking technology as a venue for these human relationships. The authorship of the work is therefore distributed among its creators, and like the combined artist/ audience as participant model of the Fluxus movement, its authorship is obscured into a cooperative group that requires participation and interaction in order to transpire. By participating in socially based works, participants become intrinsically linked and through their interactions both the artists and the work exists.

Furthermore, in Bourriaud's examples of relational art, many maintain similar Situationist and Fluxus examples of time-based experiences not in keeping with the traditional gallery format. He says that "it is no longer possible to regard the contemporary work as a space to be walked through…It is henceforth presented as a period of time to be lived through, like an open-

ing to unlimited discussion. The city has ushered in and spread the hands-on experience: it is the tangible symbol and historical setting of the state of society" (Bourriaud 15). Through this new relational lens, art is becoming a time-based experience where, when involving participants, time and sociability combine to create pieces. It is what exists in individual and group experiences as well as in these created situations that becomes important, and the city is vessel for these experiences. Within people's daily urban routine, we can extract these interactions, and thus there is material for relational art.

As with Situationist and Fluxus works, Relational aesthetics attempts to break away from traditional commodified art, however much of it takes place in traditional art venues, for example Rirkrit Tiravanija's collective meal making or Vanessa Beecroft's uniformly dressed models standing in a museum room (Bourriaud 7-8). The interaction that takes place between gallery-goers, however is the work's emphasis. Although displayed in a New York gallery, Tiravanija's

Figure 05, *Untitled Free,* Rirkrit Tiravanija, 1992

Untitled (Free) would not exist were it not for the gathering and participation of viewers. The premise was simple: Tiravanija cooked Thai curry in the gallery and people were allowed to sit and eat together for free. Arguably, it is the people eating and interacting that are making the art, rather than the artist, Tiravanija.

This blurring of the artist/audience relationship is quite similar to that of the blurred relationship prevalent in Fluxus scores. However, the majority of artists Bourriaud names in *Relational Aesthetics* primarily show in galleries and museums, which brings everyday life into the art sphere, as opposed to Fluxus, which emphasized incorporating art in the life sphere. Much of this shift of audience-involved art back into the gallery and museum space is attributed for the presence of far more art venues, especially those highlighting more experimental or interactive work. Furthermore, with a lasting foundation of the artists in the 1960s Conceptual and Fluxus movements, this type of work has maintained its relevance, and is therefore more widely and readily recognized as having a valid place in the formal art world and in its physical venues. While the artists described as "relational" are still challenging the definitions and boundaries of art and artist, and while they are addressing a perceived decrease in quality interactions among and within the everyday, these artists are still thriving and existing within the realm of the commodified niche, thus the work makes a slight departure from Situationist and Fluxus anti-capitalist paradigms and rather more strongly reflects the active and associative qualities of both. Claiming to possess the same doctrine of decommodification as its conceptual predecessors, Bourriaud misses the fact that Relational Aesthetics, along with its anti-capitalist Fluxus and Conceptualist precursors, are not purely autonomous and independent in the art world and there-

fore inherently not immune to its dependence on commodity artifact value. This is evident in the numerous original Fluxus happening posters and instructional scores now for sale in auction houses. It is apparent in one of Bourriaud's frequently mentioned artists', Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who's *Untitled" (Portrait of Marcel Brient)*, one of Gonzalez-Torres's iconic candy piles intended to incite audience interaction and consumption, was recently purchased at auction for $4.5 million (Philips de Pury and Company). Many of these artists are displayed in high profile establishments like MOMA, where visitors are required to pay admission, thereby not only applying a monetary commodification to the work inside, but also limiting the so-called "real" interactions as a reflection of the outside world. Hal Foster, in his text, "The Artist as Ethnographer" discusses the obstacles of public community-driven work within the context of the formal art institution and offers a criticism of the art institution.

> "Here, values like authenticity, originality, and singularity, banished under critical taboo from postmodernist art, return as properties of the site, neighborhood, or community engaged by the artist. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this displacement, but here too it is important to remember that the sponsor may regard these "properties" as just that, as sited values to develop. Of course the institution may also exploit such site-specific work in order to expand its operations for reasons noted above (social outreach, public relations, economic development, and art tourism). In this case, the institution may displace the work that it otherwise advances: the show becomes the spectacle where cultural capital collects." (Foster 306)

The example Foster describes shows the disconnect inherent in bringing community work into the gallery or museum space, wherein an aspect of its social relationship's authenticity is diminished in favor of institution financial advancement.

Perhaps it has simply become the fate of any works that have established a credible definition as "art" to ultimately succumb to the commodified nature of the art institution. With this in mind, the artists mentioned in this paper attempt to at least assert that art's role as commodity is not its primary or even desired function and attempt to, at the very least, combat it with the

most real and genuine notion they all recognize: human connection. As Guy Debord posited, everything around us has become a spectacle and that simulation is possibly inescapable, even for those who set out to do so.

3 MY INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE

Like the Parisian student, I find myself taking the same paths as part of my routine. I walk the same thirty-minute route to and from work. I go from my house to school along the same path every day. These common routes tend to be dictated by the shortest distance between points to ensure efficiency of travel. But, I often find myself following the same routes and routines when I walk my dog as well. There is a twenty-minute loop through my neighborhood that I mindlessly follow with him every morning, and for this instance, there is no reason why the path should remain the same since there is no specific destination. However, it is routine. I am used to it. I don't think about it. It is the everyday.

It is this exact acceptance of routine in walks to which the Situationists referred in their writings and encouragements to break free from mindless routine and rather incorporate the intentional and conscious derive. As with the Fluxus intentions of finding consciousness and interest in the banal, I want to become more aware of my space and assimilate play and creativity into my daily life, especially that which as become routine and automatic.

3.1 Small Scale Mappings

"In every case the spatial field depends first of all on the point of departure — the residence of the solo dériver or the meeting place selected by a group. The maximum area of this spatial field does not extend beyond the entirety of a large city and its suburbs. At its minimum it can be limited to a small self-contained ambiance: a single neighborhood or even a single block of houses if it's interesting enough."

Debord, *Theory of the Derive*

I began by mapping the most familiar spaces around me: my living room, my studio, and the café where I work part-time. I mapped my movement, my emotions, sound and the movement of individuals and groups. These activities and spaces have all become highly commonplace and are key players in my everyday, yet many patterns go unnoticed when I experience them everyday. For example, what is the shape of my path while I'm screen-printing in my studio? I placed post-its at positions where I anticipated peak activity in the studio, and every time I encountered one, I made a mark on it. Then, I was able to recreate my route as I performed the task. These remaining traces of the everyday provide insight into what I am doing when I'm not paying attention to what I'm doing, including deviations to eat snacks or play banjos. As an additional small-scale mapping, I photographed and mapped the coffee shop where I work based on movement and sound of the customers as well as visually tracking the paths of my coworkers behind the bar as they worked the morning shift. These initial, small-scale documentations laid the groundwork for my later focus on noticing the patterns and features within longer routes of daily routines. In focusing intently enough on the trivial routines in order to map them, I was able to defamiliarize myself with my familiar and thus call a new attention and appreciation to the quotidian. It then became clear how much I was truly missing through familiarization.
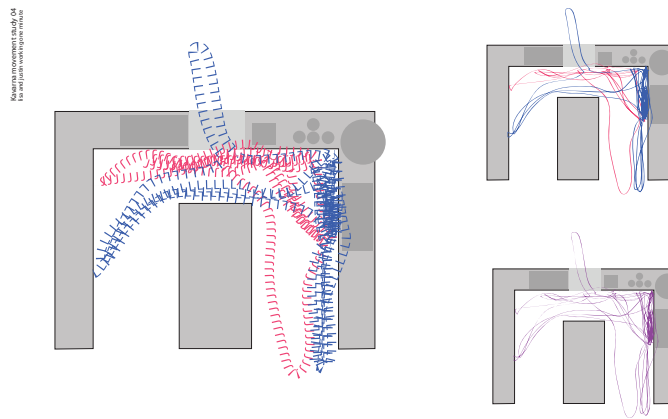
Figure 06, *Mapping study: Justin and Lisa working at Kavarna*, 2011
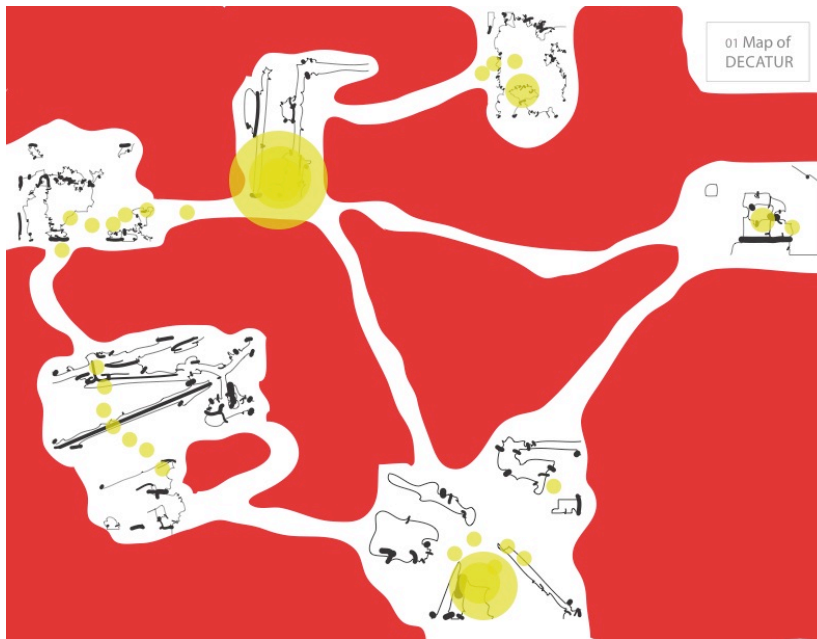

Figure 07, *Mapping Study: Situationist Decatur 05*, 2011

3.2   Documented Derives

I love walking. I walk a lot. I don't have a car and primarily rely on walking, biking or

riding my scooter for transportation, but have come to view these modes of transportation as a

privilege, for these means of travel allow for a far greater absorption of the surroundings than

from within a car. I can smell and hear what is going on around me. I can feel every bump in

the road or uneven ground under my feet. Because it is my slowest means of movement, walk-

ing allows for the most observation and contemplation of an area. I have come to know these ar-

eas that follow my routine in a specialized way. For instance, I walk down the left side of Adair

Street, but always move to the right at the last minute before crossing Dekalb Avenue. There is a

crosswalk there and occasionally I encounter a driver sympathetic to the pedestrian's travels to

let me by. From here, there is a hike up and over the railroad track mound with a worn path that

lines up perfectly with the end of the crosswalk, which lets me know that I am not the only one

who has chosen this route on a daily basis. Immediately after descending the tracks, I visit with

Figure 08, *worn path and vacant building*, 2011

the vacant building with great floors and plenty of windows. I always lament its lost potential as I simultaneously check my full-body reflection and lament my recent lack of exercise. Details such as this have become my everyday.

While walking does offer a closer, more involved relationship with my surroundings, along with intimate knowledge often comes normality and regularity, and I quickly forget to notice new things as they become part of regular routine- the small details that change from day to day or that are constant but go unnoticed, still get washed away and assimilated into routine. After traveling the same routes over and over, I just come to expect these things. I can ride my bike through the dark Krog Street tunnel and know where to expect every single jarring bump on the under-maintained road. I don't think about it anymore. It has become merely a part of the day.

On the other hand, sometimes the routine does become about what I encounter everyday and how it does make me think. On Jefferson Avenue, on the left side of the sidewalk when heading towards College Avenue, there is a spot on the sidewalk with tiny blue tiles inlayed into the cement. Every single time it makes me happy and starts me on a string of thoughts about how I should be placing small surprises around for other people and how wonderful it would be if everyone left tiny treats for observant passersby.

Figure 09, *blue tiles on sidewalk*, 2011

 I wonder how many other people notice those tiles and if it makes them just as happy. I wonder how many other details I miss on my way from point A to point B and begin to wonder if I too am just hurrying along too much to appreciate what is around me. Eventually I cross the busy street get a block or so and forget about it entirely, until I pass those little blue tiles again and the cycle of thinking begins once more.

    I began walking these daily routes attempting to take in everything thrsvough photographs and written documentation, tracking my routes and synching photos to map locations by way of a smartphone app called EveryTrail. I have been documenting my walks and photographing the spots that I already know spark my interest as well while keeping a keen eye out for how the aesthetics of my environment affect me. Which things I absorb and which things I elim-

inate in my perception become important in the documentation process. By taking pictures with-

in the app on my phone along the way, I can geographically plot exactly where the photo was

taken and then associate not only specific objects, but also an entire area where thoughts or emo-

tions were relevant. Also I am able to act and capture the image immediately, when the thought

occurs allowing for a more accurate capture of chance and spontaneity. After routinely explor-

ing my immediate geographical area, I am able to track my own patterns of walking routes in

conjunction with thoughts and feelings associated with them, and thus I begin my plunge into

psychogeography.
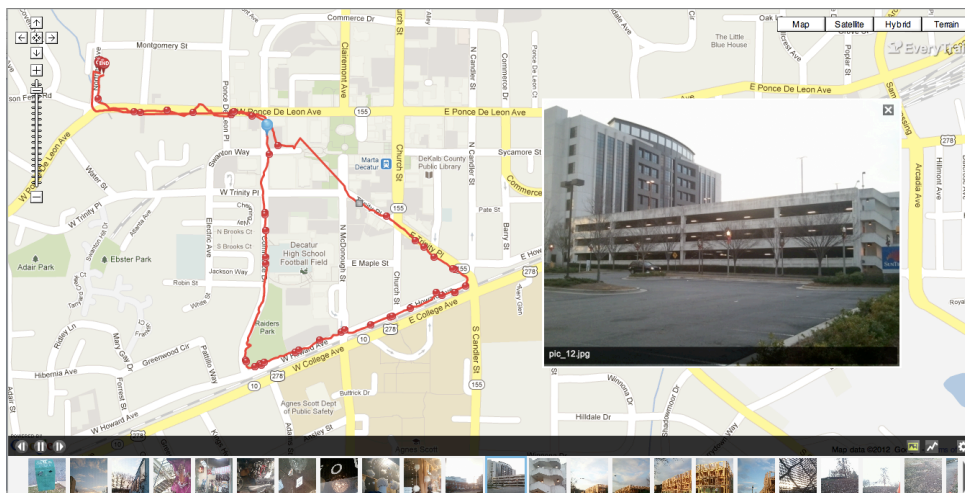
Figure 10, *EveryTrail screenshot*, 2011

In my personal explorations of this psychogeography, with the photograph archives of

my travels, I graphically edit the aesthetic information that I don't absorb. Fluorescent paint,

clothing or signage, for example is often the only relevant detail set against a background of

sparse brown winter leaves. Certain architecture, or shapes created by groups of buildings may

be enticing, while the street in front of them or the actual buildings' surface details are irrelevant.

I began digitally and manually removing the extraneous images from the photographs in order to produce custom landscapes containing only what was important to me.

Figure 11, *Reductive Study: TOES building,* 2011
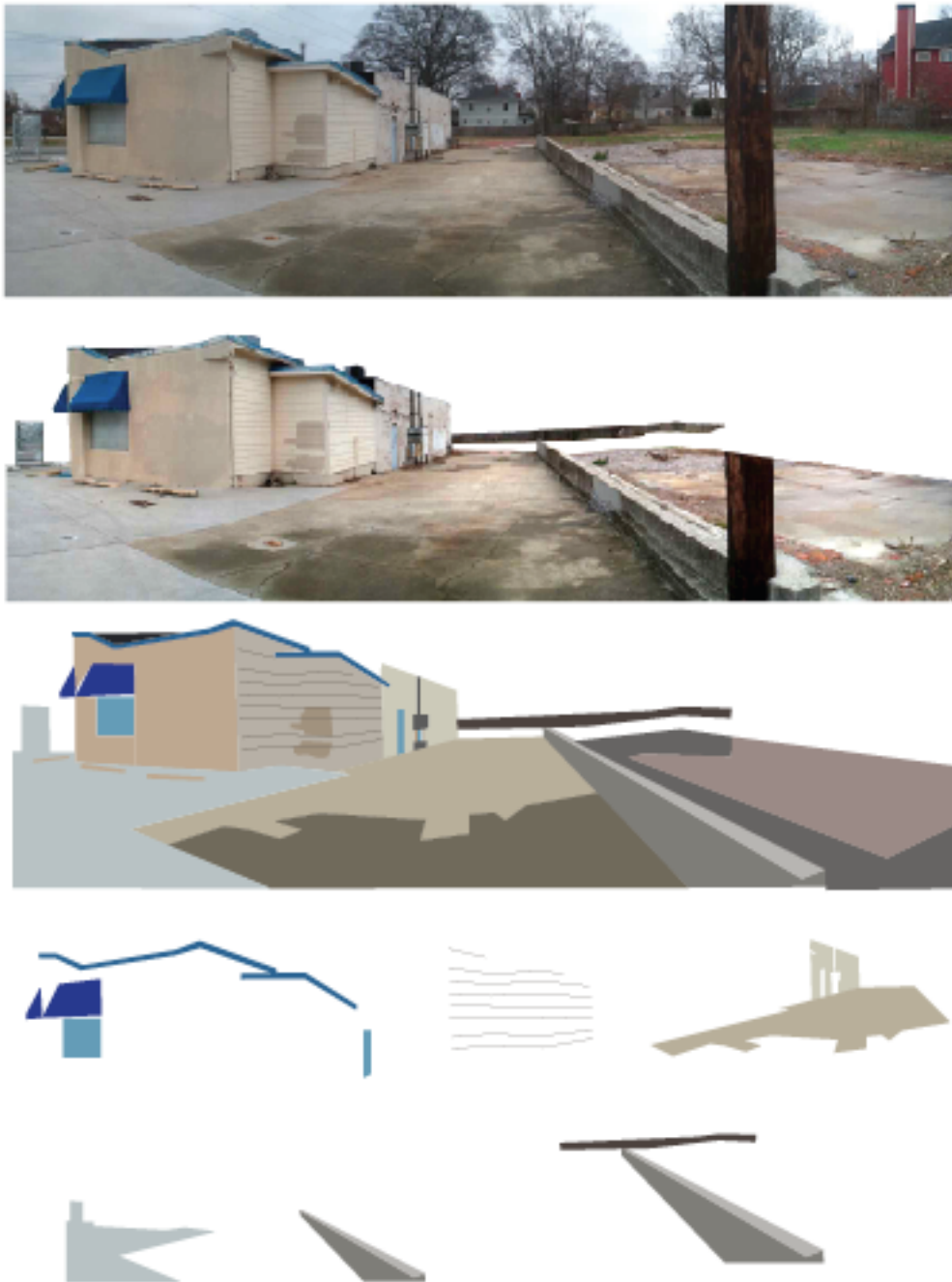
After visually reducing a series of images across a geographic location, new landscapes began to form that were mere references to their originals. The final result of the walking photographic tracking is isolating geographic regions of interest, and mapping only what seems to reoccur as relevant and then removing the rest. Also, these maps now have photographic archives of what is important, so it is a map and individual images, and the new imagery creates a new, different type of mapped record.

4   PEDESTRIAN

The problem remains how to adequately "map" a space from walking, for it is so much more than a line that traces the route one walks. While the path line can trace where a person physically travels based on psychological influences, it cannot capture what those influences are or how they affect the walker. Michael de Certeau poetically addresses this very problem asso-ciated with mapping a walk:

> "Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it 'speaks'. All the modalities sing a part in the chorus, changing from step to step, step-ping in through proportions, sequences, and intensities which vary according to the time, the path taken and the walker. These enunciatory operations are of an unlimited diversi-ty. They therefore cannot be reduced to their graphic trail."
> Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life* (99)

The individual experiences and physical space perceptions are eliminated when a space is plotted linearly and two-dimensionally. Although perfectly valid linear and two-dimensional maps exist that only vaguely, if at all, resemble, their formal geographic counterparts, as in the case of Debord's *Naked City* map or Stanley Brouwn's series of directional maps drawn by strangers.

Because of the emotionally and psychologically biased condition of psychogeographical exploration, I attempted to capture a glimpse of this "unlimited diversity" that the path and the

walker dictate by bringing in other walkers to add to the collection of observations. In doing so, I set up a system of tracking and comparing that would capture not only the linear paths taken, but also instructions for interacting with and documenting specific points of intellectual and emotional interest along the way.

I established a list of fifteen volunteers to participate in the project. The participants walked while following an algorithm of instructions that I created for them, similar to the Fluxus instructional scores. The instructions are intentionally interpretable and results depend, not only upon decisions of the active participants in the project, but also on unknowing passersby in the area. In order to ensure some level of physical overlap in paths, I delineated an area on the map in Decatur, in which all participants started and I provided them with a list of instructions to follow, which guided their walks.

Participants were provided with a 9" x 11" envelope containing the following:

> guide book
> 8x5" paper (20)
> black Sharpie marker
> ball point pen (2)
> pencil
> colored pencils
> masking tape
> plastic bags (5)

(IMAGE OF SUPPLIES LAYOUT)

Inside the guidebook is the instruction list and directions for documenting the results using a camera and the provided paper and writing materials. The instruction list is as follows:

Collect artifacts as you walk. Store and label them.

1. Photograph your starting direction
2. Walk

3. Take a picture of the first stranger you see
4. Thank the stranger
5. Walk towards the sun
6. Turn on the third street on your left
7. Walk until you see an unappealing object that belongs to someone else
8. Photograph the object
9. Draw the object as you would find it more appealing.
10. Leave a note for the owner on the object suggesting your improvements
11. Photograph the note.
12. Turn right and walk
13. Ask the first person you see for directions into town like this: "How do I get into town from here?" Accept the person's first interpretation of the term "town".
14. Write down the directions.
15. Follow the directions until they end
16. Stop and draw a map of the route you have taken to this point
17. Cross the street
18. Follow the first smell you smell
19. Write down a description of the smell
20. Walk until you no longer smell it
21. Draw everything you see to your left
22. Walk for 5 minutes in the direction you find least appealing
23. Stop at the next street corner
24. Take a picture of the corner
25. Improve the corner
26. Document your improvements
27. Ask the next stranger you pass for a suggestion on which direction to walk.
28. Follow his or her suggestion
29. Claim a plot of land that appears otherwise unclaimed.
30. Photograph this process.
31. Determine the wind direction and walk in the direction of the wind's movement
32. When you reach a street light, stop and write down every sound you hear
33. Write down an instruction for someone else
34. Find a visible place to post the instruction
35. Take a photograph of your posted instruction
36. Now follow your own instruction
37. Document this process
38. Begin to walk back in the direction you started.
39. Walk for 10 minutes
40. After 10 minutes find something wonderful that you think someone else would not notice.
41. Photograph it.
42. Write a glorified description of it.
43. Make sure other people notice it.
44. Photograph and/ or write down how you accomplished this
45. Return to your starting position.

In addition to walking and following instructions, participants also electronically tracked their routes and photographs using the EveryTrail phone app. In doing so, I was able to keep track of their linear routes as well as their photographs, which the app geotagged at the physical spot where the photo was taken. With the collection of fifteen data sets, I can note common spots of interest as well as common routes taken within the same small area, thus resulting in a collaborative psychogeographical map of the space.

I encouraged participants to not only follow the specific instructions I provided, but also to collect physical artifacts and take notes and additional photographs as they saw fit to more fully illustrate their walking experience. Also within the instructions are directions to interact with
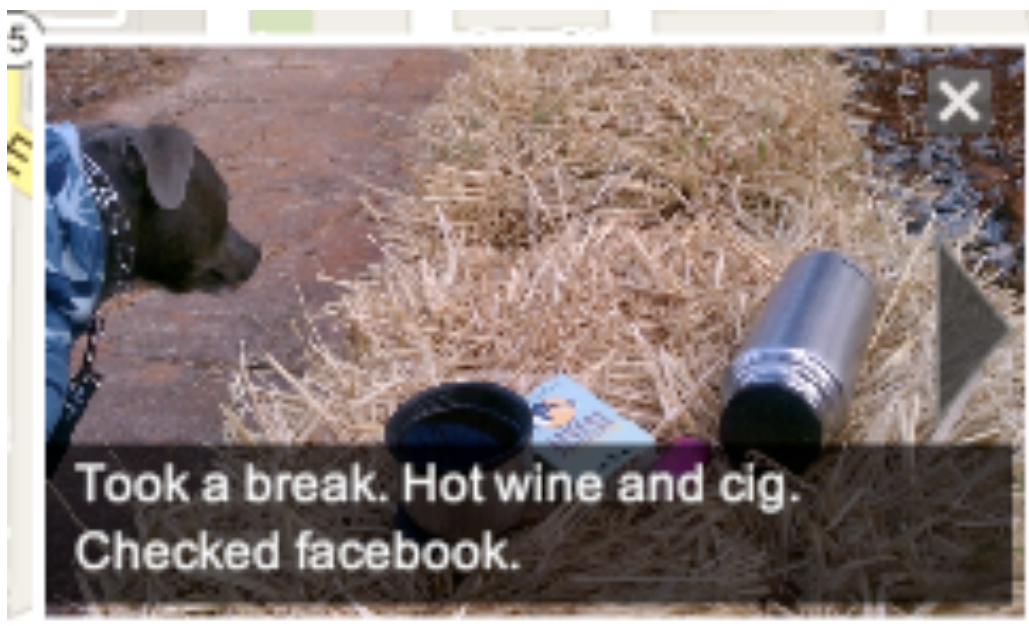

Figure 12, *EveryTrail screenshot:* Sirkka Hougard, 2011

and take instructions from strangers in the area, thereby placing me, the "artist", yet another degree away from the outcomes, as well as adding another relational element to the activity. In other words, by following my directions, participants have a connection to me within their space,

and I also surrender control by instructing the participants to get instructions from strangers on

the street, thereby bringing them into the process as well and encouraging human interaction.

The outcomes of the group project were more exciting than I anticipated. Individually,

some are innately more intriguing, but the variety of outcomes placed together as a unit provides

an interesting comparison. They display a series of tiny adventures and unique experiences

brought about by generic instructions and a commonality of environment and also provide a

linked web of commonality and comparison among results. For example, here are two very dif-

ferent responses to instruction # 27: Ask the next stranger you pass for a suggestion on which

direction to walk:

> We were in Decatur and I stopped this woman who was walking by. I said, "Excuse me"
> and she kept walking. I said it a couple of more times and she finally stopped, took out
> her earphones that were hidden by her stocking cap. I asked her what would be an inter-
> esting direction, and she looked surprised but said "Yes sure! I would love to! Go down
> this street a couple of blocks and you will come to the Decatur Cemetery and it is really
> cool." She was so pleased. So I went there of course.
> Calvin Burgamy, January 15, 2012

> And another outcome from the same question:

> The teenage boys thought my question was stupid. Rolled their eyes, but advised
> "straight". A brave afterthought a few feet down the way, "You could come to my
> house!" His friends gave him appropriate kudos.
> Lisa Holter, January 6, 2012

A woman's gleeful surprise and seemingly proud advice versus the teenager's sarcastic remark

clearly not meant to be helpful: these two reactions placed side by side illustrate a wonderful

contradiction among stranger and participant relationships within this project.

Figure 13, *Instructions 24 and 26*, Sirkka Hougard. 2012

On a few occasions, the instructions require the participant to regard an aspect of their surroundings and leave something behind, whether it is another instruction, an indication of ownership or a constructive suggestion. Many of the responses to this were playful and humorous. For example as a solution to the instructions to locate an unappealing object and leave a note as to how it would be more appealing, Adam found somebody's recycling bin. He left a note and a drawing indicating that perhaps instead of holding the owner's recycling, this should be a bin for cats. Sirkka claimed a nearby bush by removing the bra she was wearing and hanging it on the bush. Physical artifacts like these intentionally left behind by participants offer a multi-layered opportunity for investigation into the commonplace. The participants are now forced to make quality judgements about their environment and consider how they can actively change and interact with it. Secondly, the part to which we are not privy, is the viewer who is not knowingly involved in the project. The owner of the recycling bin will find the note, and for a moment, entertain the idea of filling the bin with cats. Thus the provider and the reciever of the note have exchanged a communication and awareness of their space.

Figure 14, *Instructions 35 and 37*, Linsey Meeks. 2012

Additionally, by placing compelling instructions around the city for onlookers to notice, partici-

pants are providing an option, and even encouraging strangers to involve themselves in the pro-

ject. Therefore, the number of project participants increases from the known fifteen.

Some interactions and results promoted more practical than humorous responses. In one

case a participant, and non-Decatur resident, instigated multiple interactions about an existing

community concern in executing her response to instruction #9, suggesting a solution to an un-

appealing object:

> "9a: While I was photographing the un-level sidewalk, an older man came to ask what I
> was doing. He was obviously a proud and involved citizen. He explained the current
> policy of the City of Decatur is to maintain all sidewalks on one side of each street.
> Budget restrictions do not permit maintenance [on] all sidewalks at present. Makes
> sense! We also discussed the severity of this sidewalk's defects and hazards to pedestri-
> ans at night. We mulled over several approaches to solve this problem without jeopardiz-
> ing the health of the large tree whose roots created the problems. We finally concurred
> that a gravel section around the roots would likely address the issue well.

9b: While we were pondering the sidewalk repairs, another Decatur citizen stopped to comment. She asked if there was a complaint against the appearance of the house and yard behind the large tree. There indeed was an opportunity to improve that area. She mentioned that the owner of that house was working hard to better the surrounding. The woman commented that it would not be kind to make any negative notes about the property and leave them for the owner. I assured her that was not my intent. She was ahead of my "be kind to others" instruction (#33)"

Cindy Gary, January 07, 2012

By noticing an aspect in her surroundings, of which the nearby citizens apparently were already aware, the participant fueled a dialog about the matter through unsolicited discussion and interaction, and worked together to devise a possibly feasible solution to their obstacle.

Just as the maps in *This Way Brouwn* show an intriguing level of diversity, my responses to instruction #16: Stop and draw a map of the route you have taken to this point, displayed an equally diverse array of mapping styles and interpretations. Although many of these maps
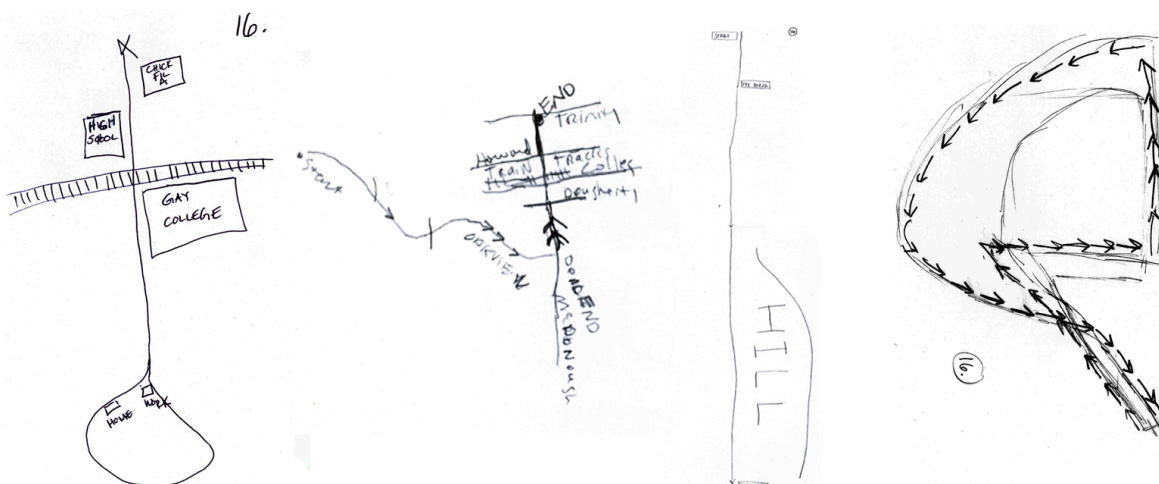
Figure 15, *four responses to instruction 16*, Sirkka Hougard, Calvin Burgamy, Candice Greathouse, Lisa Holter. 2012

cover the same areas, many are indistinguishable as representing identical geography. Some attempt to include the applied elements like street names and intersections while others are merely

a single unmarked line. Some highlight activities along the way rather than objects, while others covey movement and direction. Each one of these styles conveys an individual interpretation and perception of the space they moved through. Each map illustrates a unique psychogeographical reference to its creator's experience.

Although all of the participants' routes overlapped at least one other at some point, the photographic and anecdotal results only documented one observed case of a participant encountering the evidence of another participant. Candice claimed a plot of land and left an instruction for someone else, that Sirkka walked past and documented two days later. Here is yet another component of interaction and community relations within the project. When Sirkka noticed the tape on the sidewalk, she immediately recognized it as part of the project in which she was

Figure 16, *Two participants' paths cross*, Candice Greathouse and Sirkka Hougard. 2012

currently involved, and identified with her fellow participant through the work, even though they had never met.

The culmination of different people's walks and their results begin to build up a collec-

tion of notable interest within a space previously ignored. Working together, the participants and I are compiling a new interpretation of what already exists and repurposing the designated area into a region of play, contemplation and interaction. The interactions that occur both verbally and immediately or through altering the environment for someone to notice later follow in the reclaiming spirit of the Situationists, the playful directional motives of Fluxus and the social and community connectivity described in Relational Art.

4.1   The printed guides

Figure 19, *Map Display*

As with any instructional navigation system, the new mapped space requires printed maps. The maps serve to establish the new perception of the space as a valid interpretation and

also to highlight it as worth seeing. While popular tourist destinations often include self-guided walking tours, these guides do as well, although rather than sending its tourist to the Eiffel Tower or to the newest competing aquarium, the map offers highlights such as the stain on the sidewalk that looks like a cat, or the unnoticed brilliance of a crosswalk sign.

The maps also encourage another interactive participatory element for gallery-goers. There are fifteen maps to correspond to the fifteen participants in the project. Each map is labeled with the participant's name and the shape of the route the participant originally took. Once unfolded, one side features the *Blueprint For a New Decatur*, on which the gallery display is based, and on the other side is a copy of the original instruction list next to that person's results with corresponding instruction numbers. The cover of each map is a different color, which becomes that person's color code throughout the gallery installation. With the map and the color-coded physical space, a gallery visitor can attempt to retrace the participant's path.

In developing the color system for the maps and installation, I used a simple palette of yellow, orange and grey with five shades of each, where the yellow becomes green as it gets darker. The restrained palette offers diversity along with control and intentionality with a balance of visibility and contrast across the group. The color palette also references the outdoors, which tends to be universally appealing as well as relevant to depicting this particular project where the process all occurred outside. Within the installation, the individual participant colors are applied to a series of four muted green/blue tones, replacing the red to yellow organization system of the first gallery layout.
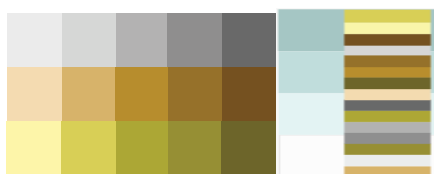
Figure 20, *Color Palette*

4.2   The Installation

Figure 21, *Pedestrian 2012*

If the group's participation in the project served to construct an idea of space and its use by building a collection of data, my next step attempted to reach the same goal by opposite means: breaking it down. Based on my participants' results, I collected a series of notes and photographs, which I used to edit information and remap the physical space they walked. I subjectively reduced their images of spaces down to simplified elements leaving only the visual information that seemed relevant to make the space what it is. For example, shapes of specific buildings, sidewalks, graffiti or navigational signs all remained if they served to define the space's emotional or psychological associations. The decisions of what to keep and what to remove were based on both my own perception and the participants' results. For example, instruc-

tion number 40: "After 10 minutes find something wonderful that you think someone else would not notice". These items were considered in the reduction because they were deemed wonderful in some way.

I began by creating a two-dimensional map of the project results. First, I traced the shape of each person's route onto tracing paper so I had fifteen individual outlines. Next, I acquired a few official maps of Decatur to work with. I began by over-laying all of the routes on the map and overlapping each other, so all fifteen routes turned into an indistinguishable series of red lines on top of the map.
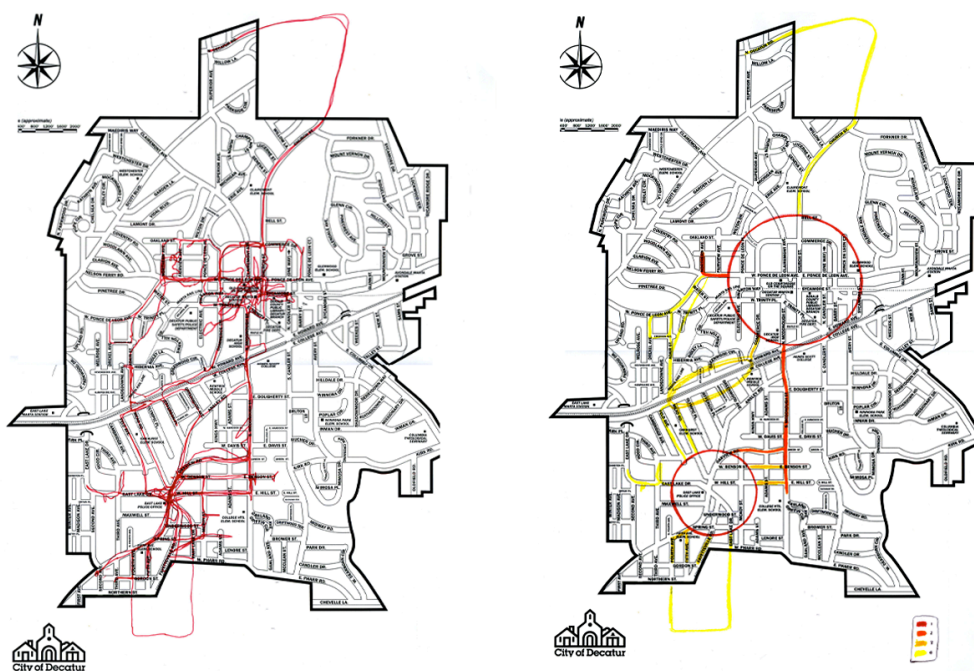

Figure 22, *Decatur process maps 1 and 2*. 2012

Once the paths were all collected in the same place, it became clear that there were certain areas that were more trafficked than others in the project. Based on this new information of populari-ty, I divided the city into four parts from most popular to least, based on the participants' walks

and made a color-coded system to delineate regions one (red) through four (pale yellow). Finally, I used a third existing Decatur map and cut, rearranged and glued it back together, resulting in the *Blueprint For a New Decatur,* which mimics the reconfigured psychogeographical Situationist maps of Paris.
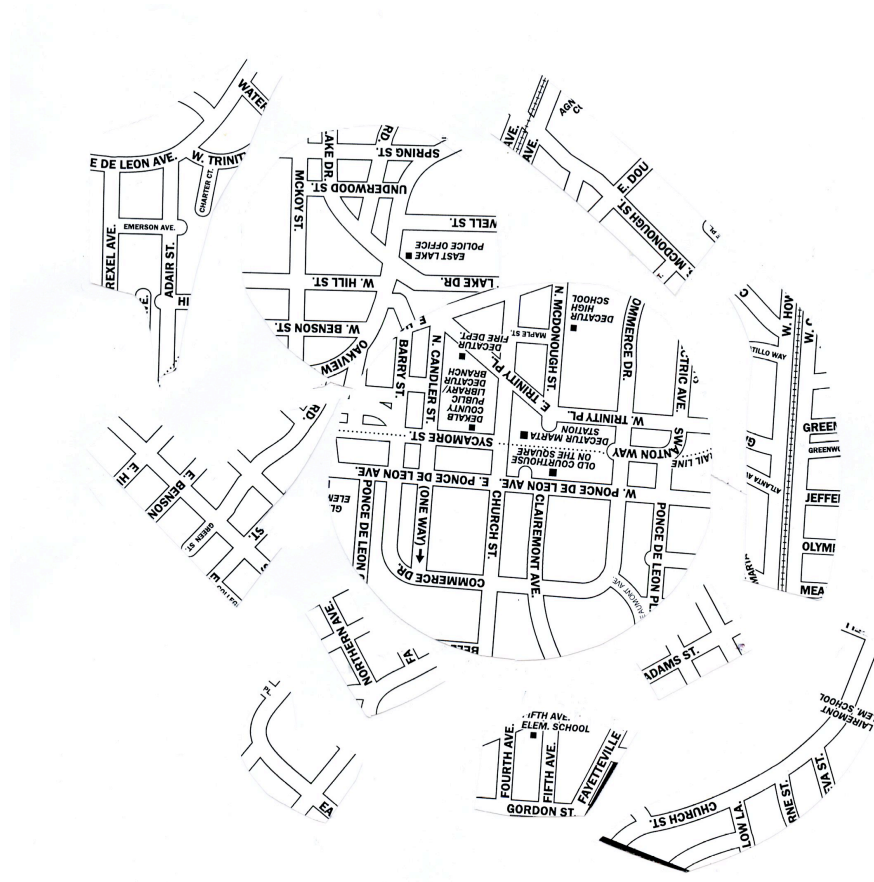

Figure 23, *Blueprint For a New Decatur*. 2012

The Decatur map I rearranged is organized in concentric circles with the most popular regions (red) in the center and moves out to the least trafficked regions (pale yellow). In making this distinction, I formed a guide for the gallery installation layout.
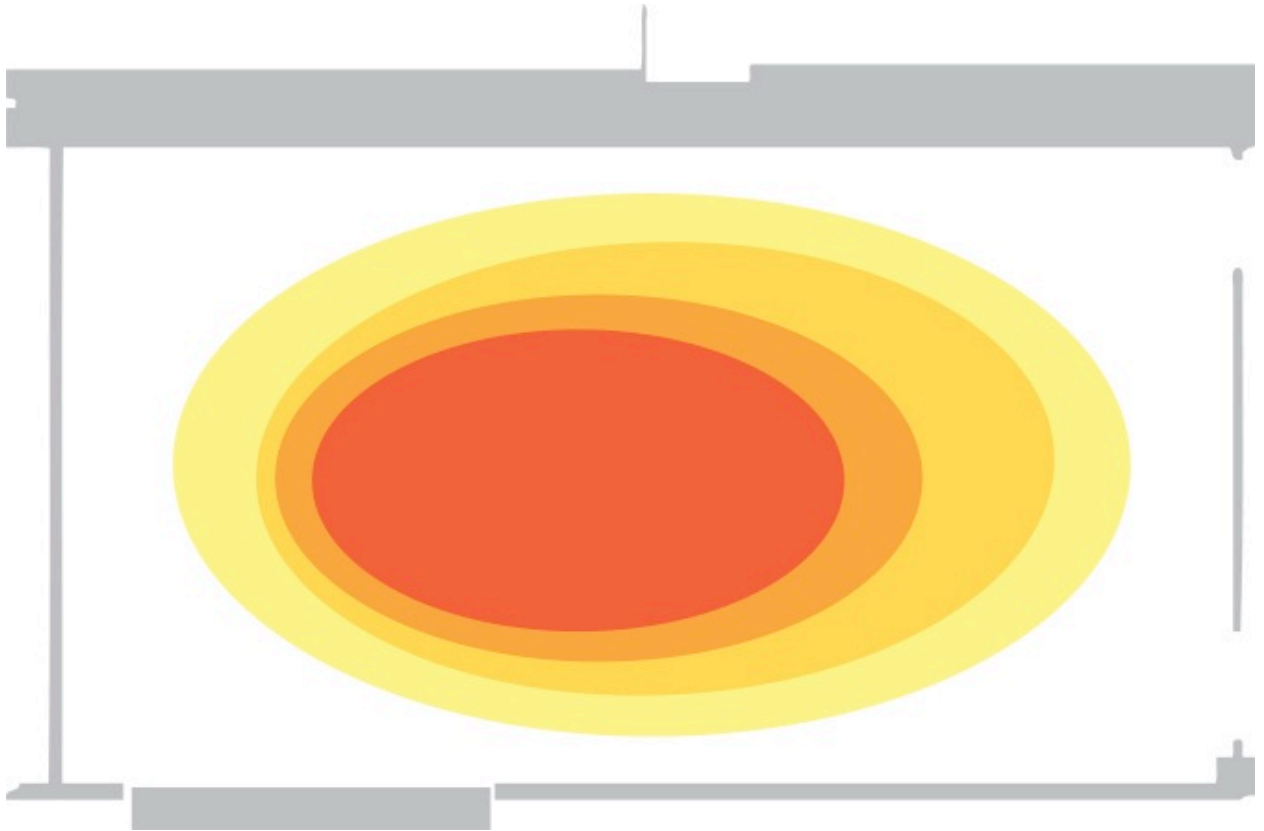
Figure 24, *Gallery Regions*

After establishing the four main regions of the map, I returned to the participant results and made

a new chart where, based on their EveryTrail maps, I determined which regions they had ex-

plored. Next, I categorized all of their results by region as a preliminary step to creating the gal-

lery installation. This way I had all of their assigned colors cross-referenced with the associated

region color.

Figure 25, *Region and image chart*

Once I mapped the area two-dimensionally, including visually reductive recreations of physical aspects in the space, I brought it back into a physically navigable three-dimensional space by building and painting the new reduced shapes in the gallery space, thus creating a new environment including only the minimal pertinent psychogeographical information. The resulting installation is a compilation of both building up, with the group's results and breaking down, with my own simplification of form and color. The two meet in the middle to establish a micro-utopia of play and function reduced to the purest of form necessary to maintain it. Likewise it serves as a reinterpreted and repurposed version of Decatur, and exists as a sort of theatrical spectacle with a series of flat facades intended to imply a "real" place.

The installation components are made out of thin luan wood. They serve as facades of the buildings and other elements collected in the project. The facades are rough and handmade to reference their association with a flimsy set-like theater scene to reinforce the tie to Debord's spectacle and an environment of non-genuine elements.

In visually simplifying the information the participants gathered, I also assigned the new simplified image the same color as the participant's printed map. For example, if Candice's map color is grey, the included elements from her walk are also the same shade of grey. Thus, with the gallery space arranged by participant traffic density within the scope of the project, and each of the elements are color-coded, the progression of color density and variation as well as variation of images changes as a gallery visitor moves through the three-dimensional map. Additionally, the four delineated regions are referenced on the painted panels as four subtle cool hues that imply the boundaries of the mapped regions.

While the installation stands alone simply to be viewed and walked through, or as a type of information design indicating the movement and encounters of particular participants, it also contains an additional option of active participation where the audience can use the individual maps provided to lead them through the space similar to a scavenger hunt. If a person picks up Adam's map, for example, the visitor can attempt to follow Adam's route based on the photos he took and my color-coded representation of the places he went. Although my rendered line drawn images are obscured from the photographs in the participant maps, the color and general shape serves enough to engage the audience into making a connection between the guides and the physical pieces and lead them to a new exploration of their own in this new reinterpreted space.

The new space in the installation transforms into an environment of its own. The structures in the front of the space are lower to the ground (around three feet) while the height of the structures in the back of the gallery is eight feet. Therefore, when visitors enter, the entire span is visible, thus creating a skyline available for exploration. Likewise, once a visitor has walked to the back of the gallery, because the height of the structures is so tall, the rest of the gallery be-

comes obscured and the area becomes one of small intimate spaces.

Figure 26, *Installation View*

Figure 27, *Installation View*

5   CONCLUSION

Through the Situationist derives and revolutionary proclamations of city ownership by experiencing it in fresh and perceptive ways, they illuminated Paris for themselves and their subsequent admirers. The Fluxus movement brought about a further exploration of the familiar and ordinary through a new filter of interactive instruction scores and a leveling of artist/ audience planes, thus reinforcing a celebration of the commonplace. The most recent Relational Aesthetics trend in contemporary art followed in the footsteps of Situationist theory and Fluxus interconnectivity and established it all with contemporary applications into the sphere of the current art institution, while still attempting to highlight its focus onto human relationships despite the ever-present fetishized art commodity. As a successor of these movements, *Pedestrian* enters the dialog at a point of filtering these previous patterns, practices and discoveries through my own personal surroundings and activities. As a culmination of my pre-existing affinity for foot travel and ongoing fascination with documentation, organization and information design, this piece articulates my individual artistic vocabulary within a scope of public participation. In doing so, I transfer the opportunity onto an audience of participants to create their own mediated experience or situation, whether out in the city or within the gallery installation, and to discover on their own, new ways of reclaiming, repurposing and acknowledging their surroundings.

This work's intent is to inform and unveil what is around us always. It seeks to make new what has become old and to make noticed what we ignore. It elevates a new way of seeing and interpreting that which has been reduced to banality through familiarization and blind acceptance. If we are all indeed entrenched within Debord's all-encompassing Society of the Spectacle, all I can do through observations and active engagement- both with physical space and

human interactions, is attempt to find those fleeting remnants and sparse notions of substantial

realness within it and reassert them as my own.

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