Interstices, Liminality and Boundaries

67 Lo sQuaderno

Location..... Job centre
.... Barnsbury Road, Lono

Interviewer Number...

Interview date.... 5. June 2013 .time.. 13·06 to

Response (reason).... 6 .... Moved ... 8 ....No Respo

.... to 12·15

....No Response..... 4 ....

1. How long have you been unemployed?

2. How long have you been looking for work?

a)
What are your skills
3. b) Do you feel your skill is useful in finding a job you want? —
4. Do you think the Job Centre provides jobs that
How are you feeling in this situation?
to your

5. How does being unemployed affect your life?

want?

Could be around 10/15 people

8 question = 80/120 phrase

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a cura di / dossier coordonné par / edited by
Teresa García Alcaraz, Cristian Silva & Andrea Mubi Brighenti

Guest artist / artiste présentée / artista ospite
Marco Dalbosco

EDITORIAL

In the heart of urban living lies an often un-noticed realm, the world of interstitial spaces. These spaces, remnants of the past, voids awaiting development, and margins inhabited by outliers, weave a hidden, or forgotten, tapestry within our cities. They whisper us untold stories, offering glimpses into the soul of cities that surpass the confines of the defined urban landscape. The exploration of interstitial landscapes and urban margins has recently evolved into a captivating and cross-disciplinary field of study. It extends beyond the boundaries of traditional urban research, delving into the complex morphology of spaces that exist between and on the fringes of conventional urban realms.

In this Special Issue, we present eight original articles, plus an interview with leading theorist in geography Matthew Gandy. The essays delve deeper into the urban in-between, each offering unique insights into the complex dynamics unfolding within these spaces. Taken jointly, they illuminate how interstitial spaces subtly, but profoundly, shape communities, cultures, and imaginations. From the Latin American murals to vacant lots in Paris, through the northern-Irish borderlands, the interstices bear testimony of the struggles and the resilience of people dwelling in liminal ways, providing insights into issues of social inclusion and ecological development.

An interview with Matthew Gandy opens the collection, offering the opportunity to round our understanding of interstices as spaces of memory and future, and as complex sites of imagination that encompasses capitalist contradiction and violence, but also biological treasure troves and forgotten adventures: as Gandy suggests, 'the study of interstitial spaces invites a wider reflection on the types of methods as well as analytical frameworks that can be used for the study of cities and urbanization'. These include, for instance, the approaches Gandy characterizes as ecological ethnography and

forensic ecology.

Following Gandy's lead, we invite the reader towards an interstitial tour, starting with a piece by the architect Juan Manuel Del Castillo and the community leader Arturo Vásquez, who invite us into the depths of Lima's pre-Hispanic roots, emphasising the urgent need for community-driven conservation amidst the modern urban challenges of unregulated sprawl. As cities worldwide grapple with preserving their historical landscapes, Del Castillo and Vásquez suggest how interstices can contribute to this timely conversation.

Moving to Northern Irelend, architect Keith McAllister and archaeologist Colm Donnelly take us on a literary trip in the work of crime fiction author Brian McGilloway, emphasising the importance of history and place identity in understanding liminal spaces often depcted as wild and undomesticated. McGilloway's fictional settings in the territory turn out to 'delve and dig deep into geographies and histories, actively probing to detect truths, alongside the detective on the page'.

If Belfast stands for the iconic city of Northern Ireland conflict, the architect David Coyles reflects on the materialities of spatial reconciliation design in the case of a specific boundary place, Northumberland Street. Analysing this peculiar urban interstice located on the boundary between Protestant and Catholic communities, Coyles remarks the paradox of formal spatial reconciliation efforts that organise the participants into opposing camps, perpetuating, instead of defusing, the presupposition for the conflict itself. Coyles also highlights how such choices serve political agendas that preserve governing monopolies through predictable voting patterns inspired by confessional territorial divisions.

Next we move to Paris, where the planner Stefano Mastromarino and the urban designer Camillo Boano have studied the struggles of

marginalised asylum seekers, offering a poignant, although certainly bitter, reflection on the type of existence that interstices also host. One eviction after the other, asylum seekers are not simply made invisble and threatened in multiple ways, but are actually captured into 'spaces of holding' that can extend indefinitely, perpetuating exclusion through suspension.

Two more theoretical pieces follow. In his contribution, the co-editor Cristian Silva, an urban planner, challenges commonsense perception of urban voids, urging us to recognise their vital role in shaping spatial cognition and cultural identity. He approaches the 'emptiness' of interstices by illuminating how they can influence, not only the physical landscape, but also the cognitive and imaginative dimensions of urban living.

For his part, the architectural theorist Cameron McEwan complements such view by the reversing the dominant approach to preipheries: through a playful détournement of Aldo Rossi's classic *The Architecture of the City*, McEwan seeks to disrupt the association of architecture and city centre, so as deploys a 'peripheral imaginary' that preludes to a whole new 'architecture of the periphery'. Issues of memory and monumentality are seen here as crucially positioned across the cleavage between 'high' and 'low' (official and unofficial) typologies of dwelling practice.

In the final two essays, we return to Latin America. The designer Alejandra Fernández and the sociologist Petr Vašát discuss the phenomenon of macro-paintings in cities of the global South: large murals are often amongst the tools devised to improve the conditions of marginalised communities by transforming their physical environments. As remarked by the authors,
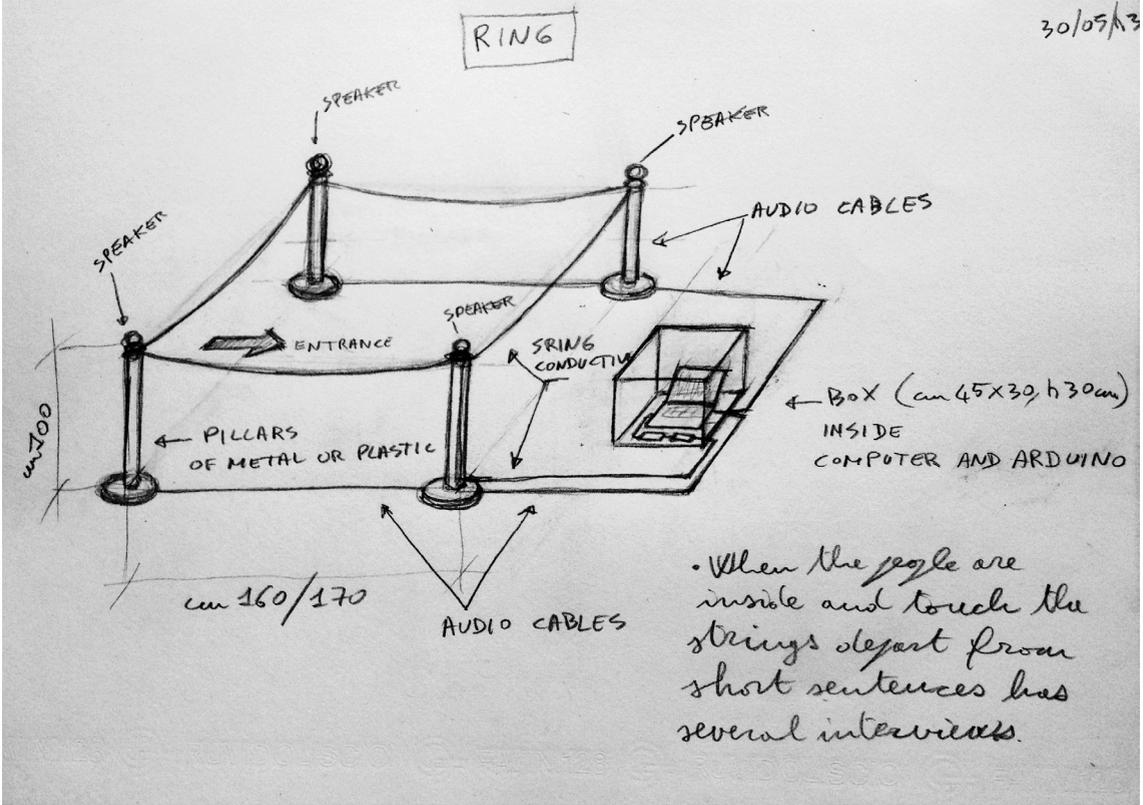
macro-paintings have various, not always predictable socio-material implications, sometimes leading to touristification and other long-term transformations of neighbourhoods.

Finally, and almost unavoidably, the last interstitial-liminal urban condition discussed concerns the city of the dead. In this respect, Christien Klaufus considers the dialectic between city and necropolis in Latin America. The relation between polis and necropolis is not simply exclusive, but precisely as the interstitial topology reveals, extremely enmeshed, whereby the tension between drawing-close and rejecting the dead shapes geometries of wanted and unwanted contact. Shocking demographic events, such as pandemics, deeply unsettle the official relation between polis and necropolis, highlighting the nature of the liminal spaces where the ongoing conversation between the living and the dead unfold.

The confluence of scholarly contributions hosted in this issue challenges established paradigms, furthering the interstice as both an object of study and a sensitivity that can inform research at large. A more nuanced understanding of interstitial spaces, liminality and boundaries emerges, one that compels the reader to revaluate and appreciate their historical and cultural relevance. By embracing the narratives of overlooked spaces, we are not merely confronting inherent complexities, but also reshaping our perception of urban landscapes. These explorations urge us to reimagine the spaces that exist in between the familiar, transforming interstices from mere gaps into vibrant reservoirs of innovation and resilience within perpetually evolving urban milieus.

<div align="right">TGA, CS, AMB</div>

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SPEAKER

SPEAKER

AUDIO CABLES

SPEAKER

SPEAKER

ENTRANCE

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PILLARS
OF METAL OR PLASTIC

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AUDIO CABLES

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short sentences has
several interviews.

An interview with Matthew Gandy

Cristian Silva

CS: What initially caught your attention in relation to interstitial landscapes, and why?

MG: I can trace my curiosity back to childhood experiences of growing up in inner London with its fascinating mix of bombsites, canals, and abandoned buildings. There were many unusual or anomalous spaces, some of which had been produced by the legacy of war, but many others created by a combination of de-industrialization, demographic decline, and official neglect. These ostensibly 'empty spaces' were full of life, especially in summer with vibrant carpets of distinctive plants such as rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), and of course children played in these spaces since they were often located in those parts of the city with limited access to parks or playgrounds. More recently my interest in marginal spaces was rekindled by a research fellowship held in Berlin in the early 2000s that reconnected me to these kinds of unusual spaces and in particular to the *Brachen* that have become a particular source of fascination. (Fig. 01)[1]

CS: You have been researching on interstitial spaces from different angles. Reflecting on your research, what would you say these spaces are (or how would you define them), and what are their values for the understanding of cities?

MG: As a working definition, I would define interstitial spaces as sites that exist in contradistinction or tension with capitalist land markets. They are sites that unsettle the spatial order of the capitalist city although they have often been generated by contradictory dimensions to capitalist urbanization. In certain ways they may present problems of integration through their size, shape, or physical characteristics. We could also include sites of post-industrial toxicity as well as void spaces produced through violence or geo-political upheaval. The rich and complex etymology for such spaces — shared across many languages — is testament to their varied origins and meanings. It is perhaps the unfixed nature of such spaces which makes them such an interesting entry point for urban research.

CS: What type of imagination(s) do interstitial spaces evoke or stimulate for you?

MG: A lot of my geographical writing is stimulated by direct contact with places, spaces, and also cultural events such as exhibitions or art installations. In methodological terms, I have been developing the idea of the *ecological ethnography* as a kind of sustained interaction with specific sites that can form the basis of a larger argument about the production and meaning of urban space. I am especially interested in how the aesthetic and scientific dimensions of marginal sites can intersect at both a practical and theoretical level. I have also been working on the concept of the *ecological imaginary*, drawing on the work of Cornelius Castoriadis, Slavoj Žižek, and other scholars, as a way of weaving

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1 Figure 01 : A wasteland or Brache on the Chausseestraße, Berlin (2007). Photo: Matthew Gandy.

together different strands of collective cultural meaning in relation to both extant and imaginary spaces. How, in other words, can we envisage alternative environmental futures? It is through such spaces that we can begin to imagine alternative socio-ecological constellations.

CS: What elements of interstitial spaces stimulate your imagination and perception? Is it their emptiness? Their abandonment?

MG: I think it is a combination of factors that interests me. In some ways these sites can be considered to be open-air experiments where a variety of spontaneous socio-ecological dynamics can be observed, from the chance arrival of seeds to unexpected forms of human use. And, of course, none of these sites are truly 'empty', in the sense that they soon become a hub of life and activity. Additionally, these sites present a stratigraphy of traces and memories that can be explored in a variety of ways. In analytical terms, I am especially interested in the intersections between aesthetics, ecology, and history, which artists such as Maria Thereza Alves have explored in their work through the analysis of urban soils or other substrates that contain traces of global history.

CS: Do interstitial spaces lead you to look back (to the past)? Or forward (to the future)? Or both? Are these places of memory or imagination?

MG: Interstitial spaces offer a double temporality since they contain traces of the past – especially in terms of their varied soils, substrates, and topographies – but they also serve as portents of the future, as reflected in emerging or unexpected urban ecologies. Since many of these spaces have been erased, however, they sometimes persist only in our memory or imagination, or in some cases through accidental archives such as photographs and other material or digital traces.

CS: What examples of interstitial spaces are the most interesting for you, and why?

MG: One interstitial landscape in particular, on the site of the former Berlin Wall in Chausseestraße, was a longstanding focus of my work before its replacement with a luxury housing development. This was the site that stimulated me to radically extend my previous work on landscape and infrastructure to include different facets of urban nature such as botany, entomology, and other fields. The site served as a kind of creative puzzle that challenged my existing conceptual framework for the analysis of capitalist urbanization.

CS: In your approach to 'entropy by design' you elaborate on the tensions between wild (spontaneous) and manicured urban nature. This is a clear (and provocative) contrast between design and ecological traditions. In some way, it also resonates with Sennett and Sendra's 'infrastructures for disorder'[2] in the sense of introducing conditions for the unplanned use of the public realm. Do you think that architecture and other design disciplines have such power (and/or knowledge) to introduce entropy? If so, do you think that interstitial spaces can contribute to this?

MG: I have been drawn to this question especially through the ideas of the French horticulturalist and landscape designer Gilles Clément, whose work I first encountered at an exhibition in Montréal. Clément's focus on the *garden-in-movement* presents a direct challenge to tightly controlled types of municipal landscapes by incorporating aspects of aesthetic and ecological uncertainty. (Fig. 02)[3] This is not a simple form of 'non-design' but rather an attempt to guide the spontaneous ecological dynamics of urban space in interesting and unexpected ways. In my research on parks I have noted in particular the role of edge effects between different mowing regimes to allow wilder elements of urban nature to flourish alongside more frequently cut zones where people can relax and have picnics and so on. Through the use of these interesting edges it is possible to communicate sophisticated

2 Sendra, P. (2016). Infrastructures for disorder. Applying Sennett's notion of disorder to the public space of social housing neighbourhoods. *Journal of Urban Design*, 21(3), 335-352.
3 Figure 02 : An "edge" effect in Gilles Clément's design for Parc Henri Matisse, Lille (2011). Photo: Matthew Gandy.

ecological ideas to a broader public audience and alter aesthetic expectations about how public spaces should be managed. The intentional inclusion of forms of ecological spontaneity in urban space clearly has resonance in the social and cultural realm. The emphasis here is on 'steering' or 'guiding' public space rather than a narrow focus on forms of control.

CS: In your edited book *Urban constellations* (2011), as well as in your essay 'Interstitial landscapes: reflections on a Berlin corner' – you highlight the emerging ecologies and associated science of urban interstices. Would you say that these ecologies are helpful to 'sabotage' existing design traditions and introduce forms of entropy?

MG: I think the Berlin case is very interesting in terms of the post-war development of urban ecology and in particular the emergence of the 'Berlin school' as a distinctive approach to the study of novel ecosystems. Beyond a series of specific scientific advances, however, the legacy of the Berlin school is important in three further ways: first, the practice of urban botany in Berlin marked a departure from the ideological formations associated with nativist approaches to vegetation science; second, the twin role of urban ecologists as scientists and advocates for the protection of vulnerable urban sites with high levels of biodiversity marks a critical interface between urban ecology and the politics of land use planning; and third, the aesthetic fascination with interstitial spaces, or *Brachen*, has been incorporated into a series of innovative park designs in the city. (Fig. 03)[4]

CS: What new epistemological angles for the study of cities (and the built environment) do interstitial spaces suggest to you?

MG: The study of interstitial spaces invites a wider reflection on the types of methods as well as analytical frameworks that can be used for the study of cities and wider processes of urbanization. Two epistemological approaches that interest me in particular are *ecological ethnographies* and *forensic ecologies*. I use the term ecological ethnography to emphasize the embodied and affective dimensions to sustained interaction with a specific site which might extend to various practices such as the use of walking transects, close forms of observation, or the recording of soundscapes. Unlike multispecies ethnography, however, I have sought to retain some kind of conceptual synthesis with urban political ecology, collective forms of human agency, and the structural dimensions to the production of urban space. With forensic ecology I have sought to combine insights from the fields of forensic architecture and forensic entomology to examine threats to specific sites. I am interested in the role of organisms as sensors for different levels of ecological vulnerability as well as the wider role of citizen science and other collaborative methods for tracking systemic forms of environmental threat such as climate change, epidemiological risk, and the loss of biodiversity.

CS: From a different perspective, what can planning, design, and other applied disciplines introduce to the understanding of interstitial spaces?

MG: A key question here concerns the degree of engagement with the urban process. When we look at the legacy of progressive figures in the history of planning and design, there is evidence of a deep appreciation of the complexities of capitalist urbanization. An influential figure in my own work is the contribution of Martin Wagner to Weimar era Berlin, where he understood the necessity of better access to urban nature as part of a wider conceptualization of work, housing, and leisure under modernity.

CS: What other types of interstitial spaces are interesting for you?

MG: I would like to mention two other types of interstitial spaces that have been a focus of interest in my recent work. One is the realm of *saproxylic ecologies* associated with old trees that can harbour huge numbers of rare invertebrates, including many extraordinary insect mimics such as flies that

resemble bees or moths that resemble wasps. In an urban context, however, old or 'veteran' trees are under immense threat from neo-liberal efforts to simplify space in order to make the maintenance of streets or other spaces cheaper (and more profitable) along with the spectre of insurance claims in relation to tree roots, falling branches, or other hazards. My other example is that of *ecological decay*, where degraded ecosystems can produce specific forms of epidemiological threat. In my work on zoonotic urbanization, for example, I am interested in the role of degraded urban wetlands in harbouring insect vectors for disease in situations where many of the natural predators for mosquito larvae such as fish or amphibians have been much diminshed or even eliminated.

CS: What other aspects of urban interstitiality can be further explored?

MG: Building on my point about zoonotic urbanization, I think it is important for studies of interstitial spaces to be extended to the cities of the global South. In my work on Chennai, southern India, for example, I am interested in exploring post-colonial discourses that relate to forms of socio-spatial marginality. The very idea of the wasteland or *peramboke* (to use the interesting Tamil term that has no direct English equivalent) is connected with colonial histories of land use and the designation of non-productive land. In a contemporary context, however, the idea of the *peramboke* has been ap-propriated as part of a cultural and political lexicon for creativity and resistance. (Fig. 04)[5]

CS: Thank you very much for sharing your knowledge with us.

5 Figure 04 : Ecology decay in the disappearing Pallikaranai wetlands, Chennai (2019). Photo: Matthew Gandy.

Interstitial prehispanic landscapes
Ancestral knowledge and community action in San Juan De Lurigancho

Juan Manuel Del Castillo Cáceres, Arturo Vásquez Escobar

Introduction

The territory of Lima, Peru, is the result of thousands of years of history of prehispanic cultures. While the strategic management of ecological and social resources has been mostly disrupted by colonization and modernity, the landscape of the southeastern side of San Juan de Lurigancho offers some testimony of the past relationship between the agricultural economy in the lower Rimac Valley and hunting-gathering activities and ranching in the surrounding mountains of the present peri-urban area of Lima. Here, the participation of grassroots organizations in the conservation of ancient monuments and their landscape has been crucial for over a decade. This paper intends to trace a biography of the landscape in the urban interstices of San Juan de Lurigancho, and to highlight the role of community involvement in its present conservation.

Landscape is a multi-layer reality that encompasses territory, use, the local people and their worldviews (Staring et al., 2019). Biography of a landscape takes into consideration long periods of history, building a bridge between the past and present, to contribute to fields like geography, local and regional development, urban planning, landscape design, and archaeology (Sütünç, 2017). The contemporary process of planetary urbanization creates new types of urban spaces whereby the relationship between cities and their surroundings are deeply transformed. In this context, the appearance of urban interstices, spaces between developments with a wide range of activities and portions of undeveloped or underdeveloped land (Phelps & Silva, 2017), becomes more common.

In Lima, close to 256 prehispanic archaeological sites (called by the quechua word *huacas*), located in the peri-urban areas of the valleys, are nowadays neglected by local governments. Some of these areas host a great biodiversity, which, added to their cultural significance, define a very particular case of interstitial space (Gandy, 2016): a landscape with underrated, but high potential.

Biography of a Pre-Hispanic Landscape

The southeast area of San Juan de Lurigancho, on the right bank of the middle-lower valley of the Rímac River, is home to two neighborhoods with a rich history dating back to prehispanic times: Campoy and Mangomarca. According to Abanto (2008), Campoy dates from the Late Intermediate Period, and was part of the Ychsma kingdom, with Pachacamac as its main sanctuary. However, archaeological interpretations generate some confusion, since Fernández Valle (2007) has suggested the presence of "Ruricancho elites" without specifying their territorial autonomy.

The Campoy Fortress, despite its military name, probably served as an administrative centre. Its design includes enclosures with high walls, evidence of product storage and exchange, and a strategic location with panoramic views. In addition, the double rammed earth walls (Villacorta, 2001) and

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the use of Yapana clay in construction stand out. Historical evidence suggests that Campoy could have been related to the Ruricancha lineage, a member of the mountain *ayllus* of Huarochirí and descendants of Pariacaca (mountain deity) (Arguedas, 2012). These *ayllus* allied themselves with the Inca emperor Pachacutic and defeated the Huancas, expelling them from the region. Jacques Poloni (1987) attributes the construction of the Campoy Fortress to the Huanchos Yauyos, and suggests that the current name of the San Juan de Lurigancho district comes from "Hurin Huancho," which means "The Huanchos from below." The Yauyos mountain groups expanded their influence in the basins of several rivers and developed an advanced irrigation system for coca planting in the lowlands of the Yunga region (between the end of the coast and the start of the highland region). Despite possible initial conflicts, these mountain and coastal groups merged and created a new culture.

The presence of the old Lurigancho irrigation canal, which took water from the Rímac River, indicates the importance of agriculture and the delimitation of territories in prehispanic times. This canal linked several territories and exercised control over the agricultural areas of the valley. Likewise, it is worth mentioning that in the 16th century, i.e. already in colonial times, the Encomienda of Lurigancho was defined based on such areas, which later survived as a group of Haciendas. At the end of the 19th century, thanks to the existence of this canal, the so-called Campoy hacienda is mentioned (Poloni, 1987), but it is not specified whether a family or gentleman with the same surname lived here. Currently, informal urbanization threatens the ecological and archaeological heritage of the area. Organizations like the Institute of Culture, History and Environment (ICHMA) work for the conservation of this valuable natural and cultural heritage, promoting the Ecocircuit "Huaca Fortress of Campoy – Lomas of Mangomarca" to preserve these historical and natural treasures.

The second area of this study is the geographical space of Lomas of Mangomarca, which encompasses communities such as El Sauce, Mangomarca and Campoy. These mountains were inhabited by the "Chivateros", "Cabreros" or "Lomeros", nomadic ranchers in an intermediate situation between the farm laborers and the peasant community members of the highland areas of Jicamarca, Huarochiri, who grazed in the region during the winter and in the mountains in the summer. Their provisional camps and corrals still bear testimony of their presence. The Chivateros built stone bases and tent roofs to care for their livestock, which consisted of a few cows and many sheep and goats, which they kept in stone corrals on the slopes of the mountains. Their economy was precarious, since the meat and milk they gave to the landowners was barely enough for them to survive.

In the central and main ravine, of the five that exist in the mountains of Mangomarca, there is a dry well possibly used by ancient shepherds. This large well, which some residents call "the devil's mouth", has a stone with a peculiar phallic shape that points directly to the centre and depth of the hole, as if fertilizing Pachamama (Mother Universe). This impressive rock formation could have been used as one of the springs that existed in ancient times, when the water rested after flowing through the stream, which is the wettest and most fertile during the Lomas season, in the months of July to September. Just below this formation, towards both sides, stand some corrals of the old Lomeros. With the chaotic process of urban growth in San Juan de Lurigancho and Lima, there are few spaces in which you can still walk freely to appreciate natural attractions, such as the native flora and fauna of the Lomas landscape.

Ancestral knowledge and community action

The initiative "Ecocircuit Huaca Fortress of Campoy – Lomas of Mangomarca" originated in 2008 thanks to the commitment and enthusiasm of a group of students and a teacher of History and Geography at the I.E. N° 0090 Daniel Alcides Carrión de Campoy. Their mission was to protect these sites and they organized themselves as the "Defenders of Cultural and Natural Heritage" and the "Tourist Guides" known as KUSI SONQO (Del Castillo, 2015). In its early days, their task was to publicize the

existence of the archaeological site and prevent invasions that threatened it. In addition, the area, by then converted into a public latrine, was cleaned and prepared to receive visitors. This led to the creation of a group of School Tourism Guides, later renamed Tourist Orientators.

To protect the Huaca Fortress of Campoy from threats of illegal invasions, ancestral ceremonies were organized, such as the Inti Raymi, based on the Andean worldview. Recognizing the growing disconnection of Peruvian society with its cultural roots, the crisis of cultural identity and its impact on future generations was addressed. The lack of knowledge and appreciation of their cultural heritage was reflected in the students, despite their proximity to the *huaca*. To address this situation, it was decided to reconstruct cultural identity through the protection of Cultural Heritage and Andean traditions, using creative methods. Since cultural heritage was the responsibility of the National Institute of Culture (nowadays Ministry of Culture), it was necessary to coordinate with them to receive advice on protection and conservation. The representation of Inti Raymi was based on research on how it was celebrated in Cusco and was adapted to the history of the lower middle valley of the Rímac River, with the help of the friendly association Kapaq Sumaq Ayllu.

Over the years, the hiking routes to the Old Temple and New Temple arcaheological areas of Mangomarca, the Lomas of Campoy, Mangomarca and El Sauce were expanded. These routes diversified the hikes and created new activities. Challenges were faced in convincing tour operators and allies of the viability of these tourist routes, despite the proximity to Lima. Criticism was faced about the lack of amenities, but determination and support from close friends allowed these obstacles to be overcome. In 2011, the routes were extended to 850 meters above sea level, and the "Seven Summits Route" was established as a more extreme experience for people in optimal physical condition. In addition, the "Hatun Purinakuy," an annual pilgrimage to the seven summits of the Lomas of Mangomarca, was instituted. The "Singing to Pachamama" became another activity that was celebrated on the first Sunday of August, in honour of Pachamama (Mother Universe) Day.

In 2012, ICHMA was formed, with the purpose of encouraging and promoting tourism in the Huaca Fortress of Campoy - Lomas of Mangomarca eco-circuit and supporting and training the Kusi Sonqo Tourist Guides, in its work to preserve and disseminate the cultural and natural heritage of the region. Finally, since 2015, a series of multidisciplinary projects have been carried out to enhance the area with the support of local universities and socially committed professionals. Among them is the Fortress of Campoy Archaeological Research Project in 2017; the project to improve public touristic services at the Fortress of Campoy in 2019; and the Planning Application for the Archaeological Landscape Cerro El Chivo, presented to the Ministry of Culture in 2023, which seeks to unite five archaeological sites, around the aforementioned hill, into a single protection area. Added to this arduous work are the various academic investigations produced by ICHMA, already published in scientific outlets; the self-funded book *Community Management of Huacas and Lomas of San Juan de Lurigancho*, and the City Award for Urban Leadership 2019 in the Citizen Action category.

Conclusion

The urban fringes of Lima are a contested territory where hundreds of archaeological sites coexist with natural amenities but are also threatened by informal urban settlements. In this type of interstitial landscape, where conservation policies lack proper implementation, the existence of ancient monuments is usually seen, by the urban poor, as a liability in their search for available land to dwell. In the case of the southeastern side of San Juan de Lurigancho, the role of grassroots organizations is crucial in maintaining cultural and ecological assets and preventing further urbanization. The evidence shows the need to include this type of community action into urban planning, empowering grassroots organizations to bridge the gap between current policy making and its implementation in the urban interstices of Lima.
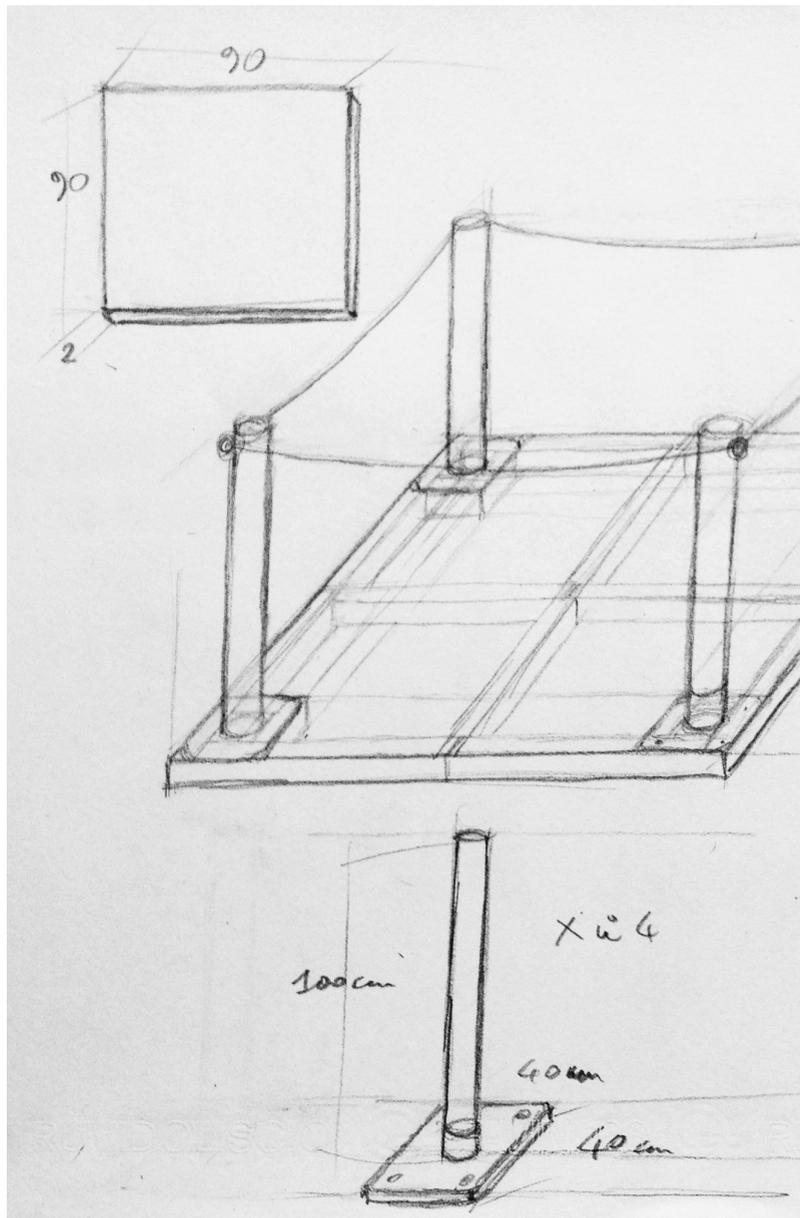
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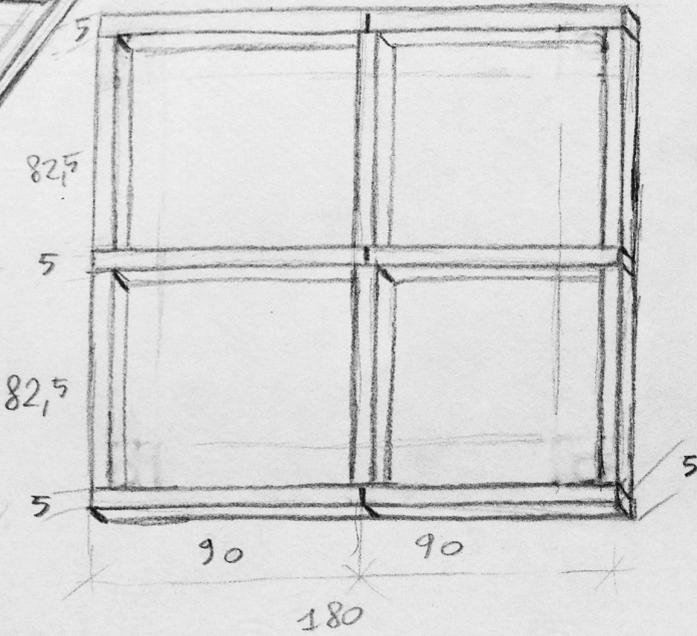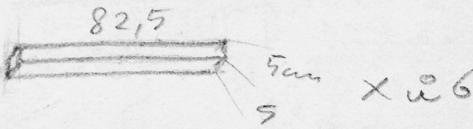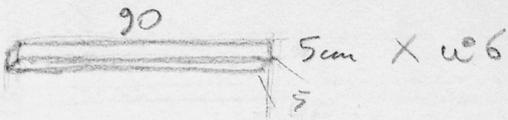
Reading the (in)-between-(in) the Borderlands of North-West Ulster
Brian McGilloway as Literary Detective & Guide

**Keith McAllister,
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Place

When the Ulster poet Sam Gardiner wrote that all good mysteries contain a death (2010: 31), he was arguably only partially correct in relation to any murder penned in Crime Fiction. Importantly, those murders also require place as setting and crime scene. This fact and the inter-relationship between event and setting are made immediately apparent in the Ulster crime novelist Brian McGilloway's first novel *Borderlands* (2007), where it is in the first line of the first paragraph of page one that the reader is informed that the body of Angela Cashell has been found lying directly across the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

That very specific place is no mistake. Yes, the border has a resonance with crime fiction as it is a place of reputed lawlessness and smuggling. It is also where two different jurisdictions come together, thereby affording opportunity for criminality and escape. But McGilloway skilfully makes it much more than that by recognising that the Borderlands of North-East Ulster are representative of broader contemporary society and therefore worthy of a deeper study and autopsy.

On one level, the Borderlands are a setting unheeded by most, out of sight and distant from the urban and centres of population. Moreover, in terms of popular conception, by being associated with criminality, the Borderlands is a place of shadow, past guilt and malevolence. It is the untamed countryside astride a cartographer's line, a no-man's land of menace and potential danger. Wild and undomesticated, the Borderlands are therefore purposely ignored and consequently disregarded by outsiders. Pallasmaa (2005: 62), when describing the home, posits that the benefit of windows is that they allow the dweller to dream. However, by contrast, in the windowless realm of the unin-habited rural borderland, the travelling visitor only experiences a sense of uncertainty and danger. This perception of disorientation is only heightened by the curious nature of the North-West Ulster borderlands where, if moving between Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland, you do so not by travelling north and south, but instead by moving east and west. So even cardinal points and maps can be misleading when trying to orientate and understand the in-between that is the Borderlands in North-West Ulster.

However, it is this very fact that makes the Borderlands so relevant. The liminal or 'grey' is not isolated but commonplace when accepting McGilloway's assertion that it is where;

> . . . most of us inhabit, the distance between what we'd like to do and how we'd like to be and what we do and what we actually are. (McGilloway 2011: 303)

That is a location where much of modern society exists, inhabiting an in-between realm amid the real and the imagined. It is a place of instability, flux and constant change where the promise of a

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better tomorrow is the hope that sustains in times of uncertainty.

That relevance is also heightened in terms of geography and place. Whilst the singular nature of the Borderlands and its location might at first sight make it appear peripheral, closer inspection will reveal that it is in fact far removed from this positioning. It is connected and central, not least for those living there. Born of geological scar, fold and glacial tear, the Borderlands of North-West Ulster are a continuum of the landscape of the North-West of Scotland; not just in terms of topography, but also in language, customs, the vernacular and even prejudices. They are therefore part of a larger whole. But specifically, it is pivotal and essential for those inhabiting the Borderlands. They do not see themselves as peripheral. Whilst disregarded by others and therefore perceived as isolated and alone, the rural in Ulster is a place of community where, traditionally, people live together in small clusters and *clachans*. These are informal groupings or clusters of farm buildings originating from medieval times, commonplace in Ireland and Scotland, where neighbours can support one another in tending land and livestock. That notion of togetherness and being 'in the midst' is further strengthened when considering the sentiment within Icelandic poet Einar Már Guðmundsson's 1995 poem *The Eye of Chaos*, in which he dismisses the idea of outposts, corners and peripheries because the centre of the world for every person 'rests beneath your feet', is transitory and 'follows you wherever you go.'

Hence Guðmundsson reminds us that cartographic points and grid reference positions may be less important than some might think. Instead, what is important is the here and the now, an impermanent pause temporarily and spatially before moving on. In that way, the choice of Borderland setting is both relevant and accessible to all as an in-between, a liminal and a grey that readers can relate to.

Hence McGilloway's opening line of his first novel, *Borderlands* (2007) is significant. When writing, 'It was not beyond reason that Angela's Cashell's final resting place should straddle the border.' McGilloway is mapping an identifiable location without Cartesian co-ordinates. It is clearly an *(in)-between*; temporally, spatially and psychologically. By providing that location, McGilloway provides his reader with an accessible and applicable setting that they can all orientate and position themselves into. This mirror's Hall's assertion that 'To orientate is to hop back and forth between landscape and time, geography and emotion, knowledge and behaviour.' (2004: 15) McGilloway's Borderlands setting therefore acts as an orientation device, a map of sorts, to aid and guide the thoughts of the reader beyond that solely of geography and where the reader can take stock and reflect. This is a necessity when considering that 'nothing we do is unplaced.' (Lawson, 2001: ix)

Of course, any map has limitations, being in essence a two-dimensional representation on a very reduced scale, of the much more layered and complex entity that is our landscape, whether social or geographical. What a map does do however is collate a collection of fragments, readings and clues that, like in crime fiction, can be investigated and scrutinised when searching for underlying truths. Often it is what is missing or no longer evident that is important when reading a map. The Belfast poet Peter MacDonald in his 1996 poem *In His Place,* describes maps as 'charts of loss and ruin,' implying that they can be read alongside other texts as exploratory tools when exploring the past. Crime fiction is one example of a text and resource that can be used in this way and in relation to the Borderlands, the 6-book Devlin series by Brian McGilloway offers insight into developing an understanding of not only a unique and particular region, but the countryside and society at large. By its nature, crime fiction allows both writer and reader the opportunity to delve and dig deep into geographies and histories, actively probing to detect truths, alongside the detective on the page.

The author John Connolly makes the salient point that crime fiction at its best 'recognises the role of the past in reaching an understanding of the present', rather than purely acting as a record of contemporary societal ills. (Burke, 2011: 50) It is therefore meaningful that Brian McGilloway, in his Devlin series, not only records and describes the proliferation of ghost housing estates, drug use, dereliction

and exploitation of the rural by industrial operators in the Irish countryside, but using the setting of the Borderlands, also maps and chronicles a shared challenge beyond those topics. Outwardly less obvious but still powerfully evident is the sense of loss and a growing alienation for contemporary society away from both the old and the past, discarding local language, knowledge and customs.

Interpretation

Robert Macfarlane's (2012) assertion that geography and history are cosubstantial is supported by the Dutch architect Aldo van Eyck (1962) when he wrote that architecture is less about space and time than it is about place and event. It is the ritual and the actions of people that give place and architecture its significance. The importance of this relationship is further highlighted by the declaration of the French architect Bernard Tschumi (1981) that to appreciate architecture, you may need to commit a murder in it, because architecture is defined by the actions it witnesses. Tschumi is asserting that the events of the past are absorbed into their setting, intertwined and threading both together. An event without a setting does not work. Thus place, event, geography and history are indeed cosubstantial providing landmarks and signposts for society to navigate through the dimensions of space and time.

Often such landmarks are architectural (Norberg-Schulz, 1996: 73) and exist as manifestations of human achievement and the culture in which they sit. Cathedrals, museums and universities sit as palaces of society, artefacts to be read, interpreted and celebrated by generations, linking the present to the past and reassuring those looking to the future. Libraries and galleries also serve that purpose, acting as espoused by Bevan, in being 'caches of history and memory' (2007: 8). However in the rural, one might argue that the architectural landscape is much more difficult to read. After all, the majority of buildings of the rural and countryside display functions of everyday life in the form of home, farm, barn and shed. That is indeed the case in the Borderlands, which as noted by Alistair Rowan when writing in the Pevsner inspired guide to North-West Ulster, described the region as 'not an area of Ireland that is associated with architectural excellence' (1979: 17). Instead, the architecture of the rural is often commonplace and unexceptional and can be, as in the case of Ulster, built at a latitude in which materials erode with time. Figuratively and literally to outsiders, such buildings all too easily dissolve out of memory mind and sight. Modest buildings, subordinate to nature that adjust their topographical setting and view, do not linger in the public consciousness.

Moreover, adding to the difficulty in reading, the rural is a context that is always in flux. The seasons initiate changes of land-use and with it, variations in colour, textures and feel. The River Foyle bisecting the Borderlands of the northwest is a tidal river with ebb, flow and changing water levels. Atlantic weather patterns arrive overhead bringing with them the grey of the ocean, cut by crepuscular light at dawn and dusk. Sensitivity to change, variation and flux are the norm and a way of being here, evidenced by the local knowledge and skills of local farmers on land and sailors on river and at sea. That is an integral part of the rural in the Borderlands and one that is enduring and ageless.

So too the landscape itself and its formation over time. Landscape constantly records its own genesis and development through its chronology of stratification and geology, a fact noted by Louis Kahn when commenting: 'In everything that nature does, nature records how it is made. In the rock is a record of the rock.' (Kahn 1998: 18) It also is a container of artefact, the buried and unseen. Seamus Heaney when writing about the uncovering of the bog men of Jutland in his poem *Bogland* (1969) makes the observation that 'every layer they strip seems to be camped on'. The landscape is therefore a densely layered archive of knowledge offering to be translated and understood. But in doing so it needs a deeper investigation to accurately interpret the past. Just as the landscape above ground can be a manual by being 'a calendar, a watch and a history book' (Evans, 1973: 94), Heaney and McGilloway remind the reader that there remain elements that still require revelation and exposure in an

island so redolent with the voices of the past.

Conclusion

The value of McGilloway's work is that it not only sheds light on what is seen in contemporary society but that it allows a deeper understanding of our time and a more acute reading of a distinct geographical area largely unseen, the Borderlands. That narrative has particular value in that it helps direct the reader's gaze beyond a single horizon by uncovering the truths and wisdom of what lies below, beyond our immediate perspective. It also challenges the all-too-common picture where the rural and vernacular are culturally relegated by being seen or portrayed as closed, insular, unsophisticated and without value. However, this belief neglects the value and knowledge of the elderly and traditional by not valuing or being inattentive to human experience. Deficiencies in recording and collating oral histories merely add to this shortcoming by being dismissive of the experiential and the qualitative, making it more difficult to accurately read and understand social change. (Clark & Geaty, 2013: 300) It also damagingly precludes the acceptance that tradition is not moribund but an evolving living entity that can provide meaning and context to contemporary culture, as noted by Bevan when reminding us that, whilst memories will always be partial and potentially problematic, they are 'dynamic', handed down from generation to generation rather than staid and etched into the stones of history (Bevan 2007: 16).

The multiplicity of readings within the Devlin novels of Brian McGilloway illustrates a lack of cultural confidence in the region, far removed from the picture postcard images of a rural idyll. They are a record of continuing loss and societal anxiety at a time of in-between for an island built on the typography of legend and believing in the mythology of possibility rather than looking to the rich repository of wealth and knowledge that is our rural identity. As such, they are working and ongoing documents helping shed light into the liminal, the mysterious and the forgotten. But therein lies their real value: they are like the clues sought by Inspector Devlin in the Borderlands, pointers and aids to a deeper, more meaningful and less immediate truth. The fact that they too require investigation, uncovering and disentangling only adds to their value.

The Ulster poet Sam Gardiner in his poem *The Shortened Day* (2010) wrote that 'our landmarks may have perished, but not our hopes.' The record of loss evident in the books of Brian McGilloway echo this sentiment in that his characters still yearn to know and belong, especially in a time of change. That search for identity in their Borderland setting is enriched by valuing the lessons of the past, even if they are sometimes inaccessible. We, like Inspector Devlin in his Borderlands setting, are all therefore arguably richer and better for the knowledge of and the invite to uncover and visit the past, whether in terms of history, language, place or people.

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Ambiguities of Segregation and Spatial Reconciliation
Reflections from Belfast

David Coyles

Introduction

Sometime between 2011 and 2012 a very curious, perhaps even extraordinary, space was created in Belfast. It may well be the very first of its kind in the city. It is situated in a small 30m by 20m zone bookended by two corresponding and rudimentarily fortified sets of security gates on Northumberland Street in the west of the city. Throughout the Troubles, this patch of land acted as a no-man's-land or demilitarized zone blocking connectivity between the Catholic heartland of the Falls Road and the Protestant heartland of the Shankill Road (Figure 1). Yet, for the last decade, this space has quietly served a new purpose: brokering spatial reconciliation between the two areas it once so profoundly separated. Today, this outwardly unremarkable space is a place of *dual territory*. It is not a tourist-orientated 'neutral space' like the Titanic Belfast visitor attraction that has been sanitised of the uncomfortable sectarian histories associated with shipbuilding in the city (Coyles 2013). Nor is it a self-consciously 'shared space' like the Northern Ireland Executive's signature Girdwood Community Hub, which disregards the complex political reality of the very different Catholic and Protestant environs surrounding it (Bertram 2018). Rather, this place of dual territory is a knowingly Catholic and Protestant space where Catholic and Protestant culture are brazenly celebrated side-by-side. Given its spatially divisive history, in this new guise it could not have a more befitting location. But it sits lost amidst the detritus of the inner-city redevelopment programmes that swept through Belfast during the early 1980s. Northumberland Street was once lined with mills and factories and a dense gridiron of terraced row-housing which accommodated the industrial labour force. Today, the space is marred by an incoherent collection of nondescript light-industrial buildings and access roads. In a city where over 90% of social-housing remains divided along ethnic boundaries (NIFHA 2017), the visitor can therefore be forgiven for failing to gauge the true allegorical significance of the Northumberland Street spot.

Visibilities

After the signing of the Belfast peace accord in 1998 (Northern Ireland Office 1998), the Northumberland Street security gates (Figures 2, 3) were opened Monday-to-Saturday from early morning to early evening. In 2011, through negotiation with local residents, the decision was taken by the Northern Ireland Executive to open these gates on Sundays too. Soon thereafter, this space, situated on what is essentially a perfunctory link road rarely trafficked by people but heavily frequented by vehicles, became the focus of relatively unassuming efforts by the local New Life City Church to modestly, but quite visibly, mark the wider and historic peacebuilding progress that was being made. On the east side, a mural created to commemorate *United Nations International Peace Day 2012* occupies the full length of the space (Figure 4). Mixing historical and contemporary imagery with

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poetic quotations, the mural blends the history of the Protestant Shankill Road and the history of the Catholic Falls Road with a central motif to the overarching theme of 'Peace'. On the other side of the space is a paved area where it is possible for people to gather and walk around the three sculptures that have been installed there (Figure 5). The first of these, at the south end of this zone, is a tower of white blocks fashioned in metal and adorned with flat black metal letters on their four exposed faces. These blocks are stacked and rotated so as to vertically spell the word 'Peace' in English, Irish (Síocháin), Scotch Gaelic (Sochaint) and Welsh (Heddwch). Sitting beyond this at the centre of the area is then a large pre-rusted metal cross entitled *The Cross of Crosses*. The third installation, situated just off to the north, is less obvious. It is an artwork composed from four metal discs that look like upright coins which have been arranged to enclose a loose square. Each disc possesses an obscure engraving that hints at a landscape. It could be guessed that these four etched landscapes have some relation, perhaps, to the four native languages emboldened so clearly nearby.

To spend some time dwelling in this space, and to then leave it to take a short walk in each direction, soon reveals that this area of dual territory sits at the centre of a longer length of roadway that begins to tell a fuller story of the differences that exist between the present-day Catholic and Protestant territories that engulf it. Across this scant 500m slice of the city, the distinctions are visibly clear in a tapestry of architectures and spaces. On the Catholic Falls Road side the neighbourhood is buzzing. This stretch of Northumberland Street is occupied on the west side by a collection of small-business units and a busy retail park with lots of open presentation to the street and plenty of activity along its frontage. Opposite this and travelling southward to turn the corner east along the Falls Road is the *International Wall* (Figure 7). Customarily accosted by large gatherings of tourists, this bordering wall to the large Andrews Flour Mill behind it has become an international tourist attraction. Its many murals celebrate a carefully selected mix of global political causes. Depictions of the conflict in Northern Ireland are accompanied by murals representing struggles in South Africa, Palestine, and West Papua, amongst others. Alongside these are also clarion calls for local causes and responses to current topical references. These have recently brought the addition of Black Lives Matter and Covid-19 artworks. Beside this, the wider area abounds with commotion, helped by the proximity of bus stops and a halt for Belfast's new rapid transport system inaugurated in 2018.

Walking back through dual territory and onto the Protestant side of the space is like stepping through a portal to a different world. At first, where the Andrews Flour Mill wall extends into Protestant territory, we see another carefully considered panoply of concerns. Here, it is a militarily themed and digitally composed printed graphic frieze which governs the view. It displays imagery which unites the British Army with the First World War Ulster Volunteer Force and, perhaps surprisingly, photographs of the Israeli Army of today. Where the wall then wraps around the corner and onto nearby Beverly Street, a similar installation commemorates the Second World War *Battle of Britain*. But there are no tourists here admiring these cultural celebrations and there is nothing to support or promote pedestrian activity on the street. It is a rather desolate place. It does not benefit either from the fact that the buildings are, for the most part, constituted in residential cul-de-sacs which are defensively turned away from the public road. This situation is also not helped by the large amount of space given over to the many surface car parks and warehouse buildings that are scattered amongst them and enclosed by yet more walls and fences.

When you then return to the space of dual territory after having journeyed in both directions and garnered some sense of the resoluteness of the Catholic and Protestant identity in these adjacent territories, you can begin to appreciate anew the enormous degree of restraint and control that has been brought to bear on the planning and delivery of this special place. Looking harder at the setting, you can discern a carefully curated balance in the execution. For example, whilst perhaps debatable to some extent, it can still plausibly be argued that there is a strong affinity within Catholicism with the

symbol of the cross that is not consistent across the many diverse deviations of the Protestant church. Yet *The Cross of Crosses* is noted on a plaque to be the brainchild of the Pastor from the New Life City Church. Indeed, their premises are located on a site just outside of the space and behind the cross, where a titular banner draped across the long side of the church building (itself a warehouse unit) provides an informal backdrop to the entire scene. And then there is the tower of blocks artwork. Upon further inspection, it appears that the well understood English reading of 'Peace' is orientated towards the Protestant Shankill Road where English is unquestionably the favoured language of choice. While the less recognised Irish 'Síocháin' is not equivalently orientated towards the Falls Road where the Irish language is routinely used in local Bunscoils and numerous cultural organisations, this is compensated for by allowing this aspect of the artwork to instead face forward toward the dominant postcard view that any visitor will have of the sculpture plaza. And, on the *United Nations International Peace Day 2012* mural itself, it could be assumed, with a fair degree of certainty, that the square footage of the display allocated to both Catholic and Protestant histories has been measured and equalised right down to the very square inch.

Dichotomies

Perhaps the most significant meaning to be found in this place of dual territory at Northumberland Street is the way in which it also inadvertently shines a light on a delicate conundrum that sits at the heart of spatial reconciliation efforts in Belfast. Those processes now seeking to forge spatial reconciliation can also be understood to inherently reproduce the very forces of conflict that they are trying to ameliorate. We see this in how the meticulous and painstaking creation of the dual territory, made possible by genuine ingenuity and earnest goodwill, required an involved and prolonged consultation with the raft of community actors and government agencies that have an interest in such a politically contentious enterprise. Central to its creation was a paradox, an ambiguous default starting point where the fostering of cross-community consensus by virtue of its very nature entices the participants to retreat and organise into Catholic and Protestant groups. This can be seen as a true Foucauldian subjectification (Kelly 2013), where these individuals act in ways which contribute to, and inevitably reinforce, their own subjugation primarily as either Catholic or Protestant. In this way, these subjects constitute themselves 'in an active fashion' through practices that are 'not something invented by the individual himself… They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group' (Foucault 2000, 291).

The subtly divisive effects of this subjectivity are also deeply embedded within formal policies. *Together: Building a United Community* (The Executive Office 2013) was Northern Ireland's first dedicated conflict-transformation policy framework. Its architectural remit was limited strictly to a focus on a ten-year programme to remove 'interface barriers', a catch-all term for the physical divisions that separate many Catholic and Protestant communities, the most famous of which are undeniably Belfast's widely recognised 'peace wall' structures. A remarkable feature of this document is that it does not use the terms Catholic or Protestant, nor does it acknowledge the informal territorial claims over public space made by many local communities that are in fact formal fundamental constraints to the development and use of land in many parts of Belfast. Instead, it talks about a divided society in a generalised and agnostic way. There is also no stated rationale for why the policy exclusively targets emblematic structures such as the peace walls. There is much local conjecture that the inspiration can be found in remarks made in 2008 by then Mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg, who stated in an address to the Northern Ireland Assembly, 'the sooner the physical barriers come down… the sooner the flood gates of private investment will open' (Geoghegan 2015). This falls in line with a long history of overtly 'trickle-down' approaches to post-conflict regeneration which have favoured symbolic signature projects that readily brand Belfast as a 'city open for business' (Muir 2014, Neill 2006).

It would seem, on reflection, that the drive to remove the peace walls was an overly ambitious, and perhaps fanciful, objective. At the time of writing, on what is now the ten-year anniversary of the initiative, only 17 of 59 interface structures identified by the government's dedicated *Interface Programme* have had some form of intervention (DoJ 2018). However, a less visible legacy is how the machinations of the *Interface Programme* can also be seen to subjectify local actors in ways which creates the air of peacebuilding progress without actually agitating the staunchly territorial neighbourhoods which are so clearly demarcated by their presence. The identification of an interface barrier for specific remediation is premised on a cross-community consultation process ostensibly put in place to 'create an environment for physical and social change' (DoJ 2018), where decision-making is devolved to those on the ground. This very necessity to seek cross-community consensus once more encourages individuals to organise into antagonistic Catholic and Protestant groups. This then steers the attention of the *Interface Programme* towards minor obstacles around which unanimity is much less disputed, and away from politically contentious barriers, such as the major peace wall installations, where enmity is all but ensured. This is borne out in the data. Of the aforementioned 17 interventions that have been made, there are nine applicable to Belfast. Only two of these items refer to what might reasonably be argued as the removal of a proper piece of a peace wall; a 270m long and 2.5m high wall along the Crumlin Road in north Belfast (Moriarty 2016), and a 250m long and 3m high wall at the Springhill Avenue area in west Belfast (Campbell 2017). The remainder refer to isolated gates and fences (Black 2018, Graham 2014).
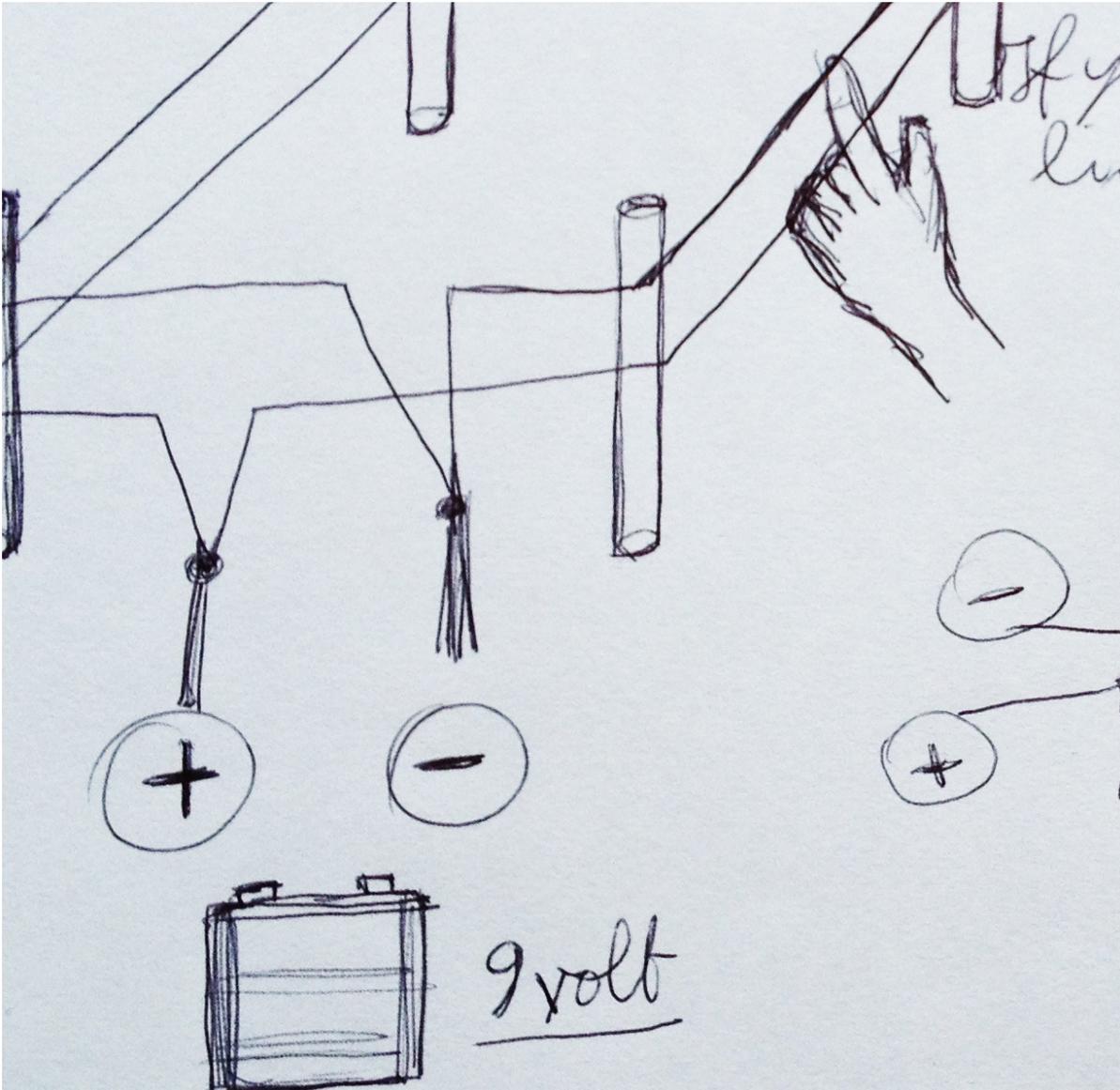
Logics

The lack of significant progress toward removing major peace wall structures, and the fact that many other forms of barriers do not even appear on the register of identified interfaces (Coyles, Grant, and Hamber 2021), persists as an overarching political logic. This logic serves to generate much activity and attention around the symbolic lines of division between communities whilst astutely leaving the internal social, economic, environmental, and political, structures of their adjacent Catholic and Protestant territories completely intact. There is a political expediency in maintaining this territorial status quo. The power-sharing Northern Ireland Executive is, in reality, a duopoly where government is chiefly split between the Democratic Unionist Party (Unionist) and Sinn Féin (Republican). The preservation of this duopoly is certainly helped by the preservation of the familiar boundaries between territories and the commonly predicable voting patterns that such boundaries can inspire. Against this complex and problematic backdrop, the space of dual territory at Northumberland Street provides a certain degree of barefaced transparency to the opaque ways that these local and state forces remain ambiguously but fundamentally intwined with land use in Belfast. The place of dual territory is, however, singularly unique in its placement. It is an unabashedly political space. Its carefully considered challenge to lingering spatial division pragmatically embraces Protestantism and Catholicism side-by-side. Here, the hidden subjectification of peacebuilding policies is exposed and writ large for all to see. Perhaps there is a lesson in this.
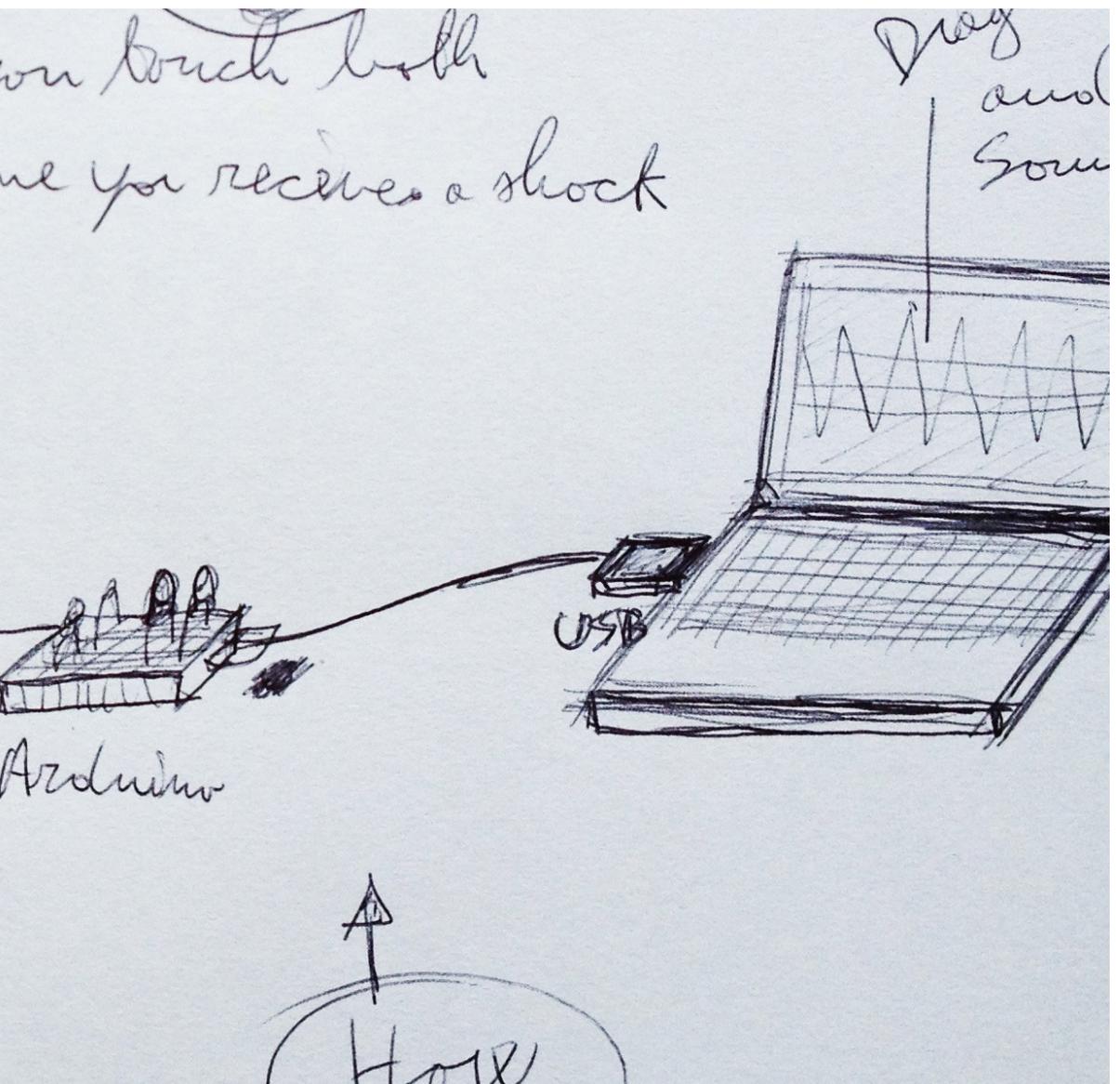
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don, respectively in Islington and Shoredicth. Subsequently, an installation space was set up at Goldsmiths College, with audio recordings from the interviewees. A dissertation and an artist book have been produced, too. With LWII, Dalbosco explores the feelings of marginality and frustration in those out of empoyment, with a keen emphasis on mental health issues. His work thus considers the interstice from the peculiar perspective of socio-existential experiences of uneasiness and hardship.

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Inhabiting through interstitial opacity
Protective negotiations of suspended existence across Paris' liminalities

Stefano Mastromarino
Camillo Boano

Paris' spaces of displacement between inclusion and exclusion

In the early hours of December 17, 2021, police enforcement from Paris and Seine-Saint-Denis gathered in rue Delphine-Seyrig, at the border between the 19th arrondissement and the municipality of Pantin, to evict and shelter people who had found refuge under the bridges along the Canal de l'Ourcq. Under the ring road of Boulevard Périphérique, more than a hundred people had been sleeping in tents and other precarious dwellings for several months, supported by associations and citizens.

Since the beginning of 2021, the prefecture had carried out 27 previous evictions, affecting over 7,000 people. Only a few weeks before the December 17 clearance, 237 people were forced to leave from a tunnel between the 19th arrondissement and Pantin and 331 people were evicted from a camp in Parc de Bercy, near the border with Val-de-Marne. These are just some of the hundreds of camps and spaces of makeshift inhabitation that have proliferated in Greater Paris over the years. Due to the transient nature of these camps, the inefficiencies of the French reception system, and the convulsive displacement and evacuation from central areas of Paris, many of these settlements can be found in proximity to major railway stations or along the borders of the city of Paris, in liminal, interstitial and discarded spaces between Paris *intra* and *extra muros*. Somehow moved by the same precarious and temporary condition of the transit, camps and makeshift dwellings settle in the liminal and interstitial, spaces longer there, but also not there yet, a *terrain vague* (Careri, 2002) that is simultaneously "a rapture and an opening up" (Mubi Brighenti, 2013).

In the context of contemporary Europe, our research looks at urban interstices and liminalities to examine the strategies employed by people on the move to challenge and transcend the obstacles posed by State power and negligence. Our objective is to construct an atlas of the undesirable that sheds light on persisting, if concealed, legacies. This investigation prompts us to question which spaces emerge as a consequence of the urgent movement of bodies that are forced to live in opacity and constant displacement. Based on this, these areas appear as *borderzones* (Squire, 2010), where the conflict between bordering policies and migrant activism is constantly repositioned. This infrastructure can be likened to an archipelago of sheltered spaces, which simultaneously exclude and include, they become "connected spaces of exclusion" (Rygiel, 2011) offering protection while perpetuating a state of suspended existence.

Drawing on literature focusing on the relations between control and care (Aradau and Tazzioli, 2020; Agier and Le Courant, 2022) as well as the vast scholarship on refugees makeshift inhabitation and informal settlements (Minca, 2015), we found productive to build on the concept of 'holding'

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(Sharpe, 2016; Rendell, 2022) to indicate such spaces that provoke and challenge conventional notions of urbanity and the right to the city. We have called them "spaces of holding" (Mastromarino and Boano, 2023) to indicate thresholds where camp and city get blurred; where bodies on the move are transiting yet made immobile and controlled, where people's presence is concurrently visible and opaque, central as well as interstitial. Here, we highlight how the complexity of social and political reconfigurations of forced displacement and makeshift inhabitation is relevant for urbanists, geographers, and architects alike. We question the role of the interstice and its opacity in developing new planning vocabularies that could include the multifaceted nature of urban fragments, spaces that are testimonies of what cannot be witnessed (Derrida, 2007) and that legitimize autonomous infrastructures of livability for the undesired (Agier, 2008).

Delphine-Seyrig: radical inhabitation across the interstices

The Greater Paris is an illustrative case that shows the paradoxically relational nature of interstices (Phelps and Silva, 2018), where infrastructures of mobility, urban borders and their liminalities have enabled stories of entrenched socio-spatial inequalities to merge with new reconfigurations of informal spaces and practices marked by the passage of people in transit. Historically, the city has undergone profound transformations following neoliberal strategies. The Haussmanian renovations, the plans of the hygienist revolution and the following projects of urban renewal have gradually contributed to create a city of material and social borderlands. Along these lines, the overwhelming presence of infrastructures of production and mobility, as well as its resulting interstices and voids, have shaped a metropolis where wealth, poverty and vulnerability coexist, albeit accentuating their stark separation (Secchi, 2013). Paris contributes to shedding light on the little known about those makeshift liminal geographies that are "smaller and less visible", "the sites that no longer exist", yet that, in the case of analysis, are "key to the production of migrant corridors in the context of Europe" (Jordan and Minca, 2023). These sites show the conflictual yet dependent relationship between the form and function of the camp and the horizon of the city. Within their endurance and opacity, liminalities manifest infinite possibilities of perpetual becoming that challenge dynamics of power and resistance and mobilize the marginalised and their singular identities (Mubi Brighenti, 2013).

The current state of the Parisian borderland is marked by the circular infrastructure of the Boulevard Phériphérique, which separates the city from its suburbs, generating a series of spaces of blurred function and management. This is the case of Porte-de-la-Chapelle, as well as Porte-d'Ivry, Delphine-Seyrig or Porte-de-la-Villette, where bridges, liminal wastelands and debris serve as sheltered roofs of exclusion for people seeking asylum on hold or in transit. Through participant observation during militant and aid activities between 2021 and 2022, we have explored the case of the makeshift camp of Delphine-Seyrig. Supported by associations, the camp first settled in October 2021, with some 15 tents occupying the pedestrian pathway along canal-de-l'Ourcq, under the bridge of the Boulevard. The camp was equipped with tents of various sizes, chairs, cooking utensils and waterproof cover sheets provided by associations or new arrivals. According to our observations and unstructured interviews with people supported and volunteers, most of the people inhabitants came from Afghanistan and planned to leave the country via Calais, thus living there temporarily before continuing their route. Despite the camps, Delphine-Seyrig is an area of daily commute and leisure for the citizens of Paris and Pantin. Compared to other inhabited liminalities in the capital, here the leftover interstices, people's vulnerability and the hysteria of the city coexist, highlighting the impending spatial tension that makes such interstices part of a borderscapes that keeps people's existence on hold. In other words, this tension prompts progressive hostility, police stops, and evacua-tions, yet also several acts of resistive support by support networks.

The camp was evacuated several times between 2021 and 2022 – in December 2021, then again

in January, August and September 2022 – with people returning after the eviction, as in an eternal mechanism of rejection and enduring existence. Like other cases such as the Tunnel, la Marseillaise, and Porte de la Chapelle, Delphine-Seyrig, too, attests the ambivalent condition of the migrant, as stranded on hold between ambivalently hostile and supportive geographies.

Inhabiting beyond the threshold, dwelling beyond shelter

The spatial dimension of globalization, along with the perpetual reconfiguration of boundaries between security and insecurity, knowledge and the unknowable, certainty and experimentation, has defined the attributes of modernity in both scientific and political realms. As a consequence, the threshold emerges as a topographical construct for scrutinizing contemporary spatiality and conceptualizing design. The term "threshold" carries a multitude of connotations: in French, *seuil* simultaneously signifies the act of passage and grounding. In German, *Schwelle* refers to the door lintel, and its structural potential is encapsulated in the verb *schwellen*, which conveys the notions of "swelling, expanding, and rising" (Benjamin, 2004). In common English usage, "threshold" also implies the sense of "restraint, hesitation, or vacillation" when approaching a particular territory. Crucially, the threshold should not be misconstrued as a rigid boundary; instead, it is an expansive zone, an infrastructure that, while acknowledging the existence of both an inner and an outer realm, does not rigidly segregate them but rather encompasses them in a fluid manner (Stavrides, 2010). In alignment with Agamben's perspective, it renders them virtually indistinguishable (Agamben, 2015).

In the mentioned case, these interstices also serve to enact the strategic and opaque mechanisms of rejection promoted by the French government, as well as the EU tactics of refugee deterrence. As argued by Harsha Walia, physical walls are not EU's primary mode of deterrence (Walia, Kelley and Estes, 2021), as the increasing of complex mechanisms of surveillance, police control or illegal pushbacks are all contributing to a progressive dematerialisation of borders in more opaque and differentially legitimised measures to keep people on hold and fortify fortress Europe. Therefore, borders and liminal territories inhabited by people on the move constitute the material configuration of the double mechanisms of state exclusion, through national and urban frontiers, but also dematerialised transnational thresholds morphed by migration and the criminalising policies of the EU. Despite the geographical distance from the national frontier, Greater Paris becomes the border itself, a main hub on the route to reach the UK and a strategic territory to "keep people stranded in convoluted geographies" (De Genova *et al.*, 2022)

At the same time, these spaces are far from being vacant and transparent; they are spaces of difference, where individuals stumble, converge, and collide, where people become opaque. In this context, the architectural threshold serves as a metaphorical device for a pedagogy that necessitates alternative approaches. It beckons us to recognize latent potentialities that exist beyond conventional representations, distorting cartographic norms while implicating a scenography that resides between the realms of the expressible and the visible, thus distorting both image and language. This superfluity remains ineffable, almost suspended, residing in the interstitial, fraught with contradictions and aporias. Hence, the inquiry into architectural thresholds assumes, regardless of its contextual placement – whether in philosophy, geography, or design – a political dimension, and serves as a valuable tool for the pursuit of critical discourse. It prompts us to question "whose city" (Phelps and Silva, 2018) emerges from liminality, and what is the role of planners in maintaining those areas in which vulnerability and loss find spatial legitimacy. These interstices, spaces of holding, where inhabiting in opacity means maintaining infrastructures of livability yet perpetuating a state of suspension, show the unequivocal interweaving of urban dimensions as a "politics of visibility" (Mubi Brighenti, 2013).

Although we condemn the inhuman tactics of dispersion and displacement that force people on the move to inhabit uninhabitable places (Simone, 2016) lacking facilities and institutional support,

we also acknowledge the importance of holding these areas in which fragile lives endure and resist. Reaffirming functions, identities, and autonomous legitimacies through opacity, these territories become third spaces where "the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 35). Despite not considering these camps and makeshift interstices as solutions to legitimise the persevering negligence of States and international organisations, these liminalities open to the temporary inhabiting "with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016), resisting people's permanent state of being on hold.

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Interstitial constellations
and their evocative emptiness

Cristian Silva

Introduction

The interstitial spaces that lie between built-up areas depict a varied geography of non (or less) urbanised lands that are often labelled as undeveloped or as opportunities to stich the city's fabric with updated forms of order. At a city scale, open tracts between neighbourhoods, brownfields, empty sites, or under-motorways are cases in point, while other more built-up interstices — such as abandoned buildings, gardens, or back alleyways — appear as apparently integrated but nevertheless forgotten or marginalised. At large scales, the countryside between cities also remains somehow forgotten from the hectic urban, while being depositary of excluded and gated communities, industries, unregulated developments, large infrastructures, and post-human architectures (Koolhaas, 2021).

In any case, interstitial spaces are *foci* of futurity and planning imaginations around 'the city to come' (Fields, 2023), which speak on their transitional stand towards being urbanised. This futurity stimulates creative thinking, and innovative forms of (in)filling which are often well aligned with communities and developers' will of filling the spatial emptiness and introduce visible changes against dereliction (Gandy, 2022). The under-utilisation of sites often also represents an extra pressure for the deprived communities nearby, above all when other 'sites of modernity sit uncomfortably close to communities that are still affected by poverty, division and violence' (Murtagh, 2018: 438); a situation that contributes to create a spatially uneven landscape of developed places and deprived ones where excluded groups are confined. Here, the regeneration exercise is the political scaffolding used to overcome the fears around economic detriment, informal encroachment, further abandonment, and institutional oblivion.

What is usually missed in this depiction of interstices, however, is their (contradictory) beauty and evocative stand precisely as spaces of dereliction, abandonees, ruins, vagueness, uncertainty, undefinition, emptiness, and the influential effects they have in the cognitive processes of spatial orientation, imagination, identity, and attachment (Brighenti, 2013; Stewart *et al*., 2019). This evocative stand is often lost when interstices are urbanised while the cultural connotation of dereliction and abandonment is relegated to the past (Mah, 2009). More conceptually, the value of the emptiness itself is somehow dismissed by authorities and developers, but also architects, planners, and designers who 'seem incapable of doing anything other than introducing transformations, changing estrangement into citizenship, and striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated magic of the obsolete in the realm of efficiency' (de Sola-Morales, 1995, cited in Gandy, 2022: 1120).

This essay is not a pledge for keeping interstitial spaces marginalised or undeveloped, but a call to highlight the value of their emptiness as an element of evocation, diversity, stimulation of memory

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and futurity; elements that count for the beauty of interstitial spaces during their transition to urbanisation. The insights could serve to reflect upon the meanings of the emptiness, and the role of actors and communities around preservation and change; as early observed by Koolhaas (1995) on his imaginaries of Berlin: 'it is a tragedy that planners only plan and architects only design more architecture' (201). The emptiness of urban interstices might signal what is going to be lost when urbanising them, what could be preserved, what will be gained by (in)filling, or how innovations in planning and design can transport the primigenial (and often wild) evocative beauty of the emptiness into the future.

The urban emptiness

Urban interstices describe a constellation of spaces of different forms, sizes, functions, environmental properties, and levels of emptiness. This emptiness is indeed 'a degree of' as — even when it would be undisputable in geographic and morphological terms — the social domain of interstices makes their emptiness contentious. Clearly, a total emptiness cannot be expected considering that cities irrigate their functions, infrastructures, meanings, and competing agencies to all corners (Kim *et al.*, 2020) — something that has been early on countersigned by Lefebvre (2003), who argued that the urban fabric 'does not narrowly define the built world of cities but all manifestations of the dominance of the city over the country' (Lefebvre, 2003: 4). Thus, considering that a discrete degree of urbanity can be found within interstitial spaces, the study of their emptiness becomes counterintuitive, more metaphorical than physical.

An approach to urban interstices from their (level or degree of) emptiness is conceptually and methodologically challenging as the 'emptiness appears to represent a problematic category to pose to the social and cultural analysis of urban space and place, a study which usually focuses on a "fullness" of interactions, structures and meanings' (McDonogh, 1993: 3). The emptiness, however, 'remains an evocative category, a stimulus to rethinking conceptions of space rather than a classification from any urban culture' (*ibid.* 3). While initially 'it implies a total lack of content: people, buildings, objects or markings on a map . . . it is quickly evident that none is truly devoid of everything' (Campbell *et al.*, 2019: 1) as empty spaces are full of contents of different sorts. 'Yet these contents do not necessarily contradict a palpable identification of emptiness', something that confirms emptiness as 'inherently relational, defined as much by what does not fill or is expected to fill a space as by what is in fact there' (*ibid.*) and thus, more something perceived and constructed by comparison and in contrast with other more complete places.

Despite the difficulties surrounding the empirical tractability of emptiness, archaeological studies have proven that 'specific examples of empty space (in ancient cities) have enabled us to discuss the multiple meanings of nothingness at the household, neighbourhood, and urban scales' (Smith, 2008: 216), evincing the emergence of interstices since the dawn of civilization. Notably, in ancient cities 'humans intentionally created interstices of space between architectural units, preserving the notion of a dialectic between point-specific phenomena and the unmarked spaces between them', while in modern cities the 'emptiness is a particularly potent cultural category because of the many meanings and activities that may be simultaneously and sequentially encoded there' (*ibid.*). It is precisely in this interstitial emptiness, for example, that 'urban informality from global south to global north is distinct in its emergence' (Phelps, 2021: 97). Koolhaas' (1995: 199) claim that 'where there is nothing, everything is possible; where there is architecture, nothing (else) is possible', is indicative of this potential, and might signal still unexplored methodological approaches and planning vocabularies to address the interstice aside from accepted city-oriented epistemologies.

In 1993, Koolhaas elaborated on *nothingness* to depict the spatial character of Berlin after WWII, as the city was shaped by survival areas interspersed with urban voids resulting from war destruc-

tion. These voids – with no standing architecture, but only ruins – amalgamated the fears of the past with the hopes and optimism of the city's future. Koolhaas disputed the institutional impulses to (in)fill Berlin's damaged fabric, arguing that any attempt to urbanise would bury the scars of history. Instead, Koolhaas contended that Berlin is now a divided, dispersed, and decentralised city in which the urban voids express Berlin's new character of a dazed, fragmented, and destroyed land with no centre. The future of Berlin must operationalise the subtraction, the excavation and even the destruction, and introduce emptiness as a mechanism to (re)create the new character of the city. So, 'only through a revolutionary process of erasure and the establishment of "liberty zones"' (*ibid*. 201) would Berlin (re)signify itself. The *nothingness* would take place, and the wild forest would manifest in it; Berlin would float in this nothingness to become an interconnected system of (discrete) built-up clusters where 'the green interspaces (would) form a system of modified, sometimes artificial nature' (*ibid*.). Thus, Koolhaas' imaginary of Berlin speaks of emptiness as intended design, advocating for new forms of urbanism arising from it.

The beauty of *horror vacui*

Empirical studies in social psychology have demonstrated that 'the interlinked phenomena of memory and of stage-setting encompass our species' predisposition for olfactory or aural prompts in addition to visual and tactile ones' (Smith, 2008: 221), and that urban interstices are key in stimulating such correlations. At large scales, individual and collective fears of empty sites count for the agoraphobic label of the emptiness and its dismissal (Walz *et al*., 2016; Brighenti and Pavoni 2023). Ancient cartographers and mapmakers were indeed terrified of the blank spaces found in port-ship cities and oceans, and literally invented neighbourhoods, mountains, and monsters to handle the uncomfortable emptiness and avoid the unknown of this *terra incognita* (Walter, 2019).

At proximal scales, the narrow alleyways of British Victorian housing blocks have been the perfect scenarios for darkness, inappropriateness, illegality, dangerous, ugliness and dirtiness, while also hosting intimacy and the emergence of community projects that teach on how to transform the ordinary into the sublime. A recent case in point of this spatial alchemy are the *Wildflower Alleys* in Belfast, Liverpool, Manchester, and London (The Alternative UK, 2023), typically used for rubbish disposal and now transformed into colourful places for families and wildlife. The alleyways that one day fed Jack the Ripper's horror are today places for social interaction and nature-based design. In developing countries, there are also countless examples of impactful projects flourishing in such narrow interstices of cities (see for example the 'non-rectangular football pitches' in Bangkok's slums). Not calibrating these interventions, however, can cross the line of accepted expectations on what the interstice could be as per surrounding communities, and transmute *horror vacui* into *horror futuri*. The High-Line Park in NY illustrates this, becoming contentious for the social consequences of urban regeneration and the consequences of commodifying urban scars (Millington, 2015). The plea of making cities 'just green enough' highlights the fact that 'urban green space strategies may be paradoxical: while the creation of new green space to address environmental justice problems can make neighborhoods healthier and more aesthetically attractive, it also can increase housing costs and property values' (Wolch *et al*., 2014: 234).

Aside from uncalculated futurity, for scientists the beauty of urban interstices precisely lies in their original and inspirational atmospheres defined by wild and overlooked nature. It also counts for the unexplored potential of hosting groundbreaking findings. Gandy (2011: 151) appealingly describes the interstices of Berlin as landscapes where 'the aromatic white flowers of yarrow *Achillea millefolium* stand out strikingly against the gloomy undergrowth of a patch of waste ground where the busy *Chausseestrasse*, running north-south, meets the quieter *Liesenstrasse* from the east': these sites are 'aesthetically and scientifically much more interesting than the closely managed municipal

park . . . with its short turf and widely spaced trees' (*ibid*.). Such wild disorder – or, what Gandy (2013) elsewhere refers to as 'entropy by design' – touches on an anthropocentric perspective for urban interstices. Based on the type of service that nature provides, wild interstitial spaces have been compared to 'cathedrals' which have a cultural role as a 'vital opportunity for spiritual renewal, moral regeneration, and aesthetic delight' (Home *et al*., 2010: 496).

The beautification of *horror vacui* has been recorded in the history of urban interstices. Their rejection as derelict lands provides a paradoxical trampoline for planning imaginations that span the very bottom of society and strongly institutionalised communities and 'clubs' (Phelps, 2021). Clearly, however, the beauty of interstices resonates with their character as empty sites, but also with 'the eye of the beholder': interstices are (inter)subjective spatial signifiers of imaginative readings of the past, the present, and the future of places (Silva and Ma, 2021). After all, such spaces depict what is essentially a constellation of small abysses that can easily trigger our fears as well as our hopes for the future. Interstices are something of an oxymoron, a deafening (spatial) silence that constantly and loudly speaks on what should be left behind and what should come next. In the process, we tend to overlook their beauty as empty spaces that face us with Koolhaas' *nothingness*, and the paralysing stand that makes them evocative: '. . .if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you' (Nietzsche, 1886: §146).

Final remarks

Urban interstices describe constellations of in-between spaces that touch on the collective illusion of futurity and change. Their evocative beauty as spaces of dereliction, abandonees, vagueness, informality, undefinition and emptiness raises question on their material and symbolic aspects, and their condition as sources of memory, aesthetics, and agency offered to different actors in the social integration politics. Their emptiness helps to re-signify cities and their (uneven) geography of prosperity: it necessarily invokes what is absent, missed, or in-progress, and is deeply rooted on how places are feared, (un)controlled, and imagined. The beauty of emptiness also offers a distinct approach to the governance and understanding of the events that may occur between built-up structures (Brighenti 2013), while challenging simplistic expansions of static labels on architecturally defined spaces into the interstitial domains. It becomes a metaphor, a lens, a filter, a hermeneutical tool to read the anxieties of development, societal phobias, and illusions.

By celebrating the beauty of emptiness, further insights are nevertheless needed to understand how emptiness is socially constructed and represented, and how it mirrors on those built-up spaces that can nevertheless be considered 'interstitial' in light of their marginalised (or unrecognised) functions, modes of occupancy, hosted social groups, lack of institutional status, or simply because they evoke memories we prefer to forget. These built-up interstitiality can eventually illustrate a type of emptiness that – although physically visible – is forced to remain invisible; a heterotopic beauty that carries a more tangible side of the societal *horror vacui* and absences that 'should not cause us to look elsewhere, but to look closer' (Campbell *et al*., 2019: 13).

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Peripheral Imaginary
Towards an Architecture of the Periphery

Cameron McEwan

Introduction

> The periphery is first thought in the mind…[1]

Peripheries are where most of us experience the unfolding of everyday life, a familiar terrain, often the place where we sleep, the place where we work, the place where we hang out when not working or sleeping, the place we move through to get to the place where we live, work, or play. Peripheries occupy the space between the urban to nature divide, neither fully city, nor entirely landscape. Peripheries merge. Urbanature. What is notionally urban gives way to nature, and what is landscape merges into the city. The city as a place of centrality tends to have a coherent relationship between figure and ground, monuments and fabric. It is usually a place regarded as holding collective memory — think of the image we have of traditional European cities like Milan, Rome, or Paris. As architect Aldo Rossi once said, the city is the locus of collective memory.

The periphery is different. Sometimes all figure, sometimes all ground, often a strange yet compelling mix of figures and grounds, of landscapes, buildings, infrastructures, fields, and geotechnics — think of the Dutch Randstad, the Italian Veneto, the Scottish Glasgow-Edinburgh Central Belt, the extending urbanism of New York's Long Island, the one million acres and no zoning of Houston, or the desert edges of the Nile Valley. More and more one periphery entangles another periphery. Uneven urban development and the processes of urbanisation lead to the expansion of peripheries at a planetary scale.[2]

To speak of peripheries is not to set up a dichotomy of city-periphery, or urban-nature, but rather to articulate the interstitial quality of the periphery as entanglement.[3] The periphery is an in-between space. It is transgressive, a *trans-urbanism*. If there is a city of collective memory and with it a city that occupies a place in the cultural and social imaginary, then there may also be a periphery of collective memory, a *peripheral imaginary*.

Might it be possible to start from the periphery of everyday life, from the experience of the ever-shifting combination of dominant to residual and emergent peripheral forms and forces, to practice a type of trans-urbanism and an urban writing that is also peripheral and transgressive? It would be peripheral and transgressive in the sense that it may not conform to the classic urban typologies of piazza, street, and monument with their associated urban culture, or the conventions of academic discourse — quotation, exegesis, interpretation — but instead be a different type of critical urban thought and writing. Is there a speculative form of urban writing that uses the urban "archive" differently, transgressing its modes, practices, and imaginaries?

One aim of this essay is to develop a preliminary theory for an *architecture of the periphery*, which

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entails a reflection on the relationship between peripheral monuments and the peripheral imaginary. It is to use Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* and speculate about an "architecture of the periphery".[4] One of the subtexts is to test a writing practice that uses the urban archive — Rossi's book — and transgresses its ideas, subverting scholarship. It extends a type of writing practice I previously called *authorship without aura*, a critical yet speculative type of writing that is collective rather than individual.[5]

Writing towards an architecture of the periphery

I approach the writing of this essay as an experimental material practice that puts different ideas into dialogue. I use specific concepts from *The Architecture of the City* transposed onto an architecture of the periphery. Rossi's ideas about monuments, permanence, the city as an artefact, and collective memory, provide the material for transformation. Rereading those ideas as peripheral monuments, the peripheral imaginary, and the periphery as a permanent artefact provide new analytical categories for understanding the urban condition today. Principal reference points for my writing approach include Roland Barthes's "Death of the Author," Michel Foucault's "What is an Author," and McKenzie Wark's writing on "low theory" in *Molecular Red* and *Capital is Dead*.[6] Wark advocates a relation to writing that is a practice of literary communism. I am interested in the way that these thinkers challenge questions of authority and authorship, how they articulate a different sense of agency within the structures of knowledge, scholarship, and power, and how they have sought a writing practice for understanding collective life, which today is the pressure of the Anthropocene — a natureculture entanglement that reaches its acuteness in the urban periphery.[7]

Writing towards an architecture of the periphery means using the intellectual culture of urbanism as a commons of knowledge. The essay begins by selecting key statements in Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* substituting and combining the word 'periphery' with Rossi's key concepts. I problematize authorship, allowing the shadow of the architecture of the city to reach into an architecture of the periphery. I practice a highly selective identification of statements and concepts in Rossi's book, combine them into a new order and use the text as a material form so that the agency of theory is articulated afresh. It is a method of *détournement*, which appropriates ideas and then in a process of erasure, correction, and inflection, puts those ideas into a different register: from city to periphery, monument to peripheral monument, city as locus of collective memory to peripheral imaginary.

Peripheral monuments and a theory of the peripheral imaginary

Let's select a fragment to *détourner*, starting in the centre of *The Architecture of the City* where Rossi reflects on the relationship between the city as spatial entity and as an idea in the collective imagination. Then move backwards and forth.

The periphery itself is a repository of history. On one level, the periphery is understood as a material artefact, a human made object built over time and retaining the traces of time, even in a discontinuous way. The periphery yields knowledge. It is a history of multitudes, cities, regions, civilizations. Peripheries become historical texts. On another level, the periphery is understood as a synthesis of ideas and values concerning collective imagination. Both levels are intimately connected and structure the architecture of the periphery.[8] The former is what the eye sees. The latter is what the mind sees. The relationship between the city and its region, between the periphery and the imaginary, forms an indivisible unity. Peripheries constitute a world in themselves.

The periphery is to be understood here as architecture. By architecture it is meant not only the visible image of the periphery and the sum of its different architectures, monuments, and infrastructures, but the architecture of the periphery as a construction over time. The architecture of the periphery is

collective. It is inseparable from society. The periphery came into being with the traces of the city and is rooted in a new civilization as a permanent artefact. Architecture gives concrete form to society. Over time, the periphery grows upon itself acquiring a consciousness and a memory.[9] The periphery is the locus of the collective memory of the multitudes of people who inhabit peripheries.

Studying the periphery can take different forms, historically, comparatively, formally. It is possible to elaborate the enduring elements of peripheries, their permanences, the *peripheral monuments*.[10] A key to understanding peripheral monuments lies in their collective nature. By the architecture of the periphery, the periphery is seen both as a monumental object and simultaneously as constituted by peripheral objects. These are large complexes, big buildings, large areas that constitute pieces of the periphery and which structure how we experience peripheries: airports, hospitals, logistic hubs, infrastructure, suburbs, waste plants, supermarkets, ALDI, Walmart, supermarket coffee shops, car parks, allotments. The architecture of the periphery summarises the periphery as form and idea.

The periphery is a human made object, entangled in issues of labour, nature, economy, representations, and discourses.[11] The past is partly experienced now, which is the meaning to give to peripheral monuments. They are a past that we are still experiencing. Permanence is revealed through monuments. They are physical signs of the past. The persistence of a periphery's layout reveals the axes of originary development and the permanence of form remains.[12] The most meaningful permanence are the street and the plan. The suburb, the favela, and the ladder have become permanent and which we can now say constitute peripheral monuments.[13]

At first sight, it might seem that permanence absorbs all continuity. But, not all things in the periphery survive. Signs of the urban dynamic such as the destruction of urban areas, expropriation, uneven development, changes in building use, land speculation, overdevelopment, are reflected in peripheral monuments. Peripheral monuments present two aspects. They can be considered propelling or pathological elements. Peripheral monuments that propel can enable us to understand the periphery in its totality. Rossi defines propelling in terms of function and capacity to change function over time. His example is the Padua Palazzo della Ragione which has held many functions over time and continues to operate as a market and a museum today. A pathological monument is primarily defined by its lack of capacity to hold different functions over time and Rossi uses Granada's Alhambra as an example, abandoned to tourism, yet remaining a powerful urban form, isolated and only linked tenuously to its urban relationship. A peripheral monument is a result of its capacity to constitute the periphery, its history, art, its collective memory, its power for disturbance and transformation.

Transposing those definitions to peripheral monuments produces surprising results: the adaptive reuse of car garages to hotels, retail infrastructure into offices and housing, mansions into hostels, bowling greens into public parks or allotments. Yet function is insufficient, the value also resides in form. On the one hand, peripheral monuments are fixed elements of the urban structure and have an aesthetic value. They are "high typologies." On the other hand, the architecture of the periphery attributes as much legitimacy of form to housing and minor works, "low typologies", such as the shopping centre, the airport, the suburb, the supermarket café. Peripheral monuments represent propelling elements of development. They constitute the origins of the periphery. The form of the periphery is the form of a particular time of the periphery and there are many times in the formation of peripheries. The periphery is seen as an architecture of different times and parts. Housing is a major portion of the urban surface and constitutes a dominant form. The relation between peripheral monuments as fixed elements and the dominant form of housing in the periphery constitutes a principal formal dialectic.

The periphery is the locus of collective memory. The relationship between the monument and the urban subject could map onto the peripheral monument and the multitude. The collective memory

participates in the transformation of spaces and the urban condition, a transformation that is conditioned by material realities, social and natural forces, and capitalist development. The history of the periphery can be understood through its peripheral monuments, which are the expression of power and entanglements.[14] The value of understanding the peripheral imaginary is that it helps to grasp the significance of the extending peripheral urban structure as the historical production of form and idea.

Conclusion

In this essay I wanted to test the extent to which some of the key ideas in Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* might be transposed to an architecture of the periphery at a time when the urban condition is now a continuous periphery, simultaneously heterogeneous yet all the same.[15] In doing so it is to articulate the possibility of Rossi's ideas for a different period, different typologies and conditions. It is to begin to develop a low theory of the periphery, with associated peripheral monuments, low typologies, and a peripheral imaginary.

Articulating a writing practice that makes use of the commons of urban knowledge is a method that starts with the key texts of Rossi, then cuts them up, inflects them into a new form, loosening the status of authorship. It seems close to the disillusion of authored works in the periphery – the suburbs, exurbs, favelas, big boxes, infrastructures, logistic hubs, and so on – yet all those low typologies are also peripheral monuments that produce the collective knowledge of the urban condition. The essay aims to update Rossi's ideas of the city, but for the periphery, as a movement from city as centrality, to periphery as the centre elsewhere, and for the Anthropocene. Rossi wrote compelling reflections on nature that constitutes an unusual forward glance at the Anthropocene. The peripheral imaginary, transgressive urbanism, and low types, constitute some of the concepts through which we might address peripheries in the era of the Anthropocene.

Endnotes

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The ecology of surface
Within and beyond communities in transformation through macro-paintings

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Introduction

In recent years, macro-paintings have become a popular tool through which various actors try to uplift communities in cities of the global South by painting their material environment.[1] A macro-painting is essentially a massive painting that covers dozens, sometimes even hundreds, of houses in marginal neighborhoods. These actors operate under the assumption that improving the material conditions of these communities will lead to their overall transformation. While communities represent a key unit in this process on which macro-paintings are intended to impact, macro-paintings, *de facto*, create new spaces and boundaries in each territory and city.

In this brief paper, we want to shed light on the phenomenon of macro-painting by thinking of them within and beyond the community. In doing so, we are concerned with "exploring ephemeral processes of presencing and proximity, accounting for the intermingling of interiority and exteriority" (Robinson 2013, 8). Based on interviews with various actors from different countries of Latin America, we analyse the boundaries of diverse scales of macro-paintings — houses, neighbourhoods/districts, cities — and argue that macro-paintings produce their unique ecology through which they affect meanings, materialities and lives all over the city. We believe public art always represents the history and vital events of given sites and the country. It becomes a testimony of the context in which they were created, thus entering repeatedly as an actor into the present day. So, democracy, citizenship, or identity are all linked in some way with graffiti, street art, and (macro)murals in Latin American cities (Dabène 2020).

To understand these nuances — of materialities, imaginaries, and practices — we think of our materials through the concept of *surface* (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos and Brighenti Eds. 2018). We claim that the concept very well captures potential links between a painting and the city and, at the same time, provokes us to rethink the crucial issues that this connection brings into conversation. In this, we follow the articulations of surfaces, "interested in what surfaces can do and how they come about in social life" (Anusas and Simonetti 2021, 10), which holds broader significance for urban studies.

Macro-paintings in Latin America

Around 30% of all the inhabitants of current cities live in so-called *slums*: self-built settlements con-

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structed by inhabitants on illegally occupied land using only locally available materials (UN–HABITAT 2003). Although settlements differ globally in history and shape as much as scale and demography, they are all characterized by being illegal responses to the basic human need for secure housing (Álvarez-Rivadulla 2017), and just the materialization of this need becomes most often a convenient surface for macro-paintings.

On the scale of the community, these settlements represent vulnerable territories exposed to poverty and marginalisation. In this sense, for instance, a recent report on Altos de la Florida, a self-built settlement in Soacha in the south of Bogotá, informed that around 73% of dwellers live in poverty (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center 2020). Usually, houses in these territories are structurally and materially inadequate, creating a visually uneven surface characteristic of self-built settlements. As a result of peripheral urbanization (Caldeira 2017), infrastructures can be dire in these neighborhoods: unpaved roads, lack of sanitation, or missing garbage collection. Given all these attributes, communities face suspicions and stigmatisation from the dwellers in surrounding areas and the rest of the city. By creating a visible surface through the use of colors and patterns, macro-paintings aim to integrate the neighborhoods into the urban fabric.

Since 2010, mobilized by various actors, these paintings have spread as a general concept across Latin America and even beyond. Nowadays, we can find such projects in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, and Haiti. In all these countries, art collectives and local governments, cooperating with residents, attempt to transform local communities. To understand this trend, we conducted interviews on 18 individual projects across 6 countries, carried out by eight different collectives or artists. Though outcomes are mainly evident in the material intervention of macro-paintings, every unit of scale also reflects different social and political effects.

Macro-paintings represent an ecologically, socio-materially, politically relational, and multi-sited assemblage (Vašát 2024). All the murals discussed here are shaped through the effects of mountains, and through a network of practical but also symbolic relations with other parts of the city, the ability to see the artworks from inside/outside has emerged. Moreover, ecological aspects and environmental conditions – from animals and flowers to rivers to wind – very often become the themes of paintings chosen by residents during workshops organized by urban authorities and their mediators. The projects are then coordinated mainly by the city authorities, delegating responsibilities and tasks, and the participation of other actors is usually affirmed by legal contracts involving not only the artists but also the residents of a given neighbourhood. And if legality is not directly established – sometimes the legal character of a given territory may be disputed – then at least a considerable degree of institutionally practiced formality is usually achieved. They are a specific reminder that in urbanisation of Latin American cities, "materiality and political economy are always already co-continued" (Schindler 2017, 56) and thus much more than the mere (painted) surface of this materiality.

Within and beyond communities undergoing transformation

At the smallest unit of scale, macro-painting produces a novel boundary between individual houses. This can have two general socio-material implications – one materializing as an impact of participation, the other resulting from refusal. Particularly, houses in self-built or popular settlements are usually never finished and represent a project that has been continuously evolving (Hoston 1990; Caldeira 2017). Given this fact, residents occasionally do not agree with a project and forbid their houses from being included. Tomás Darío, from Colectivo Tomate, explained how in the process of the macro-painting *Colosal* in Monterrey, Mexico, some neighbors did not want their walls to be touched because they had plans to improve them with plaster in the future. It would, therefore, be futile to paint them: "We do not want to impose; we like to invite people to choose whether they want to participate or not" (2 April 2023, online interview). More generally speaking, in a macro-painting, as

the exterior wall becomes public, it might represent a loss of autonomy over property. A similar effect occurs among residents who decide to participate in a project. The material outcome is co-produced by the (auto)construction phase in which a particular house finds itself. As implied above, the colored surface of bricks slightly complicates insulation as the paving makes it difficult for the plaster to stick to the wall. Through the decisions they impose, the projects instigate material and affective differences between individual houses and their residents.

The new boundary is also being created at the scale of community. Either directly through the city's surfaces or by reproducing pictures on the Internet, macromurals attract the strong attention of tourists and the general public. Some macro-paintings involve smaller graffiti and murals on the walls in between, usually made for tourist tours. Such tours can be found in Bogotá, Colombia, as part of the macro-painting *El Luna Sol* and *La Mariposa*. These tours offer people the chance to experience local food, such as *buñuelos* (fried cheesy pastries) in La Mariposa, or buy products made by local artists, such as bracelets in Buenavista. However, once again, these graffiti and murals, products, and tourist trajectories through the geography of the *barrio* (neighborhood) are associated only with some communities or their parts. Only the chosen ones are visible enough and thus accessible to potential socio-economic benefits that these spatial attributes offer.

Macro-paintings are largely dependent on the topographical nature of the site, conditioning their size and the unique perspectives that enable the visibility of the painting. As such, they have the capacity to transform the narratives of places and create upstart boundaries that differentiate them from, and connect to, the urban surroundings. In Lima, Peru, the macro-painting *El Gran Telar* sought to make visible a neighborhood that is very close to the city center but remained segregated from it. Daniel Manrique, from Color Energía collective in Peru, mentioned how through *El Gran Telar*, the barrio Leticia became the one colorful neighborhood amidst the grayness: "Lima is a gray city, but this in no longer a gray neighbourhood." (21 February 2023, online interview). The new, colorful identity produced by the macro-paintings creates an unequivocal sense of pride among many neighbors who see their barrio transformed into a livelier place. Additionally, as a material-discursive entity, the painting intervenes in the world of representations and symbols, when challenging prevalent negative depictions associated with the neighborhood. Despite this intervention, while the potential for tourism and the creation of a new identity have been established for one district, the remainder of the city, with its pervasive 'grayness' and accompanying challenges, remains largely unchanged in this regard.

Conclusion: Towards the ecology of surface

This paper explores macro-painting as a manifestation of urban surface. Within this perspective, a territory of macro-painting represents a distinct "textured surface that accelerates and decelerates, where interruptions foster diverse points of view, attentiveness, memories, consolidations, and dispersions of effort and association" (Simon 2011, 356). Macro-paintings transcend being merely specific entities that arise from the interplay of mind, body, and materiality (Ingold 2013); they transform into a form that, by virtue of evolving surfaces, forges intricate relationships with the urban bodies and surfaces. In essence, they are in a state of becoming, characterized by a "continuous interstitial knitting, rather than a fixed strata of matter" (Anusas and Simonetti 2021, 4-5). Consequently, macro-paintings possess the capacity to inscribe themselves in the urban landscape through diverse trajectories and multifaceted means.

Inspired by Isabelle Stengers' writings on the "ecology of practices" (2005, 2018), we argue that these inscriptions can be approached and understood through the ecological framework that a macro-painting's surface creates. From this perspective, ecology represents 'the interrelations between heterogeneous beings as such, without a transcendent common interest' (Stengers 2018, 91). To comprehend specific practices, one must explicitly consider the habitat of these practices because,

as Stengers (2005, 195) reminds us, "a practice is part of the surroundings that produce its ethos." In this sense, the unique ecology of macro-paintings introduces new spatial practices (e.g., tourist tours) that may limit or alter practices associated with a territory (e.g., insulation). However, this ecology of surface is not a static or permanent spatial condition; it presupposes changes in the rhythms of practices, the speed of processes, or the temporality of outcomes.

Although macro-paintings certainly do not address the full range of problems associated with poverty and inequality, they have significant effects on cities. On the one hand, as we have illustrated here, they create new sources of income and foster a sense of coalescence and belonging within communities. On the other hand, much like burgeoning vernacular architecture (Grubbauer 2017), they may become a new fetish for urban authorities. Similar to philanthropically motivated infrastructure upgrades in slums, they can pose a threat to residents, potentially leading to the loss of their homes (Desai and Loftus 2012). Or, akin to street art in general, they might contribute to the gentrification of adjacent parts of the city where they are visible (Schacter 2014).

Nevertheless, before we embark on an investigation into whether and how the specific relationships with the components through which they are adopted – be it institutional, ecological, socio-material, or socio-spatial (Vašát 2024) – determine their outcomes, we must first understand the results produced as a consequence of a general array of limited but recurring practices. This underscores the importance of recognizing that seemingly invisible and homogenized urban surfaces are not inert (Brighenti and Kärrholm Eds. 2018); they have broader spatial consequences that scholars must thoroughly investigate.

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Interstices between polis and necropolis

Christien Klaufus

> *They say that … actually it was the dead who built the upper Eusapia, in the image of their city. They say that in the twin cities there is no longer any way of knowing who is alive and who is dead.*
> *Italo Calvino,* Invisible Cities

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Where does the city of the living end and where does the city of the dead – the necropolis – begin? Cities like the fictitious Eusapia exemplify both antagonism and fluidity between the two types of *polis*. These conceptual interstices between spaces for the living and spaces for the dead tend to be overlooked in mainstream urban studies research. After all, urban scholars conceive of the necropolis as a spatially-bounded area separated from residential areas. The city of the dead is referred to as a 'cemetery' or 'graveyard' to underscore its distinct status, in which homes for the dead cannot be confused with homes for the living. From a functionalist viewpoint, the necropolis is a practical yet sacred place destined for the disposal of bodily remains and neatly orchestrated commemoration rituals (Rugg, 2000). Yet, the Eusapia model resonates in Latin American cities, where boundaries are often fuzzy. Residential and burial spaces overlap and complement each other in a physical-material and spiritual-emotional sense. Both can be sacred and mundane at the same time. This essay presents three examples from Latin America to discuss the essence of entwinedness as part of an interstitial geography.

The theoretical framework considers two analytically opposed tendencies: the first can be called 'Drawing-Close/Accepting/Showing', the second, 'Repelling/Rejecting/Hiding'. Drawing-Close involves attempts to literally or figuratively bring the remains of deceased persons into the proximity of mourners for them to be able to grief, communicate, venerate the deceased, or just *salir adelante* [get ahead in life]. The Repelling tendency entails the norms and regulations that literally or figuratively enforce the distancing, rejecting, and hiding of death and the dead, for example for sanitary reasons. Constant dynamics between Attracting and Repelling play out in paradoxical forms, and with ambiguous outcomes, on different scales, from individual to neighborhood and up to culture. The following cases are set in different Latin American cities, where groups with a relatively marginalized social position struggle to survive, to be self-reliant and creative, in their everyday confrontations with death and the dead. The cases exemplify, respectively, the massive casualties of COVID-19 in Guayaquil, Ecuador; the synergy between the polis and the necropolis in a marginalized community in Lima, Peru; and the tabooed death among marginalized migrants from Cuenca, Ecuador.

Let's start from Guayaquil. In March and April 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Ecuador's largest city causing an astonishing number of victims. On the deadliest day in early April, a number of 678 people died within 24 hours (Ortiz-Prado *et al.*, 2021: 410). Death was everywhere. Hospitals could not cope with the rows of ill patients waiting to be attended. Morgues could not cope with the number of dead bodies; corpses were piled up on floors and in hallways. The urban public health system collapsed, while hundreds of people were left dying in their homes. With funerary services stuck, families did not have other options but to put the dead bodies of their loved ones on the side-walk, wrapped in blankets or plastic, to avoid further contamination. The municipality of Guayaquil struggled to collect and identify the dead bodies before they were buried. Excess mortality was estimated at 94% (Ortiz-Prado *et al.*, 2021: 412). Guayaquil's pandemic disaster became a worldwide mediatized spectacle, featuring the metropolis of death in the news. People elsewhere gazed at the footage entering their living rooms as abstract stories (Jacobson, 2016). Meanwhile, people in Guayaquil had to distance themselves from the dangerous dead bodies of their loved ones, who they did not want to let go. This multi-scalar struggle between the Repelling and Drawing-Close modes resulted in people feeling conflicted and traumatized.

Dramas unfolded on a personal scale. Alarcón (2022) relates how an informal taxi-driver named Roberto was lucky to purchase a coffin after his mother Norma had died, because the city had run out of coffins. He was glad that he could at least bring her to a last resort. However, his mother's corpse got lost: it was moved without notice from the overloaded hospital where she had died to another hospital's makeshift morgue, and from there, probably, to a mass grave in a peripheral cemetery. As Norma's remains got lost, the coffin remained empty. Not being able to trace his mother's remains was traumatic for Roberto. In despair, he sold the coffin. His tragedy reflects a deeply human need to have control over bodily remains, and carefully store them in order to be emotionally able to grief and find closure (Dawdy, 2021). A moment of physical proximity is regarded in psychology as a prerequisite to deal with death's final separation. Rituals such as the *velorio* [wake] which follow after death in regular times, mark an important threshold in the relation between the living and the dead in Latin America (Cann, 2016). Yet, in Covid-ridden Guayaquil, the danger of contagion enforced immediate physical distancing. Relatives were not allowed to have a wake or attend the burial. The interstices between the living and the dead were temporarily broken. Individual trauma turned into a collective urban crisis, from which the city could hardly recover (Alarcón, 2022). In the antagonism between repelling danger and enabling contact with the deceased, the Repelling vs Hiding forces fostered lonesome burials and lost human remains, while the Showing mode defined the global mediatization of this urban trauma.

Different from the instantaneous personal and urban crisis caused by the pandemic, the second case exemplifies a long-term connection between the polis and the necropolis in Villa María del Triunfo, Southern Lima. Local cemetery Virgen de Lourdes has its origins on a piece of empty land where the settlers who arrived between the late 1940s and the 1960s, escaping poverty and an earthquake elsewhere in Peru, clandestinely buried their loved ones in the *cancha* [open space]. When the municipal district Villa María del Triunfo was established in 1961 authorities claimed control over the graveyard. In the 1970s, in an act of Repelling for sanitary reasons, the municipality relocated the human remains from the *cancha* to a location further away from the settlement. The new cemetery catered to a rapidly growing population and expanded over 65 hectares. Soon it was fully enclosed by densely populated informal settlements. With new shelters approaching, and even invading the necropolis, the houses of the dead were physically drawn close again to the houses of the living.

At a first glance, the immense cemetery looks unstructured and chaotic. Thousands of small self-made structures randomly dot the hills as far as the eye can see. Yet the spatial logic is less chaotic than it seems. Cemetery users have established a collectively-imagined internal order based on VMT's

history. Cemetery sections have been given the names of categories of settlers, ranging from the Huancaínas section (named after migrants from Huancayo) to sections dedicated to the newcomers of 1995, 1998 and 2000. This way, the internal spatial order reflects the neighborhood's history. Even though the cemetery is formally run by a municipal manager, it continues to function thanks to local residents, workers, and vendors, whose practices extend beyond the cemetery itself, intersecting with other parts of daily life and livelihood provision. Visitors spend days at the grave with food, drinks and music, which they share with the deceased. They hang out on self-made wooden banks constructed near the grave to symbolically convert it from storage space into an open-air living room. Ambulant vendors make a living selling beverages, food and paraphernalia to visitors. When celebrating work relations, vendors play soccer and barbecue in the cemetery, dismissing the idea of proximity of the dead as "dirty" or "hazardous". Over time, the polis and the necropolis have become co-dependent in their histories, functioning, and morphology (Debray *et al*., 2019). This necropolis has also attracted media attention, not as a space of crisis but as an "authentic" tourist destination. The Drawing-Close & Showing mode prevails: the synergy between the living and the dead ties the residential area to the cemetery and vice versa. The result is an interconnected, interstitial space that helps locals to *salir adelante* both socially, financially, and emotionally.

The third case unveils a transnational drama with its basis in Cuenca, Ecuador. From there, thousands of migrants from low-income families have traveled without documents to the US (and, to a lesser extent, Europe) since the 1970s. During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, a new migration wave developed (*Plan V*, 2021). Consequently, many Cuencan families were recently confronted with news about a disappeared or dead relative, followed by a frantic search for the body and the repatriation of remains. Most families of undocumented migrants that passed away during the hazardous journey, or while working abroad, do not receive governmental support for the repatriation as the Ecuadorian state ignores the extent of the problem, thereby relegating vulnerable migrants to a situation of social death (Borgstrom, 2017). Families of deceased migrants need to find other ways to solicit support to "bring the body home", to draw the dead close. New forms of community support have developed on social media. Families publish personal videos, telling the story of their relative who has died in a faraway location, soliciting financial support to pay for repatriation and funeral. Dozens of videos show humble homes with crying relatives holding pictures of deceased sons, daughters or parents. The mediatized exposure of loss and sorrow includes mentioning their personal financial details, bank account information, GoFundMe sites, and cell phone numbers.

This media circus highlights the painful details of death, emotional loss, and financial crisis. Such strategy of exposure challenges the national political taboo on *illegal* (undocumented) migration – social death – as much as it ignores the local taboo on *failed* migration, of which most families are deeply ashamed. While local and national politics play the Reject & Hide card to taboo the problem, families produce personal videos to Show & Draw-Close, even if this means that they admit failure in *salir adelante.* Showing the ugly face of death challenges the repel and hide tactics of the State: these dead will not be obscured, and not without reason, because mediatizing personal loss and trauma proofs effective. Community solidarity via social media and GoFundMe accounts have become an ac-cepted custom (Brighenti, Ed., 2022). At the same time, the Ecuadorian state's necro-politics remain powerful in its denial of the nation's socio-economic failure resulting in social and physical death.

These examples weave into a theory of interstitial space of life and death among marginalized groups in the Latin American city, shaped by the antagonism and fluidity between Attracting and Repelling the dead, between Showing and Hiding deadly loss on different scales. While both local planning policies and national migration politics aim to obscure the spatial manifestations of death in the city, especially in times of tragedy, grassroots forces contest the taboo through community solidarity, the visibilization of the dead in virtual space, and synergetic daily practices that integrate the necropolis

into the polis. In the interstitial space of the Latin American city that Eusapia so brightly symbolizes, no clearcut boundary can be drawn between who is alive and who is dead.

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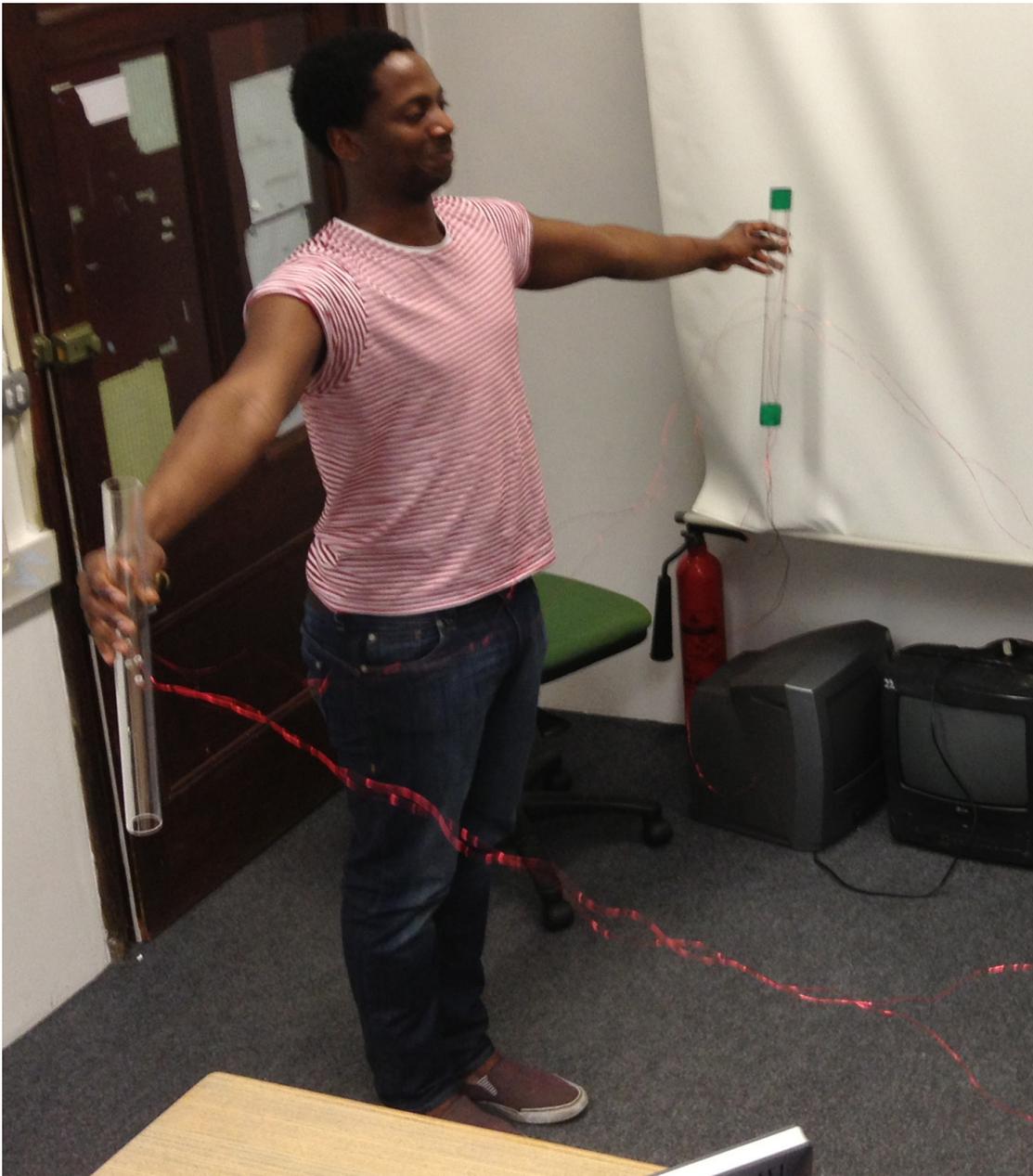
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Interstices, Liminality and Boundaries

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Guest Artist // Marco Dalbosco

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