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Art & Movement in Public Transport Networks of Contemporary Metropolises

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to my beloved friend Ioanna
whose angelic character is always present

Art and Movement in Public Transport Networks of Contemporary Metropolises

Research Direction

In this research it is necessary to follow a cross-disciplinary approach which involves, beyond visual arts, the study of technological achievements, both physical and virtual, with regards to contemporary infrastructure networks.

Thus, the present research is threefold. Namely, it consists of

- my artistic practice,
- art theory which relates to it and
- research on latest technological achievements.

My thesis, therefore, consists of two parts: an art exhibition and an academic thesis.

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this project-based research is art produced in relation to movement in Public Transport Networks of Contemporary Metropolises. Moving in Public Transport networks is the epitome of contemporary city pulse. Intensive studies are being undertaken in order to estimate, control and depict the flow of particles/agents (people and vehicles) within them. Further than individual photography and recording, Intelligent Transport Systems are made to meet the above objective; Google Street View, CCTV, Traffic Jam-Cams, Google Earth etc. Much of this apparatus is publicly available and has led to an unprecedented collective voyeurism. What is art's response to the use of this apparatus and its imagery? The art projects in the present research make use of digital tools and virtual imagery to depict movement in London City and particularly in London Streets and London Tube. Many artworks are created electronically, but in others one can see the subversion of bringing virtual imagery back to materiality. In this way art brings together the physical with the virtual and reflects this dual experience of contemporary city.

INTRODUCTION

The present research refers to the visual interpretation of movement and flow in contemporary networks under the prism of Visual Arts.

Generally, the networks of reference follow the methodology indicated in the scheme below:

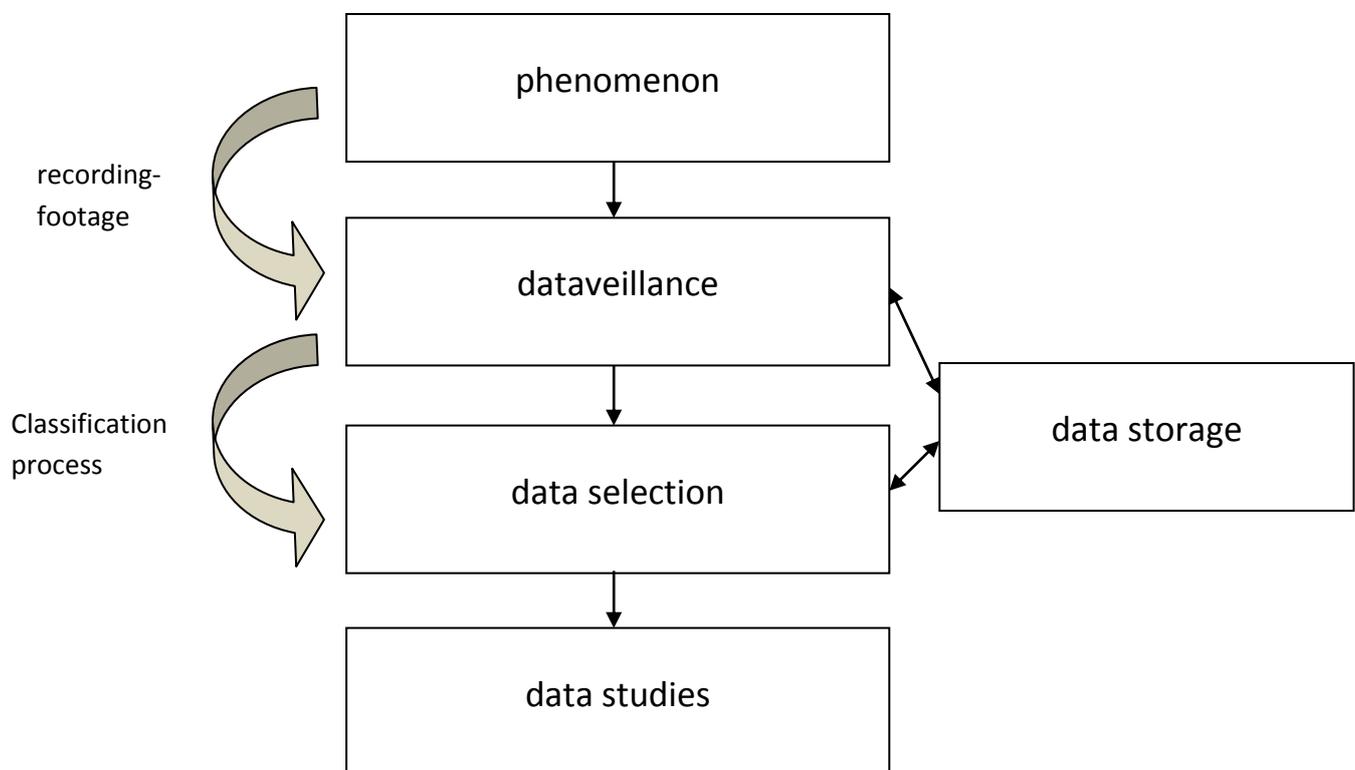


Fig 1. Souliotou A.Z. (2011) Diagram of Data Processing. (the diagram is based on the sources mentioned here, in *Introduction*)

The *phenomenon* in this research is, obviously, the flow of particles¹ within contemporary networks.

¹ The term 'particle' is generally used to denote any moving agent (e.g., pedestrians, passengers and vehicles) in the transport network.

This method is nowadays popular in many fields of knowledge including medicine, biology, astronomy, physics and geography. Thus, a large quantity of image are being generated and then automatically analyzed, in order to produce new knowledge. (Edwards, 2008)

There are three dataveillance methods, namely three methods of recording the flow within networks. These are the following:

- Individual recording with personal apparatus
- Surveillance apparatus (eg CCTV)
- Mapping apparatus (eg google earth)

These methods are analysed in the following section, *Dataveillance Methods & Art*.

There are some particular steps from dataveillance to data selection which constitute the classification process. These are the following (Barbieri, DeArruda, Rodriguez, Bruno, DaFontura Costa, 2010: 512):

- Pre-processing, which involves removal of noise and information filtering
- Segmentation, the identification of types of objects by putting a label to every pixel of the image, so that pixels with the same label represent the same object or part(s) of it
- Characterization

In their thought-provoking paper *Topological relation of layered complex networks*, theorists from Yangzhou University of China argue that networks are not distinct or stand-alone structures. They are, instead, part of a set of interconnected networks. (Zou, Zhou, Liu, Xu, He, 2010: 4406) Primarily, according to Kurant and Thiran, every infrastructure network is a bilayered structure which consists of the physical infrastructure network and the network of flow of particles.

The present research focuses on the latter network, not necessarily by mapping it, but mostly by depicting the particles that appear to move in it. It is necessary, though, to provide a sufficient understanding of the physical infrastructure network, as infrastructure determines the form, the complexity and the direction of the overlaid 'network of movement'.

One can draw a parallel between the above statement and Klee's theory on form and gestalt and then apply this to contemporary mapping of infrastructure networks. Namely, most maps of networks depict or even simplify their physical structure. In this sense they actually depict or simplify the *form* of the network, rather than its *gestalt* (Klee, 1971: 17). The present research, instead, intends to illustrate the latter through the depiction of movement.

The data acquired by these methods, once taken, they are filtered and then proceed to the step of data studies, which involves depictions, mathematical equations and graphic functions. In transport networks the measurements mainly focus on traffic.

Why movement in infrastructure networks

The subject of the present research refers to the movement and flow of particles within the infrastructure networks of contemporary cities.

City here is considered to be a 'contested space' which is simultaneously and continuously used by its population. Its citizens, habitants and visitors share it. (Harvie: 2009, 12-13) More particularly, though, what all of them can share is the public or 'semi-public' space (Public Space: Wikipedia: 2011).



Fig 2 Souliotou A.Z. Diagram of *What is a City*. Souliotou, 2011

THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Dataveillance Methods & Art

Individual recording

Nowadays, it is a common locus that recording media can be used by every person for an individual purpose. Both theorists and practitioners have stressed the importance of having representational imagery of urban environment in order to creatively study and transform it. Notably, many claim that this constitutes photography's 'raison d' être' (LeGates & Stout, 2009)

As far as artists are concerned, Vito Acconci followed strangers in New York city and recorded their behavior with photographs and written texts. Likewise, Sophie Calle commented on the artist voyeuristic attitude either by engaging herself with the act of following strangers or by employing others to follow her and keep the resulting documentation (Philipps, 2010). An equivalently powerful approach is Mark Wallinger's *Threshold to the Kingdom*, where not only does he 'privatise' passengers' movement by capturing them while exiting from the terminal, but he also gives to this matter a global meaning. This is because terminals in airports are similar around the world and, thus, 'Kingdom' could be any country. (Fallon & Rosof, 2009)

Surveillance apparatus

Surveillance schemes have widely entered our lives, opened up our perception of space and aspire to fully view what was until now invisible (or hardly visible). How and to what extent, though, do they produce overviews of particle behaviour within infrastructure networks? What kind of imagery do they provide us with? Since they promise an all-seeing situation, can they represent the worldwide becoming?

To begin with panopticism theory, the French philosopher Michel Foucault clearly outlines how surveillance strategies render an interior space totally visible (Foucault, 1987), which is otherwise a characteristic of exteriors. My position with regards to this theory is to look at transport and other infrastructure networks through CCTV and detectors respectively. As for street networks, they are recorded by Google Earth and satellites. This contemporary apparatus give us a very different view than Jeremy Bentham's *prison* (1785) or the observer's view from the top of the highest New York City skyscraper in *Walking in the City* (De Certeau, 1980).

Regarding contemporary surveillance apparatus, video cameras are most commonly used within infrastructure networks. At this point, the question arising is why video is the chosen medium for this purpose. It is clear that nowadays video is a very popular medium that all people are more or less familiar with; its history is of considerable length and has massively entered many aspects of everyday life. Hence, the sense of exposure created by video surveillance systems prevents people from misbehaving or committing crimes. However, the human observer who is 'at the backstage' of the network under surveillance can only pay attention to several things at a time. Most footage is being half recorded. One can find an analogy with an animal which has many eyes but no brain to work out the data. (Lipton, Heartwell, Haering, Madden)

It is clear that surveillance schemes cannot achieve an overview of contemporary infrastructure networks or the flow of particles in them, since they are no more than 'digital windows' of a restricted cadre.

Another drawback of surveillance apparatus is that it provides us with a simplification of transport networks complex structure. The complexity of transport networks primarily lies into their structure and secondarily into the flow of particles. More clearly, surveillance apparatus provide us with sets of rectangular screens of cameras with fixed viewpoints within a certain network, rather than with a holistic depiction of networks' complex structure. However, since every screen appears to have "entrance zones", "exit zones", "paths", "routes" and

“junctions” (Makris:2004, 12) one can make out a network by connecting the “entrance and exit zones” of the images.

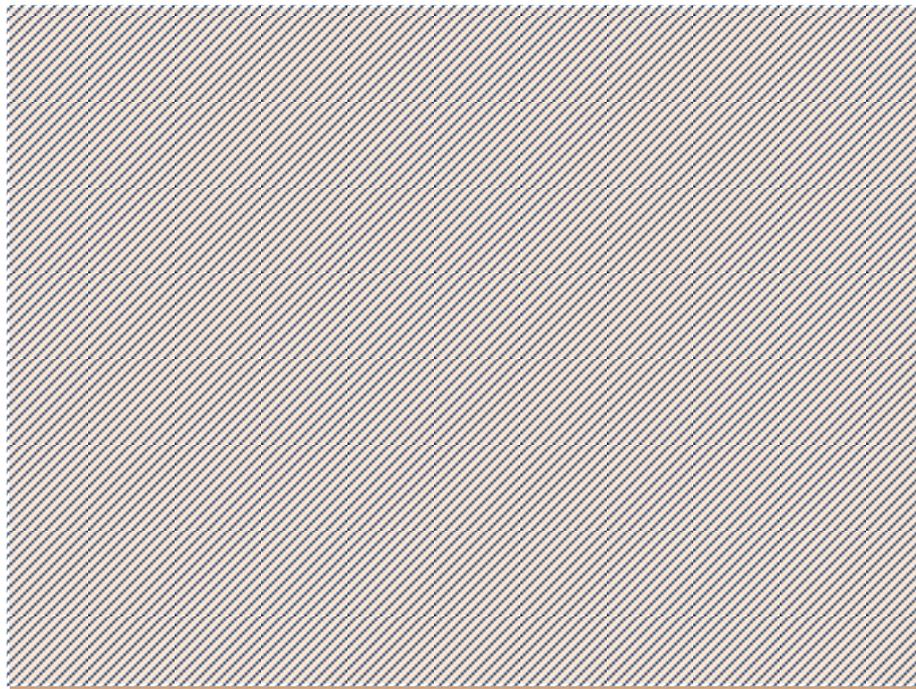


Fig 3. ‘A semantic, manually derived, description of the observed scene. Yellow areas correspond to the entry and exit areas of the scene, green areas to commonly used paths and red areas to areas where pedestrians normally stop for a while.’ Makris, 2004

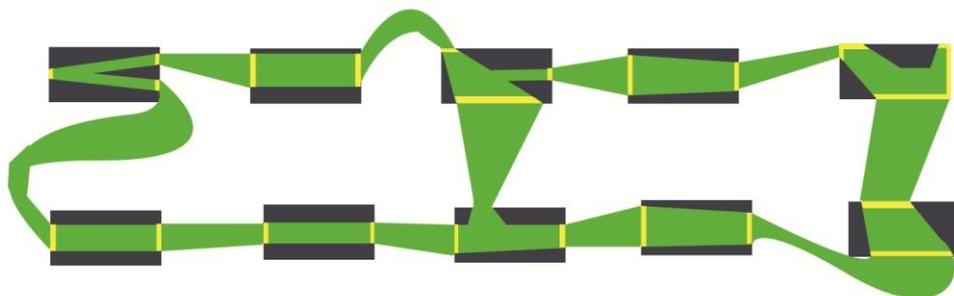


Fig 4. Souliotou A.Z. (2011) Following the paradigm of Fig. 3, this diagram shows how we can make a network with the scenes provided by the cameras. The bluish rectangles represent the scenes. The green areas represent the paths and connect the successive scenes by using the yellow entry and exit areas.

There is a challenging question, which emerges from the broad use of surveillance schemes in contemporary networks. This question (Filippidis: 2002, 19) constitutes a direct reference to the role of visual arts in the contemporary architectural reality. Filippidis' reasoning begins with architecture's stance in front of the technological evolution of surveillance schemes. Obviously, contemporary architecture follows the demand for surveillance by applying relative apparatus to buildings and infrastructure. Thus, it 'abandons the role of the passive, immobile surroundings' and actively undertakes the surveillance task rather than overlooking it. The rising question is: (Filippidis, 2009)

'Which are the ways in which visual artists have already established new frontiers on the issue of surveillance, capable of influencing potential developments in architecture?'

Mapping apparatus

Contemporary mapping apparatus involves cutting-edge technological inventions which have widely entered everyday life and are of growing popularity. They have also led to an unprecedented evolution in city view. This can be demonstrated with reference to paintings of the past and present. Within the next few pages there are painting canvases which depict city view. Camille Pissaro painted *Avenue de l'opera* in 1898 with a view from a building. Oscar Kokoschka paints the canvas *Prague, Nostalgie* in 1938 with a view from a hill. Gerhard Richter in 60s paints a series of paintings called *Townscapes* from aerial photography.

Nowadays google earth and google maps are at our disposal. Using google maps I made the *Intruding* (Contrary to Popular Thinking, 2010) Project, where the new kind of city view proposed by Google Maps is implemented in Art.

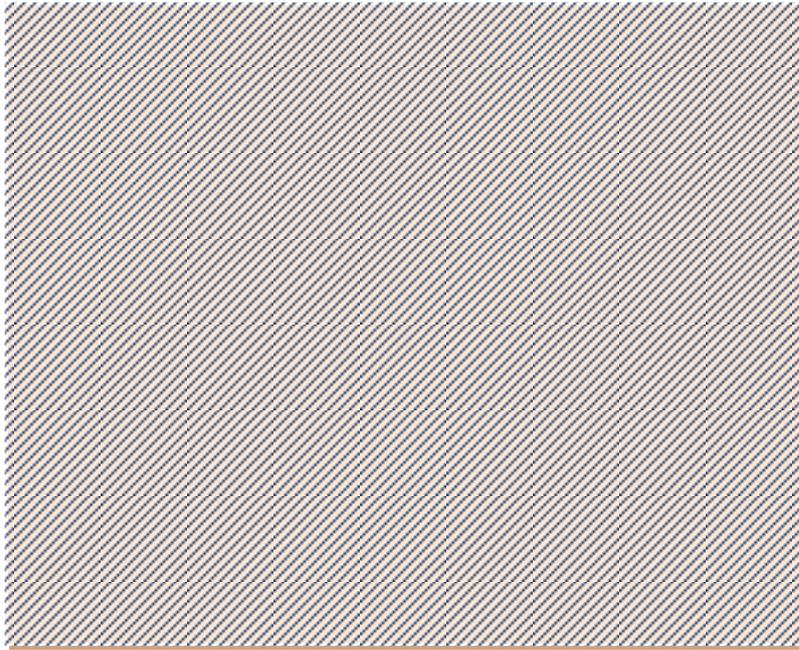


Fig 5. Camille Pissaro, *Avenue de l'Opera*, Paris, (1898)

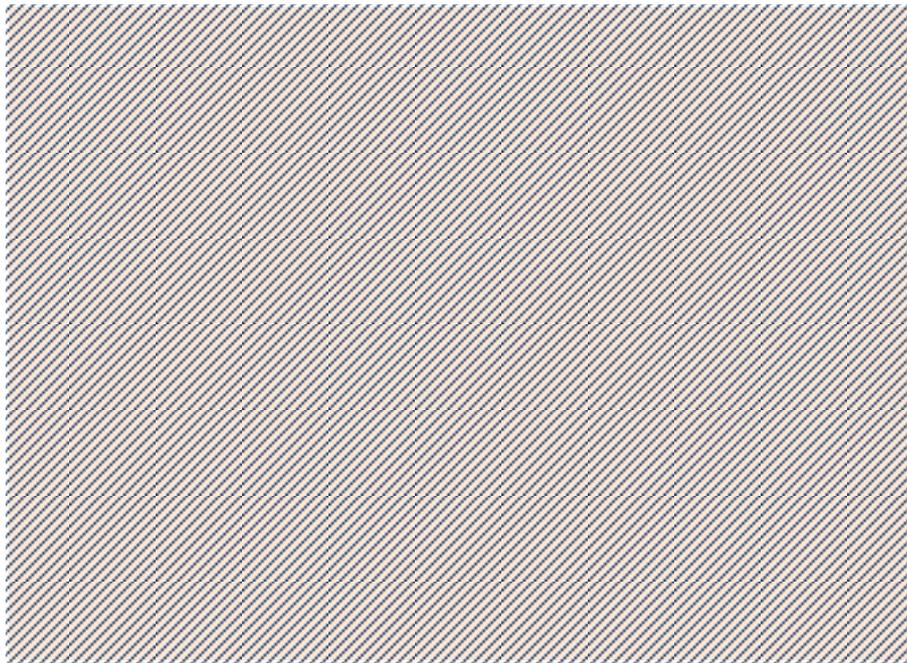


Fig 6. Oscar Kokoschka, *Prague, Nostalgia* (1938)

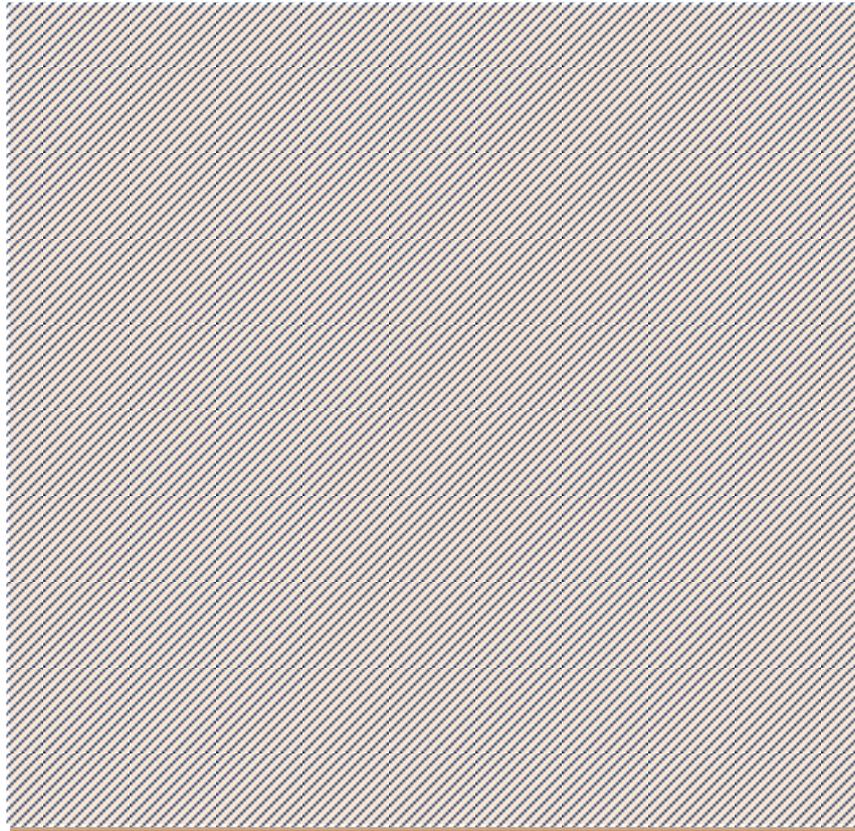


Fig 7. Gerhard Richter, from *townscapes series* (1968)

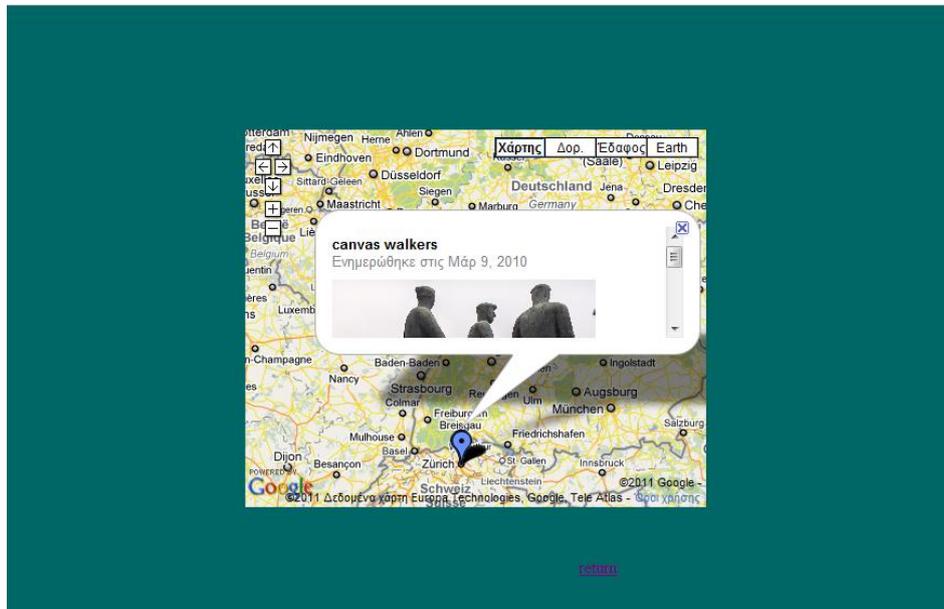


Fig 8. Souliotou A.Z. (2010) *canvas walkers-Intruding project*

My personal view is that it is of utmost importance that Contemporary Art makes extensive use of this apparatus in many ways and through diverse media, both traditional and new. This is what this project-based research aims at doing. Further than exploring in what way contemporary Art has made use of this apparatus, it includes art making which refers to the movement of particles in contemporary infrastructure networks.

However, at this point it is necessary to make clear that this research does not aim at mapping the flow of particles in infrastructure networks. It instead intends to use city imagery provided by cutting-edge technological means, in order to work it out and produce artworks.

With the advent, though, of cutting-edge technology in global mapping and street view and, more precisely, with the combination of the two (through Google Earth, Google Maps, Jamcams, GPS), nowadays the vastness of the city has become more controllable than before, rather tameable. The late capitalist city's spatiality, instead, is distributed to evoke confusion and 'placeless dissociation' (Jameson, 1984). One could find anything in the 'micro-urb', but could not easily figure out places, since it was hard to form mentally a coherent map of the city. The city's 'pastiche of superficial reflections bewildered coordination' (Soya, 1989: 243-4)

One cannot ignore the existence of surveillance systems when they map a network or depict its flow. Contemporary networks possess -except for 'intersections, sources and sinks, nodes and edges'(Bornholdt & Schuster, 2003: p 248)- surveillance apparatus, which in a way is a contemporary digital window. Such apparatus can potentially affect the travel behaviour and movement of agents, through guiding them and/or providing regularly updated information to them about network traffic flow conditions. A complete architectural plan of a contemporary network needs to include this parameter, not only as such, but also as a definitive structural element. In this sense, London Road Info (BBC, 2011) is a complete mapping medium, since it contains cameras in many different spots in London City.

What is the position of Art to this subject?

The position of Art to this subject is reflected on movements and artists that evolved since the beginning of 20th century. To begin with Futurist Movement, the Futurists depicted the movement of the human body and the vehicles, which were the technological assets of the time.

For Paul Klee the form is not a static, but a dynamic entity, as it has a fundamental role in the creation process. His notion about the role of movement in this creation is summed up in the famous say 'movement underlies the growth of all things'. (Klee, 1971)

An interesting way of depicting movement in street networks is found in *Streetscapes* series by Wayne Thiebaud. 'Essentially, it is about urban atmosphere and the need to escape it' the artist declares about this series of steep hills and skyscrapers of San Francisco. In terms of composition the interesting thing is that horizontal themes are transformed to vertical compositions and street and traffic are its underlying parts.

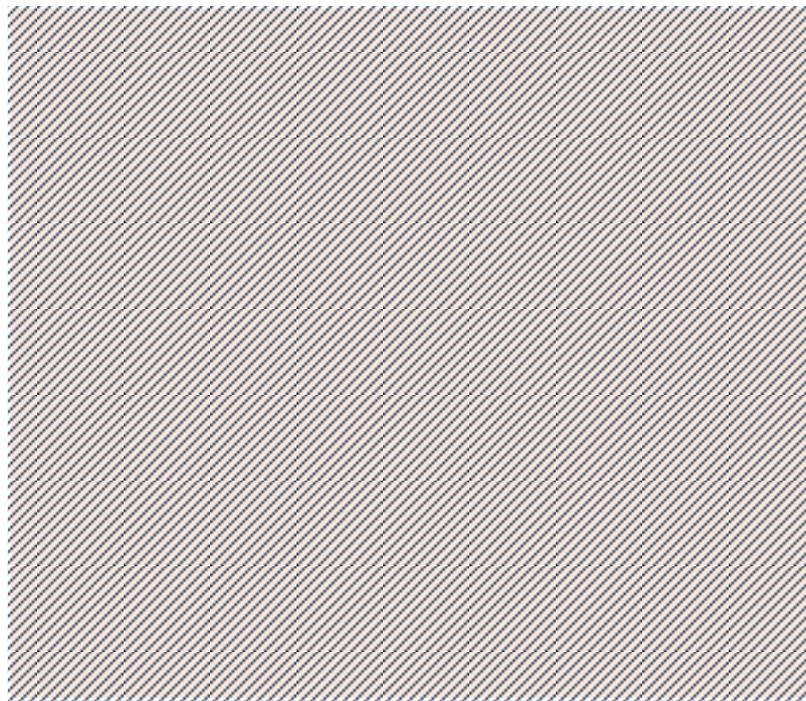


Fig 9. Wayne Thiebaud, *Highway Curve* (<http://ahistoric.blogspot.com/>)

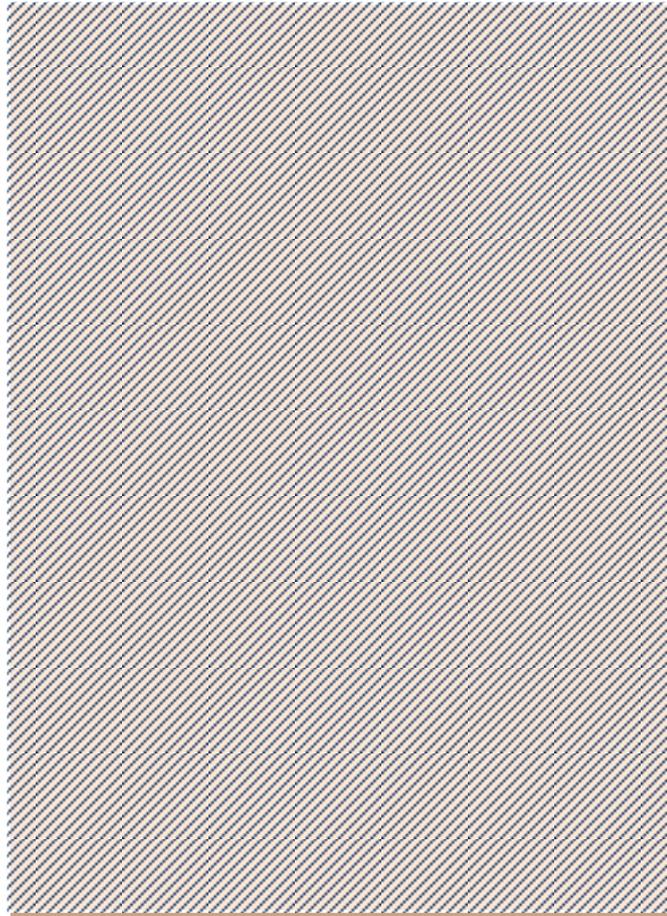


Fig 10. Wayne Thiebaud, *Apartment Hill*, 1.65 X 1.21 m, 1980

The theory of psychogeography (Psychogeography: Wikipedia, 2011), the situationist maps and the figure of the flâneur (flâneur: Wikipedia, 2011) are also highly applicable to this research, as long as they refer to the urban wandering within metropolises.

Another artistic group that investigate movement in cities is the 'Experimental Geography' which brings together art with geography through interdisciplinary practice. (Nato Thomson & Independent Curators International, 2008)

Alex Villar in his piece *Upward Mobility* demonstrates the restrictions which urban planning and public design impose on pedestrian movement. More precisely, horizontal movement within fixed lines is predominant in cities. Contrary to this, Villar presents people's efforts to move vertically in an irregular, yet alternative manner. (Rich, 2008:91)

Contemporary metropolis and megapolis have given birth to a series of new kinds of streets and transport networks. Highways, byways, (main) roads, alleys, tunnels, evacuation roads. e-Xplo group made a piece where the artist went on a bus tour and recorded the sound. (e-xplo: 2011). Kanarinka ran a whole evacuation route in Boston (D'Ignazio, 2008: 86-87) and kept archives of changes in her breath (Kanarinka projects, 2011).

Marina Abramovic along with her collaborator presented *Relation in Movement* in 1977 Paris Biennale. In this project they drove a French Police car and Abramovic had the megaphone and said the number of circles they were doing with the car. (Abramovic, 1977) In this way they created a route of their own, beyond Paris road network system.

Importance of Research

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it refers to a key subject with regards to contemporary becoming. It aims at depicting the quintessence of contemporary (city) life, which is the intermingling of rapid physical and virtual transport.

More precisely, it examines the movement in infrastructure networks (physical & virtual), which is nowadays one of the most important aspects of life. The primary demand for sustainable city is to facilitate the transport of citizens. This is partly achieved by the extensive use of Intelligent Transport Systems² (CCTV, GoogleMaps, GoogleEarth, tfl) systems which have been put forward in order to monitor movement and facilitate transport in contemporary cities (Mazzon, 2008: 141-156). This is done through helping wayfinding and reducing travel times, congestion delays, accident risk, energy consumption and pollution (Banister &

² Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) and, more precisely, Public Transport Information (PTI), Public Transport Management (PTM) and Route Guidance Systems (ROG). (Button & Heinsher, 2001: 465)

Button, 1993: 2). Since all these systems are the supporting structure and facilitate the movement of particles in transport networks of the city, footage and photographs of them can and ought to be used both in theoretical research and in artistic projects.

Transport networks and the flow within them, in turn, highly affect the morphology of the contemporary city, create psychogeographical effects and determine the rhythm of contemporary life. The ultimate purpose of this thesis is to create cartography of today's pulse in artistic projects supported by means of contemporary technology.

These systems are of growing popularity nowadays and offer an unprecedented collective voyeurism. Although there is an unresolved ambivalence with regards to the ethics of it, people have started getting used to them. (Sudweeks, 2001) Hence, the present research urges questioning about this matter and is highly timely.

Furthermore, this research and the incorporated artistic projects constitute a subversion of what the 'net generation' (Tapscott, 2009: 2) brought about in arts. More precisely, this research and practice aims not only at making projects in digital and virtual form, but also at the return to material artworks under the prism of new technology.

Then, there is a series of artists who work on virtual representations of transport networks within cities, namely they use Google Street View, Traffic Jam Cameras, CCTV, Google Earth, GPS. These artists will be presented in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Personal Art Projects

My own understanding of this subject is reflected on my projects and, more precisely, in projects about underground and over ground public transport networks.

Methodology of Art Making

The general methodology of my art projects consists of the following steps:

- Choose a transport network of reference
- Gather raw material of particles moving in this network by:
 - Taking photos physically
 - Filming physically
 - Researching software that refers to this network and gather imagery while navigating in it
 - Researching software that tracks the movement of particles in the network (or in certain parts of it)
 - Making software that tracks a certain kind of movement, which should be defined beforehand and then applied to the virtual simulation of the network
 - Research models, graphs, simulations, equations which refer to the movement in this network
- Make Art out of the primary material analysed in the previous step. The artistic projects consist of series of artworks in diverse media.
- Use Technological Equipment - where necessary in collaboration with scientists
- Present Art in Exhibitions and Publications.

Public Transport Underground Networks

Underground systems of public transport are the subject of projects I have worked on since 2006. The continuous flow of passengers who form crowds in irregular shapes owing to the dynamic movement is the first and foremost reason for my preoccupation with this subject. Then, the virtuality of metro as a system where the passengers only see it from inside and can only imagine how it looks from outside. Only its interiors are accessible to passengers. Its exteriors are invisible and I am not sure if they should be called as such.

My solo exhibition *Athens & London; Intersecting METRO-poleis* held in the Hellenic Centre in London from September until late October 2011 is a synopsis of my art about Athens Metro and London Tube. In this exhibition I present paintings and silkscreen prints hung on the wall in a conventional way. This is because I want the attention of the viewers to go on what is depicted, rather than on paintings as objects.

I am citing part of the press release of the exhibition:

'Anastasia Zoi Souliotou's first solo exhibition in London is taking place at the Hellenic Centre. In ***Athens & London; Intersecting METRO-poleis***, the fast-rising Greek artist brings together the Athens Metro and the London Tube.

For Anastasia Zoi, the underground is a platform *par excellence* where city life takes place, a mirror of the city's identity. An everyday place becomes a dynamic universe of colours with lively people on the move.

Through paintings originating from images of Athens and London undergrounds Anastasia Zoi looks into the (im)possibility of connecting these. The two European capitals are geographically far from each other, thus a physical intersection of their undergrounds is rather a romantic view, a utopian potentiality. However, Anastasia Zoi claims that 'intersection lies to any association our mind is keen to sense between Athens Metro and London Tube'.

Movement is always there, even in ***All in the Waiting*** canvas where every pattern is still. Speed, energy and life animate the waiting in ***Bakerloo Turn***. [...]

Silkscreen prints and engravings underline the dynamic use of corridors, platforms and carriages by various nationalities in the London Tube as well as in the Athens Metro.[...]

(Souliotou, 2011g)

What I personally desire to fulfill is a material representation of an overview of particle flow in underground systems of transport, an underground panoptikon (Foucault, 1987). However, this is rather impossible, as I would need to make an enormous artwork, in order for all the represented particles to be visible.

In order to put forward the aim of depicting the flow of particles in London Tube, I put semi-transparent images from London Tube on top of each other in *Tottenham Court Road* silkscreen series and I revealed part of each image in *Intersection* silkscreen print. This enabled me to present the multi-axial movement in London Tube within one A2 image. Of course, these are methods of depicting parts of London Tube from diverse viewpoints, rather than London Tube in its whole.



Fig 11. Souliotou A.Z, *Tottenham Court Road*, silkscreen print, London Tube series, 2009



Fig 12. Souliotou A.Z. *Intersection*, silkscreen print, *London Tube* series, 2010

In *VideoPaintings* series the put-togetherness of images from London Tube is done in a different way. The source of these paintings is videos from London Tube. Patterns of various moments of the video are put on canvas, intermingle and produce 'multi-dimensional realities' (DegreeArt.com Gallery, 2011).

VideoPaintings are created by projecting videos of London Tube on top of a plain canvas. Then I paint on top of the projected video, keeping trace of the movement and flow of passengers, as well as of the passage from the one platform to the other. Thus, one painting can have a figure going upstairs, another sitting, a train appearing from inside the tunnel etc. The videos I am projecting were recorded by me, while travelling in London Tube.

Although there is a put-togetherness of motion in different moments and elements of different places, the term 'collage' does not appear to be right. This is because the patterns of the image intermingle and the forms are on move. Thus, there is no collage, as there is no put-togetherness of clear patterns and forms.



Fig 13. Souliotou A.Z. Process of painting *Walk the Light*, acrylic on canvas & video projection, VideoPaintings series, 2010

In *Interventions in London Tube* I placed my silkscreen prints in different spots of London Tube, took photographs of them and filmed them (Youtube, 2010). As I see it, these interventions could be considered as exhibitions in the semi-public context of London Tube (see Fig 14). I am sure that CCTV of London Tube do have footage of my interventions as well!

In *Interventions in Shopville (Zurich)* I collaborated with the Spanish artist Amparo Latorre Romero and produced the video *No idea, then AMPASTASIA, then...IDEA* (Youtube, 2010: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7t6BlvfQUQM>), in which the artists are becoming actors and the painting is exposed to the artists' and the other people's will. The video is recorded by the artists, but surely, again, by other monitor cameras in Shopville (Zurich) as well!



Fig 14. Souliotou A.Z. *Flutist in Jubilee Line*, Digital Photo and Art Intervention with the silk screen print stuck on the wall of Jubilee Line Corridor, 2010

Intruding Project uses Google Maps, in order to define the place where each intervention happened. This project consists of a series of maps locating the work with photographic and video documentation attached. Intrusion of my artworks in physical place has been expanded by placement in the virtual space of the internet.

Apart from the *Intrusions* of the artist (*Contrary to Popular Thinking*, 2010), the viewer also becomes an intruder, as he navigates in the maps and insists on finding every photo and video.

In the above artistic projects it is obvious that I am making use of the individual recording and photographing process. After gathering my primary material, I work it out in the studio or in other workshops. My own intension during this process is to give the sense of the movement in networks, which is for me the main indicator of transport experience. This, in turn, results in a series of artworks with a contemporary psychogeographical or neo-futuristic point of view. Each of the paintings in *VideoPaintings* series is 'a painting of action and an action of painting' (McKever, 2011)



Fig 15. Souliotou A.Z., *Walk the Light*, Acrylic on Canvas, 2010

For instance, in the above painting various patterns of London Tube intermingle. These are patterns both of soft ambience (behaviour, light, play with time through integrating different moments) and of hard ambience (ceiling, stanchion, carriage door on the left). This satisfies Guy Debord's vision to unify soft and hard "ambience" of urban space, in a way that soft ambience elements are (re) considered in relation to the ones of hard ambience and vice versa. (Psychogeography: Wikipedia, 2011) The unification of material ambience with behaviour constitutes a 'situation' (Jappe: 1999, 64).

Public Transport Over ground Networks

Google Street View

Unlike underground transport networks, over ground networks are revealed when travelling physically in the air. The higher the airplane goes, the more they unfold to the traveller's view. These networks as whole systems are also visible through satellites, GPS, Google Maps, Google Earth.

It is only, though, since the beginning of 20th century that people enjoy the privilege of having a more complete view of these networks.

Google Maps Street View is a project by Google which maps the world from the vantage point of the centre of the streets (Whiskets, 2010) and provides us with a 360-degree street-level imagery (Google Maps UK, 2011).

The tendency and desire of artists to physically explore their world has now passed (Whiskets, 2010) and turned into an attempt to explore their world virtually through Google Maps with Street View.

The projects around Google Maps with Street View appear to be an evolution of physical street photography, where the artist does not even have to be in streets (Lowe, 2011). There are also some other parameters that change when we shift from Street Photography to photography to Google Maps Street View. First of all is the time factor. Namely, while Street Photography images are taken ad hoc, the Google Street View images are originally taken at the specific moment when the Google 9-eye GPS car passes from the point that is to be photographed and then the artist photographs them off the computer. (Whiskets, 2010)

Doug Rickard has sit down for hours in order to scour street view, take pictures of Google Street View and select them in order to present his questioning (Lowe, 2011). In *A New American Picture* Rickard unveils life in the murky territory of America through the cutting-edge means of 'collective voyeurism'; Google Maps Street View (Newton, 2011). Pictures from this unprivileged territory are boldly revealed to the American middle class (Newton, 2011) within a book which is

already sold out (White Press, 2011). Part of the series of photographs published in the books can be accessed on www.americansuburb.com (Rickard, 2011).

The photos of this project are freed from their technological origin and put on another documentary plane in low resolution, which endows a painterly effect on the images (Stephen Wirtz Gallery, 2011).

Michael Wolf's projects with Google Street View are thought provoking. His project *Fuck You Google Street View* (Wolf, 2011) raises the question of the public's point of view with regards to the logic of a project that aspires to be imposed on a worldwide scale.

As shown in '*Metro-Net* goes Google' (Souliotou, 2011e), there are photos of metro entrances which were directly taken from Google Street View and others taken from Google Panoramio, a tool which enables internet users to upload photos of places they have been to or photos of their business and tag them to the right place on the Google Map (Panoramio from Google, 2011). This is because not all the countries are captured in Google Maps Street View. Since it is not possible to have images from these countries through the 360-degree street-level system of Google Street View, I could only use the Panoramio images which related to '*Metro-Net* goes Google' project.

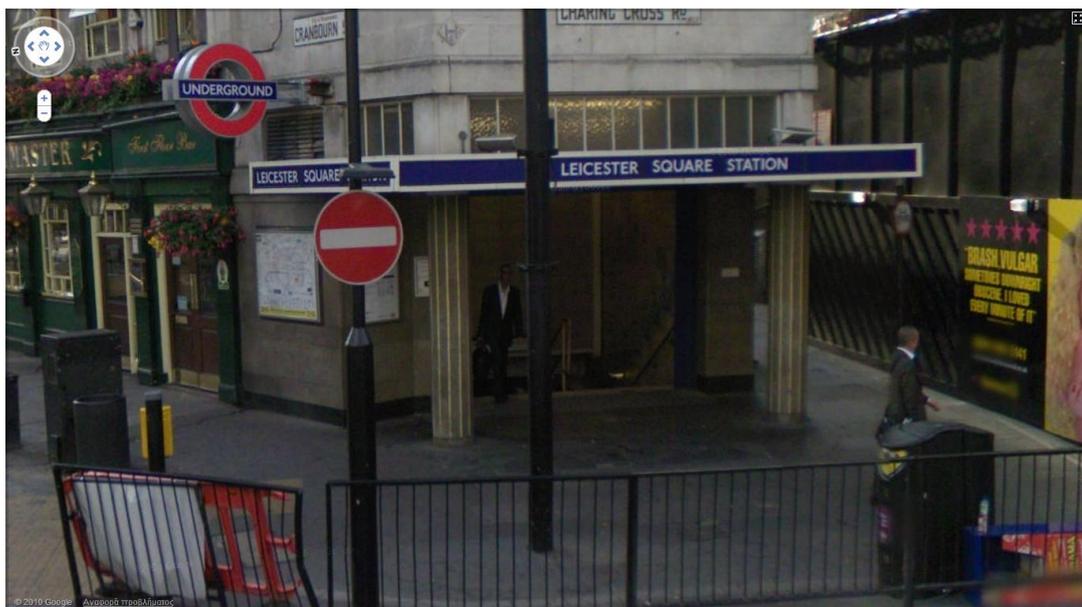


Fig 16. Souliotou A.Z. (2011d), *Leicester Square Station*, London - part of '*Metro-Net* goes Google' project



Fig 17. Souliotou A.Z. (2011d), *Omonoia Station, Athens - part of 'Metro-Net' goes Google project*

For example, the images 16 and 17 are entrances/exits from Leicester Square station in London and from Omonoia Station in Athens.

The image from Leicester Square Station in London is taken directly from Google Maps Street View, while the image from Omonoia Station in Athens is taken from Google Panoramio. I presented these two images in *Athens & London; Intersecting METRO-poleis* exhibition at The Hellenic Centre in London and stressed the above difference by adding a caption to each of the images. The caption of Leicester Square Station image was:

'Charing Cross Road / Cranbourn Street, Westminster, London, United Kingdom
Η διεύθυνση είναι κατά προσέγγιση'

This caption is the information which appeared on my computer -on the top left corner of Leicester Square Station image- when I was taking the snapshot. This is also showed by the Google copyright logo on the bottom left corner, as well as with the compass and zoom in-zoom out tools on the top left corner of the image.

The caption of Omonoia Station image was:

‘DSC00027.JPG από το χρήστη Sergio Ferreira Guimaraes Diniz’

This caption indicates that this image is a jpg photo which was uploaded by the user Sergio Ferreira Guimaraes Diniz through Panoramio. This is because Athens is not currently in Google Maps Street View project.

Prints from Google Maps introduce a virtual ‘Metro-Net’ (Kippenberger, 1993) by proposing a trip between Omonoia Station and Leicester Square station.’ (Souliotou, 2011g)

Another project by Michael Wolf is *Paris Street View* which portrays people walking in the city of Paris.

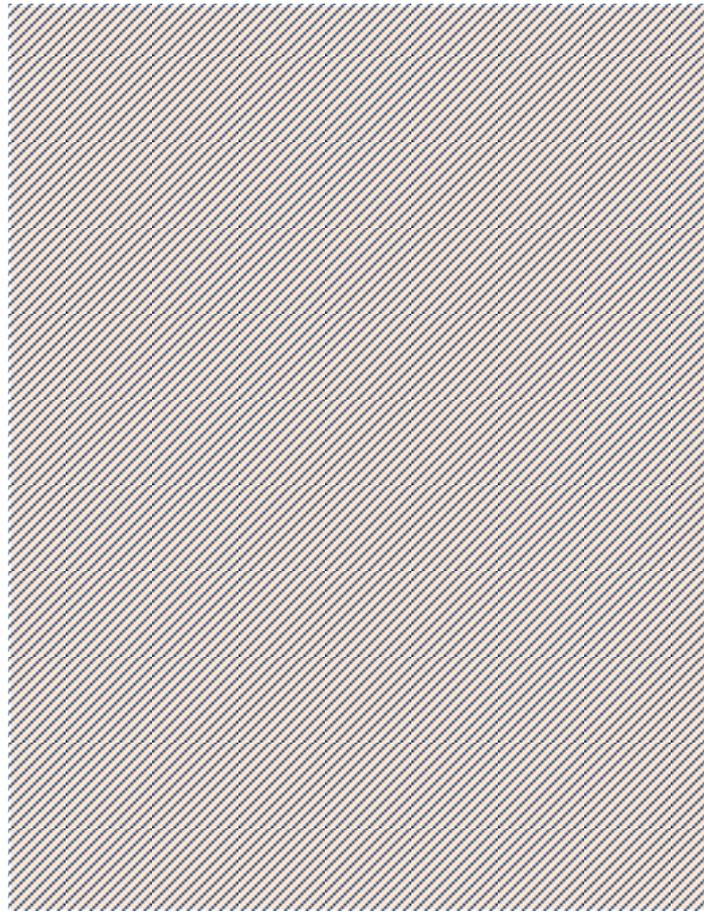


Fig 18. Image 6, *Paris Street View*, Michael Wolf, 2009

In this project Wolf manages to photograph Paris without repeating clichés by using Google's pixellation, superimposed lines, arrows and other geometric shapes. He also crops the primary images, in order to focus to a very specific part of the photo and creates, thus, 'photographs of photographs' (eyecurious, 2009). In this way he investigates the cultural identity and proposes a new reading of the city (designboom, 2010)

It is also worth it to have a look to some portraits of people in more intimate and spontaneous moments within the rather 'artless' environment of Google Street View.

Jon Rafman is a Montreal-based artist that has made artworks using images from Google Street view. In *IMG MGMT: The Nine Eyes of Google Street View* Rafman raises many burning issues with regards to the use of Google Street View. More precisely, he refers to:

- The question of privacy: Google Street View invades privacy, but at the same time is gaining popularity and is considered to be 'friendly' (Rafman, 2009)
- 'The excitement of this new virtual world' (Rafman, 2009)
- The fact that Google Street View's world is very realistic, persuasive and 'truthful' (Rafman, 2009), because of the randomness/spontaneity/neutrality of the process of its making
- The matter of 'experience' provided by Google Street View
- The presentation of various cultures and cultural contexts through Google Street View, a kind of contemporary 'docu-photography' (Rafman, 2009)
- The fact that Google Street View managed to satisfy Siegfried Kracauer's vision for a photography that represents physical reality without overwhelming it
- The possibility of finding new ways to explore and curate the world of Google Street View

- The possibility to become a photographer of any kind, ‘landscape photographer’, ‘photojournalist’, portrait photographer
- The camera errors, which can produce images of a significant visual interest
- Fulfil the purpose of cultural preservation by keeping photographic documentation of places that
- Although Google’s photography is obtained through an automated and programmed camera, the viewer needs to give an explanation to the images. This method of photographing, artless and indifferent, does not remove our tendency to see intention and purpose in images.

In my own project about Google Street View, virtual flânerie is used as a vehicle not only to explore London City but also to go beyond its cityscapes, its austere lines and catch the very atmosphere, the ‘soul’ of the city (Souliotou, 2011b). The forms are not opaque any more, but instead they appear to be semi-transparent and transparent as well.

From Underground Transport Networks to Google Street View & BBC-Traffic Jam Cameras

In Digital Art module of MA in Art & Space I made the *Intruding* project as part of *Contrary to Popular Thinking* website. In that project I placed images of my own artistic interventions within the city of London and Zurich using Panoramio. I also tagged videos of the same subject. This project inspired my interest on virtual maps and, more precisely, on Google Maps Street View.

When started working with Google Maps, I tried to access London Tube in Google Maps Street View. London Tube and undergrounds of other contemporary metropolises is a subject that highly interests me since 2006. Hence I looked into the possibility of accessing it virtually and felt disappointed when I found out that I could not 'enter' the underground through Google Maps Street View.

I compromised and started navigating in virtual London Streets through Google Maps Street View, as well as the BBC Travel News website. While 'walking' in Google Maps, started taking snapshots of them and liked this virtual strolling. More precisely, I was impressed by the fact that Google Maps Street View '360-degree street-level' environment (Google Maps, 2011) was very close to the physical experience of the city and, even more, I could take my time to observe every single pattern of the city (street, building, moving people or vehicles) just by sitting in front of my computer. Some distractive parameters of the physical walk were also missing, which made this virtual walk more comfortable and purposeful.

Hence I started 'walking' in Google Maps Street View and keeping stills of my 'walk' which I named *google.citescapes*. This is because 'behind and beyond the primarily still' and regular shaped 'patterns of virtual urban environment there is a revelation or reminder of London's identity' (Souliotou, 2011b) which takes us beyond what is primarily seen in the austere layout of the city.

Google Street View quickly became my own virtual studio, the 'place' where I found inspiration and the very source of my art making.

However, my complaint about my not being able to enter the virtual underground was always an unfulfilled want. The poems came out from this virtual walk and the one for the Google Maps Street View mentions the inability to use the underground.

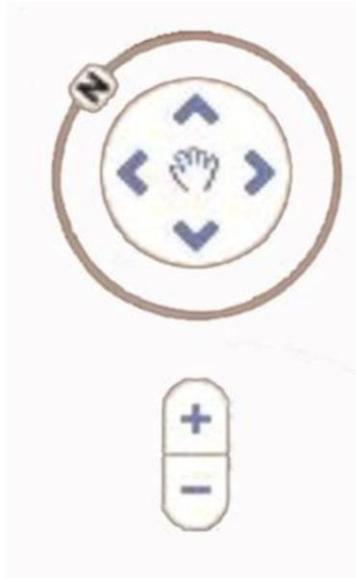
It was the line which indicated that 'cannot use the underground' in the first in the trilogy of *I've Never been to London City* poems (Souliotou, 2011f) which inspired me to make a *Metro-Net goes Google* publication.

In his *Metro-Net*, Martin Kippenberger presents the idea of a global subway system only by constructing non-functional underground entrances/exits. Through this publication, I extended his approach in the virtual world through Google Maps Street View. Since undergrounds in Google Maps Street View are inaccessible, each entrance/exit can be connected with any other entrance/exit of any city in the world. The 'bittersweet pleasure' (Gauntlett, 2002) of Kippenberger's *Metro-Net* is also present in *Metro-Net goes Google*, since there is no proof that these entrances/exits are actually interconnected anyhow. Furthermore, in *Metro-Net goes Google* case the virtual traveler who takes the photos of the entrances/exits is not physically there.

In *Metro-Net goes Google* it is advisable that the reader will not necessarily follow the sequence of the images as they appear in the book, but they can flip randomly in these pages. They can form, thus, their own mental journey around the world. For this reason, I did not number the pages.

In the Fig 19 I am presenting my Bios for *Circus & Bread* Show held in Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London, as a parallel show with *Thank You & Good Bye* Final MA Show. In this bios I clearly show the connection between my poem and Kippenberger's *Metro-Net* as analyzed in the article *Romantic Globalization: Martin Kippenberger's Metro-Net* (Hammermeister, 2007: 26)

Anastasia Zoi Souliotou



'The stations, we quickly realize, are nonfunctional. Not the desirability of the global but rather its impossibility seems to be the content of the *Metro-Net* project. Subway entrances as emblems of universality or as monuments of impossibility?'

Kai Hammermeister, *Romantic Globalization: Martin Kippenberger's Metro-Net*

'cannot use the underground'

Anastasia Zoi Souliotou, *I've Never been to London City* poems
<http://anastasiazouisouliotou.wordpress.com/>

Fig 19. Souliotou A.Z. Bios Anastasia Zoi Souliotou, September 2011

I've Never been to London City

I've Never been to London City is a project about virtual walking in London Streets and consists of a 'soloish' exhibition in Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames, UK in April 2011 (Souliotou, 2011c)³ and the publication *I've Never been to London City - google.citescapes*. (Souliotou, 2011b)⁴

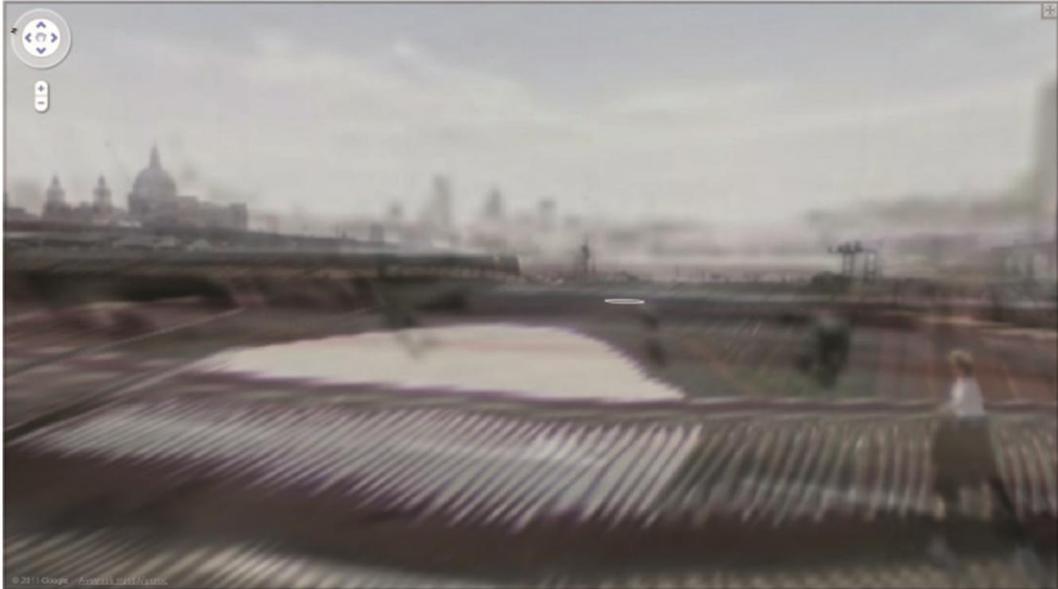


Fig 20. Souliotou A.Z. Image in Exhibition's Poster, *I've Never been to London City* exhibition, April 2011

I've Never been to London City exhibition was inspired by the virtual walking in London Streets which, as explained above, not only adds to one's physical experience of the city, but it also offers a satisfactory view or sense of it. As I was 'walking' in virtual London I felt that I was (re) discovering the city, because I observed parts of it which, otherwise, I would not have the time even to notice

³ Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi (2011) *I've Never been to London City*. Exhibition in Toilet Gallery
<http://anastasiazouisouliotou.wordpress.com/press-release>

⁴ Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi (2011) *I've Never been to London City-google.citescapes*. Publication & Preview available at:
http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2360060?utm_source=TellAFriend&utm_medium=email&utm_content=2360060

through physical walking. This made me name the exhibition in Toilet Gallery *I've Never been to London City*. More precisely, as a virtual visitor of 'meta-London' (Boyer, 1996) I felt that there are a lot of parts which I had not really seen when living it physically. I felt like as if it was my first time in this (meta-) city.

This is most of the times the case for a single person who lives in a contemporary metropolis. Namely, each person moves within the metropolis in a specific radius and the deviation from the space they use are rare, as the student from 16th arrondissement in Paris whose movement within one year of living in Paris is restricted to a small triangle the apexes of which were her school, her residence and her piano teacher. (Chombart De Lawe & Couvreur & Antoine, 1952)

However, it was not only the virtual visit of London City that fascinated me, but also the fact that 'while 'walking' London's fundamental characteristics-light, colour, ambience, architecture, sky, vehicles, pedestrians' are put into a continuous visual interaction, amalgamation and dialogue' (Souliotou, 2011b). This satisfies Guy Debord's vision for an intermixture of elements of hard and soft ambience (Psychogeography: Wikipedia, 2011).

I've Never been to London City exhibition consisted of *London Walkers* floor installation in Toilet Gallery's main lounge, three poems on virtual walking presented inside the cubicles and a series of printed digital snapshots in perimetric arrangement.

London Walkers floor installation is analyzed in *London Streets and an Archaeology of Present* section.

The three poems of the exhibition were put in three cubicles of Toilet Gallery. Each poem was placed above the toilet of the cubicle, which was blocked with concrete by ArtLab in *Savage School* exhibition (Facebook, 2011). The permanently blocked toilet was for me the 'pedestal' of my conceptual piece.



Fig 21. Souliotou A.Z. Poems in the Cubicles, *I've Never been to London City* exhibition, Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames, April 2011

In the three following pages, I am presenting the *I've Never been to London City* poems as showed in the Toilet Gallery. (Souliotou, 2011f)

The poems can also be accessed at:

<http://anastasiazouisouliotou.wordpress.com/en/exhibitions/pressrelease/ive-never-been-to-london-city-the-artworks/poetic-trilogy/>

I 've never been to London City

but visit it daily

see still people in moving stances

go sightseeing

photos appear right in front

Traffic lights are always green or always red

Vehicles have certain direction without moving

night never comes

flying through a still life

forwards and backwards, left and right

the works in progress are always in progress

when tired of a place

or bored

move upwards – minimize –

And again to another place

downwards

cannot use the underground

I've never been to London City

But drive 24 hours

have fixed viewpoints

high

drive in Regent Street

and then By Kensington Church

never have to pay 5 pound fee

see ALL the vehicles

turn right to Hackney Road

coming without moving

still people walking

Am I a Londoner

higher than bus' floor

crossroad nations

observe highways

Southward beyond

traffic Heathrow

in

London Streets

I've never been to London City

neveralways sleep

google.citiescapes

Part of google.citiescapes project was presented in the Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames in the soloish exhibition by Anastasia Zoi titled *I've Never been to London City*. Another part of *google.citiescapes* is presented in the self-titled blurb publication by the artist. (Souliotou, 2011b)

Google.citiescapes project presents the outcomes of a virtual walk in London City as it appears in Google Maps Street View. The process is as follows:

- The meta-space or hyperspace of virtual London City (Boyer, 1996: 15) provides me with imagery
- I go beyond the static version of this reality by taking immediate snapshots while moving in Google Street View
- Dynamic citiescapes are formed, meta-citiescapes

While navigating in virtual metropolises captured by Google Street View, I document the movement of my virtual ego. My own walking, turning, rotating, jumping, zooming in/out are captured with the print screen method and create digital images which go beyond what citiescapes looks like. The city is turned into a dynamic and malleable entity, which leaves behind the austere lines of the built environment.

A rising objective of this project is to turn Google Street View imagery to abstract paintings. 'For me, what comes out of this virtual journey within London City is a perpetual quest for the hidden 'digital canvases' that movement produces' (Souliotou, 2011a).² Through perpetual intermingling of patterns of city's 'ambiance' (Debord, 2011), the 'soul' of the city is unveiled. City's 'virtual signature' is put and reflected in every image (Souliotou, 2011a).²

These images capture both the urban life and the urban space where it unfolds as action (Stara, 2009). Furthermore, they do not intend to capture the moment in a photojournalistic way nor the setting of the city alone (Stara, 2009). They, instead,

tend to animate the primarily 'frozen' moment of Google Maps Street View environment.

City's identity is found in its light, colours, forms, proportions, lines, shapes and, of course, in its monuments, buildings and in temporary elements like weather conditions, pedestrians, vehicles.

The virtual traveler is now the one that dominates the city, rather than its built environment. (S) He becomes the point of reference for the movement showed in the pictures.

In psychogeographical terms virtual traveler turns out to be a flâneur-euse and Dériveur-euse, the (wo) man of the crowd (Tester, 1960), the poet/author/artist of city's becoming.

The virtual traveler appears to capture paintings when walking in the city rather than create them ex nihilo. They are hidden behind the lines of the cityscapes.

Within *google.citescapes* snapshots the elements of soft and hard ambience of the virtual London or meta-London (Boyer, 1996) intermingle and, thus, are in accordance with Guy Debord's vision for a unification of these two different kinds of 'ambience' (Psychogeography: Wikipedia, 2011). Light, movement and time are unified with physical constructions (buildings, bridges etc) in blurred abstract forms. The whole tradition of flânerie in Paris, London and New York reassures that is very popular in the metropolises.

'walking is an art[...]Bonzini was out every day after school, letting the route produce a medley of sounds and forms and movements, let the voices fall and the aromas deploy in ways that varied, but not too much, day by day'. (De Lillo, 1997)

Towards a Virtual Flânerie; Art's Response

The rising question is:

What is art's response to this virtual imagery of London City?

I've Never been to London City exhibition refers to the above question. For me, it marked the introduction of a new kind of flânerie, the virtual flânerie. Following the walking-based or running-based artistic projects by Marina Abramovic, Adrian Piper, Francys Alys and Janet Cardiff (Nato Thompson & Independent Curators International, 2008:8-10). virtual flânerie is a new category at every internet user's disposal.

During *I've Never been to London City* exhibition I gave a talk titled *Towards a Virtual Flânerie; Art's Response*. In the following paragraphs I present the content of this artist talk.

The exhibition *I've Never been to London City* marks the introduction of a new kind of visionary walker, the virtual flâneur.

Contemporary technology offers both two-dimensional and stereoscopic visualisations of contemporary cities and the possibility of navigating in it through a broad range of tools, such as google maps, google earth, London road info, cctv. As a result, nowadays one can travel virtually anywhere.

Walking and the action of seeing has long inspired the invention of visionary figures of urban life, namely the wanderer, the walker, the stroller, the stalker, the flâneur in London and Paris.

The action of seeing has been a popular matter in realist painting and literature since the Renaissance. In Velazquez's painting 'Las Meninas' the figure at the doorway appears to be a detached, however central, spectator of both the Royal family and the painter. Not only does this trajectory around the action of seeing equalize vision with knowing. Notably a Balzac character clearly states this notion in his rhetoric question 'Voir n'est-ce pas savoir?'

Passing from realism to modernism, the vision continues to hold a firm position in theoretical approaches of the time, but there are some considerable changes on the perception of it. Namely, the realists associate vision with knowledge of high level, whilst modernists emphasize the joy of seeing. Thus, the distant but central onlookers are being replaced by strollers, the *flâneurs* and *badauds*. (Rignal: 1992, 7-8)

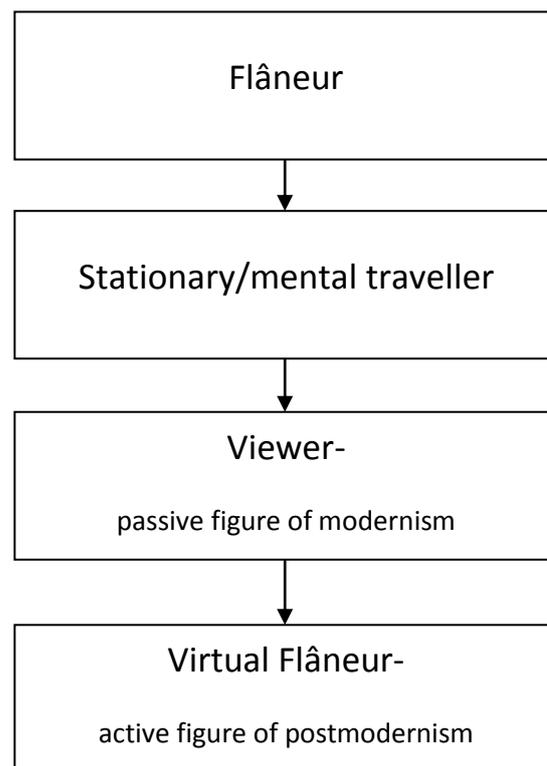


Fig 22. Souliotou A.Z. (2011) Diagram of Evolution of the figure of the flâneurs (the diagram is based on the sources mentioned here, in *Towards a Virtual Flânerie; Art's Response* section)

William Blake confesses 'My streets are my Ideas of Imagination' in 18th century London. Daniel Defoe continues this notion of city as a dreamscape by introducing Robinson Crusoe. The terms flâneur and flâneuse, however were introduced by Charles Baudelaire in his accounts for Paris. (Coverley, 2006) The

flâneur as well as the stationary traveller of the 19th century is now being replaced by the virtual traveller, who appears to 'travel' in an interactive way, just by using the mouse or the keyboard.

Virtual space, as a "reality" of half image and half substance (Boyer, 1999) is a semi-reality or meta-reality of contemporary becoming.

Further than flânerie, contemporary virtual environment gives the opportunity to citizens to track crimes and it is believed that this will be a routine in future. Namely, CCTV data will be publically available and, thus, a citizen of a certain city may keep a snapshot of a crime committed in another city (Owen, 2011)

It is also worth it to refer to compare derive tradition to the virtual derive which comes out of virtual walking in cities. Most of the variants of traditional derive can be considered and applied in the virtual derive as well. These are the place, the transitions, the 'ambiances' and the luck. Weather is the only variant that shall be excluded in Google Maps Street View case, however it is applicable to the BBC Travel News-Jam Cams, London Streets. More precisely, each image from Google Street View and BBC Travel News-Jam Cams, London Streets can be seen as a virtual psychogeographical relief. Currents and vortexes appear when moving in Google Street View and are captured every ten minutes in BBC Travel News-Jam Cams, London Streets respectively. Hence we have to do with virtual *dérive* cities.

Virtual *dérive* of London city appears to have sudden, sometimes rather sharp transitions and different ambiances.

An arising question with regards to the context of virtual walking is whether it occurs in a reality or in a heterotopia. This question will be worked out in the following paragraphs.

The limits of physical and virtual space appear to be both clear and indefinite. (Boyer, 1996) This controversial claim is close to the concept of Michel Foucault's heterotopias. Although this theory makes extensive use of tangible examples, in order to define what heterotopias is, it then becomes abstract and rather untenable, as it does not clearly separate or define the 'real' in relation to which

the heterotopias are named as such. In my opinion, though, the abstract aspect of this theory is the one which is most close to contemporary 'reality'. If we see this theory through a relativistic prism rather than as abstract or incoherent, we can form systems of realities-heterotopias depending on what we each time define as 'reality'. In this case, movement turns out to be an action of continuous crossing of the line between 'reality' and 'heterotopias' or between two different 'heterotopias'. 'Reality' is the basis, the 'inertial frame of reference' (Inertial Frame of Reference: Wikipedia, 2011).

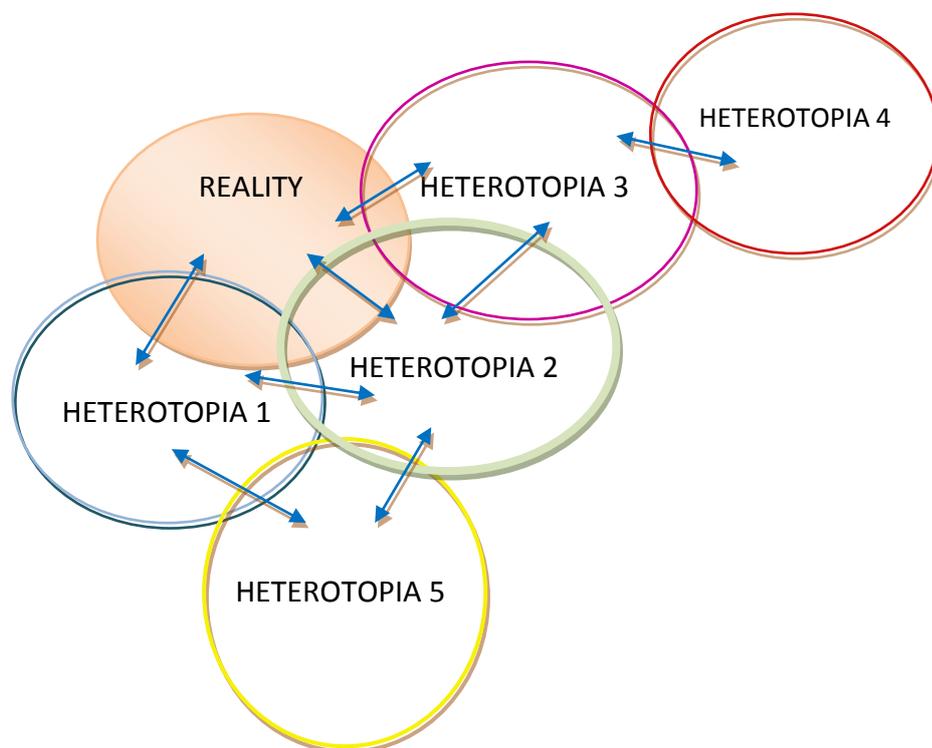


Fig 23. Souliotou A.Z. Diagram *Reality-Heterotopias*, 2011

In the above scheme, there is a cluster of places, one of them is named as 'reality' and the others are the 'heterotopias'. However, this is a convention, because what is named as 'reality' and what as 'heterotopias' depends on us, namely on what we define as 'reality'. For instance, one else could define 'Heterotopia 2' as 'reality' and in this case the 'Reality' of the scheme would be a

heterotopia and so on. Movement occurs when we leap from reality to heterotopias or from the one heterotopia to the other.

In the same way, the conception of physical environment as 'reality' and of the virtual as 'heterotopia' or vice versa depends on us. Our movement between these two resembles the Fig 23 scheme. Likewise, the context of virtual walking can be considered either as 'reality' or 'heterotopia' and the other contexts (physical and otherwise) can be named in relation to this.

In postmodern theory heterotopias are regarded as a means to define complicated structures and spaces which were thought to be incognito. Namely Steven Connor indicates that as soon as 'such a heterotopia has been named...it is no longer the conceptual monstrosity it once was for its absolute incommensurability has been in a sense bound, controlled and predicatively interpreted , given a centre and illustrative function' (Connor 1989:9). In this sense, the theory of heterotopias promoted postmodern flexibility and pluralism by being an intermediate state between utopia and reality.

London Streets and an Archaeology of Present



Fig 24. Souliotou A.Z. *London Walkers*, floor installation, Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames, April 2011

London Walkers is a site-specific floor installation where viewers walk on. It consists of digital images taken from BBC Travel News of London, Traffic Jam Cameras - London Road Info. Variable orientation of the images makes viewer's walk multi-directional and random. Equally, variable sizes differentiate their focus in every image. As the primary digital images were of low resolution, when printed in large dimensions (A1,A0 and other), they were blurry.

Orientation was variable in order to follow the viewers' possible directions of stance or walk. However, the horizontal-vertical arrangement of the prints was made in order to bring a balance to the randomness of viewers' movement.

The images thrive between urban photography and physical experience of London City establishing, thus, another reality, the virtual London city (the meta-London / hyper-London). The labels of the images indicate this positioning:

- Transport for London-London Streets label on the up right corner of every image along with the Streets logo. This indicates the image source.
- the label that indicates the place in the bottom. In this way the viewer knows the place where they 'walk'
- the label of the date and time. The viewer walks on a place in London, but on a past date and time
- the serial number of the image. This indicates that there is a plethora of images from every place. This is true, as a snapshot of the place is taken every almost 10 minutes.

According to the above, the viewer becomes a 'London Walker'. However, are they physical or virtual London Walkers?



Fig 25. Souliotou A.Z. Viewers walking on *London Walkers* installation, Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames, April 2011

London Walkers was presented in the main lounge in Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames as part of *I've Never been to London City* soloish exhibition by Anastasia Zoi (April 2011). Nearly all the visitors of the exhibition walked on the piece. However, there were also several of them who did not want or did not dare to step on it.



Fig 26. Souliotou A.Z. *London Walkers* Detail during exhibition in Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames, April 2011

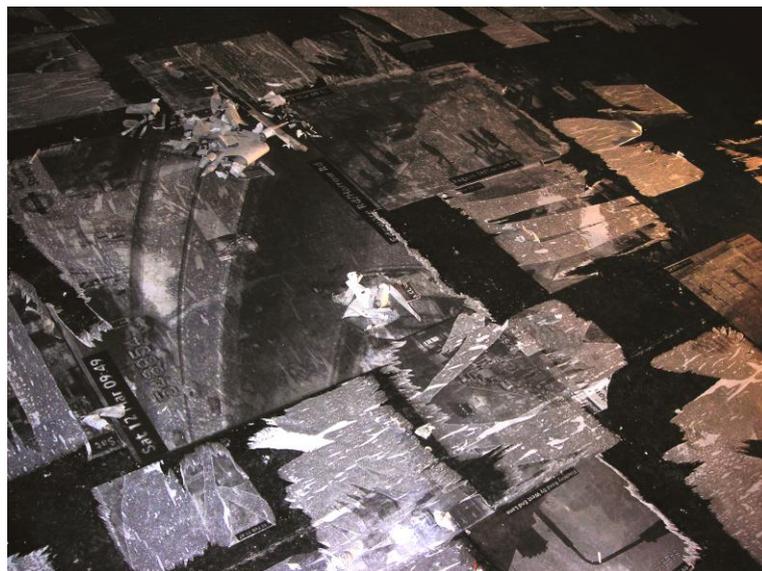


Fig 27. Souliotou A.Z. *London Walkers* Detail while removing prints. Toilet Gallery, Kingston Upon Thames, April 2011

BW endows to this piece the sense of the streets. Furthermore, when walked it gets as dirty as streets. By the end of the exhibition the prints were dirty, which is the case with London Streets.

During the dismantling of the exhibition both me (the artist Anastasia Zoi) and the gallerist Tristan Rogers removed the images from the floor. As the images were glued on the floor, they were torn when removed. I kept the torn fragments of my installation, in order to reuse them in future. Despite the effort to remove all the printed paper, there were still some little pieces that remained on the gallery's floor and the latter had to be painted

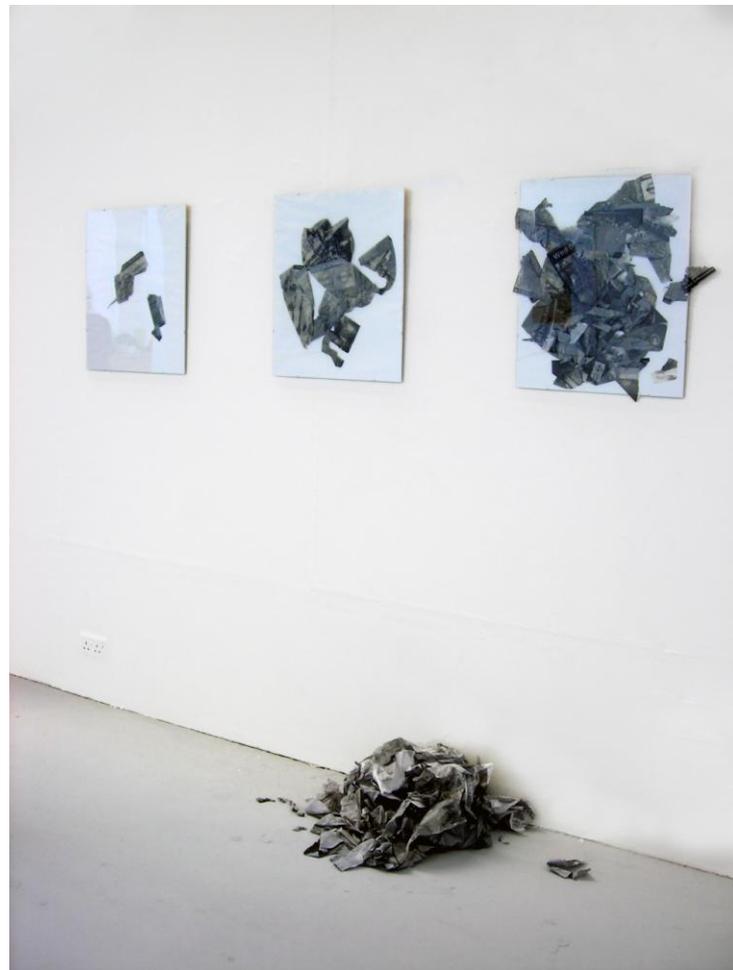


Fig 28. Souliotou A.Z. Triptych entitled *nsport for London – Londo Stree*, Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London, September 2011

In a constructive dialogue with Tristan I told him how fascinated I feel because there are still some remnants from my floor installation right underneath the upper layer of paint. He seemed excited and he responded in a rather funny way: 'Well yea, archaeologically there is something interesting with this.'

That was it.

This word largely affected my thinking. The torn pieces of paper suddenly became 'archaeological objects' of my own installation. An installation which was presented recently, not more than 6 months ago, was about to sink into oblivion. Even I had almost forgotten it. So I reconsidered the importance of things and the importance of Art. They come and go quickly in the same way that London Road Info's pictures change every 10 minutes.

Thank You & Good Bye

Thank You & Good Bye Final MA Show is about this. ‘Yesterday’s news is today’s fish & chip paper’ (Purcell & Guhan, 2011) is the cornerstone of its whole concept.

A triptych of frames along with a pile of paper remnants composes the *nsport for London – Londo Stree* installation. In the latter I am presenting the torn remnants of *London Walkers* floor installation. This *détournement*⁵ (Chollet, 2004: 99), though, brings again the same artwork into (re) question and remembrance.

A pile of the rest of remnants is lying on the floor. Any piece of the pile can potentially be part of the triptych.



Fig 29. (left) Souliotou A.Z. Thank You & Good Bye Final MA Show, Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London, September 2011

Fig 30. (right) Souliotou A.Z. Thank You & Good Bye Final MA Show, Old Truman Brewery, London, September 2011

⁵ *Détournement* in the sense of a diversion within a recent project of the past; the *London Walkers* installation. It shows the fear of loss of importance of the impact of this project and the need to remember it.

The subject of all the art projects of this show is about transport. It initiates from Public Transport and raises the issue of transport.

Liverpool Street, September 2011

Thank You & Good Bye was initially presented in Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London and lasted for three days. It then 'moved' to Old Truman Brewery, Liverpool Street under the same title, as part of FADA (Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture) Kingston University Final MA Show 2011. The canvases on wheels were presented in both shows and the intension was to hint at their transport from Kingston University to Old Truman Brewery. Were they transported with the university van or on their own wheels?

Apart from the digital images from Google Maps Street View and the poems, I painted out portraits of passers-by whom I 'came across' in Google Maps Street View. These portraits are for raise a reconsideration of the painter-sitter relationship. Having my virtual sitters with blurred, thus anonymous, faces on my computer screen I would reproduce them on canvas.

These canvases can be seen in Fig 29 and Fig 30

Most canvases were placed on the floor, along with the palette which I had been using for the whole year. There was only one half-finished canvas on three wheels of different size, which was hung from the wall and seemed ready to move vertically (upwards/downwards) or as a pendulum.

This is a hint at vertical movement which is rare within contemporary cities, where one can move vertically only with elevators. Alex Villar's *Upward Mobility* demonstrates a person trying to find ways of moving vertically in city instead of following the normal horizontal movement axes. He manages to move upwardly to a bus stop, telephone booth, wall of a building. (Nato Thomson & Independent Curators International, 2008 : 90-93) was applied on people moving down some buildings in Trisha Brown's work.

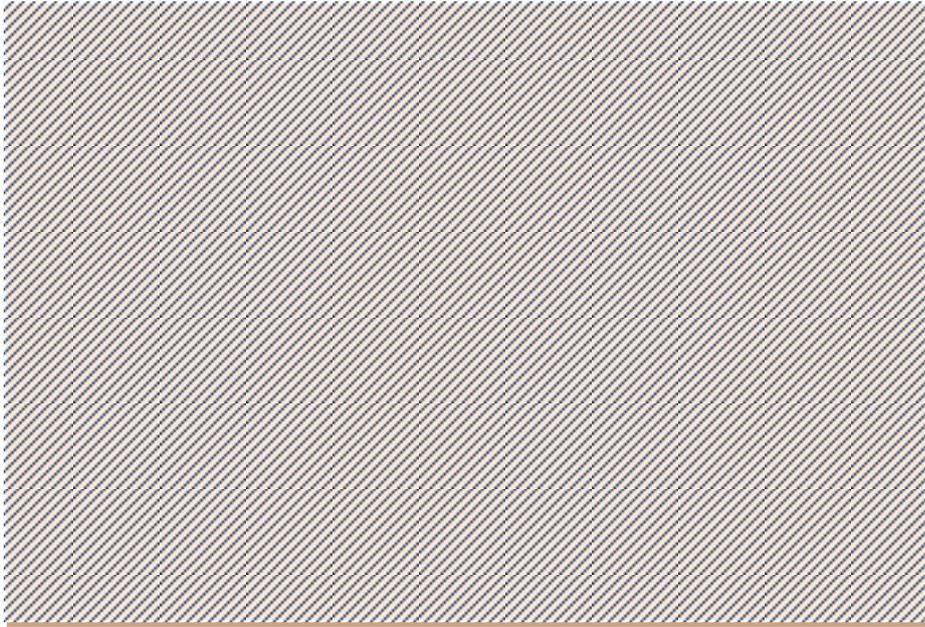


Fig 31. Alex Villar, *Upward Mobility*, 2002 (Video Still)

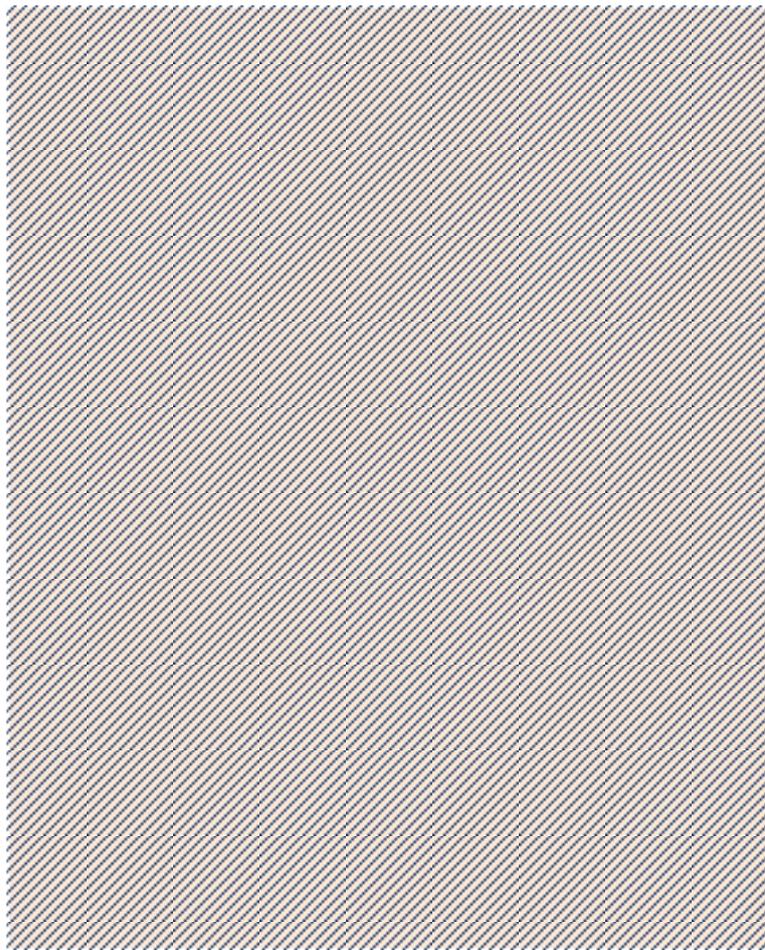


Fig 32. Alex Villar, *Upward Mobility*, 2002 (Video Still)

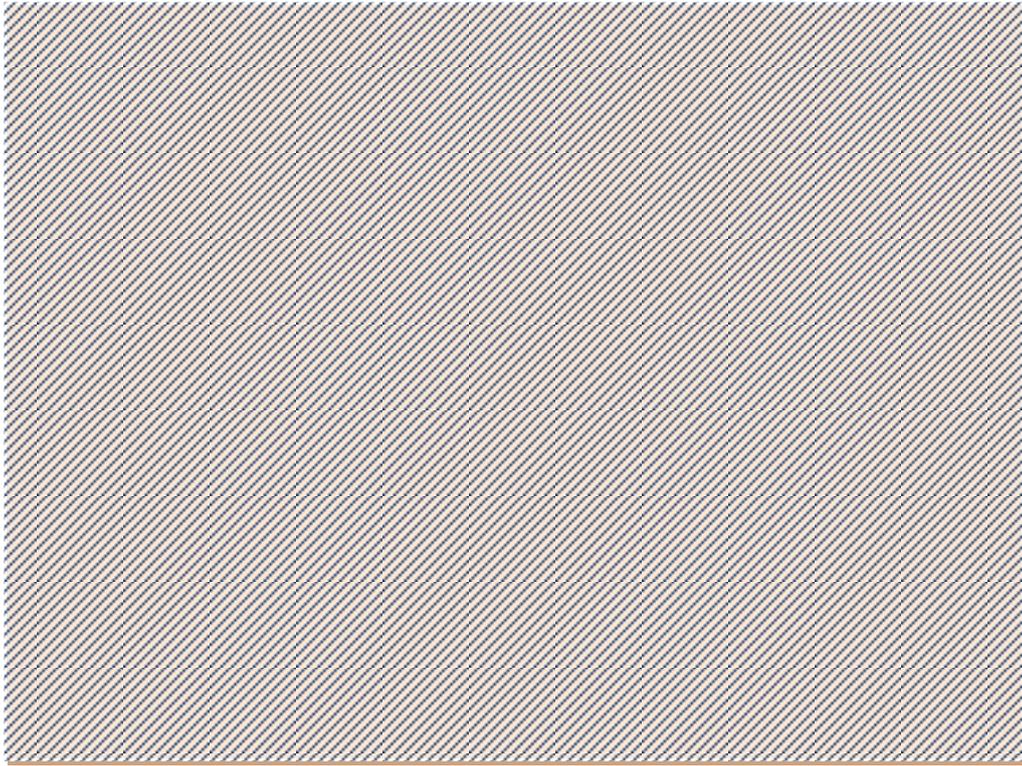


Fig 33. Trisha Brown, *Man Walking Down the Side of the Building*, 2006

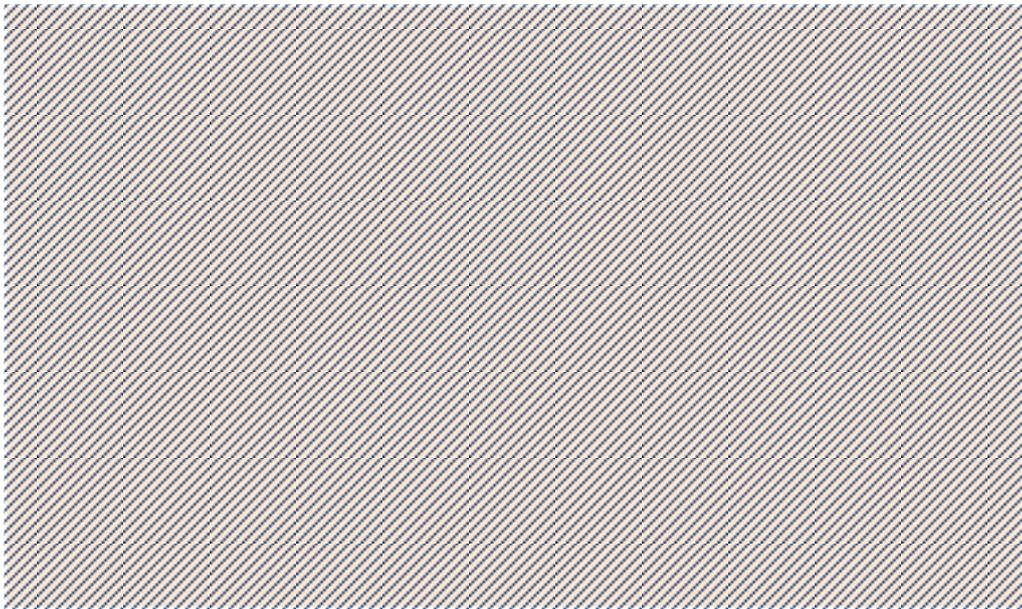


Fig 34. Trisha Brown , *Walking on the Wall*, Barbican Gallery, London 2011

Trisha Brown in *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970) showed another possibility of vertical movement. A dancer walked down an exterior wall of a seven-storey building. His gravity-defying movement was vertical, his body

horizontal and he was wearing a harness. As for *Walking on the Wall*, dancers were held with ropes perpendicularly to the gallery's wall and walked on gallery walls. In this way Brown actively displaced movement from the ground or floor (Yee & Hasham, 2011).



Fig 35. Souliotou A.Z. Hung *Half-Finished Businessman*, Thank You & Good Bye Final MA Show, Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London, September 2011

No matter how multi-level and multi-axial our transport in cities and towns is, we move between certain heights in relation to the earthly surface. Thus, our vertical movement turns out to be negligible comparing with the horizontal (the movement which is parallel to the earthly surface). In a way, our restricted movement creates a restricted Space-land, which consists of the space between the maximum and minimum height levels we are moving in. This restricted Spaceland is in a way a 3D *Flatland* (Abbott, 1884). Because this last term is obviously an oxymoron, I shall change it into the more accurate term '3D Surfaceland'. Thus, when moving in infrastructure networks, what we see is only routes consisting of roads, corridors, stairs, bridges. We follow the route that leads to the certain place of our

destination. In this case, orientation is achieved by signs and memory. However, we can only imagine how the whole network we find ourselves in looks like.

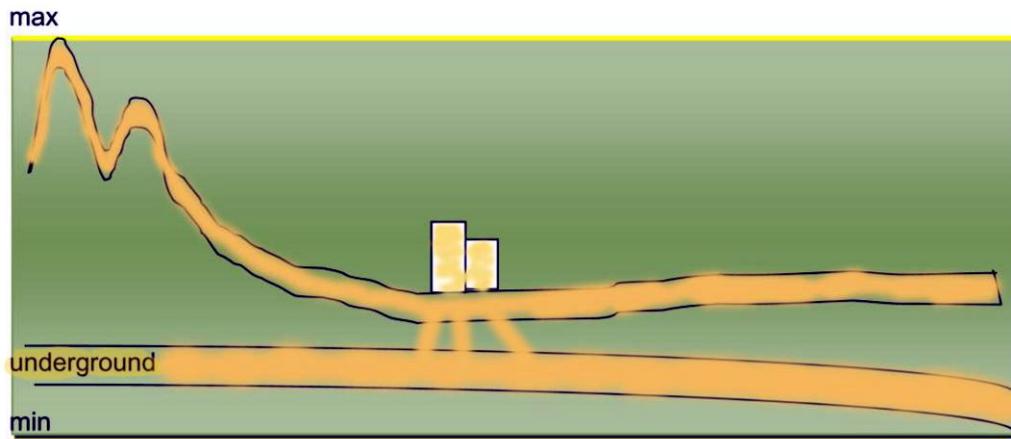


Fig 36. Souliotou A.Z. (2011) Diagram of Level of our Movement within the yellow zones. The upper orange zone is our movement on surface, which follows the line of ground (plain, mountain) and extends in buildings. The lower orange line is of the underground transport.

Another aspect I am usually concerned with and regularly asked about is the performativity in my work. This aspect lies merely on the work itself, rather than on my own thinking and perceiving the work (Cullinan Richards, 2010: 10). The fact that my paintings on wheels raise the desire to move them and play with them constitutes the performative aspect of my work.

This strongly relates with the questioning and positioning of my painting within the exhibition context and, more broadly, the art context. Further than 'paintings as two dimensional wall-hung-special-objects' (Cullinan Richards, 2010: 10), their turning to movable constructions takes into account the presence of a viewer-participator.



Fig 37. Souliotou A.Z. *UK Detective on wheels*. Thank You & Good Bye Final MA Show, Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London, September 2011

Chora is another value unconsciously present in many of my paintings, especially when it comes to the depiction of movement or flow. This philosophical term, which derives from Plato and follows upon Derrida's texts, bridges the visible (becoming) with the Form (being). When transferring the former onto the canvas chora is the gestural brushstrokes that imply the existence of movement, energy on top of a perfect composition.

For me, in the painting above the chora is not only the gestural brushstrokes, but also the wheels, which give to the painting the potentiality to move.

In these portraits I also question the idea of privacy in Google Maps Street View. In my point of view, this idea appears to be vague, as there are many recognisable figures in Google Street View environment. The choice to make portraits out of this environment Deliberating idea of making a portrait – reconsideration of the idea of the sitter .Wheels are put in order to indicate that the people of these portraits are moving in the streets.

The subversion to bring this cutting-edge virtual material back to materiality, either traditional through painting or by making use of digital prints, is done because virtual reality is based upon the notion of presenting reality as 'half image and half substance' (Boyer, 1996: 46). Although virtual space is very close to physical reality, it is not (yet) a standalone entity. Instead, virtual and physical are interwoven and interdependent. Navigation in virtual cities turns out to be a new kind of experience of urban environment owing to its tangible appearance.

Besides, the postmodern world is 'surrounded and bombarded with incoherent fragments of space and time' and the CyberCities of postmodern condition are constantly and in many ways on the move (Boyer, 1996: 19).

In the same way as when moving physically in a Public Transport system, virtual walking is characterised by individuality and anonymity. The virtual stroller does not really know any of the figures they come across. At first this makes the travel joyful and gives the sense of freedom. However, it can later cause alienation. (Sennett, 1999)

Conclusion

Systems of contemporary public transport have been captured by digital means and transferred to virtual space. The latter is a space of half image and half substance and its tangibility inspired me to research virtual material, work it out and bring it back to materiality.

Projects of other artists mentioned in this essay embrace the subject in a narrative way and keep it digital or virtual. The advancement of my practice lies on the fact that I visually animate digital and virtual imagery by revealing movement of my virtual ego. Thus, I create a 'situation' which leads to an active participation/response to the initial imagery (Jappe, 1999: 64). Additionally, the subversion of bringing this imagery back to material art projects contributes to a much better understanding and a sense of engagement with what is presented digitally or virtually.

The imagery is from Google Maps Street View and BBC Travel News – Jam Cameras, London Road Info. However, there are more virtual systems which I will work out in future, including Google Earth, GPS.

I will also definitely research more the ways in which 'scene activity observed by CCTV cameras can be modelled and learnt' (Makris, 2004: 8) and the possibilities which relative software provides me with.

Another future intention is to expand my project by applying my thinking and art making to other world metropolises. This 'urbi et orbi' scale of the project will enable me to compare particle behaviour in transport networks in different places under various circumstances. In order to meet this objective, further than flânerie, I will examine crowd intelligence and system intelligence in transport networks.

The ultimate purpose of future research is to depict the dynamics of contemporary mobility and transport, which is achieved through today's significantly rapid technological development. The latter enables both physical and virtual transport, the main aspects of contemporary space and life. The networks to be researched, although distinguishable and different with each other, are interlinked and form a network of networks. Following the same logic,

the artistic part will be a series of series of artworks, which will in total depict contemporary dynamic (inter) urban mobility.

Going beyond every single network, one comes across with another burning parameter of contemporary transport. Namely, (transport) networks are not distinct or stand-alone structures. They are, instead, part of a set of interconnected networks (Zou, Zhou, Liu, Xu, He, 2010: 4406). Transport in contemporary cities needs to be and turns out to be multi-modal or inter-modal. Hence, many metropolises around the world (also referred to as *world cities*, Wikipedia: Global City, 2011), such as London, Paris, New York City, Tokyo and Hong Kong, have developed a multi-modal transport system that includes bus, metro, light rail and tram, metro. This in turn brings about a caring for the interaction of this variety of networks (Chen, Tan, Claramunt, Ray, 2009: 147).

The method followed in this research will be applied to further infrastructure networks and worked on both in physical and in virtual terms. The tools used for fulfilling this purpose will be personal devices, GoogleEarth, GoogleMaps, CCTV, GPS and software that tracks movement of particles.

In this sense, the present research is the creative start for a worldwide project.

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Figure 28. Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi. (2011) *nsport for London – Londo Stree* [torn paper pieces from *London Walkers* installation now reused to make another installation of torn pieces in three frames and in a pile on the floor] 3 frames 50 X 70 cm. (2011) *Thank You & Good Bye*. London. Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London. 13 September – 16 September 2011

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Figure 30. Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi. (2011) *Google Street View Portraits on Wheels* [oil paintings on wheels] 3 paintings 55 X 65 cm on wheels of various sizes. (2011) *Thank You & Good Bye*. Liverpool Street, London. Old Truman Brewery. 22 September – 25 September 2011

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Figure 35. Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi. (2011) *Hung Half-Finished Businessman* [oil painting on wheels hung on wall] 55 X 65 cm on wheels of various sizes. (2011) *Thank You & Good Bye*. London. Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London. 13 September – 16 September 2011

Figure 36. Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi. (2010) *Diagram of Level of our Movement within the orange zones. The upper orange zone is our movement on surface, which follows the line of ground (plain, mountain) and extends in buildings. The lower orange line is of the underground transport* [made using Microsoft Word and Adobe Photoshop design tools]

Figure 37. Souliotou, Anastasia Zoi. (2011) *UK Detective on wheels* [oil on canvas, wheels]. 65 X 55 X 30 cm. (2011) *Thank You & Good Bye*. Knights Park Campus, Kingston University of London. 13 September – 16 September 2011