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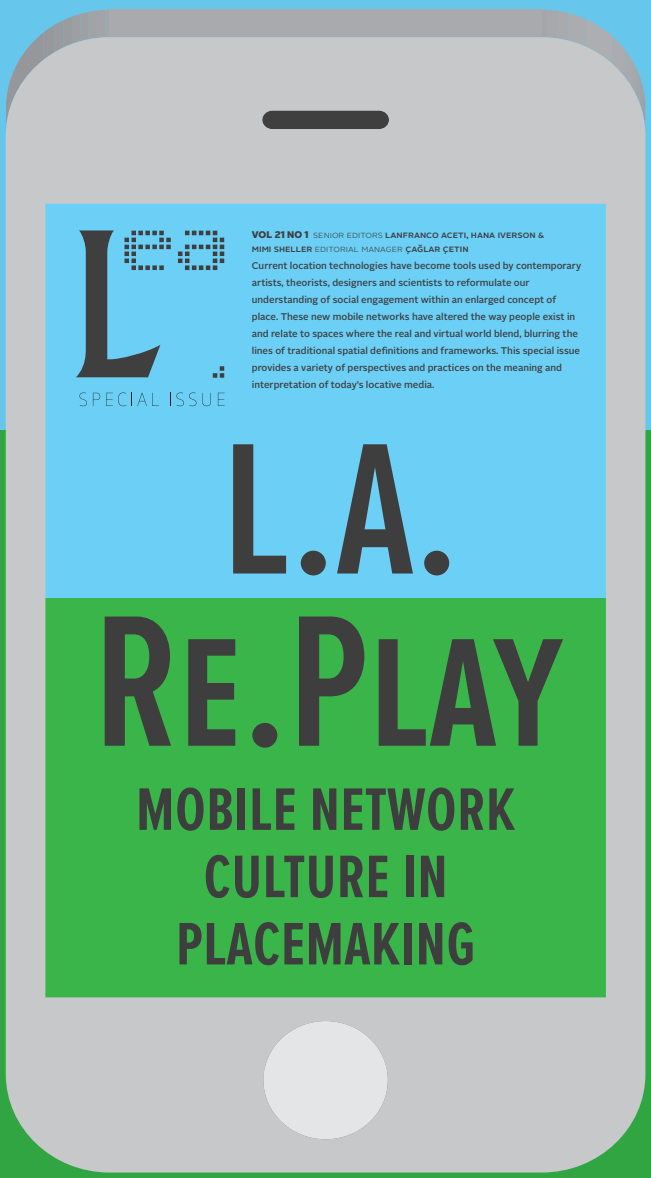
Current location technologies have become tools used by contemporary artists, theorists, designers and scientists to reformulate our understanding of social engagement within an enlarged concept of place. These new mobile networks have altered the way people exist in and relate to spaces where the real and virtual world blend, blurring the lines of traditional spatial definitions and frameworks. This special issue provides a variety of perspectives and practices on the meaning and interpretation of today's locative media.

SPECIAL ISSUE



OBJECTS AS AUDIENCE

Phenomenologies of Vibrant Materiality in Locative Art

by

Jason Farman

Associate Professor of American Studies, Director of the Design Cultures + Creativity Program
University of Maryland, College Park, USA
jasonfarman@gmail.com
http://jasonfarman.com

We need to complicate the relation between the lines that divide space, such as the equator and the prime meridian, and the "line" of the body.

– Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* [1]

ABSTRACT

In his performance art piece, 0.00 Navigation*, Simon Faithfull uses a GPS receiver to walk the entirety of the Prime Meridian, staying 'faithful' to this longitude regardless of what gets in his way. Faithfull is filmed from behind as he navigates across waist-deep canals, over fences, and through strangers' houses. In my analysis of 0.00 Navigation and similar locative media artworks such as* CoMob *and* Telepresent*, I argue that these projects importantly highlight the relationship between the human body and objects (both tangible and virtual). Drawing on a phenomenological approach, this article focuses on the role that objects play in the embodied practices of locative media artists. This analysis is also concerned with how objects themselves are embodied agents, serving as audience for one another. These objects – including the GPS receiver, video camera that tapes his journey, YouTube, and even the Prime Meridian itself – serve as ethical others, as vibrant materialities. As such, this article offers an analysis of objects in locative art that affords them a space of transcendence in the ways that they are able to exceed the embodied frame of reference of the artist and human audience members.*

INTRODUCTION

Simon Faithfull's performance art piece, *0.00 Navigation*, begins with footage of him – dressed in black – swimming in the English Channel off the southern town of Peacehaven. He swims to shore, takes out his GPS device, and begins his long walk along the Prime Meridian. His journey – which starts at this southern-most point where the meridian intersects England and ends in the northern seaside town of Cleethorpes – will last 4 weeks. Once he reaches the water's edge in Cleethorpes, he reenters the sea, swimming further north along the meridian into the North Sea. [2] We see his performance through black and white footage, all shot by the cinematographer Rebecca Rowles, who follows behind Faithfull throughout his entire journey. Faithfull will stay faithful to the Prime Meridian regardless of what gets in his way. His first obstacles are the large white cliffs of Peacehaven. He walks up to cliffs, puts away his GPS device, and begins his ascent up a ladder attached to the cliff face. Once he reaches the top, he again pulls out his GPS receiver and continues along 0.00 longitude. Throughout the performance, Faithfull walks through people's front doors and out their kitchen windows, wades through chest-deep canals, walks through large industrial buildings, climbs tall fences (see Figure 1): anything that stands in the way of his journey along the meridian is traversed.

For Faithfull's performance, there were (and are) many audiences. In his mind, the "primary" audience for the piece was the people who would be watching the film, especially those seeing it when it premiered in Berlin in 2009 at the Haus am Waldsee exhibit space in a double show with Carla Guagliardi. A related audience is the one watching the film on YouTube, which was posted by Faithfull a year after the premier. Another audience for the performance is Rowles, who captures the journey while following behind Faithfull (sometimes inches away from him and other times standing

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Figure 1. *0.00 Navigation*, Simon Faithfull, 2009. Here, Faithfull is seen scaling a fence that is blocking his walk along the Prime Meridian in Lincolnshire, England. Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Polaris, Paris. Used with permission.

many yards behind him–especially when capturing footage of him swimming through a pond or scaling some ominous obstacle). The bystanders at the meridian watching Faithfull along his journey also serve as an audience for the piece. Thus, some of the audience members for this piece experienced it in real time, while the majority of those experiencing the piece do so asynchronously. Therefore, when considering the various phenomenologies that could be studied in *0.00 Navigation*, there are many embodied perspectives that could be considered and many mediated experiences of the piece that offer important insights on the role of time (both synchronous and asynchronous) for performance studies.

However, what these approaches overlook is the role that objects play in the study of phenomenology. Faithfull's performance is one that exemplifies the production of embodied space, a production process entirely dependent on the body's interaction with spatial objects. Of key importance to this study is that some of the objects of the performance are physical (e.g., his GPS device, fences he jumps over, Rowles' camera) and some are virtual (e.g., the Greenwich Meridian, YouTube, the representations on the GPS screen). *0.00 Navigation* demonstrates the integral link between the physical and the virtual when considering the various phenomenologies of performance and how objects function as the hinge between these spaces and, ultimately, how objects are vital for the production of embodied space. Objects produce embodiment and are simultaneously embodied by our encounters with them.

This performance offers an important look at two modes of phenomenology in locative art by answering the following two questions: 1) How does our encounter with virtual objects inform emerging phenomenologies of performance spaces? 2) What role do objects (especially virtual objects) play in phenomenologies of locative media? This chapter thus focuses on virtual objects in locative art and the role these objects play in producing a phenomenological encounter with space. How do objects like a GPS receiver, a fence, a house, a canal, or even the Prime Meridian itself inform our phenomenological sense of self and produce our embodied spaces? As will be developed throughout this article, these approaches to phenomenology demonstrate that there is a political imperative to the inclusion of objects as fundamental components of our experience of embodiment, the production of space, and our relationships with others.

PROPRIOCEPTION AND THE SPACE OF THE MERIDIAN

Faithfull's *0.00 Navigation* was inspired by a trip he took to the British Antarctic from late-2004 to early-2005. His journey to the Antarctic took him via military plane from a Royal Air Force station in Oxfordshire to Ascension Island, from Ascension to the Falkland Islands. Here, he joined an ice beaker to various islands such as South Georgia and the South Shetland Islands before finally arriving at the British Antarctic. Traveling such an expansive scope of the Earth's surface, Faithfull found it remarkable that throughout his journey, he "never left British territory: all of those little rocks were last little bits of Empire." He goes on to note,

> *You become very aware of the scale of the planet when you're two months in the middle of the ocean. As you get closer toward to the South Pole, you start crossing time zones quicker and quicker and quicker, so eventually you give up changing the clock because you're changing time zones every 20 minutes or so. […] Particularly because of crossing the time zones, you start to get a real sense of these lines drawn on the planet.* [3]

Much of his subsequent work is about exploring the imaginaries of planetary space, about "the maps that we create in our heads. These maps are a combination of our immediate locale (the humdrum everyday world we move in) and the other psychological world that we hear of from afar." [4] Projects like *0.00 Navigation* are about performing an embodied practice of "measuring this sculptural object that we find ourselves on, this sphere." [5]

This study of Faithfull's performance, in conjunction with similar GPS art projects akin to his work, thus begins with an understanding of the production of embodied space as a phenomenological process. His journey along the Prime Meridian is not just a walk along a preconceived pathway; instead, his walk is the production of a particular relationship with the space signified by the meridian. This fits well with Henri Lefebvre's theories of spatial production in which space is not a container waiting to be filled by bodies; instead, space is co-produced alongside the bodies and objects typically labeled as "inhabiting" space. Lefebvre argues:

> *A comparable approach is called for today, an approach which would analyse not things in space but space itself, with a view to uncovering the social relationships embedded in it. The ideologically dominant tendency divides space up into parts and parcels in accordance with the social division of labour. It bases its image of the forces occupying space on the idea that space is a passive receptacle. Thus, instead of uncovering the social relationships (including class relationships) that are latent in spaces […] we fall into the trap of treating space as space 'in itself,' as space as such.* [6]

Instead of space being a pre-existing receptacle filled by bodies and objects, space is *produced* simultaneously with actors' bodies (both human and non-human actors) and the social conditions that contextualize the relationships between these categories. Maurice

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Merleau-Ponty makes similar arguments in his book, *Phenomenology of Perception*, when he writes:

> *We notice for the first time, with regard to our own body, what is true of all perceived things: that the perception of space and the perception of the thing, the spatiality of the thing and its being as a thing are not two distinct problems. [..] To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world, as we have seen; our body is not primarily* in *space: it is of it.* [7]

Such an emphasis on these bodies as vital elements for the production of space thus lends itself to a phenomenological approach to understanding these spaces. Of particular relevance is analyzing the production of space in *0.00 Navigation* through the lenses of proprioception and orientation. Faithfull's walk is a performance of situatedness, of the experience of proprioception (i.e., the understanding of the bounds of the body as located in a particular space and in a particular way). The proprioceptive body is always in relationship to the location of others and objects, thus producing the body's "nonvisual, tactile experience of itself, a form directed toward the bodily project of affection (affectivity)," as Mark B.N. Hansen notes. [8] Merleau-Ponty's famous examples of proprioception are a person walking through a doorway while wearing a tall feather hat and someone attempting to navigate an automobile through a narrow passage such as a parking spot:

> *A woman may, without any calculation, keep a safe distance between the feather in her hat and the things which might break it off. She feels where the feather is just as we feel where our hand is. If I am in the habit of driving a car, I enter a narrow opening and see that I can "get through" without comparing the width of the opening with that of the wings, just as I go through a doorway without checking the width of the doorway against that of my body.* [9]

Merleau-Ponty's examples are highly applicable to Faithfull's experience of *0.00 Navigation* and to locative art more broadly. As in the two examples of the hat and the car, Faithfull's sense of embodied proprioception always relates to his position with another spatial object (the Prime Meridian) as encountered with a device or technology (here, the visualization on his GPS receiver). The limits of his body are extended by the technology of the GPS to give him a global sense of positionality. His steps are contextualized and made meaningful through the proprioceptive process of connecting the limits of his body to the GPS device and the ways that the device locates him by connecting to the satellites.

Artist Jen Southern, in collaboration with Chris Speed, explore similar proprioceptive engagement with sensory-inscribed bodies in space through their project, *CoMob*. Started in 2008, the same year as Faithfull's *0.00 Navigation* walk, *CoMob* is a GPS app that visualizes spatial connections of distant people in motion (see Figure 2). Southern notes, "The basic idea was that in the app, small groups of people could see each other's locations, overlaid onto a Google map or satellite image. Their individual positions would link with a line, and their usernames could be displayed beside their location." [10] She goes on to argue that such projects are able to understand mapping as a collaborative process in which movement through mapped space is experienced as a "complex event, and that it could be thought of as a series of intricate movements woven together in an intertwined set of social relationships." [11] Similar to Faithfull's journey along the Prime Meridian, Southern used *CoMob* to collaboratively walk 78 miles from Huddersfield UK to her job in Lancaster. The walk, which took five days, was visualized on the *CoMob* interface. As people joined her onscreen, their positions were linked with Southern's (wherever in the world they might be), creating a visual web of real-time connectivity.

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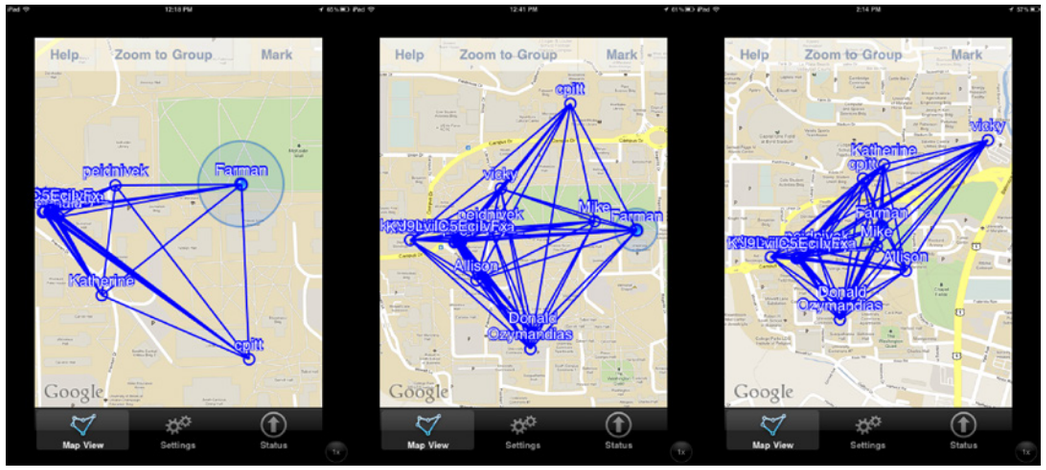

Figure 2. *CoMob*, Jen Southern and Chris Speed, 2008. Screencaptures of students and faculty at the University of Maryland, College Park, experimenting with *CoMob* in early-2011. © Jason Farman, 2011. Used with permission.

This practice of "comobility," as Southern terms it, is a visual practice of social proprioception. Having a sense of her spatial relationship to others across a vastly expanded geography produces the artist's sense of her own body. This social sense of the body, as something that is deeply linked to the perception of social connectivity across geographic distances, is an integral part of the ways we inhabit our bodies. Social proprioception, for Southern, is something that produces a shared sense of embodied space in three ways: first, by creating an interface that highlights people being "locationally present" by showing the geographic location of all participants and artists represented on the same map as blue dots associated with a username; second, users are "temporally present" since the dots move in real time as people navigate their spaces (producing "a sense of a shared 'now'"); and third, participants are "virtually co-present" by visualizing these locations on a single map. [12]

While *CoMob*'s proprioceptive engagement with spatial bodies is produced through their unity and alignment on the interface, Faithfull's proprioception in *0.00 Navigation* is most often produced when his body comes into misalignment with the structure of the physical space by being in direct contrast to the objects, people, and places he must confront. Instead of being harmoniously in movement with other bodies, Faithfull's body is challenged by the position of objects and others in space. These contrasts to his proprioceptive relationship to the Prime Meridian happened throughout most of his performance since "[t]here wasn't one bit [of the journey] that actually had something line up with [the Greenwich Meridian]. [...] There were a few roads where you could walk for about 100 meters but then again you'd end up in someone's front garden." [13] Thus, Faithfull's walk became a performance of this imaginary line that defines global time and the grid of the planet and how this line does not fit with any of the existing pathways journeyed by those living along the Prime Meridian. Early on in the performance, Faithfull had a memorable experience of this disjunction between his own proprioception defined in relationship to the Prime Meridian (via GPS) and the lived space he moved through:

> *It was a very strange experience making [the performance], not least because of the wrongness of always going totally at odds with every other route that was laid down (and how perverse that was). When you're walking at 10 degrees to a very obvious path, it becomes a very perverse thing to do. There is a nice moment just leaving the first town, Peacehaven, where there is a path and a very stereotypical hiker with knee-length socks and boots and backpack who strides purposefully past me and I'm about 10 degrees off and just go straight into this hedge, over this fence, and into a field. All of that is so wrong for hiking and the landscape and the paths. I end up somehow looking like a projection from a different time or dimension.* [14]

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Such performances of space fit into what I term the "sensory-inscribed body," a practice of embodiment that is simultaneously a phenomenological experience with the space and the ways that the body is both inscribed and an inscribing agent. [15] For both Southern and Faithfull, the practices of embodiment in the space are indeed about a sensory engagement with the space, with the screen of the GPS or mobile phone aligning the body with spatial markers like the Prime Meridian; however, this is an incomplete view of how embodiment is produced in these projects. We must *simultaneously* consider the body to be inscribed by the cultures within which it is situated. In the above example, as Faithfull deviates from the prescribed hiking path in order to stay true to the Prime Meridian, his actions are "read" by those around him. He is read as deviant to the predefined structure of the space and he is aware that he is being read as such. Thus, his phenomenological experience of the space is informed by the act of reading the space as a textual encounter of inscription and interpretation. His body also serves as an inscribing agent in the space, here functioning as the marker of the imaginary line that comes to give a particular meaning to global time and space but is not lived through the pathways carved out in the space. His act of inscription thus fits somewhere between Michel de Certeau's categories of strategies and tactics: his pathway reinscribes the Prime Meridian which is one of the most strategic place-making objects created by the British Empire; however, his journey is also a tactic that reimagines the spaces since he is traveling deviant pathways that don't fit with the ways the space was prescribed. [16]

Faithfull's actions as an inscribing agent in the space owes much to the work of artist Richard Long. Faithfull notes that *0.00 Navigation*, in part, was inspired by Long's *A Line Made By Walking*. Faithfull's piece, however, was a "walk made by a line." [17] Long's piece, in which he walked repeatedly along the same pathway until his trace was seen on the landscape, notes how space can be impacted by the body's movements through it, how the body can be an inscribing agent into the characteristics of a place and how that place is, ultimately, practiced. Long and Faithfull use their body's as a spatial, tactical tools to inscribe the landscape.

ORIENTATIONS OF THE BODY-AS-OBJECT

The performance also comments on the practice of orientation as a phenomenological production of space. Faithfull's orientation is directed north and is guided by the technology of his GPS receiver. His forward facing, purposefully journey north is a "twofold directedness" (to use Edmund Husserl's term) that addresses the Prime Meridian while allowing his body to offer a very directed interpretation of this spatial boundary line. As Sara Ahmed writes, elaborating on Husserl's twofold directedness, "First, I am directed toward an object (I face it), and then I take a direction toward it (for instance, I might or might not admire it)." [18] For Ahmed, such orientations depend on modes of perception that simultaneously allow us to see an object and, in so seeing it, take a particular orientation toward that object. For *0.00 Navigation*, the orientation that Faithfull makes is one that, in embracing the rigidity of the Prime Meridian as the global starting point for all other meridians, performs the absurdity of putting this arbitrary line into lived practice. His north orientation along 0.00 longitude exposes his directed critique of this legacy of the British Empire.

0.00 Navigation accomplishes a kind of theatre of the absurd by orienting the audience to see incongruous practices of the same space. By bringing together several elements that do not fit well together, the performance offers the various audiences an experience of stark juxtapositions. As mentioned above, the act of walking the line established by British astronomers (and later made the global "prime" meridian by the International Meridian Conference in 1884) simultaneously reaffirms the existence of this line while going against any sense of spatial standards of everyday navigation through these regions of England. Faithfull notes,

> *One of the legacies of the British Empire is this Greenwich Meridian, which has no reason to be there geographically (it's just through naval power that it ends up going through London). I got fascinated by the authority and sort of pomp and circumstance of that line being totally at odds with the fact that it a) doesn't exist and b) if you do try and follow it, it goes through Mrs. Cruddak's kitchen sink [See Figure 3]. It's totally at odds with the idea that it's this grand line of Empire.* [19]

Another compelling disjunction in *0.00 Navigation* is the role of Faithfull's body in the performance: his embodied walk along the Prime Meridian emphasizes an emphatic subjectivity, highlighting the *embodied experience* of the meridian as it is explored from a specific performer's point of view. At the same time, Faithfull is always filmed from behind and his face is never seen. As he notes, "In a way, [I'm] using myself as a measuring device. I become this object in a way. It's not really very personal. I'm this faceless ghost that is always seen from behind, seemingly totally at odds with the landscape." [20] He describes himself as "a cursor moving through space." [21] The performance again offers a vital sense of juxtaposition here by forcing the audience to see the piece as a celebration of the particularities of embodied perspective/subjectivity alongside the body of the performer becoming another object within the space.

The body in *0.00 Navigation* – since it is both the extension/essence of the self and can also be read as an object among other objects – presents an important site for us to consider the relationship between the body-as-subject and the body-as-object. This has been a concern for the advancements in phenomenology and, indeed, serves as a crucial point of contention between the key figures in phenomenol-

Figure 3. *0.00 Navigation*, Simon Faithfull, 2009. Faithfull crawls out of a stranger's kitchen window in East Grinstead in his walk along the Prime Meridian. Image courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Polaris, Paris. Used with permission.

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ogy (Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty) since they each understand the body-as-object in notably distinct ways. While phenomenologists tend to agree that the other's body can be an object for me (situated among other perceptive objects in the world), my own body presents a different challenge. For Husserl, a person's own body is not presented as an distinct object among other objects in the world; instead, as Taylor Carman notes, "[t]he moment of perception excludes the perceiving organ itself from the domain of objects perceived. [...] his point is simply that the body cannot see or touch itself as it can other objects, since it cannot step back and, as it were, hold itself at arms length." [22] Merleau-Ponty, while distancing himself from the foundational categories that lead to such arguments in Husserl, still notes that the body is not simply an object through which we are allowed to be agents in the world (thus gesturing toward the dualism that presents itself in Husserl's writings). Carman notes that Merleau-Ponty's arguments showed that "we understand ourselves not as *having* but as *being* bodies." [23]

Merleau-Ponty's writings complicate this easy divide between body-as-subject and body-as-object by citing many perceptive moments in which the body exceeds the bounds of agency and even does not align with our being-in-the-world. He writes,

> *I henceforth treat it as an object and deduce it from a relationship between objects. I regard my body, which is my point of view upon the world, as one of the objects of that world. My recent awareness of my gaze as a means of knowledge I now repress, and treat my eyes as bits of matter. They then take their place in the same objective space in which I am trying to situate the external object and I believe that I am producing the perceived perspective by the projection of the objects on my retina.* [24]

While another person's body can be an object in the world I am able to touch and understand as something that transcends my own frame of experience (thus leading to an "ethical other," as I will discuss at the end of this article), my own body at times functions in similar ways. Sometimes I can be the audience to my own body-as-object when it refuses to align to my will (as many with physical disabilities or debilitating muscular diseases will note) or at times when I am audience to my body through a medical lens (via MRIs, x-rays, or CT scans).

Similarly, moments of body-as-object happen in locative media as the self is experienced externally and we are audience to the body among other spatial objects. The perceptive layering of my body's sensory engagement with the world and the various virtualities that make up this world (from the Prime Meridian as a virtual line to the moving blue dot that represents me on a GPS or phone screen) often place me in the position of audience to my own body. The result of my body being perceived as an object among other objects in the world is that I am able to situate my body among a large network of objects. The production of space that depends on these bodies/objects contains many audience members, many bodies, many perspectives, and many agents. Among these agents, my body is one.

Locative art has privileged the situatedness of individuals (i.e., human agents); however, approaches to the study and practice of locative art have not neglected the role that non-human agents play in the production of these spaces. Objects (including spatial objects like the built environment or the Prime Meridian) are not only the topics of locative media art, but are indeed the agents alongside embodied human actors. As Marc Tuters and Kazys Varnelis famously argued in their article, "Beyond Locative Media," we must move from a focus on locative art as being about *subjects* to instead being about *things.* Developing Bruno Latour's conceptions of actor-network theory, Tuters and Varnelis note that locative media are not simply about a person's movements through space; for such projects would overlook the vital networked relationships between that person and the various objects in space. Citing Eshter Polak and Ieva Auzina's work *MILK* (and later in *NomadicMILK* among a wide range of projects with similar concerns), locative media can be about locating and mapping data, mapping relationships between things, and instead be about a much more expansive and inclusive understanding of the production of space. [25]

THE VIBRANCY OF OBJECTS IN LOCATIVE ART

As objects become key actors in the production of locative media space, the very definition of the "audience" for such projects must be significantly expanded. The things that are audience-actors in the networks of locative media art are necessarily tangible and/or virtual. For example, the Prime Meridian is a virtual object (and actor) within Faithfull's performance. It is a *virtual* object because, while it doesn't exist physically as such, it is layered onto physical space and becomes an object that defines the space. It is a meaningful object but its meaning is only enacted through the process of layering, of understanding it as a potential. [26] The Prime Meridian is itself an object of multiplicity: it is a location but it is also an imaginary, it defines global standards of time but is itself geographically arbitrary. While the Prime Meridian does not possess a material ontology often applied to the category of "objects," when seeking to understand the body's relationship to the many objects that make embodiment possible and meaningful, the category of "object" needs to be categorized very broadly. As Ian Bogost argues, drawing from Levi Bryant's implementation of the term "flat ontology": "For Bryant (as for Latour), the term *object* enjoys a wide berth: corporeal and incorporeal entities count, whether they be material objects, abstractions, objects of intention, or anything else whatsoever . . . not one is 'more real' than any other." [27] Thus, as phenomenology employs an object-oriented approach to understanding embodiment and objects in locative art, we see that whether encounters with objects via physical touch (as when Faithfull opens the door to a stranger's house) or through mediated interaction (such as his relationship to the meridian through the GPS visualization or our encounter with the performance on YouTube), the "reality" of our phenomenological encounter with these objects does not create a "hierarchy of being." [28] In fact, Faithfull's relationship to the Prime Meridian as a virtual object can serve as a foil to all encounters with objects: embodied space becomes meaningful through interactions with spatial objects (both physical and nonphysical), the imaginaries and representations of these objects (which accounts for their status and potentiality), and the ways such objects can interact with human bodies and other object bodies as "ready-to-hand" or "present-at-hand." [29]

Thus, objects and bodies-as-objects within locative art serve as vital nodes in the networks that produce embodied space. The "tool-being," to use Graham Harman's term, of objects in these networks either present themselves to the artist or the viewer as ready-to-hand or recede from view. [30] Regardless of the level of visible engagement between objects (i.e., whether the link between actors in a network can be visibly traced or not), the phenomenologies of embodied space must account for that which takes place at the foreground, background, or within – what Nigel Thrift terms – non-representational space. [31] For example, Stephen Wilson's locative art project, *Telepresent*, consisted of a box with a GPSr, a small computer, and a digital camera "that automatically sent images from where it was to a Web site, chronicling its travels as it goes." [32] Once *Telepresent* was launched in 1997, the networks became evident, especially in the way that the devices in the box announced their disconnection from the infrastructure of the internet. As Karen O'Rourke chronicles in her book *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers*:

> *When Wilson built the* Telepresent *in 1997, he imagined it "traveling the world through networks of friendship and gift-giving." The artist wrote custom software that allowed it to upload images and download comments from the Web. Online viewers would see whatever the* Telepresent *saw and respond with comments that would be spoken by a speech synthesizer. But the reality did not scale: "wireless Internet was available only in a few cities*

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in the world. There was no good method for keeping the batteries charged. [...] Airlines were not about to allow GPS devices in their baggage." [33]

The prototype of *Telepresent* only ran a few days in San Francisco. For the project, when the network infrastructure would not support the network of objects (or when the network of airline safety regulations and government policies would not support the network of interactors trying to share the locative devices beyond the geographic region of Northern California), human agents became aware of the "present-to-hand" nature of elements within the broad network of embodied space. However, sometimes, the human agent is not an audience member for these present-to-hand moments of breakdown of tool-being. Sometimes, the audience members of locative art are objects talking to objects, machines talking to machines, or network nodes disconnecting from other network nodes.

In other words, when objects (both physical and virtual) become foundational for phenomenology, it can be argued that this approach to embodiment can no longer be applied strictly to human bodies, but must also be understood broadly through theorizing the "phenomenology of objects." Objects themselves have a phenomenology: they have meaningful interactions with each other that produce space while often doing so without the intervention of human actors. Arguing this point further, and extending Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, Bogost notes that "object-oriented ontology" allows for objects to be related to all other things within a network of meaningful relationships while simultaneously being "independent from their constituent parts." [34] Here, we see that one of the aspects that *0.00 Navigation* attempts to redefine is the very definition of "audience." When theorizing a phenomenological engagement with a performance event, the body addresses a very broad audience that necessarily includes the objects in the performance space. Thus, while Faithfull performed for many "audiences" such as the passersby on the street, the person who let him walk through his or her doorway and out the kitchen window, or Rebecca Rowles following closely with the camera, we must also include the camera itself as a member of the audience. If there is no hierarchy of being in an object-oriented approach to phenomenology, then the ontology of the audience must include objects like the GPS device and satellite, the fence, the school playground, and even the Prime Meridian itself.

In this case, taken further, we see that objects can serve as audience for one another. The Prime Meridian becomes meaningful for this performance when it intersects and (via the performance) addresses other objects in the space such as a house, a major street that does not follow the grid of the meridians, or a canal (see Figure 4). Of particular note, the GPS receiver's very function is to serve as an audience for the signals broadcast from the various GPS satellites orbiting the Earth. The satellites address the receivers, who in turn transform that address into something meaningful. And while human agents initiated these objects (and the ways in which they can address each other), they do so continuously regardless of human attention or intention. Thus, broadening our understanding of what constitutes an audience extends Alice Rayner's ideas about how to understand audiences when she writes that the term audience is "a model for intersubjective relations as opposed to a model for a unified community; to view the audience, that is, as a 'boundary condition' in the act of understanding another and, as a result, of understanding the constitution and contradictions of its own differences." [35]

If an audience is positioned as that which simultaneously listens and addresses through its interactions, then this fits well with ideas of orientation and two-fold directedness discussed above. An audience orients itself in diverse ways toward a performance and takes a directed attitude toward the piece. It engages (or disengages) and, in turn, responds. Objects within *0.00 Navigation* thus serve as one audience of the piece, listening/receiving (to GPS signals or light and movement captured on Super 8 film stock), responding, and giving feedback (either through data gathering of movement across space or view-counts on YouTube, or through moments when the GPS has lost connection to the signal from the GPS satellites and does not correctly display Faithfull's location). The objects here respond to the feedback from other objects and do so in a way that avoids the idealization of audience unity and wholeness Rayner discusses (as that which is "idealized precisely because it assumes stability and turns a complex relation into a simple one"). [36]

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Figure 4. *0.00 Navigation*, Simon Faithfull, 2009. Faithfull wades through a chest-deep canal in Lincolnshire in his walk along the Prime Meridian. Cinematographer Rebecca Rowles films from a distance. Image courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Polaris, Paris. Used with permission.

This approach also allows for an understanding of objects and their diversity/alterity: they are understood relationally within their network but are also able to be seen through their emphatic alterity in relation to the other objects and people they interact with.

THE ETHICS OF OBJECT ORIENTATION

Locative art projects like *0.00 Navigation*, *CoMob*, and *Telepresent* invoke the integral role that objects play in the creation of embodied space, a process that includes the objects as vital bodies alongside human bodies. Ultimately, by approaching phenomenology through object orientation, we see that there is an ethical imperative to understanding objects as agents and audiences in and of themselves in the performance. Drawing again from Rayner's exploration of what actually constitutes an audience, she writes:

> *In this context, what is heard is not the "person" or "subject" as much as the memory, desire and hope that emerge through the person. Perhaps the function of the audience is to hear both history and desire in the silence. The idea of audience suggests specific capacities to hear meaning in both the spoken and the unspoken: to hear the* vouloir dire *as much as the utterance. Those capacities, furthermore, may derive from the resources of desire, community, the relation of differences, and even the impersonal "it" of objectification and orthodoxy, all of which may be put into play through intention.* [37]

When an object, including virtual objects like the Prime Meridian or the visualization on the GPS device's screen, is understood to have the capacity to listen, to have intention, there is at once an insistence on the ability for phenomenology to be founded on the idea of alterity and true transcendence.

Such an approach offers an important intervention to the critiques lobbed at phenomenology. Phenomenology, historically, has often been critiqued as placing an over-emphasis on the individual and on the immanence of the subjective. Thus, if all understanding of the world must come back to the individual's perception, how can there be a place for true difference and the transcendence of others? Such a critique was made of Merleau-Ponty's work in 1946 when he presented in front of the *Société francaise de philosophie*. At that meeting, Emile Bréhier argued that there was no room in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology for otherness: "When you speak of the perception of the other, this other does not even exist, according to you, except in relation to us and in his relations with us. This is not the other as I perceive him immediately; it certainly is not an ethical other; it is not this person who suffices to himself. It is someone I posit outside myself at the same time I posit objects." [38] Such a

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complaint is summarized nicely by Jack Reynolds when he describes Emmanuel Levinas' concern with this approach to being-in-the-world, "phenomenology hence ensures that the other can be considered only on the condition of surrendering his or her difference." [39]

The objects in a phenomenological reading of *0.00 Navigation* are extreme others, often transcending human perception in profound ways (from the true invisibility of the Prime Meridian to the interactions between GPS satellite and receiver that are beyond the sensory capacities of human interactors). To address the concerns of critics like Bréhier and Levinas, phenomenology must announce otherness as central for the practice of embodied space, for the ability for people and objects (including the body-as-object) to truly transcend our own capacity for understanding. For phenomenology to embrace difference and the ability for others to transcend our own immanence as embodied subjects, then objects must be included as such others. Objects are others who meaningfully produce embodied space and serve to position the self among a larger audience that has the capacity to surprise us and offer a different perspective on the world. Human performers like Faithfull, as well as human audience members like people seeing him walk across their golf course or see him on the screen online, thus can no longer be considered the "monarchs of being, but are instead *among* beings, *entangled* in beings, and *implicated* in other beings," as Bryant argues. [40]

The political stakes of inserting objects as fundamental agents within a phenomenological framework are profound. For writers like Jane Bennett, such an approach is a political response to human hubris and the elimination of difference that positions the self among a very broad ecology. She argues, "Why advocate the vitality of matter? Because my hunch is that the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption. It does so by preventing us from detecting (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling) a fuller range of the nonhuman powers circulating around and within human bodies." [41] Phenomenology, if it is to include both those aspects of the performance space that are "sensible" as well as those things which we encounter through the cognitive unconscious, needs to insert vibrant matter if difference is to ever be considered possible. [42] The result, as Reynolds notes, is the capacity for an ethics that embraces alterity and ultimately leads to human interactions that transcend our immediate frame of reference. He writes, "Not only can interactions with the other involve us in a renewed appreciation of their alterity (i.e., the ways in which they elude us), but the other is equally importantly that which allows us to surprise ourselves, and move beyond the various horizons and expectations that govern our daily lives." [43] ■

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1. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 13.
2. The opening and closing sequences, in which Faithfull enters from the water and reenters it at the end, are an homage to Buster Keaton's short 1965 film, Railrodder. In the film, Keaton jumps into the Thames in London and emerges on the eastern coast of Canada. He then journeys the length of Canada to the Pacific Ocean. See *The Railrodder*, directed by Gerald Potterton (Montreal: National Film Board Canada, 1965).
3. Simon Faithfull, Skype interview with author, January 10, 2013.
4. Annet Dekker, "Interview with Simon Faithfull," *Visual Correspondents Berlin*, November 2, 2009, www.visualcorrespondents.com/faithfull.html (accessed February 1, 2013).
5. Simon Faithfull, Skype interview.
6. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 89-90.
7. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge Press, 1962), 171.
8. Mark Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 230.
9. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 143.
10. Jen Southern, "Comobility: How Proximity and Distance Travel Together in Locative Media," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 1 (2012): 78.
11. Ibid., 77.
12. Ibid., 81-82.
13. Simon Faithfull, Skype interview.
14. Ibid.
15. See Jason Farman, *Mobile Interface Theory: Embodied Space and Locative Media* (New York: Routledge Press, 2012).
16. See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1984).
17. Simon Faithfull, Skype interview.
18. Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 28.
19. Simon Faithfull, Skype interview.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Taylor Carman, "The Body in Husserl and Merleau-Ponty," *Philosophical Topics* 27, no. 2 (1999): 207.
23. Ibid., 208.
24. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 81.
25. Marc Tuters and Kazys Varnelis, "Beyond Locative Media: Giving Shape to the Internet of Things," *Leonardo* 39, no. 4 (2006): 357-363.
26. Here I draw on the word virtual in a very deliberate way, connecting this particular employment of the term with the long history of the word (and thus hope to deviate from the narrow uses of the word in contemporary scholarship and trouble the idea that the virtual is constituted by digital technologies). The term's current usage in both academic and everyday spheres, which is extremely narrow in scope, fits best with the approach first employed in 1959 in the *Proceedings of the Eastern Joint Computer Conference*, which coined the phrase "virtual memory" to describe a simulated environment for computing memory. The idea of simulation carried over into the usage of "virtual reality" and similar technological advances in simulated worlds. While this may be the most common understanding of the virtual (often placed in contrast to "the real"), it is far from an exhaustive sense of what virtuality has meant throughout history. Exploring these historical uses in depth, John Rajchman argues that the virtual "lies in those forces or potentials whose origins and outcomes cannot be specified independently of the open and necessarily incomplete series of their actualizations. Such is their multiplicity (or complexity) that it can never be reduced to a set of discrete elements or to the different parts of a closed or organic whole." This understanding of the virtual cannot be contained within notions of simulation or a real/virtual divide; instead, virtuality signifies the experience of layering between the physical and the imaginary, a layering that always announces actualization as always becoming. See John Rajchman, "The Virtual House," in *Constructions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 116.
27. Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology, or What it's Like to Be a Thing* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 12.
28. Ibid., 22.
29. For a thoughtful engagement with Heidegger's concepts of "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand," see Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2002).
30. See Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2002).
31. See Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (New York: Routledge Press, 2008).
32. Karen O'Rourke, *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2013): 128.
33. Ibid., 129.
34. Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 23.
35. Alice Rayner, "The Audience: Subjectivity, Community and the Ethics of Listening," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 7, no. 2 (1993): 6.
36. Ibid., 12.
37. Ibid., 16-17.
38. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 28.
39. Jack Reynolds, *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Intertwining Embodiment and Alterity* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 125.
40. Levi Bryant, quoted in Ian Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 17.
41. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), ix.
42. For a more in-depth discussion of the relationship between cognitive awareness and the cognitive unconscious, see my discussion of how these categories relate to embodiment and phenomenology in Jason Farman, *Mobile Interface Theory*, 27-29.
43. Jack Reynolds, *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida*, 128.

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