READING REFLECTION 4
CASSIE SMITH
CART 351

"BORDER BUMPING" (2012-2014)
BY JULIAN OLIVER

ENCOUNTERED IN:
[*LOCATIVE MEDIA REVISITED*](#)
BY JONAH BRUCKER-COHEN

I started out writing this response to Brucker-Cohen's "Locative Media Revisited" article, and decided to focus on one artwork that I encountered therein after it piqued my interest. Julian Oliver's "Border Bumping" collects data from cell-phone users in close proximity to national borders, logging moments of discrepancy where the user is in one country but their cell-phone tags them as being in another. The data is then used to redraw the map around the users physical location, moving or "bumping" the border as they cross or linger near national boundaries. For example, I am currently located in Sooke, BC, a small town on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Because the town is so close to the American border, my cell-phone frequently thinks I am in the States. If I were a "Border Bumping" user, the American border would be redrawn further north on the map so that my virtual location (USA) encompassed my actual physical location (Sooke). Oliver labels "Border Bumping" with the term *dislocative media.* The project challenges the integrity of national boundaries, positioning cellular technology as a "disruptive force". I thought this was compelling. Because of the power borders have, and how used we are to seeing them drawn, it's easy to forget that they aren't real. Borders are largely arbitrary socio-political constructions and national borders as we understand them today have only existed for a few centuries. Yet they are bound up with ongoing histories of colonial violence and exclusion. Canadian

mining companies are some of the principle drivers of displacement in certain areas of the developing world, including throughout Latin America. Canadian foreign policy, wrapped up in the interests of Canadian capital abroad, has likewise had terrible consequences for many in places far from here. Yet, when the response from displaced populations is an attempt to migrate for survival, they cannot necessarily find refuge within our national borders. Around the world, crises of migration are accelerating, yet the movement of people continues to be restricted. At the same time, the flow of capital moves freely across these same boundaries. Virtual bodies may also cross where physical persons cannot. In this context, it does not do well to ignore the enmeshment of technological networks with those of state power (through which borders are enforced) and global financial capital. Oliver's "Border Bumping" manages to encapsulate this set of interdependencies and contradictions (or at least opens a space for critique).