

Le Lin CART351 Reflection 2

Locative Media Revisited

Jonah Brucker-Cohen

“Locative Media Revisited” by Jonah Brucker-Cohen, published on Rhizome in 2014, talks about some projects that thwart current closed systems of data/communication technologies. Geospatial systems such as GPS (Global Positioning System) are controlled by the government / military institutions and we as users do not have any transparency as to how our data is mined or how and if the system will be changed in accessibility. This just shows how the state continues to surveil us and track our every move.

A project showcased in this article is Molly Dilworth’s “Paintings for Satellites”. The project consists of extremely large paintings on New York City rooftops that can only be seen clearly by orbiting satellites moving through space. It critiques the ways in which locative media shape our experience of urban spaces, and how Google Maps informs us our perceptions of certain cities. Dilworth tries to disrupt these images we see with satellite surveillance by implanting her large scale paintings into urban areas.

Another project is German artist Philipp Ronnenbergs’s “Open Positioning System” (OPS), an alternative positioning system that works by triangulating seismic frequencies produced by generators in power plants, water turbines, pumping stations, or large machines in factories. If the sensor, held in contact with a wall or the ground, can detect seismic frequencies from three known sources, its location can be established (Brucker-Cohen). OPS is an attempt to curtail the US government’s control of geolocation systems, making its effects visible and opening it up.

These acts obstructing and challenging locative surveillance incite us to question the effect of these technologies and who they are trying to serve. The more we use these tools against themselves, the more we are bringing into the dialogue of digital autonomy and agency.

Brucker-Cohen, Jonah. “Locative Media Revisited.” *Rhizome*, 26 March 2014, https://rhizome.org/editorial/2014/mar/26/locative-media-revisited/?ref=fp_post_readbtn.