

Local Tide
Curated by PARALLELOGRAMS
and Francesca Capone
Code by Zac Parker
S1 Portland
Feb 11-Mar 5 2016

featuring:

Ben Alper
Gideon Barnett
Aeron Bergman +
Alejandra Salinas
David Court
Joy Drury Cox
Fabian Hesse
Rob Hult
Alfons Knogl
Chris Maggio
Kayla Mattes
Elisa Giardina Papa
Gabriela Salazar
Eileen Isagon Skyers
Sheida Soleimani
Courtney Stephens
Barry Stone

Parallelograms is an online artist project exploring the relationship between images and interpretation. As an ongoing and evolving project – involving a wide range of artists and thinkers – it has been a way for us to consider issues relating to art, the internet, image culture, artistic process, and what it means for artists to make work for digital space.

In late 2015, we were invited by Francesca Capone to put together a show at S1, an artist-run space in Portland, Oregon. Our conversations with Francesca focused on making an exhibition that could somehow simultaneously exist in both digital and physical space. This process led us to think a bit more broadly about location, place, and our experiences with technology across geographic boundaries. How do we experience and attach memory to the specific places in which we exist, both digitally and physically? As we spend more and more time in digital space (where physical location becomes more nebulous and abstract), does our process of forming memories around place change? Can we attach meaning to digital ‘places’? And do we have the same kinds of attachments to digital ‘objects’ as we do to material things, such as photographs or family heirlooms?

Roni Horn’s wonderful book, “Weather Reports You,” is a collection of interviews with Icelanders of all ages. Each person is asked to describe his/her most memorable experiences with the weather. Reading these interviews, we became interested in the ways the internet parallels a weather system: something amorphous and unwieldy to which we all relate directly.

As Roni Horn puts it:

“Everyone has a story about the weather. This may be one of the only things each of us holds in common. And although it varies greatly from here to there – it is finally, one weather that we share. Small talk everywhere occasions the popular distribution of the weather. Some say talking about the weather is talking about oneself. This seems to hold true in a general sense on an individual level. But for entire populations as well the weather is reflection and measure. In this century, as young as it is, we have merged into a single, global us; with each passing day we can watch as the weather actually becomes us.”

Jumping off from her ideas, we decided to conduct a series of interviews with a group of artists to better understand the different ways they think about personal experiences of place, both online and offline. Rather than providing the invited artists with images to respond to (which is the format that Parallelograms.info is based on), we asked them to use the interview questions as a jumping-off point for making two [related] digital works for the exhibition. One would be a representation of a physical place that has been important to them, either artistically or personally; the other would be a set of digital “artifacts”: representative of a place, as filtered through browser-based – or otherwise mediated – experience.

In the exhibition, the works are displayed in direct relation to one another. Upon entering the gallery, you see the artists’ physical places, projected onto surfaces, and also displayed on

iPads. These places become present, but merely as immaterial images. Interaction with the iPads triggers the digital artifacts to overlay – or replace completely – these places, but only on the projectors; the iPads are coded to remain unchanged. The works are stored online, on servers off-site which communicate to negotiate this interaction. However, they are viewable only in the gallery; links to the projects are not made public. This creates a specific viewing experience, located somewhere between a physical place and a non-place. To quote Robert Smithson: “Whereas a ‘Site’ is scattered information, a place you can visit, experience, travel-to, a ‘Non Site’ is a container, an abstract work about contained information.”

A tide is an ever-changing phenomenon affecting a large area of coast; it is an interaction of land and sea driven by earthly and planetary forces much greater in scale than the land which is affected. Thinking about a tide as something “local” suggests pinpointing, or locating, a discreet part of this fluctuating system. And it suggests that things which happen to us – “local” things – are part of a larger, ever-changing, phenomena: currents that circle around specific places, affecting the point or place in question, and coming from somewhere else. The internet, from this vantage point, does two things: it locates us, but it also diffuses the idea of location – turning a singular place into many places at once.

– Leah Beeferman +
Matthew Harvey,
PARALLELOGRAMS

www.parallelograms.info
www.s1portland.com