Moving Images - Static Spaces: Architectures, Art, Media, Film, Digital Art and Design

• Paper / Proposal Title:
City as a scene for interpretation: how and why to capture depth through drawing

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
How can the temporal and non-spatial phenomena of city depth can be captured through the static medium of drawing? City depth is comprised of buildings, urban patterns, movement of people, legislative structures: invisible and visible, concrete and ephemeral, moving and static. From a philosophical background of social constructionism and a methodology of phenomenological hermeneutics, the paper examines the interpretation of city depth through drawing, and draws parallels between the interpretation of city depth and the interpretation of film scenes. Data collected from ethnographic participation, in-depth and ad hoc interviews was situated in detailed drawings of Tottenham High Road. In a process of dialogue and reflection, much like that which film audiences undergo, the drawings revealed the architectural ‘text’ (Vesely 2014) that we interpret when we move around the city or watch a film; mostly in peripheral vision, relying on sounds, objects, positions in space and cultural conventions. In making marks on a page to communicate both formalised, articulated knowledge and tacit embodied information (Polanyi 1958 and 1966), a process of interpretation is required: what is relevant, what can be excluded? Which parts are most meaningful?
What should I focus on to explore? In ways reminiscent of designing a film set, the layers must be easily interpreted (the ‘text’ readable) by the audience. In making a drawing, or designing a film set, hidden knowledge and temporal phenomena are made explicit. The analytic process of drawing Tottenham High Road established both the nature of the layers of its architectural, social and economic depth, and to navigate between them; to understand and express how they communicate their meanings and knowledge to their users. The purpose of the project was to establish how the rich and adaptable vernacular depth of Tottenham High Road can be emulated by urban designers to communicate with users to maximise the ethical and civic goodness of the city. Architecture has a lot to learn from film.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Jane Clossick is Lecturer in Urban Design; co-runs the Cass Cities research group and is the course leader for MA Architecture and Urbanism at The Sir John Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University. She trained as an architect in London and Manchester and began her doctoral studies in 2010, completing her thesis entitled ‘The depth structure of a London high street: A study in urban order’ in 2017. Jane has taught at Cambridge and the University of East London and runs the Cass Cities design studio at London met. Her current research is into the depth of the Old Kent Road in south London, focused on loss of accommodation for local economies as a consequence of reactive policy and London’s housing crisis. She also writes on the ethical consequences of urban design and policy-making, particularly its impact in individual autonomy and the capacity of citizens to flourish in the civic environment. Jane lives with her husband and co-researcher Colin and small son Tommy, in east London.