URBAN ASSEMBLAGE: THE CITY AS ARCHITECTURE, MEDIA, AI AND BIG DATA.

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Parkour, the City, and Mediated Subjectivities

• Author(s) Name:
Fidelia Lam

• University or Company Affiliation:
Media Arts and Practice, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California

• Abstract (300 words):
Parkour is a movement practice and discipline that involves running, jumping, vaulting, swinging, and flipping around, across, and through obstacles as they are encountered in the urban landscape. Its practitioners navigate the late capitalist city in unexpected and subversive ways, imagining new political possibilities of existence with their movement. As a dynamic and relatively young movement practice and culture, parkour practitioners leverage emerging technologies to explore the relationship of parkour bodies to their situated environments and create new entanglements of body, architecture, and media. How do these movements, visions, and technologies inform our perceptions of public life and public space?

This paper analyzes instances of parkour media that utilize digital technologies to capture media assemblages of bodies and architecture, focusing on how various cameras as sensors are deployed at and imply multiple levels of scale and distance in relation to both bodies and architectures. These scales of distance are inherent in sensor technologies
and hold aesthetic and political implications for what data and how data is captured and how it informs existence within public space. In particular, I examine drone, third person, 360, and first person camera perspectives of parkour movement, highlighting each apparatus’ aesthetic and political ramifications on compositions of media, bodies, data, and urban structures. In doing so, I discuss how emergent assemblages of parkour bodies, technology, media, and architecture might suggest alternative political dimensions and trajectories within the late capitalist city.

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

FIDELIA LAM is a Canadian media artist and scholar experimenting across mediums to synthesize theoretical research with creative practice. Her work attends to processes of becoming and relation found in subcultural spaces, compositions of movement, body, and landscape, and alternative epistemological processes. She has exhibited, presented, and performed work across the U.S. and Canada, Asia, and Europe. She is currently an Annenberg Fellow, a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellow, and PhD candidate in Media Arts and Practice at the University of Southern California.