

Community Proposal

Team: Sarah Clovis Bishop, Alba Newmann Holmes, Grace Cohen and Brynn Raymond

City: Image, Imagination, Performance

You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders,
but in the answer it gives to a question of yours.

—Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

What questions can we ask of cities, about their spaces, histories, the images that they leave in our minds? Cities have long figured in the human imagination, and have long been understood as hotbeds of creativity; but what constitutes a city's presence, its identity? Is its image based on experience, on memory, on myth? Our research community will pose a series of questions to several cities—St. Petersburg and Rome, New York and Portland—examining each through the works of poets, mapmakers, and filmmakers. We will ask questions about the relationships between a city and its residents, and the connections between urban spaces and the spaces of creativity and performance. In doing so, we hope to better understand the ways in which cities are rendered visible, legible, poetic.

Our research community—made up of two faculty members and two students—will draw upon materials and methodologies from a variety of disciplines: Russian literature, urban studies, art history, film making, American history, poetry, cartography, and performance studies. Together we will read, view and discuss a core group of texts and films, through which we will approach our individual projects. Sarah Clovis Bishop will respond to a body of work by Russian poet Elena Shvarts that moves between Rome and St Petersburg; at the same time she will consider poems that have been translated from the page to the stage. Alba Newmann Holmes will complete a book chapter on Langston Hughes' documentation and invention of Harlem, proposing an analogy between his poems and the collaged maps of the Situationists. Brynn Raymond will investigate the material conditions in Harlem during Hughes' lifetime and the effects of these on creative productivity, drafting a research paper by summer's end. And Grace Cohen will put theory into practice, creating her own experiential, filmic map of Portland that draws upon the work of the Situationists, while also exploring questions of translation across genres: from paper map to a cinematic one.

While the city is a central trope for each of these endeavors, movement across media and genres is also very important (poem to play, poem to map, map to film), as is the concept of performance. Our collaborative research plan allows each of us to come into contact with and experiment with new materials, new genres. In addition to responding to one another's writing, we aim to join in the experiential aspects of Grace's project, traveling together to Portland to participate in the mapping process. Michel de Certeau suggests that when we move through a city, mapping it with our bodies, we create the text that is the city itself—in doing so this summer, we will become authors as well as students of the city.

We are requesting a small budget for this exploratory work in Portland and for shared texts, please see attached. We have also included a proposed list of readings.

Proposed Budget

Book purchases/copying charges for shared texts:	\$250
Group trip to Portland to participate in Grace Cohen's film project transportation, lunch, admissions to central sites for four	\$200
Transportation between Salem and Portland for Grace Cohen to support her filming project. 12 roundtrips over the course of the summer at \$33.00/trip (Greyhound rate).	\$396
Total requested budget for Summer, 2013:	\$846

Conditional request of \$525:

If funds are available, and Grace Cohen's project is accepted to the Conflux festival in October, 2013, we would like to request additional support for her travel to New York City in the amount of \$525 (\$375 for airfare; \$150 for food costs. Funds for lodging will not be required.).

Proposed Readings

- Abbott, Carl. *Greater Portland: Urban Life and Landscape in the Pacific Northwest*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Boym, Svetlana. "Archaeology of Metropolis," "Moscow, the Russian Rome," and "St. Petersburg, the Cosmopolitan Province" in *The Future of Nostalgia*, Basic Books, 2001.
- Brooker, Peter and Andrew Thacker, eds. "Introduction: Locating the Modern" and "Geographies of Modernism in a Globalizing World" in *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces*. Routledge, 2005.
- Buckler, Julie. *Mapping St. Petersburg*, Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Harcourt, 1974.
- Carlson, Marvin L. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. Routledge, 2010.
- Certeau, Michel de. "Walking in the City" in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall, trans. University of California Press, 1988. (pdf)
- Clark, Katerina. *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*, Harvard, 1995. p 3-13. (pdf)
- Corner, James. "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique, and Invention," *Mappings*. Denis Cosgrove, ed. Reaktion Books, Ltd., 1999. (pdf)
- Debord, Guy. "Separation Perfected," "The Commodity as Spectacle," and "The Organization of Territory," in *Society of the Spectacle*. Black and Red Press, 2010. (pdf)
- Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. 1973. (film)
- Gioia, Dana. *Disappearing Ink: Poetry at the End of Print Culture*. Graywolf Press, 2004.
- Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. MIT Press, 1997.
- Hughes, Langston. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Vintage Classics, 1994. (excerpts)
- Lamour, David H. J. and Diana Spencer. *The Sites of Rome: Time, Space, Memory*. Oxford, 2007.
- Lotman "The Symbolism of St. Petersburg," 1984 (11 pages) (pdf)
- Ross, Michael L. "City of the Soul," in *Storied Cities: Literary Imaginings of Florence, Venice and Rome*. Greenwood Press, 1994.
- Nekrasov, Nikolai ed., "Introduction" in *Petersburg: The Physiology of a City*.
- Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. 1998.
- Shvarts, Elena. *Paradise: Selected Poems*. Bloodaxe, 1993.
- Singh, Amritjit, William S. Shiver and Stanley Brodwin. *The Harlem Renaissance: Revaluations*. Garland, 1989.
- Summers-Bremner, Eluned. "Unreal City and Dream Deferred: Psychogeographies of Modernism in T. S. Eliot and Langston Hughes" in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*. Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, eds. Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Van Sant, Gus. *Paranoid Park*. 2007 (film)
- Volkov, Solomon. *St. Petersburg: A Cultural History*. (Chapter 1, pdf)
- Wheeler, Leslie. "Voice and the Visual Poetry of Langston Hughes," in *Voicing American Poetry*. Cornell, 2008.