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# CONTESTED SPACES

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MUSICAL  
IMPROV

A Field Guide

2016–17 FIELD TRIP / FIELD NOTES / FIELD GUIDE

GRADUATE CONSORTIUM FELLOWS

Volume II

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 : IDENTITY  
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 ↳ FIND YOUR OWN WAY  
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 KNOWLEDGE  
 - LAUNDRY AS A JUSTICE  
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 ↳ FUN OF RESIDENTS  
 ↳ GENERATION OF FAMILY OF PRACTICE

# INTRODUCTION

## Contested Spaces: A Field Guide, Volume II

2016–17 Field Trip / Field Notes / Field Guide  
 Graduate Consortium Fellows

Guided by the theme “contested spaces,” *Field Guide: Volume II* is produced by the Field Trip / Field Notes / Field Guide Graduate Fellow Consortium. This is a compendium of the experiences, examinations, and reflections of the 2016–17 Fellows, who collectively went on five field trips over the course of the year. Conceived and initiated in 2015 by the University of Chicago’s Arts, Science + Culture Initiative, in collaboration with the School of Art & Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Earl & Brenda Shapiro Center for Research and Collaborations at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Art, Theory, Practice, at Northwestern University, this is an unprecedented inter-institutional and trans-disciplinary platform for research and exchange, which began as an experiment but has grown into a yearly program. Our intention is to build an interdisciplinary community, provoke unexpected exchanges, build collegial relationships, and allow for unique encounters that would not typically occur within an institutional setting.

Supporting a select group of faculty-nominated Fellows from the participating institutions, Field Trip / Field Notes / Field Guide connects exceptional graduate students and recent MFA alumni from the visual arts, music, architecture, humanities, sciences, and social sciences over the course of a year as they pursue their work in the studio, the lab, the classroom, and “in the field.” In its conception, the consortium provides an open framework, intended to augment and broaden the support offered to the Fellows by each of the four institutions.

Through self-organized field trips, the Fellows together explore and digest Chicago’s vibrant urban environment as a shared landscape in which to critically formulate and communicate their diverse disciplinary concerns. Curiosity and the desire to explore through collective observation drives this extraordinary group of thinkers and makers—our future scientists, visual artists, architects, anthropologists, composers, and historians. It is our belief that bringing together students from diverse disciplines to actively share their methodologies and tools around the fertile resources of our city is highly productive for their research and artistic production.

Ultimately, it is the ten authors of *Field Guide: Volume II* who lead us through their disciplinary lenses and collective insights as they took in the sights,

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sounds, smells, and encounters with people along the way. After lengthy discussions about the theme, the Fellows decided to focus their investigations on Chicago’s South Side: walking the footprints of its neighborhoods, touring its historic institutions, and immersing themselves in the landscape of our petro-chemical and transportation industry, past and present. We deeply admire the contribution these PhD candidates and MFA alumni have made to each other’s education—providing a model of co-teaching and co-production. We are grateful to our co-institution collaborators, who took a risk on an experiment that worked: Lisa Lee, Director, School of Art & Art History at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Douglas Pancoast, Director, and Jaclyn Jacunski, Research Associate, Earl & Brenda Shapiro Center for Research and Collaboration at the School of the Art Institute; Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, Professor, and Matt Martin, Program Assistant, Art, Theory, Practice, Northwestern University.

We extend a special thank you to Naomi Blumberg, Coordinator, Arts, Science + Culture Initiative, University of Chicago, for her thoughtful insights and for keeping us all on course.

Sincerely,

Julie Marie Lemon

*Director/Curator, Arts, Science + Culture Initiative  
UChicago Arts, University of Chicago*

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# FELLOWS & FIELD TRIPS

# FELLOWS

## University of Chicago

### JOSH BABCOCK

Josh Babcock (PhD student, Anthropology) is a linguistic and visual anthropologist investigating questions of image, politics, and aesthetics in Singapore. His current work explores the changing relationship of the Singaporean state to its citizenry through the multimodal and multimedia production of the Singapore “nation brand,” a corporate-style regime of image-management applied to the nation-state. After receiving a BA in Anthropology from UChicago, he worked in marketing communications, graphic design, and UX/UI design roles in arts and culture institutions throughout the City of Chicago. He currently holds an MA in Anthropology (UChicago 2016) and works as a freelance graphic designer and marketing- and writing consultant while preparing to return to Singapore to conduct extended fieldwork research.

### TED GORDON

Ted Gordon (PhD candidate, Music) is a musicologist and musician living in Chicago. After earning a BA in the Humanities from Yale in 2008, he worked for five years in music publishing in New York. His work, both scholarly and musical, responds to the fantasy of an “American experimental music tradition” by asking questions about identity, ideology, and desire. His dissertation project revisits experimentalism in the San Francisco Bay Area throughout the 1960s and 70s, considering intersections between music technology and systems thinking. He performs improvised music with electronics and viola in Chicago.

### DEVIN MAYS

Devin Mays (MFA '16, Visual Arts) holds a BBA from Howard University and an MFA from the University of Chicago. Prior to completing his graduate studies at UChicago, he worked in the advertising industry for eight years, helping companies create fully integrated marketing campaigns. Since making his transition from commercial art to contemporary art, he has developed an interdisciplinary art practice that investigates notions of race, spirituality, and Hope. He currently teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago and serves as the Open Practice Committee assistant in the Department of Visual Arts at UChicago. Mays also works with the Chicago Community Trust helping to develop innovative civic engagement programming to serve Chicago's south and west sides. His work has been exhibited and published in both the US and UK.

## Northwestern University

### DANIEL DEHAAN

Daniel Dehaan (DMA candidate, Music Composition) is a composer, performer, and educator. He focuses on digital music creation and performance and regularly creates and performs music designed to be site- and system-specific, crafting unique experiences for each performance. His works emphasize the physical presence of the audience and utilize specially designed multi-channel speaker installations to envelop his audiences in the sonic experience. From the KROME Gallery in Berlin, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., to the Centro Cultural de España in Costa Rica, Daniel's music has been performed at venues all over of the world.

### JESSIE MOTT

Jessie Mott (MFA '09, Art, Theory, Practice,) is a Chicago-based visual artist. Mott works primarily in drawing and painting and is best known for her watercolors of hybrid animal creatures. Her collaborative animations with the artist and writer Steve Reinke have screened widely at national and international venues, including the International Film Festival Rotterdam, VIDEOEX International Experimental Film & Video Festival in Zürich, and the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Germany. Her drawings were featured in Reinke's video program in the 2014 Whitney Biennial. In addition to maintaining a studio art practice, Mott is an emerging social worker (MSW in progress, Loyola University Chicago) who is passionate about using art as a tool for connection and healing within underserved communities, particularly regarding HIV/AIDS and homelessness.

## School of the Art Institute of Chicago

### FRANCES LIGHTBOUND

Frances Lightbound (MFA '16, Printmedia) is an artist based between Chicago and the UK. Working primarily in printmaking, sculpture, and installation, she considers the production of physical and psychological space in built environments, and ways in which objects and structures materialize otherwise abstract systems such as law, capital, and property ownership. Her work has been exhibited in venues in the US and UK, including recent exhibitions at DEMO Project (Springfield, IL), Heaven Gallery (Chicago), Chicago Artists' Coalition, and Uri-Eichen (Chicago), and curatorial projects for Kruger Gallery (Chicago) and the Terrain Biennial at Enos Park (Springfield, IL). Frances is a Luminarts Visual Arts Fellow and a 2016–2017 HATCH Projects artist resident at Chicago Artists' Coalition. She earned her MFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016, and a BA (Hons) in from The Glasgow School of Art in 2012.

### MICHAEL RADO

Michael Rado (MFA '16, Printmedia) is originally from the suburbs of Columbus, Ohio, and currently lives and works in New York City. Rado's interdisciplinary work spans sculpture, installation, and video, and critically celebrates the spirit of his middle-class heritage, prodding at themes of privilege, privacy, and sovereignty. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan, with a focus in Graphic Design and Printmedia. Rado's recent work has been exhibited at a range of venues in Chicago, notably at EXPO Chicago, Pulaski Park with Fieldwork Collaborative Projects, and at Edra Soto and Dan Sullivan's East Garfield Park gallery, The Franklin.

### NATHAN TEDESCHI

Nathan Tedeschi (M.Arch '15, Architecture, Interior Architecture, and Designed Objects [AIADO]) currently works in the field of architecture. He holds a position at Sarfatty Associates where he works in various design fields, including hospitality, office, and the service industry. While at SAIC (2013–2015) Tedeschi held several teaching assistant positions in the Contemporary Practices and AIADO departments. Lessons involved various forms of working methods covering all types of media creation from the design world. His studies involved exploring some unique opportunities. These included working on the design of the 2014 SAIC Fashion Show as well as participating in the '14–'15 GFRY Studio Program at SAIC. Tedeschi's main interest in architecture is the study of urban public space. He spends much of his free time exploring the city and collecting experiences from the richness of the urban fabric.

## University of Illinois at Chicago

### SHERWIN OVID

Sherwin Ovid (MFA candidate) was born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, in 1978. He received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007 and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he received a Lincoln Fellowship in 2013. His work explores the limits of social boundaries and their perpetual transformation. As an interdisciplinary artist his practice is rooted primarily in video, painting, and drawing. Ovid has exhibited with Gallery 400 (UIC), Iceberg Projects, University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and Cleve Carney Gallery.

### JAVAIRIA SHAHID

Javairia Shahid (PhD student, Art History) is an architect and historian based between Chicago and Islamabad. She has a graduate degree in architectural history and theory from the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University. Graduating with gold medals from her undergraduate institution in Pakistan, Shahid has been the recipient of the Fulbright Scholarship, the William Kinne Award, in addition to numerous research grants. Her research considers the relationship between development and the environment in South Asia, with particular regard to epistemological disjunction of two entangled projects: the present-day production of global heritage, and the historic-colonial-Modernist "other"ing of nature and ecology.

# FIELD TRIPS

## 5 Trips through Chicagoland's Contested Spaces

**FEBRUARY 2, 2017**

**The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon**

Organized by Ted Gordon and Naomi Blumberg

**MARCH 11, 2017**

**Cottage Grove Walking Tour**

Organized by Devin Mays

**MAY 6, 2017**

**BP Oil Refinery, Wolf Lake, Calumet Region**

Organized by Javairia Shahid

**JUNE 10, 2017**

**DuSable Museum/Roundhouse**

Organized by Michael Rado

**AUGUST 14, 2017**

**Pullman Historic District**

Organized by Frances Lightbound

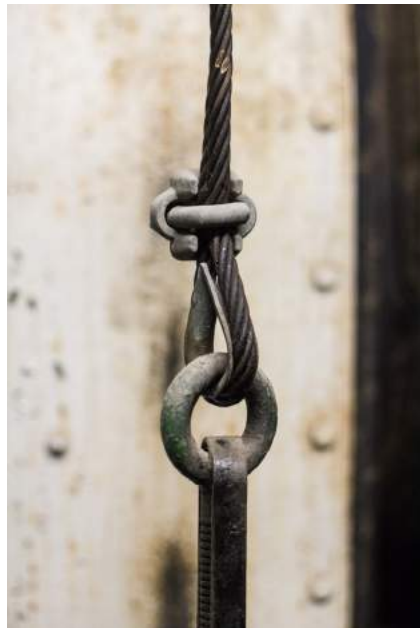
In February the Field Trip / Field Notes / Field Guide Fellows took their first field trip of the quarter to explore the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel. They were led on a tour by University Carillonneur Joey Brink up the 271 spiral steps of the bell tower to the carillon cabin, where he demonstrated how to play the bells. The tour and short performance were followed by dinner and discussion on embodiment, sound, spirituality, and space.

On a Sunday morning in March, Fellows took a walking trip along Cottage Grove Avenue on the city's South Side to take in the sights and sounds of the many churches of varying scale, denomination, and architectural styles. The group considered how faith and hope seem to be nestled amid a landscape of continued disinvestment, and asked whether these places are sites not of disinvestment and failed infrastructure, but of contestation and resistance.

In early May, Fellows joined community organizers in the Calumet region and toured the BP Oil Refinery, saw (and smelled) a petcoke refinery, and considered the proximity of big oil to pristine natural reserves.

In June, the group reconvened on the South Side's Cottage Grove Avenue for a tour of the DuSable Museum and Roundhouse. The Fellows were joined by the members of the Fieldwork Collaborative (Nelly Agassi, Andrew Schachman, Ionit Behar, and Merav Argov). During and after the tour, the group discussed the challenges and opportunities inherent in developing relationships between artists, curators, designers, urbanists, civic authorities, and communities in order to reimagine Chicago's infrastructures, networks, and spaces.

In August, a small group of Fellows traveled to Pullman Historic District on Chicago's South Side, taking a self-guided walking tour that included the Hotel Florence, Factory Complex, workers' housing, and Market Square. Conversation during and after the walk touched on historic preservation; adaptive reuse and civic branding; notions of utopia in planning and art making; and the formation of communities.



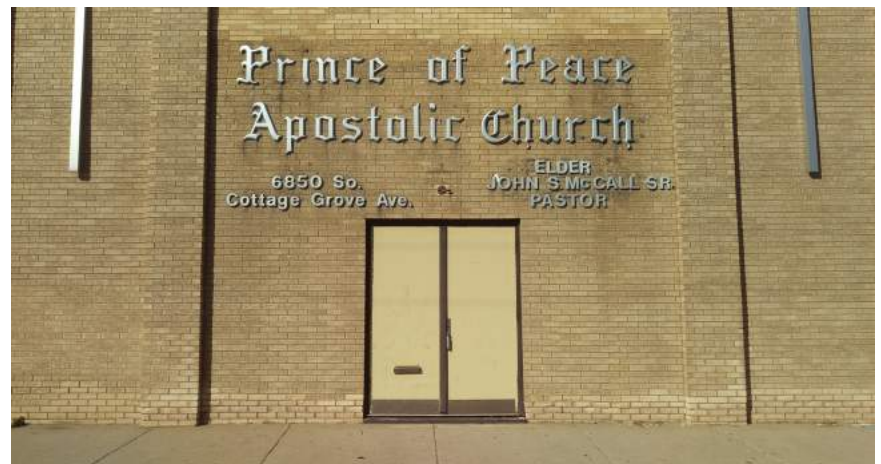
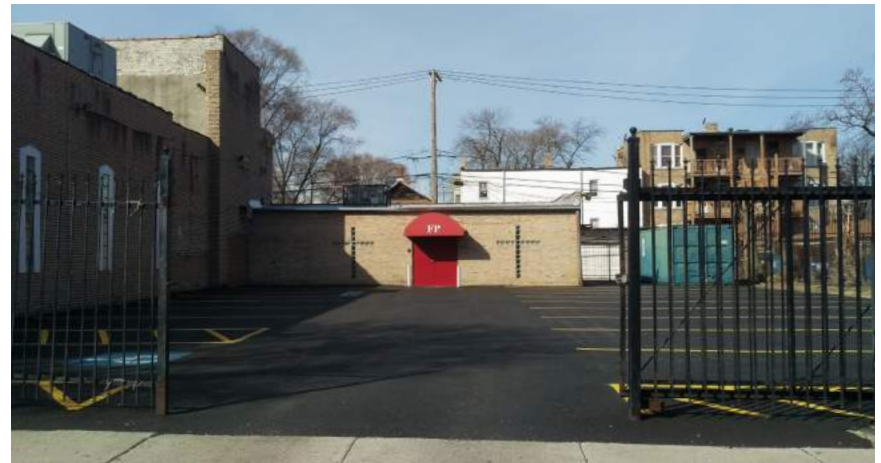
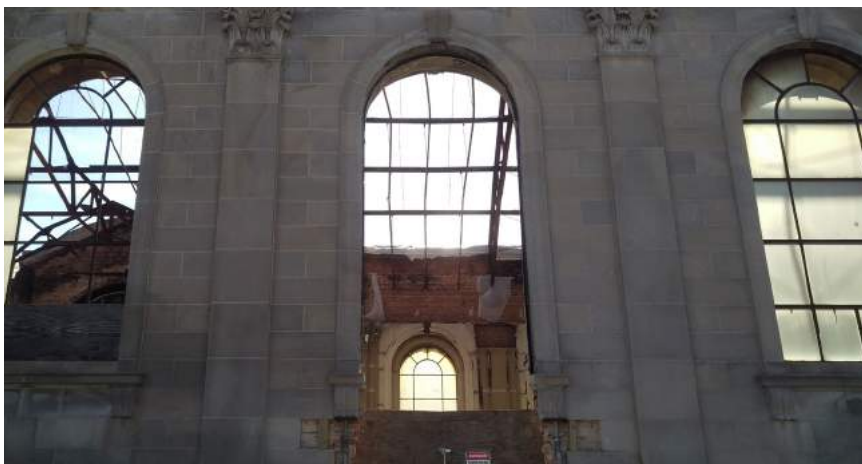
Top: University Carillonneur Joey Brink describes the carillon's playing mechanism (photo by Ted Gordon).

Bottom row: details from the Rockefeller Chapel tower (photos by Frances Lightbound).

Top: Carillon bells (photo by Tom Rossiter).

Bottom: View of the Rockefeller Memorial Chapel tower staircase (photo by Sherwin Ovid).

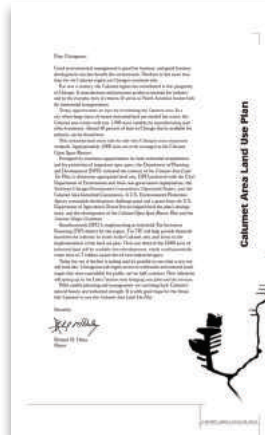






Previous pages, top to bottom, left to right: Salem Gospel Center Church (73rd St. and Cottage Grove Ave.), Martin Temple A.M.E. [African Methodist Episcopal] Zion Church (69th Pl. and Cottage Grove Ave.), Woodlawn United Methodist Church (64th St. and Woodlawn Ave.), Family Prayer Band Holiness C.O.G.I.C. (65th St. and Cottage Grove Ave.), First Paradise M.B. [Missionary Baptist] Church (68th St. and Cottage Grove Ave.), Prince of Peace Apostolic Church (68th St. and Cottage Grove Ave.) (photos by Nathan Tedeschi).

This page, top left: flaring during the distillation process. This page, bottom left: fractional distillation tower at the BP Whiting Refinery (photos by Sherwin Ovid). This page, below: report covers from the 2014 *Millennium Reserve and Greater Calumet Guide* and 2000 *Calumet Area Land Use Plan* (documents by Bluestem Communications and the City of Chicago).



Top: Cargo ships on Lake Michigan, visible from the BP Whiting Refinery (photo by Sherwin Ovid).

Bottom: Furnaces and air coolers at the BP Whiting Refinery (photo by Sherwin Ovid).



Top: Detail from *En Mas: Carnival and Performance Art of the Caribbean* at the DuSable Museum of African American History (photo by Sherwin Ovid).

Bottom: Installaton at the DuSable Museum (photo by Frances Lightbound).



Top: Interior of the Burnham and Root Roundhouse (photo by Josh Babcock).

Bottom quadriptych: Uncatalogued artworks held by the DuSable Museum (photos by Frances Lightbound).



Left: Gates outside Pullman Factory Complex (photos by Frances Lightbound).

This page: Market Square, Pullman (photo by Frances Lightbound).

# FELLOW REFLEC- TIONS

# JOSH BABCOCK

## Coordinating Contestations: Publics, Spaces, Interactions

### WHAT—OR WHO—IS THE “PUBLIC” OF “PUBLIC SPACE”?

Recent events have brought to the fore concerns over the relationship between public space and democracy. This is not just in the U.S., but all over the world, seen in acts of white-nationalist terrorism in Charlottesville, which followed closely on the heels of attacks in European recreation, tourism, and entertainment venues; in the overnight removal of Confederate monuments in Baltimore and its ensuing backlash; in pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong; and in global Occupy movements, not to mention experiences of violence in communities where such violence doesn't become the stuff of front-page news reportage at all. All of this has made clear yet again that public space—whatever we take “public” and “space” to be—is always deeply contested space.

Contested spaces are often seen as spaces of overt dispute, violence, militarization, discipline, surveillance: spaces of the uneasy liaisons, for instance, between urban form and the post-liberal police state, as described by the journalist Mike Davis's writings on Los Angeles (Davis 1992), or the spatialized, architectural enactment of modern disciplinary power made famous in Michel Foucault's discussion of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon (Foucault 2007; Wright and Rabinow 1982). Again, whatever we take public space to be, recent events have denaturalized our categories of spatial reckoning, raising definitional questions that turn out to be anything but pedantic, potentially of the highest possible human stakes, namely life and death: what, or who, is the “public” of “public space”? Who can (and by extension, who *cannot*) legitimately narrate, create, transform, or act in public space? Can there be a public space free of contestation? Can any space be free of contestation?

### CONTESTING PUBLICS IN/AND SPACE

Such concerns are by no means new. Jürgen Habermas's famous discussion of the emergence of the “public sphere” in the 19th century English coffeehouse put forward a history of a particular and peculiar mode of sociality—that of rational-critical debate, free from the deference entitlements conferred by traditional hierarchies and structures of hereditary prestige. But it was also, crucially, a theory of the relationship between a public (for Habermas, this was really “*the*” public, in the grammatical singular) and space.

In this peculiar space, men engaged with new kinds of technologically mediated artifacts (like newspapers and the networked mediatizing institutions that produced them) to interact as abstract, “public” citizens, disembodied intellects whose only allegiance was to the caffeine-fueled public performance of reason.

Of course, as the philosopher, critical theorist, and feminist scholar Nancy Fraser has pointed out in her brilliant and incisive critique of Habermas's social history, though claiming to be inclusive and depersonalized, the public sphere has always been constituted through the exclusion of certain voices, bodies, and social personae—a fact of which Habermas himself seemed either oblivious or willfully ignorant (Fraser 1990). Fraser's critique remains powerfully relevant today, not only in drawing our attention to the central and constitutive struggles between management strategies “from above” and public users' tactics “from below” (to obliquely invoke De Certeau). Structural transformations remain powerfully constitutive of user agency—even as agency is not straightforwardly curtailed by spaces' physical design and management—and “the” public sphere ought to be thought instead as multiple publics, all of which are spatially and historically situated (Staeheli and Mitchell 2007).

Yet the vast majority of contestations in and of space are not of a spectacular or monumental scale. I would argue, in fact, that most contestations (contestations that, it should be noted, always take place in and through space) are not even recognized as such.

### REFLECTIONS ON A DOODLE POLL

This year's Field Trip / Field Notes / Field Guide theme—*Contested Space*—struck me as increasingly prescient over the course of the fellowship year. This was not only because of the increasingly visible events of violence, protest, and debate mentioned earlier, but also because of the ways in which these apparently “exceptional” occurrences were juxtaposed against numerous banal events; particularly, scheduling meetings or activities among fellowship participants.

I don't mean to make light of the very real, very serious violence that can occur for those who find themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, in the middle of spectacular contestations over spaces. Rather, it is my hope that, by turning attention to banal, unacknowledged contested spaces, we might understand contestation as a broader fact of social and cultural life.

I begin with two banal moments, one more banal than the other. The first is a familiar occurrence, and begins with a Doodle poll being sent to a group of eleven very busy students, artists, architects, and working professionals (many of them participating simultaneously in more than one of these identity-categories). The particulars of this occurrence turn out not to be all that important, not least because, for me and my co-participants, this event was hardly an “event.”

Anyone who has tried to coordinate collective action of any kind will be familiar with what ensued: no single time, place, or format worked for everyone. Delays, workarounds, negotiations, and recalibrations ensued, resulting in an outcome that was less-than-ideal for most, though no one seemed to experience it all that much (if at all) as overtly dissatisfying.

Since I, like the other fellows, had been thinking about contestation, space, and contested space(s), the recurrence of such scheduling woes—mundane and ubiquitous as they may be in modern life—quickly emerged as a site of fascination rather than frustration. *What if, I couldn't help wondering, we recognized such spaces of coordination as contested space, rather than a preamble or periphery to the "real" contested spaces that existed in physical locales—places you could look at and walk through, places you could photograph or otherwise record in inscriptional media?*

## COORDINATING BANALITIES

As a linguistic anthropologist, I tend to take such matters of interactional coordination as *the* central, and interesting, dimension of life. Like others in my field, I find the focus on *coordination* rather than *sharedness* is a useful corrective to forms of Enlightenment thinking that have bedeviled attempts at understanding and organizing collective action, especially political action. Such Enlightenment views tend to bemoan the fact that (human) individuals are always already separated from one another, with thoughts, motivations, feelings, desires, and drives that are inaccessible to every other equally bounded, inaccessible *cogito*. Though this view of bounded interior selfhood tends to fit with our experienced mental life, it is still a view that—like every other social and cultural system, no matter how widespread—emerges out of locatable histories and socialization routines. That is, we have to learn to experience our own interiorities as bounded, and others' interiorities as equally bounded and inaccessible.

*Coordination*, then, refers to the ways that differently-positioned actors achieve a by-degrees mutual orientation to an object or course of action. Such a view is opposed to a widespread (but naïve) "communication"-centered approach that posits a "sharing" of ideas or goals between bounded individuals who are separated by a "gulf" in need of being bridged (Peters 1999:62–66 *ad passim*; cf. also Bauman and Briggs 2003)—a "gulf" that, once posited, is made unbridgeable by its very construction.

Despite the fact that nothing is ever "shared," somehow, things still manage to happen. Sometimes, they even seem like they are, in fact, the same to the participants involved. Yet this felt sameness or sharedness can be misleading, not least because it always involves an erasure of the concrete activity in which people happen to be engaged.

## WATCHING WATCHERS, OR, THE MEDIATION OF VISION

This brings me to the second banal (non-, or quasi-, or semi-) event. I am reminded here of the experience of taking part in the field trip to the

Burnham and Root Roundhouse, an approximately 61,000-square-foot-structure located across 57th Street from the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. Once a 19th century stable and later, in the 1930s, a storehouse for costumes and theater sets, the building now stands empty—at least officially. Yet the structure is far from empty in any straightforward sense: not only is it packed with machinery, discarded display cases acquired from the Field Museum of Natural History, and partially catalogued DuSable collections, but the Roundhouse itself also showed traces of an attempt (possibly several) to artistically repurpose the space, with structures crafted from hay bales and fabric remnants spread throughout the space (see the images on page 16).

In a classic anthropological move, I found myself observing my fellow participants as much as—if not more than—the space. (Let this serve as my confession—Dear fellows: better you know late than never that I was being a creeper. Rest assured that you weren't doing anything weird, just that you happened to be the momentary focus of my disciplinary-occupational mania. Decades of dinner companions can attest to the fact that I have an annoying habit of paying more attention to those at other tables than to the people at my own).

Having also spent the past several years noticing the technological apparatuses through which reality is known, I also couldn't help but attend to how we fellowship participants navigated the space of the Roundhouse: imaging technologies not only capture, record, or archive a perspective at a given moment, but also orient modes of attentiveness to the world. Virtually everyone carried a camera, a mobile device, or both, choosing their paths through the space according to the afforded imaging requirements of their various technological supplements, moving closer or further away from things to be depicted, coming into close contact with or avoiding one another.

These highly visible imaging apparatuses have, historically, been the object of criticism and commentary from a variety of standpoints: some of the more famous examples include critiques, bordering on the jeremiad, of touristic camera-mediated encounters (or lack thereof) with host locales (see Robinson and Picard 2009), or the French philosophical traditions that range from the Barthesian photograph as *memento mori* to the Derridean critique (and its feminist elaboration) in historian Martin Jay's "phallogocularcentrism" (Jay 1993, especially Chapters 8–9). The point, for my purposes here, is that ways of seeing come from somewhere. They are organized according to the ideologically reanalyzed affordances of particular media.

The camera, in this respect, has become one of the more celebrated and apocalyzed technologies of ideological reflection, but it is not my intention to either applaud or denigrate it as an apparatus for (or parasite on) human perception. Rather, the experience of observing others performing the practical, existential labor of navigating space made me more aware of my own habits and fashions of navigating and attending to space, and the technologies by which my spatial-perceptual experiences are shaped.

## THAT IS ALL, FOR NOW

I feel as if I should here offer something—less than an apology, but more than an explanation—for what may appear a lazy meta-analytic move to some (what has been the point, really, of observing other observers?), and to others, a deferral of the more substantive work of providing a definition of what I mean by the term “contested space”—or for that matter, by the terms “contest(ed)” or “space(s).” At the same time, as an anthropologist, I maintain that such moves shed more light on persistent and vexing questions than answers that are grounded in an erasure of the role of the observer-as-participant.

This reflection has been less about the Roundhouse field trip—or for that matter the fellowship year as such—and more a general set of observations regarding the varieties of contested (spatial and/or public) experiences that come to the fore when we attempt to reconsider the taken-for-granted underpinnings of the more banal aspects of our being-with-others-in-the-world. On such a view, contested spaces and spaces of contestation turn out to be a more general feature of interpersonal life. The more visible and widely recognized contestations differ by degree, not by kind, from the banal contested space of interactional coordination. All spaces—not merely a subset thereof—are afforded, hence are made real, by the technologies through which they are rendered knowable and known. By acknowledging that different ways of seeing—which come from somewhere—can work either to facilitate or to burden the work of coordinating different constructions of and perspectives on space, we can move beyond singular, exceptional, or spectacular forms of contestation, and attend to the banal, interactional foundations on which these more spectacular forms of contestation are built. Doing so can open a new space to coordinate with one another differently, a space in which, to coordinate differently, we need first to see differently.

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# TED GORDON

## The Sound of Industry

“The soundscape of the world is changing. Modern man is beginning to inhabit a world with an acoustic environment radically different from any he has hitherto known. These new sounds, which differ in quality and intensity from those of the past, have alerted many researchers to the dangers of an indiscriminate and imperialistic spread of more and larger sounds into every corner of man’s life. Noise pollution is now a world problem. It would seem that the world soundscape has reached an apex of vulgarity in our time, and many experts have predicted universal deafness as the ultimate consequence unless the problem can be brought quickly under control.”

— R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co., 1993

In 1977, and again in 1993, R. Murray Schafer issued a dire warning to the “modern man.” In 1977 this warning was framed in a book project entitled *The Tuning of the World*, recalling a grand tradition of scholars and spiritualists enquiring after ways to “tune” the microcosmic systems of everyday life—human bodies and musical instruments, among others—to match the macrocosmic harmonies of the cosmos. “Modern Man,” it seems, had fallen out of tune. Schafer imagines past iterations of “Man”—primitive man, medieval man, indigenous man—in order to propose models for ways forward, which really would be ways back.

By 1993, a little over twenty-five years after *The Tuning of the World* was published, Schafer was ready to publish a second edition. This time gave it a different title: *The Soundscape*. Less esoteric, more practical, this book shifted the discussion from tuning to preservation, from spirituality to science. Yet the warning remains; the world soundscape, circa 1993, has reached “an apex of vulgarity,” leading to “universal deafness.” And what are the culprits of this vulgarity? The accelerants of late capital: air travel, factories, street noise, telephones. The book jacket calls these producers of an “overabundance of sonic information,” threatening a pollution and toxicity like those found in air, water, and soil.



(If it isn't apparent by now, I have some deep issues with Schafer's argumentation. Who, exactly, is "Man"? What is a "world problem"? Is it possible to know, or describe, or perform, the "lost" soundscapes of the past? To whom is sound "vulgar"? To whom is it necessary to make a living? What is "universal deafness," and why is deafness bad? Is sound really "information," and has the amount of it really changed that much? How have the manufacture and use of microphones and magnetic tape changed the way we hear, or listen? How would the "problem" of sound be "brought under control"? Who would do the controlling, and who would be controlled?)

When the FT/FN/FG group began to think about joining a walking tour around the BP refinery in Whiting, Indiana, I initially thought that this trip would lend itself well to a Schaferian sound walk: a tour of the "vulgar" and "indiscriminate" sounds of industry. The tour was led by Deep Time Chicago, an organization dedicating to examining cultural change in the anthropocene. Their mission statement echoes Schafer's concern with time—a sense of loss that comes with the acceleration of human activity. They argue that "humanity [is] a geological agency, capable of disrupting the earth system and inscribing present modes of existence into deep time." The Earth System, as some humans describe the world, is certainly in a state of disruption at this refinery: it is where tar sands are piped in from Alberta, refined into oil and petroleum coke, and shipped on open freight train cars across America to be burned for energy. In the process, the toxicity of all of these materials pollutes the air, water, and land across which it ventures. Does it also pollute the soundscape?

Schafer would investigate this question by using the most cutting-edge scientific tools available to him at the time: sensitive shotgun microphones, high fidelity tape recorders, and headphones. With these instruments, the soundscape became audible to him in a way that human ears could not observe. In this tradition, I outfitted a hat with a pair of ultra-sensitive cardioid microphones made in Bratislava, Slovakia, by Jonáš Gruska, and recorded their signal into a Sony PCM M-10 digital audio recorder.

Wearing this hat, my hearing was transformed: because of the directionality of the microphones, both of my ears faced front. I heard things from very far away. Even though I had windscreens on the microphone capsules, I still "heard" the wind, a result of the mechanical push of air on the microphone's capsule transducer. I wasn't able to coordinate my ears and eyes; every sound that reached the microphone became apparent to me, flattened. I listened with intention.

Our walk began at a municipal beach in Whiting, where I witnessed surfers, in full wetsuits with hoods, gloves, and boots, bobbing on their longboards in Lake Michigan, waiting for waves. The sound of the lake was calming: the waves and wind were overpowering. If I didn't have sight I would have not have seen the large refinery in the background, looming. A spectrogram of the sound file created by my recording shows the full-frequency, periodic spectrum of these waves: calming noise, almost evenly distributed along the spectrum of human hearing.



Left: Sound Hat: Sony PCM M-10 Recorder; LOM Instruments Uši Microphones (photo by Ted Gordon).



Bottom: Surfing in Whiting, Indiana (photo by Ted Gordon).

Walking around the refinery, I noticed that the sound of these waves was echoed in the full-frequency noises of hydraulic and pneumatic pipes, moving coolant and other fluids around the gigantic factory campus.

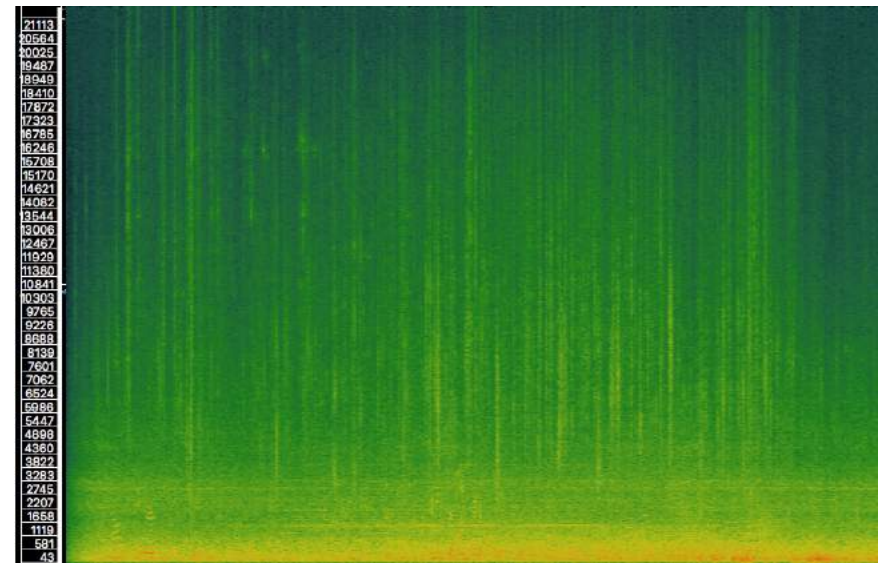
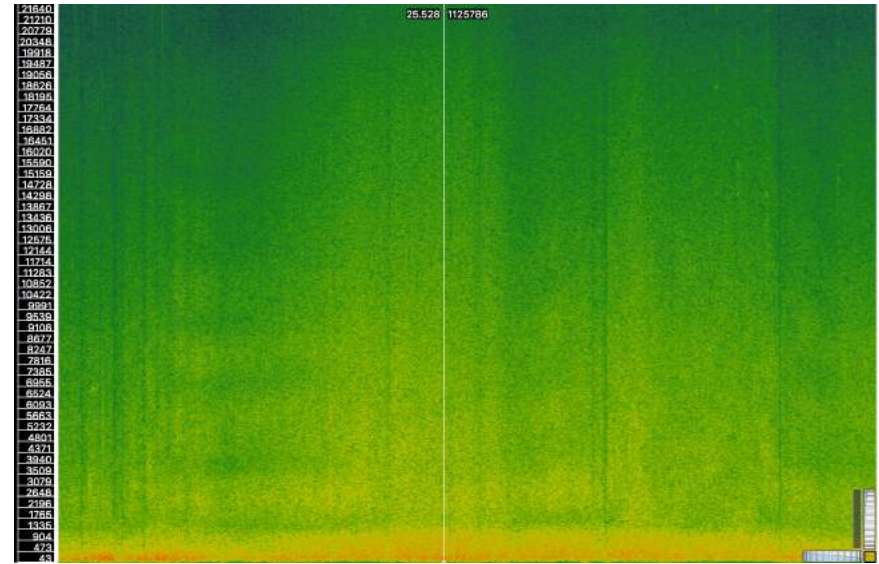
One of these pipes was leaking. The periodic drops of water on metal percussed in a way that differed dramatically from the long, sustained sounds of waves, escaping steam, distant machinery. This didn't sound so much like noise "pollution" to me—what would I have heard otherwise?

This leak, I later realized, was the source of real pollution—leaking some unknown industrial fluid into the land, where it could evaporate as gas into the air, eventually recycled in rain.

The tour guide for our walk around the refinery, Thomas Frank, admonished us about the fact that Chicagoans don't usually encounter this infrastructure. While Chicago relies on the energy, asphalt, bitumen, petcoke, and other petroleum products produced in Whiting, it is invisible to them. I wondered: what audible traces are left by this pollution as well? My experience on the walk was, surprisingly to me, frustration—that I couldn't get close enough to record anything, that I had to rely on chance encounters with leaks and steam valves to hear pollution. And days later, listening back and analyzing the audio I was able to record on the site, I was stuck by its similarity to the waves of Lake Michigan: (seemingly) eternal, loud, periodic, calming.

Is this a form of pollution as well? An affective pollution, lulling me into sound-induced calmness?

Schafer is still in my thoughts: there is certainly noise pollution, but I don't find it vulgar. And that is perhaps what's most disturbing about it.



Top: The Sound of Surfing, visualized in a spectrogram (image by Ted Gordon).

Bottom: The Sound of Leaking: Slow Toxicity (image by Ted Gordon).

# DEVIN MAYS

## Field Trip Proposal: Cottage Grove (Between 73rd and 60th Streets)

Description/Background: After visiting the carillon there seemed to be some interest in continuing with the theme of space and spirituality. We volleyed back and forth possible spaces to visit. Out of that exchange, we decided it would be best to visit a space that seemed to be somewhat the opposite of Rockefeller Chapel: in scale, economy, and community.

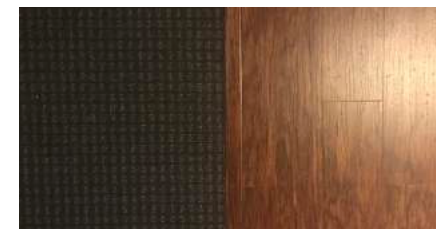
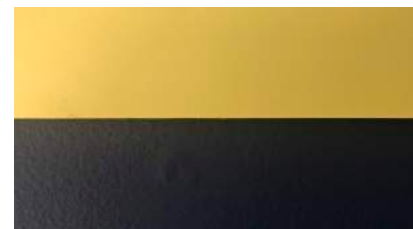
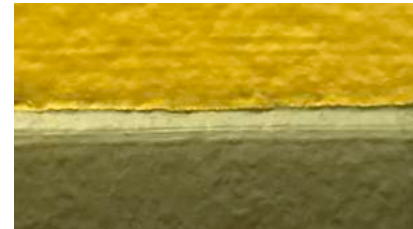
That discussion brought us to the idea of doing a walk down Cottage Grove. I briefly spoke about my practice and previous works where I would walk from 73rd and St. Lawrence to the Logan Center. On these walks, I would pass a number of churches of a variety of denominations and architectural scales. I thought it might be a nice idea for us to simply walk down Cottage Grove, taking in the landscape of activated spaces and places of worship. In our previous visit to the carillon in the Rockefeller Chapel, we did a vertical climb to reach our destination. In this proposed visit, we would go on a horizontal journey, taking in the acoustic and visual language of a Sunday morning.

### an ellipses

(excerpt)

My eyes are closed. The sound of car radios, accelerating engines, and other vibrant noises invade my sanctuary. My eyes are open. I stare at the ceiling and try to identify the distant yet familiar invasion of sound. I recognize the muffled bass. The fading music mimics the precision of a DJ's transition. As one song slowly ends, another one takes its place. I hear a car horn. The politeness of the horn only grows more agitated as time passes. Short sonnets turn into long-winded ballads. The horn stops. I hear a voice. It's suppressed but strong—similar to the ongoing orchestration of car radios. The voice moves on.

My day has begun. As my feet touch the ground, the wooden floor creaks. I look at the reflection on the mirrored door across the room. I approach the door and enter a large closet of collectibles. A stack of folded towels provides contrast to the muted white surface of the shelves. A variety of autobiographies, novels, and other books are neatly placed next to it. Wool and cotton hats are hung above an assortment of personal hygiene products. Short- and long-sleeved shirts hang on a steel rod that extends the length of the closet. Two dark wicker chests sit next to each other on the floor, and



I am very interested in the walls and floors of the historical DuSable Museum. In most large institutional archives, white walls and muted floors give prized collections their undivided attention. In the DuSable Museum it seems the colorful walls and textured floors are just as important as the objects being displayed on them. It makes the collection feel personal and familial, similar to what one might find in a living room or church basement (photos and description by Devin Mays).

a large-scale painting wrapped in plastic is leaning against the wall. I grab a hoodie and prepare for the day's journey.

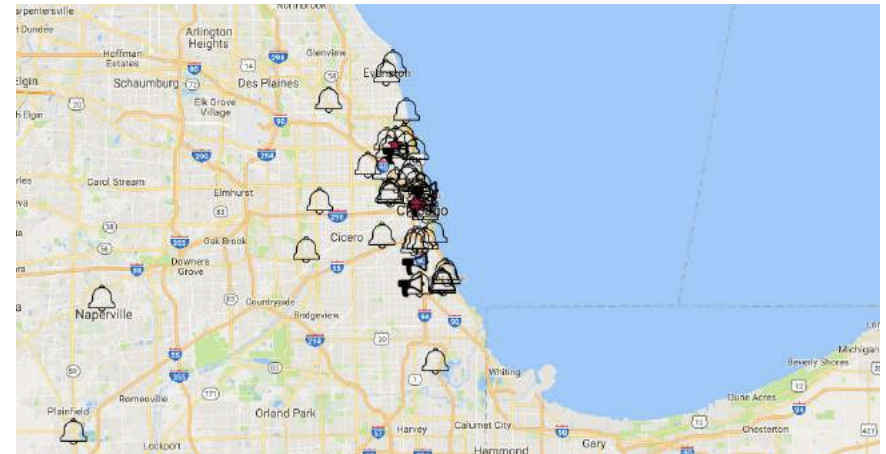
An iron gate covers the door. I unlatch the silver padlock and open the retractable barricade. I step outside on the tarred surface, walk down a flight of wooden steps, and head east. The neighborhood is a grid of modest homes, each one practically the same color and size. A large building bearing a cross breaks the cemented and brick-layered pattern. As I pass the building I notice a marquee out front with a message of hope and healing. The words aren't punctuated. I can't decipher its tone. I don't know if I should be apprehensive or enthusiastic. I continue my journey east.

Along the way, I notice colorful debris scattered across the ground. Small green cardboard boxes wrapped in transparent cellophane are sprinkled throughout the landscape. Red and yellow plastic bags are sitting on the grass and sidewalk. Glass bottles of all sizes, both fractured and un-fractured, are camouflaged on the cement and grass. I walk underneath a pair of shoes draped over telephone wire, pass an array of plywood on windows and trash can-lined alleys before reaching the end of the residential street. Just north of the busy intersection is an empty lot filled with some of the same colorful debris. Next to the green pasture is another building bearing a cross. This building is much smaller than the last. Instead of a marquee with a message, there's a portrait of a smiling, curly-haired man in a blue suit. I head north.

# DANIEL DEHAAN

## On Exactitude in Bells

As I approached Rockefeller Chapel, I could hear its carillon ringing out above me and I was reminded of a story Luis Borges once told of a king who demanded his cartographers to create a map of his empire with such exacting detail that it eventually covered his "empire, and [...] coincided point for point with it." Since the installment of the chapel's carillon during the summer of 1932, many of other church bells around Chicago have been replaced with modern load speaker alternatives. Knowing that above me hung many massive, real bells, I paused for a moment and listened from the sidewalk below trying to discern if I could hear, or feel their realness.



Map of bell towers in Chicago.

I don't believe that the body is required for something to be real, meaningful, honest, or anything for that matter, but when I step back and observe the spaces that I spend most of my life existing within, my body is required for very little of it. Often, my body simply serves to transport me from one location to another location, and while I am in transport I do my best to completely remove myself from my physical surroundings by shoving some earbuds in and thumbing through the endless content available on my iPhone

As I commuted from the north side of Chicago down to Hyde Park, I enjoyed the anonymity and invisibility that living with 2.705 million other people affords me, but as I walked into Rockefeller Chapel I couldn't stop myself from being pulled back to the physical moment I was in. The doors were heavy,

I felt the weight of my body as I leveraged it to push my way in. The stone floors and walls amplified the movements of my body making me quickly yank the earbuds from my ears so I could better monitor and control my bodies sonic presence. Then as our tour guide lead us up the extremely narrow spiral staircase that winds its way up over the false ceiling of the chapel and further still to the bell tower, I had to pause from time-to-time to breath and hope for my growing nausea to subside. While I agree, this doesn't exactly sound like a pleasurable experience, somehow it was. It was thrilling to have my body so undeniably present in this moment.

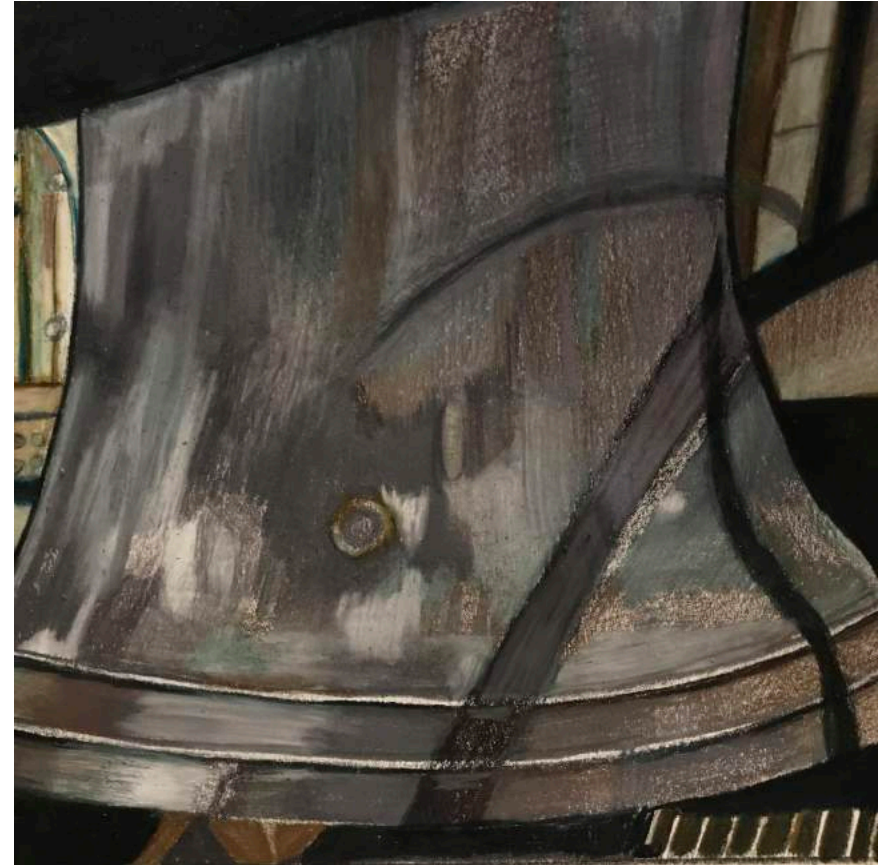
After a tour of the carillon instrument itself, we got to witness the effort it required of the performers to move all the levers that struck the bells and experience the sensation of the whole tower being filled with the vibrations emanating from the bells themselves. The sensations filled my body.

When I reflect back on our field trip I wonder about how the corporeal experience of a thing changes that thing for me. What meanings are conveyed differently? What meanings are lost? Is there any true difference in hearing these bells announce the hours of the day as opposed to a large speaker pretending to be a tolling bell? As we alter our current spaces and move into new ones I wonder where and what we will do with our bodies. Will we someday discard our bodies and fully migrate to a digital existence? Will we create new bodies for ourselves? Or perhaps, we will only momentarily deemphasize our bodies before we again lust for their presence in our experience of life and we'll begin the process of scratching away our digital maps to reveal the originalities behind them.

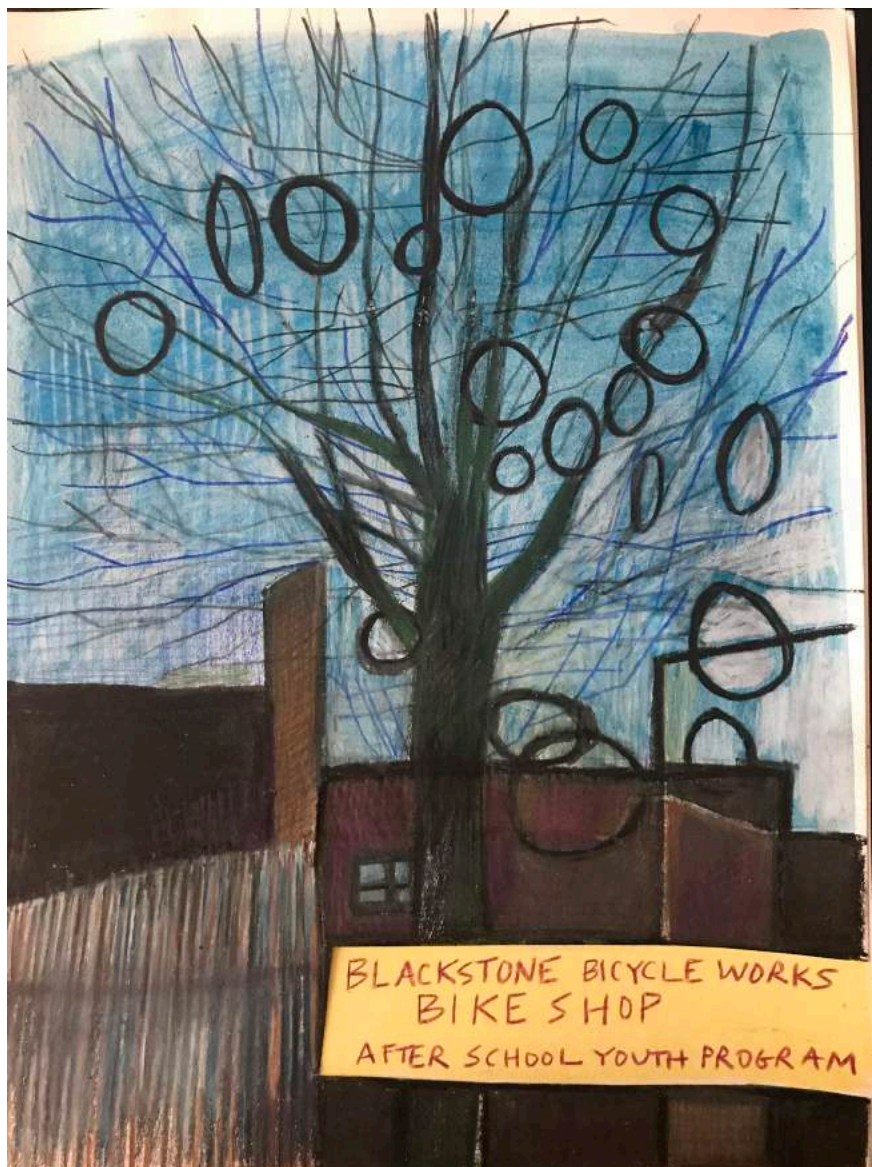
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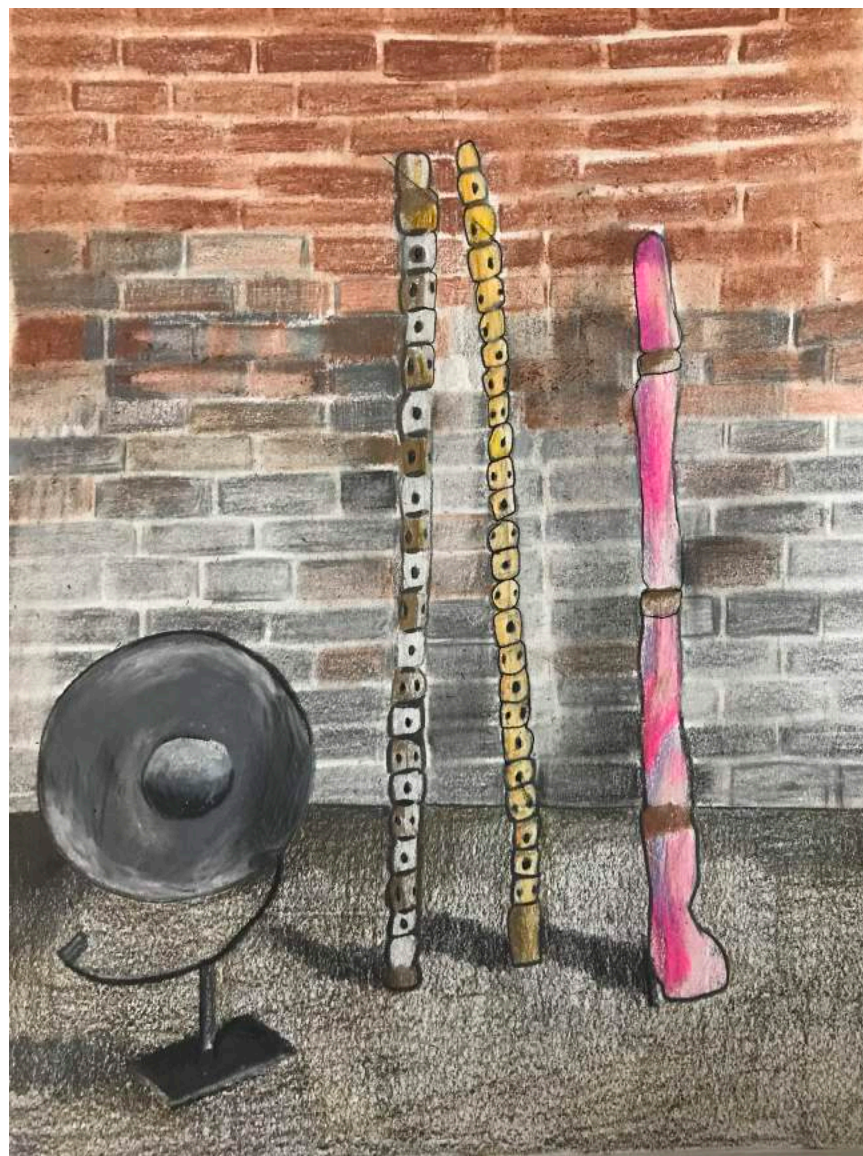
## JESSIE MOTT



Rockefeller Memorial Chapel bell (artwork by Jessie Mott).



Blackstone Bicycle Works (artwork by Jessie Mott).



DuSable Museum Roundhouse (artwork by Jessie Mott).

# FRANCES LIGHTBOUND

## Sounding Out Space

Standing immediately behind the carillonneur in Rockefeller Chapel's playing cabin, 271 steps above the main chapel, I'm aware that this is not the intended position for an audience member. With bells above and below us, chimes cascade awkwardly over one another—each tone struggling to escape the architecture before the next comes tumbling out. Due to its physical size, its incorporation into the building itself, and its sheer dynamic range, listening to the carillon from any position is an inherently spatial experience. From here, I feel acutely aware of the weight and materiality of the enormous bells, their lumbering swing sending reverberations through bodies and stone in a way that seems to highlight the containment of their bulk inside the stone tower.

The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Carillon at the University of Chicago is the single largest musical instrument ever built. Constructed in the 1930s along with its sister instrument for the Riverside Church in New York City, it features 72 cast bronze bells, the largest of which weighs 18.5 tons. The Rockefeller Carillon's design was also noteworthy for the placement of its bells, the largest of which were originally situated below the carillonneur in order to ensure that the smaller bells, located above the playing cabin, would still be audible to the player. This arrangement was switched during a 2006–2008 restoration so as to privilege audience member over performer.

Heard from inside the playing cabin, the chorus of bells is overlaid with an almost overwhelming clatter of wooden keys, pedals and mechanisms. Though the structure of the carillon mechanizes the labor of manual bell ringing, there's a prominent soundtrack of physical effort on behalf of player and instrument—something that falls away as the sound escapes the bell tower. The chimes outside are effortless in comparison to the claustrophobic soundscape of the playing cabin. The peels dissipate across the University of Chicago campus, across the neighborhood; there's a sort of spatial dislocation that happens inside the bell tower, up high, feeling the sound in your body and thinking of it spreading out across the city. I think of the authority that goes along with playing this colossal instrument—effectively a public address system that can't be tuned out. I wonder if anyone outside of the chapel is curious about the single notes the carillon player plays to show us how the instrument works. I wonder if anyone complains about the noise.

As an artist interested in space and architecture, I begin to realize that I think about sound less than I should. How does sound shape a space (and how does space shape a sound)? Can sound transport the quality, materiality, shape, and essence of one space to another? As the sound of the carillon travels, it surely transmits something of the building that houses it.



Top: Light inside Rockefeller Chapel staircase (photo by Frances Lightbound).

Bottom: Carillon bell-cranks, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Carillon (photo by Frances Lightbound).

Visiting the Roundhouse at the DuSable Museum, there are murmurs throughout the group about how fantastic the building would be for performances. I wonder how the enormous carillon would sound if it were somehow transported to that space. Bells stacked and suspended at the center of the rotunda; an audience arranged in the round at the very perimeter of the room, as if pressed to the outer limits of the architecture by the sound radiating outward. A sort of expansive claustrophobia. What would be played? What qualities might it take on thanks to the specificities of the building? What qualities would the building take on as a result of the sound—on the inside, and out?

I think of our recent visit to Pullman, and wonder what might be played there—imagining the bells of the carillon echoing inside the cavernous, disused factory complex, peels reverberating through the boarded up windows and red Queen Anne-style brickwork. Or perhaps the instrument would take up residence inside the market hall: a shell of a building standing, stage-like, at the center of Market Square. Perhaps, played loudly enough in the roofless structure, the sound would carry back to Hyde Park; acquiring on its way out a dent or distortion that speaks somehow of a column or rafter, of brick or damp wood or rusted steel.

During our field trips I think often of how meaning is made, preserved, accumulated and transmitted (or obscured) in built spaces—of who frames it, and how, and to what end. I imagine the carillon acting as a sort of architectural docent, filling spaces with sound in order to reveal some unseen aspect of their character. The information delivered by this essentially impartial tour guide would be shaped by the physical composition and form of the building, oblivious to history and social context, but ready to be personally experienced by a listener. A kind of subjective sonar system for architecture, playing on the immersive abstraction of sound to encourage a new experience of any given space.

University of Chicago, could I please borrow your carillon?



Top: Decaying signage, Pullman Historic District (photo by Frances Lightbound).

Bottom: Pullman Factory Complex (photo by Frances Lightbound).



# MICHAEL RADO

## Excessive Objects

**A number of universities and undergraduate institutions make use of carillons as part of their tradition.<sup>1</sup>**

In the middle of the last century there was probably no town in Belgium more frequented than the ancient and honorable collegiate town of Louvain. Its university has always had a splendid reputation, and at this day can boast of some of the most learned men in Europe. Its town hall, a miracle

of the thirteenth-century Gothic, is one of the most remarkable buildings of that age. The oak carving in its churches, especially that of Ste. Gertrude, is of unsurpassed richness, and attests the enormous wealth formerly lavished by the Louvainiers upon their churches. The library is the best kept and most interesting in Belgium, and the set of bells in St. Peter's Church, if not the finest, can at least boast of having for many years been presided over by the greatest carillonneur and one of the most truly illustrious composers of the eighteenth century, Matthias van den Gheyn.<sup>2</sup>



A traditional manual carillon is played by striking a keyboard—the stick-like keys of which are called batons—with the fists, and by pressing the keys of a pedal keyboard with the feet.<sup>3</sup>

Proponents of the picturesque such as Thomas Carlyle and Augustus Pugin took a critical view of industrial society and portrayed pre-industrial medieval society as a golden age.<sup>4</sup>

**Let us hope that the time is coming when our bell hangers will get some good mathematician to tell them a few of the ordinary laws of mechanics. Until then, deans and chapters may sigh and seek in vain to make their bells work and keep their towers from rocking to pieces.<sup>5</sup>**

**...where something is put to use, our concern subordinates itself to the 'in-order-to' which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we just stare at the hammer-thing, and the more we just seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly it is encountered as that which it is—equipment.<sup>6</sup>**



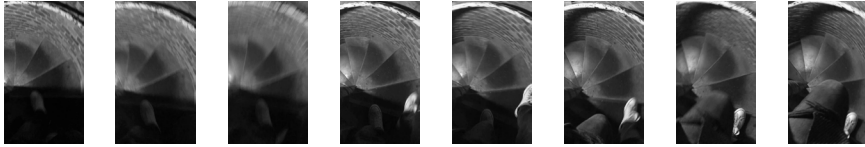
...JUST AS THE PREACHER WAS ONCE THE POPULAR INSTRUCTOR OF THE PEOPLE WHEN GOOD BOOKS WERE SCARCE.

...IT WAS LESS OBVIOUS FOR A CITY GOVERNMENT TO SPEND CONSIDERABLE RESOURCES ON LOCAL TIME INDICATION AND ITS MUSICAL EMBELLISHMENT.

...THE MUSIC SCENE HAD GRADUALLY SHIFTED FROM OUTDOORS TO INDOORS WITH THE EMERGENCE OF ARISTOCRATIC SALONS, OPERA HOUSES AND CONCERT HALLS.<sup>7</sup>

The keys mechanically activate levers and wires that connect to metal clappers that strike the inside of the bells, allowing the performer on the bells, or carillonneur/carillonist to vary the intensity of the note according to the force applied to the key. The keys

mechanically activate levers and wires that connect to metal clappers that strike the inside of the bells, allowing the performer on the bells, or carillonneur/carillonist to vary the intensity of the note according to the force applied to the key.<sup>8</sup>



Open yonder little door at the corner of the nave, and begin the dark ascent; before you have gone far you will sign for the trim staircase that leads down to the vaults. Enter the windy, dirty, rotten room where the poor old bells that cannot die are allowed to mildew and crack for want of a little attention, until they ring the tower down in the angry resonance of their revenge.<sup>9</sup>

**BELLS  
WERE  
NOT  
MADE  
FOR  
TOWERS,  
BUT  
TOWERS  
FOR  
BELLS.  
10**

**The lower classes also no longer actively listened to the carefree and noncommittal music of the bells. They needed to focus their attention and energy on the fight for survival, and when they wanted to escape from everyday miseries, they preferred to seek consolation in drinking and paid sexual pleasure rather than in free tower music.<sup>11</sup>**

...it was not so much the musical expression of good citizenship and democracy in an urban context, but rather an expression of piety and the pursuit of beauty in a spiritual or intellectual setting...<sup>12</sup>

**With full evocative power, Hugo describes the tolling of the church towers of Paris on Easter morning. His hero, the hunchback bell-ringer Quasimodo, loves his bells as if they were human beings: 'He loved them, he caressed them, he talked to them, he understood them. (...) It was these [bells], however, which had deafened him: but mothers are often fondest of the child which has caused them the greatest pain.<sup>13</sup>**



**You could imagine things, second, as what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects—their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems.<sup>14</sup>**

What of the intersection or in-between state of Heidegger's *present-at-hand* and *ready-to-hand*, whereas the object of desire has transcended some sort of authentic use—in this case, the original intent of the bell tower, for use of conveying time, promoting civil unity, or as a representation of Godly authority—but also has not formally transferred its meta-physical state into one of brokenness or non-use, so that we are not fully aware of its thingness, or of its composite parts, but only of its inauthentic value—not quite signal but not symbol either. The role of the object, a mechanized signifier of campus authority, in the supposed intellectual oasis embedded in Chicago's South Side. What relevance does this thing play to the surrounding landscape of systemic isolation? How does this

object, towering above the ground, unify the community? Is there a relevant and proportional relationship between the tower-and-bell and the world-and-man, as two interrelated operators or actors—but who encompasses whom? If the tower exists for the bell, does the world exist only for man? As the bell, the existence of man or the signifier of time, spatial relativism, civilization. There is a nod to Bryant and "flat ontology." There is a relationship between the phrases "moral ground" and "belief structures" and "ethical foundation" and their metaphorical or etymological allusion to property and ownership, of delineations in space, of a line in the sand, one side of which is moral and true, the other which is amoral and false—a symbolic allusion to otherness, separateness, of a binary separation. What is the relationship here to a grounding, to the man-world dichotomy?

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# NATHAN TEDESCHI

## A Soliloquy on Public Transportation

A Red Line trip takes somewhere between my-seat-is-uncomfortable and just-enough-time-for-something-odd-to-happen. On my 50-minute ride to the South Side, I am never left without something thought provoking. I recall the group's last discussion. What is public? What creates an identity? And perhaps most importantly, where does community fit in? I watch as the mood on the train slowly changes, not just in feeling, but in timbre. The audience of the Red Line shifts from touring suburbanites, to young city dwellers, to longtime veterans making their way home after a 12-hour shift. I find myself making a game out of guessing where people are going to get off based on their appearance. A little judgmental perhaps, but you might be surprised how much you can tell by just looking at how someone looks and carries themselves in public. You know who's in it for the long haul and who's anxious to make their dinner date. Maybe they just got off work late and you see them lean their head back to rest for 30 minutes, trying to stay warm on a winter night.

The taxonomy of the red line is a never-ending mix of oddities and average. Most live in their virtual world, striving to catch up on the world outside this metal tube, but a moment's glance reveals so much more. There are the first timers who stare at the map over and over as if the stop is going to suddenly change its location. The crazy lady yelling sexual obscenities of all kinds at people as they walk in. The guy who comes through early Sunday morning, with the same speech about needing money for food. Or the homeless guy from downtown who's always dressed in some crazy getup of trash and clothes. Of course, there are all the business women, and the fathers with their noisy kids, and the elderly just trying to get home, but these people become the backdrop for theater of the public realm. The train is a contested public space for all walks of city life. No one is turned away, and everyone accepts that sometimes, crazy shit just happens. Whether it's morning rush hour or 4 a.m. on a Saturday, there's always something to experience on the Red Line.

Public space is at an all-time premium, as it quickly moves from being physical to virtual. I am sure you can find videos of all the people from the train online, and yet there's always something missing on the screen. It's what you don't see beyond the camera lens that you miss out on. You don't get to appreciate the hedge fund executive making a funny face at the kid next to him. Or the pregnant woman who gives up her seat to an elderly man. These things can only exist in the real public realm. The train is one of the last few bastions of public life. When you take a moment to look around, you can find the people that make the city great. Even though bad interactions occur, if there was ever a place where someone would stand up to protect a stranger, it's the train. We all become unspoken friends for the brief time we share, and that's what makes those long rides worth it.

## Excerpts from Field Notes on “Contested Spaces”

### PUBLIC DISCUSSION AT A PRIVATE ROUNDTABLE

At your favorite coffee table, you wait for everyone to arrive. Of course, you got here first, but then it was an hour's trip on the train. As you sip your coffee you enjoy a moment of reprieve from the daily grind and think about something other than work. “What was the topic again? Contested public space?” You give a moment to thinking on that phrase and come back to see that most of the group has gathered for the discussion. Until now no one seemed to realize just how diverse this group really was. A small cross-section of society sits before you: an artist, a teacher, a father, an immigrant, and so much more. How curious at a time of so much divisiveness, that this group was able to come together with a common goal. A bit of hope is found as the group begins to discuss what that phrase really means. You all agree to seek out some forgotten sections of the city in the hopes of shedding a little light on otherwise obfuscated spaces. (Location: Unreferenced Coffee House).

### CAPITALISM AND FAITH

*If it's way out here, then why should I care?* You ponder to yourself as the car pulls in about 20 minutes from the city. You see the shimmering Loop in the distance and turn to be confronted with a monstrosity of industry. This is your first time at an oil refinery. The guide explains each section as you pass them on your two-hour walk around the whole facility. He talks about the horrific processes being facilitated anonymously by machinery. As you marvel for a moment at the beauty of the architecture, you start to understand the problem. You could never have imagined that this kind of pollution could be going on in the United States, let alone just down the highway from your apartment. The news had dismissed the threats these refineries supposedly were causing. That old oil spill was supposed to be cleaned up. You had believed that these things were fine and no big deal, but now you aren't so sure. As you return to the vast expanse of high rises, you notice for the first time a bit of dust clinging to each one. (Location: Whiting BP Oil Refinery).

### A “RELIGIOUS” EXPERIENCE

Back behind the pulpit of the Rockefeller Chapel exists a small access way to an unassuming stairwell. As you are warned by the guide of the long trek ahead, a sense of grandeur envelops you as you rise into the lofted ceiling above. The carillon player begins to lead you through small corridors, across catwalks and up a winding stair that seems to never end. A sigh of relief is let out from the group as you pass through a door into a room in a room. Inside you find what looks like the strangest piano you have ever seen. The player explains how it works and mentions that you can go outside onto the parapet. A cool breeze cuts across the sound-filled air as the carillon rings out across the campus, telling all that you are up here. As you are confronted with the never-ending expanse of the city, you become reverent for a moment, consumed with the master of industry's legacy. The cry of the Rockefeller's chimes below calls back to the titans of capitalism. (Location: Rockefeller Memorial Chapel).

### CHURCH O' PLENTY

Ominously looming in the distance, a ring carries out across the town. Although you have never been, you imagine the large crowd of people filing into the incensed space for their weekly ritual. The church dominates your view as you pass it on the way to your favorite coffee shop. You decide to take a different way home after grabbing your mocha to avoid the crowds. You notice this boulevard is slightly more crowded than usual. Before now you had always thought these buildings were just old and abandoned, just another struggling area on the South Side. But now you see that you were wrong, as the whole street is lit by faith from a never-ending stream of worshipers. Almost as in a dream, you make your way around the corner, unsure that it really happened. As you walk the same street to work the next day, it is hard to imagine the liveliness that briefly existed. (Location: Cottage Grove Boulevard, Chicago, IL).

# SHERWIN OVID

## Surfing the Licks of an Eternal Flame

We entered into the industrial zone of the British Petroleum power plant with Deep Time Chicago to walk the entire parameter of its footprint. Calumet had been home Standard Oil Company built by John D. Rockefeller in 1889 until merging with BP in the 1990's. Today it has transitioned production from crude oil to processing tar sands. In off white, rotund cylindrical tanks bore the insignias of a Promethean flambeau and the interlocking rays made of chromatic petals of lime green and cadmium lemon assembled into the Helios. Their logos assert a divine authority. The alphanumeric codes of their chemical contents are esoteric pictographs coupled with a diamond quadrant in primary colors. X dissected the spaces between numbers and symbols that rippled in the glaring white heat. However imperceptible the graphic semiotics appeared, the danger remained legible. Vector flames, skull and bones, and broken vials were communicable symbols accompanied by an array of cryptic signs. The myth of our secular society is that we have abandoned myth. Our penchant for idol worship is typified in the merger of political leaders and CEOs. They have legislated the flame to burn eternally. Feeding the hunger of petroleum gods is at the expense of our survival where solutions to our environmental tipping point require more human sacrifice to the perpetual flame.

The holding tanks echoed the fashion of Romanesque domes, with buoyancy that disguised their enormous volume. Their ascending walls housed the likes of benzene, sulfur dioxides, nitrogen oxides, silica, formaldehyde, mercury and a pantheon of other diabolic cocktails. Near the facilities discarded remains of concrete slabs lay submerged between prairie grass frozen in archeological postures. The tawny rebar dying the amalgamated blocks the color of oxblood. Red oxide sullied the stale coats of titanium white the color of painted deserts where gaskets leaked. A whiff of sulfuric byproducts during our trek around the refinery was hijacked by memories of living on the Gulf Coast. Daily travels through, Exxon Mobil, Shell, Dow/DuPont, Saudi Aramco, and Marathon Petroleum as a teenager had seeped into my physical location of Whiting, IN. Many of my childhood friends lived on the fence line where often our throats stung after five minutes of basketball. Slowly we acclimated to the stench. My family of Caribbean immigrants was all too familiar with this industrial juggernaut both as employees and resisters. This industry dominated our municipality by concealing the chemical exposure of their output by green washing their public relations. What are the unforeseen effects that await Marktown and Whiting? Recently I narrowly escaped the fate of this blowback leaving Houston weeks before hurricane Harvey descended.



This page: Artwork by Sherwin Ovid.

We braced against the wind's velocity and took refuge behind the public bathroom as a buffer against the abrasive currents. Fear of fine particles drifting off the black mountains of petcoke were not an impediment for surfers riding the aquatic swells. From a distance they floated across the horizon of steel and fire. A labyrinth of soft and hard wire formed a convoluted mass with gothic ornamentation as a backdrop of the clad surfers armored in wetsuits. The frigid elements abrade against their pale faces insulated by the oval coil of black neoprene. One is forced to reflect on global economic flows and its attendant metaphor of water, not as metaphor, nor cause and effect, but co-constitutive phenomena of the wave. Market forces automated through algorithms produce a reality across the digital and physical domains. Data points spread over graphs illustrate economic cycles of boom and bust as a rhythmic occurrence or wave. (Hito Steyerl makes reference to Bruce Lee's adage to "be like water" in *Liquid Inc.*) Flow charts are churning the winds at higher speeds while storms wreak havoc producing fodder for new investments. We are adrift in this deluge, saturated in the fluidity of information cascading from crystal screens while traders surf in anticipation of peak waves.

An ominous drone from the factory filled the air with an anxiety that was sustained. We drifted along a road inhospitable to pedestrian travel albeit shattered with the littered traces of drunken spirits and debauchery. The sudden encounter with a roadside memorial seemed to punctuate the tiresome string of empty glass and plastic debris. It was imbedded with the tender semblance of care and consolation of death that seemed to all but evaporate from this industrial zone of sparse habitation.

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Artwork by Sherwin Ovid.

# JAVAIRIA SHAHID

## Reading the Calumet Landscape

What makes the Calumet region unique? Some would argue that it is the exceptional biodiversity of the area. Calumet is one of the most diverse landscapes in the country, habitat for rare flora and fauna, but it is also one of the most geographically variable, boasting of hardwood forests and tall prairie alike. Others would favor Calumet's historical contribution to industry. Calumet has been home to the nation's steel, petro-chemical and transportation industry since the 1980s. The landscape even today is dominated by the sights and sounds of heavy industry. However, in the last few decades, these are now surrounded by natural parks and landscape preserves. Heavy industry—and its attendant ills of industrial modernity—and environmental restoration projects and pristine lakes and prairie sit side-by-side, perhaps like nowhere else in the country. The Calumet is also a unique Anthropocene landscape. This becomes obvious not just in the sharp contrast the landscape offers, but has also become inscribed in the bodies of the community that calls this region home (petcoke damage, rising cancer and asthma rates). Calumet's diversity and history makes it an urgent site of contestation, as has become apparent in light of recent events (petcoke case, Koch brothers move out, community activism, Deep Time Chicago walk). We often notice things when they break down, stop working, cause problems. But perhaps more poignantly, Calumet stands for much more than recent events: it forces us to slow down and think about the onward march of industry and progress, by drawing our attention to the poison our bodies imbibe—the petcoke air we breathe, the poisoned water we drink, the venomous powder coating the landscape. Calumet's landscape and everything within it is a site of contestation, which makes it a unique Anthropocene landscape.

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Anna Tsing draws our attention to how we must review how we read landscapes and pay attention to the overlaid arrangements of human and non-human living spaces. Calumet reads like a landscape of power and profit, but also the promise of the future of progress and prosperity. Moving toward this idea of prosperity, of jobs and disposable income, asks for unfettered ambition, and the willingness to become a participant in acts of great destruction. Hopes of the futures are suffused with the misery/death/destruction of the now. Jobs vs. air to breathe.



Top: Section views and rendering of the unbuilt Ford Calumet Environmental Center, designed 2008 (artwork and renderings by Studio Gang).

Bottom: Steel mills at work at the mouth of the Calumet River, 1939, courtesy the Charles W. Cushman Photograph Collection, Indiana University Archives (photo by Charles W. Cushman).

# ABOUT THE FELLOW- SHIP



# ABOUT FIELD TRIP / FIELD NOTES / FIELD GUIDE

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Beginning in the fall and meeting on a monthly basis over the course of an academic year, graduate students from the participating institutions partake in and self-initiate a series of seminars, expeditions, lectures, readings, and discussions. A series of field trips, initiated by the consortium Fellows, explores the proximities and intersections of the Fellows' distinctive approaches to research and practice. A "field guide" produced each spring collects and presents the Fellows' research over the course of the year, highlighting and examining their distinctive approaches to research and practice while on site and working "in the field."

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