Call For Papers
Responding to Site Specificity
The Comparative Media Arts Journal Issue 7

Issue 7 of the Comparative Media Arts Journal examines responses towards art engagement with land and space. Artworks, performances, music, sound art, and other mediums of art are often associated with the spaces designed to contain them, the theatre (Moving Image and Theatre), the concert hall, the museum or gallery. Yet, these institutional spaces curate art with specific intentions; imposing restrictions on artists and their process. These spaces also call for audiences to engage in specific ways, by sitting down to watch and listen or walk around without touching the art. Institutional spaces designed for Art restrict the people who can create/participate to those who subject themselves to the space’s confines.

The development of Art exploring land and space outside institutional confines has been a large component on the exploration of new practices of art making, incorporation of space utilization, and new methods of critique through artists like Ai Weiwei, Guillermo Gomez Pena, Coco Fusco, and Yayoi Kusama. Site Specificity designates the intentions of space in relation to the art created within the space itself. Site Specific practices address the exchange between artwork/performance and space.

Earthworks, or Land Art, was developed by American artist Robert Smithson, who used photography in relation to sculpture and land, during the emergence of this form of site-specific work in the 1960s and 1970s. At this time, visual and sound artists began to look at land as a form of expression and another avenue for their art. For sound artists, it was another way for these artists to expand and push boundaries for musique concrete, a technique created by Pierre Schaeffer where sounds are recorded and then mixed and manipulated to separate it from the original sound source. The sounds taken from these sites are divorced from their sources as the goal is not to replicate nature, but to achieve a sense of aesthetics.

When writing about Site Specificity in Art Creation, a few concerns come up considering the discourse surrounding Land. What are the power dynamics being addressed in the art and space? Is the artwork/performance in dialogue with the space they inhabit? If so, what is the discourse created through the spatial interactivity? If not, where do we see the disconnection? On whose land are the artwork being presented on and how does the artwork/performance acknowledge the land’s history? How are the audience situated in space and how do they engage with the artwork/performance?

We welcome all forms of medium engagement and approach to these topics of Site Specificity, whether a critical response to an artwork/performance, a critique of Site Specificity as a practice, or a cross-cultural understanding of Land and where Site Specificity could potentially be implemented in order to enhance the histories or to bring awareness to a public consciousness.

Subjects may explore but are not limited to:

- Site Specificity in Curatorial Practices
- Site Specificity in Performance
- Audience and Site Specificity
- Site Specificity and Indigeneity
- Site Specificity and Ethics
- Sonic Influences and Land
- Site Specific vs Site Responsive

We Invite Contributions including:

- Scholarly Papers
- Case Studies
- Exhibition Reviews
- Performance Reviews
- Documentation of Works in Progress
- Documentation of Developed Artist Projects

Submission Process:

- Submissions should be no less than 500 words and no more than 5000 words
- Submissions should follow Chicago Style in text citation
- Submission Deadline: October 18th, 2019
- Papers submitted past the deadline will not be considered
- Please submit your paper in MS-Word (*.doc or *.docx) format.
- Please email submission to cma_journal@sfu.ca with the subject heading ‘Attn: Issue 7’