



Figure 1. *Indeterminate Hikes +*, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Photograph by EcoArtTech. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

Ecological Awareness and the Mobile Landscape

INDETERMINATE HIKES +

by

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ECOLOGY OF SCREENS

Mobile media tend to be used as tools of rapid communication and consumerism, to get us what we want and where we want as quickly as possible. The obstacles posed by embodiment in place – the simple fact that our bodies can't be everywhere at once – are dismantled by data's global flow, breaking down long-time boundaries between public and private, natural and digital, mobility and location. Mobile networked technologies enable a constant "everywhere" accessibility beyond physical location, enabling us to work, exchange, and consume no matter where we are.

Both media theorists and environmental thinkers express concern about new modes of behavior that have arisen alongside ubiquitous computing. For many cultural critics, the experience of place has disappeared

ABSTRACT

Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (of the art-theory collaborative EcoArt-Tech) explain the theoretical, artistic, and cultural contexts of their Android/iPhone app, Indeterminate Hikes+. Weaving media studies, environmental theory, psychogeography, and conceptual art history together, their discussion investigates how artists can re-engineer ubiquitous computing devices to nurture a sense of environmental wonder. In this capacity, artists can extend the engagement of hybrid mobility beyond its more usual location-responsive practices.

altogether. "Non-places" – a term coined by Marc Augé in the early nineties to refer to the "spaces of circulation" produced by global commerce, transportation, and media – now seem to extend everywhere a network connection is available. ¹ According to Nicolas Carr and Sherry Turkle, our ability to concentrate and connect, a prerequisite to noticing where we are, has deteriorated. The web degrades human cognition and intelligence, Carr argues, promoting "hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning." ² Turkle believes our sense of community, based traditionally on "physical proximity, shared concerns, real consequences, and common responsibilities," has become devoid of intimacy due to social media. ³

For environmental thinkers, the stakes are higher: re-wiring the world challenges the survival of the human species and the planet. From E.F. Schumacher's proclamations that "small is beautiful" to Gary Snyder's and Wendell Berry's calls for people to reinhabit the earth and go back to the land, traditional environmentalism has long defined itself as anti-technology, anti-modernity, and anti-mobility. ⁴ Long-term attachment to one place, for this line of thinking, is the only way to develop an environmental ethics. This "ethic of proximity," as eco-critic Ursula Heise explains, relies on the "assumption that genuine ethical commitments [to the environment] can only grow out of the lived immediacies of the local that constitute the core of one's authentic identity." ⁵ In recent years, the proximity ethic has updated to indict mobile communication

technologies for further destroying humanity's already disrupted sense of place. Robert Thayer warns his readers that "the role of place and region is vital to the politics and culture of a democratic community," and he fears that, "in a world made frantic by the speed of electronic communication," it has become difficult for communities to find the time to "to learn about... [their] physical, ecological, cultural needs."⁶

In 2012, we developed and released *Indeterminate Hikes+* (IH+), an app that aesthetically and performatively examined environmental and media critics' conviction that mobile media and geographical grounding must exist antagonistically. Our inspiration was neither eco-utopian nor techno-fetishist. We do not suppose an app can resolve the problem of humanity's lack of ecological consciousness; nor do we think that a sense of place can be purchased at the iTunes store or on the Android Market. Our aim, instead, was to research

if the commonly held opinion that mobile devices prevent meaningful connections to place, redirecting our attention from the world around us to the screens in our hands, was a necessary and inevitable conclusion. We wanted to know if place-making could be created not *despite* mobile technologies but perhaps *through* and *with* movement across spaces. Was there a particular sense of place that could be experienced in the context of mobile landscapes? Could networked mobility be a tool of environmental imagination, meditative wonder, and slowing down?

Indeterminate Hikes+ began as an attempt to rethink what Jason Farman calls the "default mode" of how mobile technologies are used:

While our devices can and do pull us away from a deep engagement with people and spaces, this doesn't have to be the default mode for the ways

*we use our mobile media.. if used in a dynamic way that addresses the medium's strengths, mobile media can actually get us to engage with each other and with the spaces we move through in deep, meaningful, and context-rich ways.*⁷

In our art-experiment to see if mobile media can help us re-experience everyday locales in "deep, meaningful, and context-rich ways," we designed IH+ to incorporate the following cultural resources: (1) an interdisciplinary approach to art-making and critical reflection about the relationship of technology to the environment, (2) the myth of wilderness, (3) the practice of Fluxus-style happenings, (4) Guy Debord and psychogeography, and (5) the unique capabilities of networked mobile devices.

ECOLOGY, ART, TECHNOLOGY

Our creative practice explores evolutions of ecology, food, media, and memory in modern, industrial society. For over a decade, we have investigated the imagination of the environment across nature, built spaces, electronic environments, and even the microbial ecosystem of the human digestive system. Coming from distinct disciplinary backgrounds – Cary as a new media artist, Leila as a literary and cultural critic – we merge our trainings to create participatory situations and social sculptures that bring endangered environmental practices into poetic visibility, feeling-perception, and the simple acts of everyday life, such as taking a walk or making a meal. We are curious about how industrialization and modernization have transformed human perception, and our work seeks to facilitate recovery from a cultural memory disorder that we call "industrial amnesia." To remediate this disorder, our projects combine old and new, art and theory, infusing one into the other, including biological systems, natural materials, primitive skills and technol-

ogies, ancient meditation practices, nineteenth-century romanticism, theories of modernity, social media, and digital networks.

As environmental new media artists, we often need to clarify that we do not engage media technologies as digital tools to visualize or communicate scientific data or to solve ecological issues. Rather, we see the environmental arts and humanities as performing the critical role of rethinking cultural and scientific categories that are usually taken for granted. Ted Toadvine has perhaps the best articulation of the unique yet frequently overlooked contribution that the humanities make to environmental thought. The sciences, he writes, tend to frame 'obvious' environmental problems in empirical terms with empirical solutions. Although a necessary part of the environmentalist equation, the weakness of this approach is that it usually does not question "the ways that our problems are identified and framed at the outset." Rather than being focused on solving predefined problems, the project of the environmental humanities, Toadvine explains, is hermeneutic:

*the concern.. is not with the gathering of facts, but rather with the assumptions that frame what counts as a fact... the humanities are concerned with meanings and values, of which facts are only one subset, and which require the specific skills of interpretation, clarification, evaluation, and judgment.*⁸

This understanding of the environmental humanities is integral to our collaborative investigations and to our approach to digital media, which we don't see simply as communication tools but as a part of our ecological landscape, the latest on a long continuum of humanity's biological dependence on technics, from shovels to smartphones. We don't assume that how technologies are commonly used is how they have to be used. And we don't believe that the widely accepted definitions of terms like *sustainability*, *nature*, *environment*, and

Figure 2. *Indeterminate Hikes +* performance at Alhóndiga Bilbao, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.





Figure 3. *Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at Conflux Festival, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. New York City. Photograph by EcoArtTech. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.*

wilderness are self-evident facts. We experiment with media technologies and ecological ideas to see if they can be turned over, rethought, and put to unexpected uses in a way that illuminates how culture shapes values, assumptions, and the imagination. In this way, our artworks function as theoretical inquiries and critical interpretations.⁹

THE MYTH OF WILDERNESS AND HOW INDETERMINATE HIKES+ WORKS

Wilderness has long been a motivating concept for the environmental movement in the U.S.A. and beyond – a sublime, sacred space of freedom and renewal, a zone of untouched nature where the human hand has not intervened. For centuries, the term *wilderness* circulated without question and was the focal point of environmental protection efforts, including the creation of the U.S. National Park Service. However, in 1996, historian William Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness" put forth one of the most effective critiques of this approach. Tracing the roots of wilderness in a range of historical ideas and events – Judeo-Christian values, romantic primitivism, the mythology of the American frontier, U.S. nationalism, and colonial conquest – Cronon argued that "there is nothing natural about the

concept of wilderness": "It is entirely a creation of the culture that holds it dear, a product of the very history it seeks to deny." In addition to undoing the idea of pristine ecological origin, Cronon makes it clear that the wilderness myth prevents the creation of healthy, sustainable relationships between humans and the places they live: "By imagining that our true home is in the wilderness, we forgive ourselves the homes we actually inhabit." His conclusion is unequivocal: "wilderness poses a serious threat to responsible environmentalism."¹⁰

What is significant about Cronon's analysis, for us, is that despite his criticism he does not give up on the capacity of wilderness to be transformative. Wilderness might not actually exist, nature may not be natural, but there is something about the experience of seemingly wild spaces, Cronon admits, that inspires "feelings of humility and respect":

*Wilderness teaches us to ask whether the Other must always bend to our will, and if not, under what circumstances it should be allowed to flourish without our intervention. This is surely a question worth asking about everything we do, and not just about the natural world.*¹¹

If the wilderness myth has proven so inspirational, we wondered if it were possible to import the concept into contexts where it does not traditionally belong, to places in need of ecological concern, and if we could so while remaining reflective about its ambivalent history. Could wilderness be protected as an imaginative mindset, as a space of mindfulness, rather than as a factual category? As we set out developing *Indeterminate Hikes+*, we asked, is it possible to treat the ordinary spaces we move through but rarely notice with the same attention we grant natural wonders, such as canyons, gorges, or waterfalls? There are plenty of cultural tools that teach us to slow down in nature, look around, breathe deeply, and take a break. Is there a way to bring these lessons into city streets, to facilitate new ways of being in the world?

After downloading the app, IH+ users input their starting points (usually their current locations) and

their destinations. The app, rather than providing the quickest route from one location to the other, misuses GoogleMaps to create an indirect, meandering path that makes no sense in terms of efficiency. As their phones direct them along these spontaneous trails, participants are stopped at Scenic Vistas. In traditional wilderness discourse, a 'scenic vista' signifies sublime nature that is supposed to awe and inspire: views atop mountains where one can see for miles, a canyon where one pulls off the road for a closer look, a majestic waterfall where one sets down her backpack. *Indeterminate Hikes+*, however, does not work this way. The app's Scenic Vistas have a decidedly different character than the special markers we are accustomed to. Rather than landmarks designated on a static map, predetermined by either cultural values or an authoritative human guide, IH+ provides Scenic Vistas entirely at random, so you might end up at a rain gutter, alleyway, or abandoned house. To put this in

Figure 4. *Indeterminate Hikes+ performance at 319 Scholes / Bushwick Open Studios, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Photograph by EcoArtTech. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.*



terms of media and mapping: IH+ does not use mobile media technology to communicate pre-established environmental data, simply linking hikers with pre-approved places understood easily as beautiful nature or sublime wilderness. This would repeat, in effect, the privileging of wilderness that Cronon criticizes. And such an approach would not take advantage of the unique qualities of mobile media; it would entail simply uploading the age-old, hierarchical experience of print cartography onto our smartphones. Instead, IH+ reworks navigational technologies in order to create Scenic Vistas that are always changing, using mobile media to navigate the earth without a captain in charge. As a result, the app creates the possibility of place-making and ecological awakening anywhere, unrestricted by prior assumptions about what that place should look like.

With *Indeterminate Hikes+*, mobility, rather than detaching us from our immediate environment, becomes a tool enabling us to spread our capacity to experience wildness – or “environmental otherness,” as Cronon puts it – to any geographical space. At each Scenic Vista, participants are asked to complete a directive and engage in a meditative task that facilitates mindful awareness. They are also given the option to send a text, take a fieldnote, or capture an image. Examples of directives include “Follow the path of falling water,” “Listen to the mood of the walking path,” or “Wander the caverns on the surface of the earth.” Wedding wilderness vocabulary to non-wild places requires the stretching of environmental imagination. A walking path may be a nature trail or it may be a well-traveled concrete sidewalk; wandering caverns may entail spelunking through underground caves or taking the stairs or elevators into the vast depths of basements or skyscrapers. Gary Snyder reminds us: “The whole earth is a great tablet holding the multiple overlaid new and ancient traces of a swirl of forces. Each place is its own place, forever (eventually) wild.”¹²

Digital fieldnotes from hikers are uploaded to our online database. A collection of hikes, organized chronologically and linearly, is accessible through the *Indeterminate Hikes+* online project page.¹³ An alternative representation of the hikes is available as the IH+ Wilderness Collider, a real-time web app that mashes up the global data gathered by participants. The app is always live and viewable online and can be installed in galleries.¹⁴

FLUXUS HAPPENINGS

Indeterminate Hikes+ creates a series of Fluxus-style happenings on an ecological level. Allan Kaprow's descriptions of happenings, articulated decades ago, provide excellent language for capturing the experience of *Indeterminate Hikes+*, whether in a public performance or solo with your smartphone. Happenings, Kaprow says, are “events that, put simply, happen.”¹⁵ Unlike theatrical performances that take place on a stage with audience and actors in fixed, oppositional roles, happenings are improvisational, with “no structured beginning, middle, or end.” They are “open-ended and fluid,” dissolving the artist-audience hierarchy through interactivity, “melting the surroundings, the artist, the work, and everyone who comes to it into an elusive, changeable configuration.” Instead of galleries and museums, happenings occupy places such as artists' studios or the “sheer rawness of the out-of-doors or the closeness of dingy city quarters”: the more “un-artiness,” the better. At one point, Kaprow adopts ecological metaphor, suggesting that “radical Happenings flourish” only in an appropriate “habitat,” which he defines as “the place where anything grows up... an overall atmosphere.” This atmosphere of inter-connectedness produces new forms of awareness – but without any particular, intended goal: “nothing obvious is sought and therefore nothing is won, except the



Figure 5. *Indeterminate Hikes+* performance at Alhóndiga Bilbao, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.

certainty of a number of occurrences to which we are more than normally attentive.” The only assured result is the possibility of becoming attuned to “occurrences” we hadn’t noticed before.¹⁶

With wilderness vocabulary combined with Scenic Vistas’ “chance operations” – a term associated with John Cage, with whom Kaprow studied – *Indeterminate Hikes+* weaves wilderness into even the most domesticated spaces and the most unconscious rituals, creating a mobile habitat for new ecological attentiveness and “changeable configurations.” Wilderness, like Kaprow’s art, can “simply happen.” We don’t need a towering tree or a special rock formation to notice it. No matter the shape of the improvisational moment, the participant-hiker is encouraged to give these chance spectacles the attention she would give a so-called natural wonder. As Christine Oravec shows, invoking this sort of response is precisely how U.S. preservationist John Muir generated popular support for the creation of national parks through his natural history writing. Oravec identifies three elements in the “sublime response”: “the immediate apprehension of a sublime object; a sense of overwhelming personal insignificance akin to awe; and ultimately a kind of spiritual exaltation.”¹⁷ *Indeterminate Hikes+* takes the inspiring “sublime response” and moves it into

the space of disregarded locations, such as highways or garbage dumps – just as the avant-garde worked to take art out of academia and the art-world and into the ordinary spaces of everyday life. What if we redirected the sublime response normally reserved for wilderness parks and nature preserves toward the rituals and places we experience everyday? What if we call a sidewalk ‘wild’ or toothbrushing ‘art’?¹⁸ What if we observe the water dripping off an air-conditioner with the same attention we give a raging brook after a storm?

INDETERMINATE-HIKING THE HIGH LINE

The first performance of *Indeterminate Hikes+* took place on the High Line, in New York City, in 2010, as part of “UNDERCURRENTS,” a Whitney Museum of American Art exhibition curated by curatorial fellows in the Museum’s Independent Study Program. Newly opened as a privately managed public park the previous year, the High Line is a former elevated freight railway on Manhattan’s west side, built in the 1930s. The line was abandoned when gas-powered trucks replaced trains as the primary movers of goods into the city, and rugged, drought-resistant plants took root, growing undisturbed for decades, creating a wild

urban environment.¹⁹ In 1999, a nonprofit formed to lobby for the track's redevelopment as a park, and today the High Line features naturalized plantings, re-constructed tracks, and an artful pedestrian walkway. The heavy flow of tourist foot traffic to the park has drastically transformed life for residents of the Chelsea neighborhood.²⁰

The High Line presents visitors with new possibilities for experiencing nature in the city, and the park's website displays attractive images of the flowers, shrubs, and trees that make their home on the elevated platform. However, when we led an Indeterminate Hike on the High Line, an environment quite different from the park's online representation was revealed. Rather than the tree under the blue sky, or the green-lined path leading into an optimistic future, or the vibrant colors of grasses and flower petals (all featured on the High Line website), the app's Scenic Vista suggestions included a trash-can near the underside of a walkway and an air-conditioner unit atop an adjacent building that was covered with pigeon feces. These anti-spectacular Scenic Vistas generated randomly by participants' mobile phones are not what one expects during a nature hike. Yet by breaking away from the clichés of nature photography, such unsightly visions open the capacity to imagine the ecological margins.

Why shouldn't the garbage generated by High Line visitors enter the photographic record of the public park or be exhibited prominently on the park's website? Not only is the trashcan's sleek cylindrical shape worthy of aesthetic contemplation – after all, it is a well-designed discreet black hole of anti-space inconspicuously positioned to absorb humanity's excess – it also presents an invitation to consider why this fact of modern existence is wiped from environmental representations. And the chance encounter with the air-conditioner suggests that we contemplate energy sustainability as well as the unit's co-opting by pigeons as a shelter within a human-dominated environment. Such happenings are wilder, more interconnected, unexpected, and illuminating, than the concept of wilderness at a distance.

The tension between the High Line's prescriptions and the *Indeterminate Hikes* anti-prescriptions asks us to question what parts of the environment we admit into consciousness, to rethink why we limit our understanding of our ecological being to only those parts that are comfortable, visually pleasurable, and easily packaged for public consumption or real estate development. What are the effects of this selective awareness on our understandings of our lives? Why are biodiversity and wildness isolated into fantastical

Figure 6. *Indeterminate Hikes+* performance at Alhóndiga Bilbao, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.



spaces set off from actual lives, such as an isolated nature preserve or even an elevated train track? Even though the High Line is not presented as true nature with a capital "N," the descriptive narratives surrounding its promotion employ that idealization – as do nearly all the understandings of the environment that circulate through our culture.

What makes the High Line an ecological destination is its placement elsewhere – or, to use ecocritic Timothy Morton's words, "in the distance, 'over yonder,' .. on the other side where the grass is always greener."²¹ *Indeterminate Hikes+* disrupts this fallacy, breaking from default modes of both mobile media use and ecological awareness. *Indeterminate Hikes'* defamiliarizing gestures – its anti-art anti-ecological-spectacles – asks us to notice what falls off the official map, to shake up our modes of perception, and this sometimes requires that we avoid predictable paths, that we get mobile in the uncertainty of the studio of life and lose our way.

GETTING LOST AND TAKING WRONG STEPS

For Guy Debord, getting lost was a revolutionary act. In "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," he cites a friend who "wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London."²² For Debord, his friend's performance was an example of how to abandon archaic, functional forms, like maps, to make way for a non-utilitarian experience of the modern city, a city interfaced without the bias of cartography, without lines, colors, and words demarcating landmarks, highways, and neighborhoods – that is, without conceptual anchors, the way that the myth of wilderness has anchored environmental thinking. Debord suggests that pedestrians stop using only "the path of least resistance" to get from place to place.²³ Instead, he

advocated inefficient, randomized walks, the sort that might be created by mis-mappings – he used the term "renovated cartography" – which would allow for new "psychogeographical possibilities" and "the observation of certain processes of chance and predictability."²⁴

Although not transposing maps of two locations, *Indeterminate Hikes+* performs a similar conflation by importing the vocabulary of wilderness where it does not belong, juxtaposing two seemingly incongruous spaces, upsetting predictability and welcoming chance. As Debord wrote, "the introduction of [such] alterations... can contribute to clarifying certain wanderings that express not subordination to randomness but complete *insubordination* to habitual influences."²⁵ While using *Indeterminate Hikes+*, participants re-experience both their ubiquitous technologies and their environments in non-habitual ways. Rather than consuming, communicating, or navigating as quickly as possible, captivated by their screen, withdrawn from their physical environment – the "default mode" of using mobile media – hikers have the opportunity to notice happenings taking place all around them in their immediate environments, in backyards, behind shopping malls, and underneath stop signs. This not only illuminates the environment; it also recontextualizes how they use their tablets and phones.

Our participant-hikers report that they have never been so calm in a city, so open to the visual, olfactory, and psychological landscape around them. They never used their mobile media to get lost or take a wrong turn. One participant wrote to tell us that the experience heightened her attention not only to her city surroundings but also to the speed with which she usually rushes through these spaces:

The more indeterminate the hike, the more likely you are to discover things about yourself and your harried lifestyle. The app reminds us that the idea of a singular natural habitat is a hoax – sometimes

your natural habitat includes a public bus stop and a coffee shop.. Vines grow over brick buildings, birds build nests in rafters.. rats inhabit luxury condominiums; there's no distinction.. no natural and artificial. Every environment is a natural environment so long as you're in it, and.. every environment needs to be treated as such. ²⁶

The default mode of mobile-technology use has conditioned us to treat the environment as an obstacle to overcome. The default mode of cartography has taught us to follow directions and never wander off the map. And the default mode of environmental discourses has taught us that ecological events happen somewhere faraway, inaccessible, requiring a backpack or roadtrip to reach. Becoming insubordinate to these commercial, cultural, and historical influences allows sentimental eco-clichés and habit practices to fall away, opening a path for new realizations about where we actually live.

All technology, Rebecca Solnit argues, tends to have the same aspiration for the material world and our bodies:

Technology regards the very terms of our bodily

existence as burdensome. Annihilating time and space most directly means accelerating communications and transportation... What distinguishes a technological world is that the terms of nature are obscured; one need not live quite in the present or the local. ²⁷

Referring to photography, the railroad, and the telegraph, Solnit explains that these industrial-age inventions were “for being elsewhere in time and space, for pushing away the here and now.” She continues: “Those carried along on technology's currents [are] less connected to local places, to the earth itself, to the limitations of the body and biology, to the malleability of memory and imagination.” ²⁸ It's been 150 years since the advent of those technologies, and today the human sense of space, time, mobility, and nature has been rewired even more profoundly. In the twenty-first century, physical and virtual mobility have become a fact of everyday life, a necessity for survival and woven into almost every moment, and we must somehow re-contextualize what seems like second nature and rethink our presumptions about how and why we move.

Transborder Immigrant Tool (TBT), a mobile media

Figure 7. *Indeterminate Hikes+* performance at Alhóndiga Bilbao, Leila Nadir and Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech), 2012. Bilbao, Spain. Photograph by Joya: Arte y Ecología. © EcoArtTech, 2005. Used with permission.



project created by artist-collective b.a.n.g. lab, extends this inquiry into *who* can move. Like IH+, TBT explores the aesthetic potentials of navigational technologies to challenge modes of behavior that we take for granted as natural. Whereas *Indeterminate Hikes+* transports a sense of natural wonder and slowness to the places humans usually pass through hurriedly, *Transborder Immigrant Tool* appropriates mobile phones to provide navigational information, including poetic inspiration and directions to water caches, to human beings immigrating across the border-wilderness to the U.S. from Mexico. With both IH+ and TBT, mobile media are not tools for being “elsewhere in time and space, for pushing away the here and now,” as Solnit asserts technology always hopes to achieve. And yet these artworks also do not fit easily into recent defenses of mobile technology espoused by media scholars who celebrate the capacity of digital networks to help us get to know places better than before because there is so much new information at our fingertips.

Adriana de Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith argue that mobile networked devices enable new access to place-specific information in “an interplay between the actual and the virtual.” They write that “finding a location no longer means finding its geographic coordinates, but also accessing an *abundance of digital information* that now belongs to that location.” ²⁹ *Indeterminate Hikes+* and *Transborder Immigrant Tool* defy the assumptions of both anti-mobility, anti-technology environmental thinkers like Solnit and pro-mobility media critics like Souza e Silva and Frith. Both IH+ and TBT recognize the human body, deploy mobility to get back in place, and don't contribute to the endless crowd-sourced production of “an abundance of digital information.” *Transborder Immigrant Tool* provides poetry for a dangerous voyage, and *Indeterminate Hikes+* asks you to sit down on a city sidewalk and find a rabbit. Neither is utilitarian nor goal-oriented, aimed at facilitating an easy consumer experience devoid of imagination. Both recognize the role of poetics in navigating place. And both use performance art to point toward, or even invent, new spaces of ethical imagination. Ricardo Dominguez, in an interview included in this special issue of *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*, reports that TBT is “a small gesture that echoes back... occluded conditions, and

marks them via the gesture as aesthetically visible.” ³⁰ *Indeterminate Hikes+* and *Transborder Immigrant Tool* suggest art's singular role in pushing against the limits of our mental representational systems, in staging encounters that can only be perceived through aesthetic gestures. The antidote to technological displacement from place and the earth is not “an abundance of digital information” to fill the void. It is locative imagination. ■

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26. Nicole Sansone, personal communication after an Indeterminate Hike performed in Brooklyn, June 2012, as part of Bushwick Open Studios and an exhibition at the gallery 319 Scholes.
27. Rebecca Solnit, *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 11.
28. Ibid., 19, 22.
29. Adriana de Souza e Silva and Jordan Frith, *Mobile Interfaces in Public Spaces: Locational Privacy, Control, and Urban Sociability* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 9; our italics.
30. Ricardo Dominguez, "Poetry, Immigration and the FBI: The Transborder Immigrant Tool," interview by Leila Nadir, *Hyperallergic: Art & its Discontents*, July 23, 2012, <http://hyperallergic.com/54678/poetry-immigration-and-the-fbi-the-transborder-immigrant-tool/> (accessed December 20, 2013). This interview is reprinted as part of this special issue of *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*.