

City of Pixels

experimental imaging of postmodern *other* urban spaces

Wael Salah FAHMI

(Professor Wael Salah Fahmi, Helwan University, Department of Architecture,
34 Abdel Hamid Lotfi Street –Mohandessein, Giza/Cairo, uders2004@yahoo.co.uk)

1 INTRODUCTION

By splashing virtuality onto the real world, representation of digital culture has put people into a space of 'total flow', with juxtaposition of their mental images calling to attention the nature of those other (unconscious) and (hidden) spaces within postmodern cities (Thrift 2000). Virtual representation being a transmutation of the known, are thus interwoven into real urban life, thus symbiotically celebrating the new informational needs of our media – polis (Leach 2002). This gives the new face of our cities a phantasmagoric character (Huang 2000) wherein the global and local, the familiar and strange, the real and the virtual become inextricably intertwined, whilst creating a 'transnational urban experience' as the ideal of boundless and undefined spatiality predominates a digital age of fragmented post modernity.

Under late capitalism characterized by space and time compression (Harvey 1989; Jameson 1991), alternative representational methods of postmodern city landscapes are required with respect to production of architectural signs and images (Bermudez 1995), and with respect to consumption of contested city fabric that enact a variety of (re) (de) constructed local identities within emerging global urban spaces. A fruitful avenue of exploration may well lie in the current article's proposed experimental interfaces, within emerging networked environment, for intervening in postmodern cities' future developments, whilst examining potentials of digital technologies' representation of emerging urban spaces. The experimental procedure views postmodern urban landscape, as an arena for (re)(de)constructing spatial metaphors (Fahmi and Howe 2003), challenging the stable institutionalized construction of space in terms of production of a new 'hyper-real' urbanity (Baudrillard 1993). A series of spatial transformations simultaneously emerge as a simulation of urban experimentation in_ between the local and global (glocal), imaginary and reality (Patton 1995).

Accordingly the paper presents Urban Experimental Imaging Model (UEIM) with the camera's eye to grasp the psychogeography of postmodern cit(y)(ies) spatial fragments, whilst considering the proliferation and fragmentation in production and consumption of phantasmagoric other ('unconscious' and 'hidden') urban spaces. The Model emphasizes aspects of spatial representation of 'other' urban spaces in terms of digital collages (disjunction- juxtaposition-assemblage) (Tschumi 1996), and experimental diagrams (superimposition-layering-fragmentation)(Eisenman 1999). Diagrams and collages create a virtual cut through the heterogeneous assemblage of physical spaces, urban imaging and individual experiences.

Whilst attempting to capture the 'hidden and unconscious' urban, digital fragments and diagrams will bring cit(y)(ies) images into sharp juxtaposition, thus 'de-solidifying' the physical and dissolving spatial distinctions between reality and mythical spaces, between the screen and the imagination, between the virtual urbanity of the information machine and the actual urbanity of the city. Urban Experimental Imaging Model (UEIM) will call into play the possibility of a coterminous and dialectic merging of very real city of bricks and a conceptually experienced 'city of pixels' .

Key words: postmodern other urban spaces- spatial representation – deconstruction - experimentation – digital Images- diagrams

2 GLOBAL NETWORKS

In late/post modern societies local/global (glocal) tensions, with collision of signs and images (Sassen 1991), have created a 'transnational imaginary'(Dovey 1999). The intersection of local and global (glocal) spatio-temporal (dis)orders , regarded as mutually exclusive conditions, has resulted in the formation of new economic dynamics/opportunities of newly produced and newly unbundled spatialities that drive and constitute economic globalization and can be thought of as transnational process of partly denationalized temporalities (Sassen 2000). The ideal of boundless and undefined spatiality predominated an age of fragmented supermodernity (Ibelings 1998). This has led to a loss of sense of place, with non-places proliferating transit and informational spaces. With increased mobility and telecommunications, with the rise of new media, and with the emergence of cyberspace, the experience of time, space and place identity has changed (Auge 1995).

Castells (1998) provides an analysis to interpreting global politics and the transition to informationalism through the shift from the nation-state to an emergent form of governance, the "network state." Yet the growth of a global network society has intensified the unevenness of capitalist development, leading to the rise of the "Fourth World", and to growing economic and social polarization which has resulted in pockets of systematic social exclusion which Castells (1998) terms black holes of informational capitalism. Moreover economic globalization and telecommunications have produced a space for the urban that pivots on de-territorialized cross-border networks, institutional space and territorial locations with massive concentrations of resources. Cities and the new strategic geographies that connect them and bypass national states can be seen as constituting part of the infrastructure for global domains, including powerful global imaginaries enabling aspirations to trans-boundary political practice even when the actors involved are basically localized The local now transacts directly with the global --the global installs itself in locals and the global is itself constituted through a multiplicity of locals (Sassen 2003).

The centrality of place in a context of global processes engenders a transnational economic and political opening in the formation of new claims and hence in the constitution of entitlements, notably rights to place, and in the constitution of new diverse forms of 'citizenship' practices (Sassen 2001). Cultural identity has nevertheless experienced the contradictions between increased placelessness and reflexivity (in cognitive and aesthetic sense) (Lash and Urry 1994); and increased place-bound identities and tribalism as reactions to globalization (Castells 1996) .Castells (1997) demonstrates that identity issues are so critical to personal development in the information age in terms of the widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity that challenge economic globalization and cultural cosmopolitanism on behalf of cultural singularity and people's struggle to maintain (or reclaim) a

degree of control over their lives and environment. Meanwhile, caught between the opposing trends of techno-economic forces and transformative socio-cultural movements, founding social institutions have been called into question. Taking the argument further, Castells also mentions the socio-psychological perspective, as information systems and networking subvert the traditional western concept of a separate, independent subject, built on the notions of sovereignty and self-sufficiency that have provided an ideological anchoring for individual identity (Castells 1996 p 23).

3 REPRESENTATION AND SPATIALITY

Accordingly visions and myths of the city (globalization, homogenization, (in)authenticity and universalism) have been instructive in terms of 'other cities' (the embodied, the learning, the unjust), thus 'Begin to provide a sense of a city that is constantly changing, that does not necessarily hold together', and the city is regarded as 'a partially connected multiplicity which we can only ever know partially and from multiple places' (Thrift 1996, 2000). Moreover Harvey (1989) viewed collage/montage as the primary form of post modern discourse on spatiality, with the notion of consumption as assemblage, bricolage, or pastiche, largely replacing that of the functional city of modernism (Rowe and Koetter, 1978). For architects and designers, this collage, consisting of space-time, dimensions, is no longer modeled after nature or the machine, but after cities of the past which Vidler has described as "the third typology" (Vidler 1978, cited in Ellin 1996).

With ethical aspects of experiencing cities referring to questions of difference and other in urban environment, the argument was to abandon the city as a neutral space following its textual signification (Kymalainen 2000). Accordingly, the text and collage metaphors have been central to the re-conception of culture of consumption (Geertz 1980), asserting that the world is constituted symbolically, that people organize various aspects of their lives into a coherent assemblage through the medium of culture and consumption. More recently, Boyer (1994) attempts to read space as a "text", following Barthes' (1976 cited in Harvey 1989) earlier proposition that 'spatial experience is a discourse and this discourse is truly a language' and that 'architecture of signifiers with no signifieds, is considered a pure play of language'. . . Castells claims that 'we do not see reality as 'it' is, but as our languages are. And our languages are our media. Our media are our metaphors. Our metaphors create the content of our culture...'. Cultures are made up of communication processes and thus there are no separation between 'reality' and symbolic representation (Castells 1996 p 328, 372-73, 375)

Lefebvre (1991) distinguishes between 'representations of space' engaged in by planners and cartographers, and symbolic 'representational spaces' in cities, drawing on shared experiences and interpretations of everyday 'spatial practices' of people, where making space is very much a way of making meaning. According to Foucault (1986), the meanings of representational spaces or discourses are never absolute, but always subject to translation and interpretation. Therefore a postmodern urbanism is conscious of the power of discursive production of urban representational spaces where "people not only live their space "through its associated images and symbols" (Lefebvre 1991:39), they actively construct its meaning through cognitive and hermeneutical processes.

Discourses express human thought, fantasy, and desire and thereby represents human ontology's (beliefs, fantasies, values, and desires about how the world is) and epistemologies (how better understandings of the world might be achieved). Therefore the meaning of representational spaces or discourses are never absolute, but always subject to translation and interpretation. Accordingly, Derrida's (1976) work was modeled after literary criticism with the (double) reading of the text and interpreting the meaning of culture, and with the need to read spatial 'text' in terms of the rhythmic occurrence of events.

According to Ellin (1996), a new urbanity, in the information age, is emerging where boundaries between reality and virtuality are blurring, nothing prevailing but discourses, texts, language games, images. Therefore designers' task has shifted, becoming the collection and assembling of urban elements in Foucault's museum of knowledge, with emphasis on creating legibility and a sense of place. Postmodern era implies a need to re-appropriate the urban in terms of our consumption practices and spatial tactics, and sites of exchanges and encounters (Leach 2002). The postmodern age is characterized by the commodification of place, privatization of public space (mallification), fragmentation of spatial experience, globalization of local culture.

3.1 Urban Semiotics and Space-Time Compression

Barthes' (1976) semiotic approach is concerned with the how of representation, with how language produces meaning- poetics of space in terms of a system of signs. These Systems of signification (semiotics) encompass denotative signs and meta-linguistic systems in relation to culturally specific systems of connotative codes. Such universe of signs includes: the non-physiological part of perception; conception; scientific modes of discourse; and the value systems, or the socially constituted world views of social subjects, . . . " According to Gottdiener and Lagopoulos (1986) urban space is not a text but a "pseudo-text," because it is produced by non-semiotic processes as well as semiotic and socio-semiotic ones.

The postmodern phrase 'The presence of the past' (T.S. Eliot, in Venturi 1977 p.13), "...tends instead to draw our attention to the contextual and linear relations of new architectural forms as they relate to past urban images, rather than stressing the differences, the rupture between then and now, here and there, and the memory of things and events that have never and can reoccur in the present" (Boyer 1994 p. 374) The past returns to urban space in its fragmented and imaginary form and creates the city of deconstructed spaces and images which fractures our sense of urban totality.

Furthermore urban Images/screens (or architecture of images) (Bermudez 1995), with hybrid interface between electronic and built media (Pile 1996), is considered the natural extension of mediatecture (Riewoldt 1997, Mitchell 1996) and mediascape (Christensen 1993) offering (un)built forms with virtual layers, challenging concepts of presence, distance, and time. Additionally media culture has nevertheless put people into a space of 'total flow' (heterotopias- places outside of all places'), with the juxtapositioning of their mental images calling to attention a line of conflict (Jameson 1991). This is concerned with the nature of those other (unconscious) spaces, which have become invisible, with the virtual city being a transmutation of the known, being interwoven into real urban life.

"Here we are in Robert Venturi's [post]modern city, not just Las Vegas but any [post]modern city, a mediascape of office buildings and stores transformed by their corporate identities into the new language of consciousness: the sign molded in glass and light, splashed over with the insignia or characters of logos. Buildings are no longer mass and weight, stone and iron, but an array of sentences spelling out the consciousness of a city, what a city means when we enter it and use its services, consume its goods. The city's language of buildings and streets, of glass and light, is a declaration of ideals . . . which the city achieves by transforming things into words, objects into signs, the dark of nature into neon abstraction and codes. . . the mediascape devours the literal materiality around it" (Christensen 1993, p.9-10) .

Baudrillard (1993) claims, "There is no real and no imaginary, except at a certain distance. Because 'reality' or the world now seems to be cybernetically organized continuum of kinetic images, information, and technological artifacts, it appears that value and meaning also have been lost in the transformation" (Boyer 1994 p.492).

Urban Semiotics compress space and time under late capitalism (Harvey 1989), as representation of urban experience to produce multifunctional hybrid spaces (Jameson 1991). This has called for a new aesthetic of cognitive mapping of a city with multiple meanings and images (Lynch 1960). Cognitive mapping approaches arrive at the signification of the city through the perception of its inhabitants rather than their conception with the urban environment being reduced to a perceptual knowledge of physical form. Whilst perception is conceived as passive or receptive, Urban Imagery, being stimulated by urban structure, generates representational methods and narrative systems (Calvino 1979). People perform various roles to (re)construct their urban imageries as conjuring up of various impressions 'in the mind', which may be 'visual', as well as auditory, olfactory, verbal, textual, or of a notational, or symbolic score (Liddament 2000) .

"...that this latest mutation in space — postmodern hyperspace — has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world" (Jameson 1988). The postmodern context is however semiologically represented as a theatrical space, implying a multiplicity of signs (deferred and never fixed), as signified (context and meaning) and signifiers (forms and urban elements) (Leach 2002), and as imaginary in a deconstructive sense.

With hypermobility and space/time compression, the city has indeed emerged as a site for new claims and contestation: by global capital which uses the city as an "organizational commodity", and by disadvantaged sectors of the urban population. The denationalizing of urban space and the formation of new claims centred in transnational actors and involving contestation constitute the global city as a frontier zone for a new type of engagement (Sassen 2003). Compression of time and space under late capitalism has created a situation where people as consumers overcome spatial barriers , with the central value system being dematerialized , and with shifting time horizons collapsing inwards upon us. The interweaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. But it does so in such a way as to conceal almost perfectly any trace of origin, of the labour processes that produced them, or of the social relations implicated in their production.

"...the history of capitalism as being characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us". (Harvey 1989 p. 240).

"The central value system . . . is dematerialized and shifting, time horizons are collapsing, and it is hard to tell exactly what space we are in when it comes to assessing causes and effects, meanings or values" (Harvey 1989 p. 298).

"Capitalist hegemony over space puts the aesthetics of place very much back on the agenda . . . The construction of such places, the fashioning of some localized aesthetic image, allows the construction of some limited and limiting sense of identity in the midst of a collapse of imploding spatialities" (Harvey 1989 p. 303).

There is no coincidence however that global networks appear simultaneously with the postmodern literary movement. Every major intellectual field and academic discipline has taken a postmodern turn in recent years, challenging or overthrowing modern paradigms and establishing new ones. In fields ranging from the life sciences to business organization , provocative arguments are being developed that we are emerging into a new global economy, an innovative high-tech society and culture, and novel postmodern ways of life and identities. In postmodernism, there is no central authority, no universal dogma, no foundational ethic .For Harvey (1989) the postmodern turn results in fragmentation, instability, indeterminacy, and uncertainty. Network principles renounce rigidity, closed structure, universal schemes, central authority. Instead networks offer up plurality, differences, ambiguity, incompleteness, contingency, and multiplicity.

"The relatively stable aesthetic of Fordist modernism has given way to all the ferment, instability, and fleeting qualities of a postmodernist aesthetic that celebrates difference, ephemerality, spectacle, fashion, and the commodifications of cultural forms" (Harvey 1989 p.156). Postmodern developments are therefore directly related to "the more flexible motion of capital [which] emphasizes the new, the fleeting, the ephemeral, the fugitive, and the contingent in modern life, rather than the more solid values implanted under Fordism" (Harvey 1989 p.171).

Furthermore in a world of ever-faster change and growing abstraction the process of reflexivity opens up possibilities for the recasting of meaning in work and in leisure and for the heterogeneity and complexity of space and everyday life. Confronted with the increasing cultural content of flows reflexivity becomes aesthetic - a notion for which Lash and Urry argue (1994). They state that postmodernity produces 'semiotic' rather than industrial goods. The mobility of these objects or goods in flows changes their nature - they are progressively emptied out of both symbolic and material content and thus of their traditional local meaning. What increasingly is being produced are no longer material objects but signs. Goods often take on the properties of sign value through the process of 'branding', in which marketers and advertisers attach images to goods." (Lash and Urry 1994 p.15). This reflexivity is partly based on aesthetic judgments and stems from the proliferation of many forms of real and simulated mobility Thus aesthetic reflexivity raises the critical awareness and concern of people for their own environment and consequently contributes to economically relevant innovation which can occur in relation to urban form and functions. These " fields comprise:

The introduction of new types of urban place or space for producing, servicing, working, consuming, living, etc. Recent examples include technopolis, intelligent cities, cross-border cities, multicultural cities and cities organized around integrated transport and sustainable development;

New methods of space or place production to create location-specific advantages for producing goods/services or other urban activities. Recent examples include the installation of new physical, social and cybernetic infrastructures, the promotion of scale and agglomeration economies, regulatory undercutting or creating new forms of labour market relation;

Opening new markets—whether by place marketing specific cities in new areas and/or modifying the spatial division of consumption through enhancing the quality of life for residents, commuters or visitors (for example, culture, entertainment, spectacles, new cityscapes, Yuppies quarters, gentrification).

Whilst sociologists maintain that postmodern society is becoming increasingly fragmented as community groups become less clearly defined, global companies - through sales and branding have developed a new analysis of community based on consumption. Society's dependence on image and the perceived value of goods has created unprecedented control over people's choices. Accordingly themes of aestheticization in today's postmodern society reflect the increasing role of consumption as an art form. A new consumer type - the 'fluxus' consumer - has emerged. Multiple selection and combination of 'products' allows a unique spatial experience- the architecture of the postmodern commercial take-away.

3.2 Imaginary Cities and Heterotopias

Past decades have seen the rise of 'a new society of the image' in which consumerism and market frenzy are not the issue so much as 'consumption by the eyes' (Jameson 1991). As postmodern society becomes increasingly fragmented, with community groups becoming less clearly defined, global companies - through sales and branding - have developed a new niche of 'fluxus' community based on image consumption. It is not simply that urban life has become more superficial, more image- and consumption-based under conditions of late capitalism, but rather that the city in itself has become an imaginary space. The city itself is 'soft', in the sense that it is a type of reality for which the boundary between imagination and fact is not absolute (Raban 1974).

"Cities, unlike villages and small towns, are plastic by nature. We mould them in our images: they, in their turn, shape us by the resistance they offer when we try to impose a personal form on them".... (Raban 1974 p.10) And "...the city as we might imagine it, the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture".(Raban 1974 p. 10).

However, this dynamic has affected our sense of ourselves and our lives, with the self being collapsed into its manner of (re)presentation with the border between the 'self' and city becoming fluid. An alternative reading of the structure and meaning of contemporary and past urban spaces was nonetheless provided by Soja (1989), in his 'reassertion of spatiality' using Foucault's concept of heterotopia (which are places outside of all places). Heterotopias could nonetheless lead to a more fruitful unpacking of the epistemological and logical factors relating to imagery and semiotics. Two categories however are identified by Soja (1995); sacred or forbidden spaces and modern heterotopias of deviation which can change in function and meaning over time. Genocchio's (1995) interpretation revealed two different kinds of heterotopias: the extra-discursive one which is the absolutely Other, 'external' spaces' and 'heterogeneous site' capable of juxtaposing in a single real place (with several spaces that are in themselves incompatible); and the discursive other coexisting in an 'impossible space' of a large number of fragmentary, possible, though incommensurable orders or worlds.

Patton (1995) draws attention to the ways in which imaginary cities are written with respect to 'reality'. For some writers real conditions of urban existence underlie the signs they describe, for others there is no distinction between the imaginary and the real (Burgin 1996). What is of concern is the possibility that a reading of cities (the production of further signs, or urban imageries), rather than the excavation of a foundational real city (the decoding of the urban imaginary), might enhance our capacity to live in urban relations which are unoppressive. The experiment of reading and decoding postmodern cities is based on a number of actual cities, with differing enabling effects and representational methods. Moreover images of the city play a crucial role in accounts of the postmodern condition and in the description of the experience of contemporary urban life (Patton 1995). We propose that we are dealing with imaginary cities; not simply the products of memory or desire, but rather complex objects which include both realities and their description: cities confused with the words used to describe them (Calvino 1979 p. 51). Whilst a city cannot be created out of nothing. Elements of this city-imaginary have in turn affected the development of real cities .

Furthermore cognitive mapping of the post modern city of pixels takes on the characteristic of a Baudelairean (neo)flâneur whilst approaching the reality of the vast terrain of city spaces with his investigative gaze. There is tendency to capture the "logic of the place" in the post modern city, where spatial changes often outpace the revisions of maps due to its constant space-time compression (Harvey 1989) . Whilst investigating possibilities for (re)(de)constructing the meaning of postmodern space, in terms of Foucault's (1986) heterotopias (places 'outside of all places') (Soja 1995), the conceptual approach tackles inscriptions of difference, belonging and sensory experience of navigating a metropolis under transition attempts at weaving anecdotal observations, encounters and reflections oriented by the metaphor of shifting images, recalling dialectics in post-socialist contexts.

An attempt to conceptualize the Baudelairean flâneur (Benjamin 1973) as a multi-layered narrative in post modern conditions will enable us to a reflexive (and cognitive) understanding of epistemologies .The flâneur as an alternative 'vision' and an image of movement through the urban spectacle of (post)modernity is the "botanist of the asphalt" who walks through the city while exploring shifting social space. More importantly are the attempts at adapting the nineteenth-century figure of the flâneur to a postmodern context (neo-flâneur), as being engulfed in the signs and stimuli of the global flows, whilst witnessing the fetishism of commodification and aestheticization of postmodern consumption in post modern metropolis . Such neo-flâneur is a type that is out to take its artistic or aesthetical distance from its consumerist urban surroundings. Postmodern images of the urban self do more than entail an increase in the distancing defense strategies; they paradoxically also involve the postmodern phantasmagoria of an absence of distance. In the aestheticized perception of consumers, no form of distance imposes itself.

The fate of the flâneur constantly invites us to consider whether or not the era of globalization allows the kind of walking space that might liberate the contemporary (neo) flâneur from traditionally defined social space and social relations. To grasp the interaction between urban planners' spatial theories and individuals' perceptions of the lived space of the urban, for a critical reading of the utopian discourse, it is essential to examine the way our flâneur's gaze and cognitive mapping mediates the walker's experience of post modern spaces of the city of pixels. The metropolitan flâneur has also been relocated, for much of the time, to the inside of buildings and malls (the aesthetic cocoon (Leach 2001) with the 'outside' being a traffic-flow-support-nexus". The flâneur has been displaced by the post pedestrian type of driver, with the vehicle (metro, bus, tram) serving as a cocoon in which the individual finds protection from the dangers of the urban jungle and the phenomenon of "fried urban nerves". Vehicles have helped reduce the urban experience to a visual spectacle, with the cinematographic experience conferring on perceived objects a certain plasticity. In this sense, the neo- flâneur becomes an absorbent recipients of post modern imageries which can be layered onto the concrete surfaces of the overpasses and transmitted from the immense constructions of neon light which tower over the buildings of post modern city's intersections, squares and boulevards.

City's imageries invest representation with texture, multiplicity, intricacy whilst collecting and moving along its principal arteries an immense flux of trajectories, a vivid generation of visual life focused in the depth of its boulevards and avenues, and enclosed within the façade of its buildings. In the peripheral world of the highway, the complexity of the building mass is imperceptible as it fades into a faint image which hardly persists in our memory. The speed of driving creates a cinematographic effect that results in a loss of sensible referents and a decay of architectural markers.

4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Urban Experimentation

Urban experimentation views proliferation and fragmentation in production and consumption of spatiality as being regarded as series of superimposed layers of spatial programmes, whilst combining material and perceptual (de)constructive urban images. There is a need to propose tangible forms for a wider understanding of the space which mediates overlapping urban images, fields, networks (where built and unbuilt environments intertwine). This procedure aims at producing images of new space configurations which are never geometrical nor predictable, but are rather collections, aggregations, accumulations of patched-up, extendable, overlapping and developing forms. The experiment(s) acknowledges the conflict between imagination and realization as a driving force for creating and structuring virtual spatial orders, thus operating on the boundaries between virtuality and reality. The task is to materialize spatial paradox to accentuate the experienced qualities of design of the built environment. There is an attempt to replace the neutral, homogenous conception of modernist space with the post modernist figuration of form as a theatrical construction that is highly orchestrated through relations and instructions, and subjected to functions of (trans)forming, (in)forming and (per)forming (Eisenman 1999). Because of the component of sign value or aesthetic image in postmodern cities, experimentation becomes a more important aspect in producing spatial possibilities.

Therefore the proposed procedure will provide potentials for flexibility and imageability to generate new dynamic forms of urban images, with added layers of history being superimposed, with fabric being opened and randomness being valued. However the experimental procedure will allow for (re)(de)construction of new spatiality, disrupting its meaning, whilst identifying the relationship between cognitive imaging and virtual forms. There is a need to read deconstructively such internal struggle between deconstruction of institutional consumption and institutionalization of spatial deconstruction, a resistance that would provide more incentive for further deconstruction (Wigley 1995), ranging from visionary ideas to electronic agora and virtual spaces (Graham and Marvin 1996).

The current postmodern (de)(re)constructive experimentation will deal with urban images which represent multiple and continuously changing interfaces that transcend the nature of physicality by offering built forms of multi-dimensional virtual layers. The immediateness and multiplicity of these (hyper) environments challenge the traditional concepts of presence, distance, and time, whilst delivering an architecture of singular simultaneity, that is an architectural version of Auges' (1995) non-place where anything and everything is (re)present(ed) at least in theory. Urban images can be seen as both the celebration and critique of the media/information postmodern society. Accordingly importing, sustaining, and 'splashing' virtuality (e.g. art work, cinema, daily news, environmental scenes, video-games, virtual worlds) onto the real world will nevertheless lead to hybrid interface between electronic media (broadcast or wired) and built media (encoded in the urban environment).

In addition to a symbolic equivalence between the physical and the virtual, there is an ontological equivalence, with "digital-space" being made commensurate with "real-space." Not only physical axioms, but also metaphysical axioms are sustained, ensuring that the same epistemological system governing Western thought will continue to operate. Metaphors of cities, of electronic spheres imply that Cyberspace is more than a space, it is "a place and a mode of being." As such, cyberspace prompts humans to "be" differently. Often couched in evolutionary terms, the inhabitants of cyberspace are described as developing nonphysical qualities, qualities that pertain to their non-embodiment, and that suit the demands of virtual architecture and virtual physics.

Urban images are therefore the natural symbiotic result of the new material and information needs of our environments, with hybrid interface between electronic media (broadcast or wired) and built media (encoded in the urban environment). Although media may conjure up almost anything into presence, virtuality can only displace but not replace reality, whilst seeking to reaffirm the true meaning of being embodied. New spaces emerge and disappear, they overlap and interpenetrate one another, with the virtual city being at once a transmutation of the known, whilst standing alongside and being interwoven into real urban life. However with information technology bringing various areas into proximity of one another, spaces constantly juxtapose themselves one against the other, similar to Lefebvre's (1991) image of interpenetrating spaces. In turn this will invite a refocusing of spatial design, bringing together the material and the informational, the tectonic and the abstract, the real and the virtual whilst re-inscribing these motifs

within new practices, new forms, the parameters of which are the ingredients (materials and images), consuming methods (production techniques and spatial diagrams) - the architecture of the postmodern commercial take-away.

4.2 Urban Disjunction

Eisenman (1999), and Tschumi (1988) both dismantle the conventions of architecture by using concepts derived from cinema, literary criticism, philosophy and psychoanalysis (Fahmi 2001). In *Cinegramme Folie* at the Parc de La Villette, Tschumi (1989) dislocates, de-regulates the idea of meaning as emerging from built form, as constantly 'deferred, differed, rendered irresolute', displaced by 'superimposition and transformations'. 'Presence is postponed and closure deferred as each permutation or combination form shifts the image one step ahead' (Tschumi 1988).

Urban Disjunction rejects the notion of "synthesis" in favour of juxtaposition of contradictory forces (Tschumi 1996), thus producing dissociation which Derrida (1982) would call *différance* in space and time, with architectural elements only functioning by colliding with programmatic elements (Cross-programming- Trans-programming- Dis-programming). A Deconstructive procedure further reengages analytically in city imaging and new urban installations in public spaces. Lebbeus Woods' visionary work considered with analogous comparison of virtual space and, '... produces daring visual effects, suggests enigmatic purposes, and evokes a new sense of time space,' and suggests that people can create their own world with reference to their collective memory, with the ability to draw upon their own experiences (Noever 1991). The aim is to produce hybrid situations for consumption of a conflation of various commodities and urban images, including built and unbuilt elements, as influenced by history, human experience and contemporary culture, and being mapped into fictional terrain of perceptive imagery and virtual reality.

Nevertheless Urban Disjunction overcomes aesthetic borderlines and familiar structural principles, a change in visual habits, creation of a new aesthetic, experimentation, link between visionary architecture and electronic media of the real and virtual space (Cooke 1989). Urban Disjunction emancipates architectural thinking from the hegemony of functionality, from its traditional elements such as harmony, unity, symmetry..), and re-inscribes these motifs within new spaces, new forms, to shape new spatial experiences and representations.

4.3 Urban Experimental Imaging Model (UEIM)

A (de)(re)constructive reading is proposed of the city of pixels as intermediary (in-between) spaces, similar to Tschumi's event city (1994) and Coates' ecstacity (2000), a conflation of existing real cities (Shanghai 2000, Helsinki 2000, Cairo 2000, London 2002, Berlin 2003, Moscow 2003, Barcelona 2004, Manchester 2004, Cairo 2004), with urban spaces being mapped into fictional terrain of imagery and virtuality. Conceptualizing the post modern city as a collective collage or a 'theatre of memory' is based upon Harvey's (1989) diagnosis of postmodern representation of urban experience, with the city being a theatrical space, 'a series of stages', where individuals can assume different identities under space-time compression. Urban experimentation will employ representational techniques identified by Pile and Thrift (2000) such as collages (Rowe and Koetter 1978), diagrams (Eisenman 1999); montage and *flâneurie's* narratives (Benjamin 1979, 1985); screens (Deleuze 1997, Lefebvre 1991).

Accordingly city of pixels is understood as a collection of urban fragments being (re)sorted, (re)assembled and (re)connected continually unsettling and disturbing established spatial orders, whilst implying superimposition and interchange. Urban Experimentation, by means of texts, digital images, digital video stills and diagrams, creates symbolic representations, and fantasies to signify an identifiable or/and imaginary (sense of) place identity, whilst emphasizing the use of spatio-temporal mapping, narratives, and people's cognitive mechanisms within urban spaces. The postmodern Urban Experience is thus being represented as consisting of series of superimposed layers of programmes (functions, geometries, infrastructures, buildings) (Tschumi 1988,1989), influencing, modifying, changing city's structural concept whilst producing fragmentary urban patterns, with historical and topographical factors generating contradictions and tensions (Fahmi 2000). The current experiment suggests tangible forms for understanding spaces in-between, mediating overlapping images, fields, networks (where built and unbuilt environments are revealed). With the need to suture elements of the splintered postmodern urban, the experiment acknowledges the conflict between imagination and reality as a driving force for creating and structuring virtual spatial orders, producing images of the city as collections, aggregations, accumulations of patched-up, extendable, overlapping and developing forms.

Furthermore the experiment's intention is to unsettle 'memory and context' by rejecting both 'contextualist' and 'continualist' approaches, and favouring conflict over synthesis, fragmentation over unity, madness and play over careful management. The experiment opens into prior images and earlier signs, representing a different and autonomous system (a text), presenting 'urban montage', which had been applied in Tschumi's (1989) Parc de La Villette and developed as part of film technique by Eisenstein. In 'montage' independent urban fragments are juxtaposed thus permitting 'a multiplicity of combinations', together with repetitions, substitutions, and insertions.

4.4 Representation of City of Pixels

4.4.1 Urban Screens, Collages and Fragments

Urban images/screens (Bermudez 1995) offer multiple and continuously changing interfaces whilst transcends physicality by offering buildings of multi-dimensional character, and by accessing a hyper-environment, with layers of (virtual) environments overlapping. Screen interfaces are seen as indices of possibility, with their proliferation enriching our imaginative experience of the city, by producing psychic echoes and reverberations that enliven the senses. Deleuze's (1997) screens become a means of expressing affects of the city by placing images together, mirroring the way in which the city juxtaposes many different possibilities, emotions, sensations, and perceptions. They make these qualities into dialectical forces which are actualized in determinate space-times, geographical and historical milieus, and individual people's lives (Smith 1992). (Figure 1a: Screen – Interface).

This stage of the experiment pulls together a spatial narrative evoking journeys to ‘the other cities, with such juxtapositions being a montage of urban images, revealing the fragmented nature of postmodern space (Harvey 1989), with its souvenirs and its myriad connections to ‘other’ places. In accordance with Benjamin (1985), there is an attempt to recuperate and reassemble from the fragments, a different picture of the post modern city, through the flow and distribution of images. This is similar to Tschumi's (1989) follies at Parc de La Villette, where cinematography was exploited to offer new perspective on the city, by bringing many images into sharp juxtaposition, by being able to establish connections between apparently disconnected elements, and by using multimedia to capture the urban experience (Benjamin 1985). (Figure 1b: [spacez] and [connectionz]).

Box 1: Notational Interaction in Space and Time (Figure 1)

The theme for this stage of the experiment focuses on developing algorithms that formulate spatial and temporal relationships with a common (dis/ cross/ trans- programming) narrative. Uncertainty prevails as new post modern spatiality emerges using a series of collage- images and screen interfaces. Collage-images investigate the free-space construction of the newly –hidden city of pixels through the meeting of both virtual and real worlds (Figure 1).

a- **Screen – Interface** (Figure 1 a)

Screen Interface reconfigures the external surface of real built space, in response to the saturation of media in the city. The real city facades are replaced with a fluid, interactive 'blankspace', upon which all forms of digital display and advertising operate.

b- **[spacez] and [connectionz]** (Figure 1b)

Collages and Fragments represent the interface between actualised landscape and the deconstructive experience within (virtual and real) city as constantly negotiated and redefined by peoples' movement around, through and inside main public spaces

4.4.2 Urban Semiotics

The semiotic matrix of city of pixels 'at night' forms a text of aesthetic representation, with an exhibition of images actively permeating and flexibly saturating the real city. where signs coagulate, logos deliquesce, thus creating a hybrid identity for its inhabitants. The blurred tracks of the semiotic matrix of post modern spaces of the night city's articulation represent a spatial memory (Boyer, 1994), whilst being regarded as arenas for urban experimentation in between the local and global (glocal), the imaginary and reality (Fahmi and Howe, 2003) Inevitably, cities will increasingly be seen as landscapes, where each building markets itself as a distinct sign, or billboard, representing the corporate identity of and globalization. The notion of the branded landmark is explored as a major public structure. These buildings will mark place as well as represent chosen brand identities. (Figure 2: Brandscape)

Box 2: Interactive BRANDING Systems (Figure 2)

brand-segment targets zones of interactive surfaces for display-information and promotion of brandscapes, and is assembled as display devices adjustable to spatial changes. Utilizing a system of smart surface segments, an interactive surface is created for display, information and promotion of brandscapes.

Brand-nets extend the ways in which space is used to brand lifestyles. The scripted, thematic experience of the city of pixels is formulated by the installation of changeable surfaces that transform identities: a spatial mechanism/metaphor that tests the capacity of spatial radicalization of the city of pixels.

4.4.3 Diagrams between Reality and Virtuality

Drawing upon Eisenman's Romeo and Juliet project for Venice Biennale (1985), methods of diagrammatic layering, scaling, superimposition, is being employed in the experiment, producing a fractal representation of the built environment, with literary narratives being used to dramatize the meeting of the 'fictional' and the 'real'. Such Image diagrammatic technique lies between spatial and structural analysis and assumes a language founded on the articulation and contradiction of dialectics (centre-periphery, vertical-horizontal, inside-outside, solid-void, point-plane). Such technique detaches form from its programmatic concerns, and displaces it from its relationship to function, meaning and aesthetics whilst being subjected to functions of (trans)forming, (in)forming and (per)forming (Eisenman 1999). Diagrams offer experimental interfaces for intervening in complex urban processes within emerging networked environment, not only to develop advanced tools for the design of (un)built environments, but to refresh 'ways of seeing' through the design (creation) of imaginative (virtual) environments involving metaphorical (re) (de) construction of space, cognitive codes, and visual elements within urban systems. (Figure 3: Mindspace and Dreamscape)

Box 3: Mind Mapping (Figure 3)

This is fictional space or a moment in time lies somewhere between documentary and fiction. A sequence of diagrams are traced that will try to record what takes place between the moment of looking and the moment of drawing a line. Observing, analyzing and imagining a film space through drawing, in order to test and realize the possibilities of transforming a space through processes of construction: layering, adding, subtracting, cutting and distorting. A sequence of multi-view spatial diagrams are formulated with different types of projections (orthogonal, perspectives) and collages processes. The result is an operating system of different aspects of virtual, simulated, personal, imaginary spaces - a structured, multi-author, multi-threaded narrative space for consumption of the city of pixels

4.4.4 Urban Narratives

Narratives have formulated architectural fiction whilst binding together stories, myths, and fantasies through plot formation and characterization within fictional landscapes that reflect a knowledge of the culture producing them. Narrative inquiry uses stories to describe how people construct the meanings of their lives (Bruner 1986; Polkinghorne 1995) lead storied lives and tell stories of their lives, whilst combining to make fluid interchanges between fiction and, potential architectural production. However Boyer (1994) has pointed out that the postmodern aesthetic claimed to return to narrative forms, searching for design language that communicates with the public, that manipulates simple combinations and patterns that are part of our collective memory . With the text remaining central, our environments grow increasingly hyper-real, with people generally exchanging their role as users and becoming readers and consumers (Bergum, 1990). (Figure 4a: EventSpaces; Figure 4b: TranS-system and URBA-NETworks)

Box 4: EventSpaces (Figure 4)

a- **EventSpaces**- Figure 4a represents a spatial metaphor for re(de)constructing dynamic, constantly changing scenarios of hyperlinked texts and images which will provide the possibility of a more situational or flexible location of the self, as means of orientation within the emerging meta-spaces of global mobility. This will allow the urban consumer to manipulate and express spatial meaning, structure and aesthetics, thus enabling spatial representation to become part of the individual urban experience

b- **TranS-system and URBA-NETworks** Figure 4b

TranS-system has put people into a space of 'total flow', with the juxtapositioning of their mental images, and with possibility of re-mapping a real city through locating the hidden spaces in the "unconscious" of the city of pixels.

URBA-NETworks of 'third spaces' at major existing infrastructural sites reflecting mobility, time and interconnected network facilities . These spatial networks imply immersion, habitation, being-there., drifting between reality and mythical spaces, between the screen and the imagery of transit spaces and experience of space- time compression (Harvey 1989).

4.4.5 Urban Installations

Urban interfaces are introduced, including (un)built environment and image diagrams as inserted within or superimposed on the fabric of the city of pixels . These installations/icons or urban interfaces then cast the experiential tools to explore the city as an individual construct (flâneur), considering the complex centripetal-centrifugal space which everybody experiences physically and perceptually. They respond to events and initiatives to formulate hyper-spatial conditions which are multi-dimensional , multi-physical, flipping and compressing both virtual and real experiences in the city.(Baudrillard, 1993). (Figure 5 OtherSide Digital territory)

Box 5: OtherSide Digital territory (Figure 5)

This stage incorporates urban /art installations designed to experiment with new possibilities of virtual space, whilst exploring metaphors of urban life and human experience, weaving into existing fabric of the real city and becoming a city of pixels, that functions as a dynamic experimental incubator, enclosing various concepts.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 **Virtuality and Postmodern Spatiality**

Castells(1996) argues that power resides in the net as places cannot exist outside of flows of information, transactions, people, and goods. Places do not disappear, but their logic and their meaning become absorbed in the network. However the proliferation of "non-places"; the bland shopping malls, indistinguishable airports, office blocks, gated communities, theme parks, old-worldly villages, and managed and coifed "wilderness" areas that, functioning as signs rather than places, immerse the user in a self-conscious form of ritual bearing little relation to any actual time or location. Alongside the built environment, the global reach of

television networks saturates world screens with a homogenous stream of images, sounds, rhythms, flows, nuances of light, color, and location. Cultural difference is absorbed, and an intense uniformity is produced via the rigorous programming that commercial interests demand. Sassen (2003) focused on digital information and communication structures that arise out of the intersection of technology and society, whilst using the construct "digital formation" to capture this outcome, one shaped both by endogenous technical properties and by endogenized social logics. However growing digitalization of economic activities has not eliminated the need for major international business and financial centers and all the material resources they concentrate, from state of the art telematics infrastructure to brain talents.

In the familiar characterizations of cultural discourse, screen culture inhabits neither place nor ground: it is fragmented and dislocated, it operates on a surface that is ephemeral and mediated, it has a four second attention span. With the accouterments of telecommunications—faxes, modems, mobile phones, beepers, these tendencies are amplified. The ever-expanding, continuously on-call individual, becomes another kind of interface, for ever screening, filtering, ignoring, accepting, and repressing the plethora of inputs, information and demands for action that absorb his or her private space and individual time. While this appropriation of personal time and actual place may once have been viewed as a surreptitious lengthening of working hours and (mostly) unremunerated use of an individual's major asset; the home, for work purposes, it is now applauded as evidence of the collapse of borders, the process of globalization that is manifested on a national and individual level as everyone becomes his or her own small business.

Reflecting trends in poststructuralist theory, this exchange between the individual and the electronic media and telecommunications environment is discursively represented as the achievement of a polymorphous, heterogeneous subjectivity, a "liquid identity," a "post" human freed from the bonds of the autonomous subject. Subjectivity is performed as a new kind of text while the body becomes a permeable surface, adorned with signs and riddled with the inscriptions and prescriptions of culture. In this context, the hinge between cyber and space conveniently slides between ontology and postmodern "body-as-text". This belief in the body-as-text runs across theoretical discourse within the humanities, information theory, and information technologies. Cyberspace is established as an "other" place to enact the deconstructed self: a self whose multiplicity and ambiguity is continually reinforced as the body seems to increasingly inhabit the dematerialized world that technology creates.

Seeing, and the poststructuralist framework dominated by the mediated image, is replaced by being, and the supposedly unmediated experience of immersion. Despite the fact that most cyber experience occurs via the screen, or more contemporaneously, as flows of data, the body-as-text elides the distinction between the screen and its viewer by ignoring the actuality of the screen and elaborating instead the metaphor of virtual "space." The "as if you are there" is truncated to a "you are there." One is in cyberspace, not watching it, one is a navigator, not a viewer, with this shift being in line with modernist ambitions of eliding the gap between signifier and signified, viewer and viewed, real and representation. In the high modernism of virtual rhetoric this ambition travels with its own ideology: the "being-in" of cyberspace which does not allow the subject-object distinction to interfere with the cybernaut's mythic immersion in what is often represented as a mystical space, thus shifting from a mode of manipulating representation to manipulating ontology.

The boundaries between urban conditions, between private and public space, natural and urban space, are blurring whilst being influenced by forces of global capitalism. Contemporary technologies are expanding cities horizontally through new systems of digital and physical infrastructure. Beckman (1998) argued that globalized liquid 'soft architectures' of digital media flow over, under and through the local concrete and 'hard architectures' of our contemporary cities, creating an indeterminate, 'floating' environment, an interface between public and private, collective and subjective, provincial and planetary. Architecture of cities needs no longer be generated through the static conventions of plan, section and elevation. Instead, buildings can now be fully formed in three-dimensional modeling, profiling, proto-tying and manufacturing software, interfaces and hardware, thus collapsing the stages between conceptualization and fabrication, production and construction. Iconographic assemblies are absorbed, reworked, and distributed globally in various forms and embodiments. The icons that comprise this new landscape of difference are essentially mediated reflexes of similarity and diversification (constructs that are mirrored endlessly over computer networks, home pages, televised imagery, advertising campaigns).

According to Castells (1996) such emergent dimensions and new communication system radically transforms space and time. Localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographic meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks, or into image collages inducing a space of flows that substitutes for a space of places. In the information society the dominant form of social time is what Castells (1996) calls timeless time, "the annihilation and manipulation of time by electronically managed global capital markets" The reactions to this globalization, this seeming tyranny of flows is manifested in many people's desires for neo-traditional places that are more self-contained, as well as to environments where nature is reconstructed as an ideal cultural form.

Today, in a post-industrial age, technologies of communication and computation, real-time connectivity and interface, represent an ever-accelerating world (Beckman 1998). As the city of pixels represent interfaces to the net, the appearance of solid permanent buildings is challenged by virtual representation of abstract systems (electronic images). Whilst a non-local trans-urbanism is in the making, freed from a fixed geometry, the virtual city will not be the post-physical city, but a transmutation and a transgression of the known, interwoven into real urban life. We tend to operate in topographies that weave between actual and digital space, as we are increasingly relocating activities to digital spaces and locating digital capacities in the human body (Sassen 2003).

5.2 Cognitive Imaging and the Notion of Being

The experimental procedure has allowed for the virtual deconstruction of public spaces and for the presentation of diagrams that identify the relationships between cognitive image and virtual forms (Fahmi 2001, Fahmi 2002). As based on appeals to ontology rather than epistemology, to authentic being rather than mediated seeing, virtuality rhetorically expand ever outwards, encompassing an infinity of spaces, times, mythologies, and modes of transcendence, they also close in on the individual, appropriating innerspace. There is a need to revisit that postmodern subject, whose corporeality and environment has been literally infiltrated by cyberspace.

The use of image diagrams, collage sketches and screen installations led to 'de-solidifying' things and dissolving spatial distinctions, to (de)constructing perceptual shifting between figure and ground, near and far, inside and outside, with these evocative diagrams intensifying the cognitive process. The experiment therefore intended to unsettle 'memory and context' by rejecting both 'contextualist' and 'continualist' approaches, and favouring conflict over synthesis, fragmentation over unity, madness and play over careful management, indicating the change in the notion of collage images by the multiplication of screen installations, with these representations being products of particular notions of spatiality.

With navigation into a trans-urbanism in terms of turning-inside-out of cyberspace, these experimental diagrams promise to occupy the coterminous territories of the real and the virtual. Zelner (1999) illustrated that in (re)(de) construction of the virtual and the real, everyday experience is mirrored in another reality, between the virtual urbanity of the information machine and the actual urbanity of the city, calling into play the possibility of a coterminous and dialectic merging of very real city of bricks and a conceptually experienced 'city of bits' (Mitchell 1996). In addition there is a need to revisit the post modern subject, where corporeality and environment has been literally infiltrated by cyberspace, which is repositioned as the locus of techno-institutional forces, pushing and pulling to achieve maximal efficiencies.

As based on appeals to ontology rather than epistemology, to authentic being rather than mediated seeing, virtuality rhetorically expands ever outwards, encompassing an infinity of spaces, times, mythologies, and modes of transcendence, whilst closing in on the individually appropriating inner space. Virtuality is considered a psychological mechanism and cognitive adaptation in a less 'user-friendly' living environment, with imaginative space being used as a medium for 'bringing forth' or manifesting abstract ideas into the realm of virtual place (Heidegger 1977). Being as expressed, within the critiques of Western metaphysics that have been erupting for the last twenty years, is a complex assignation which nevertheless argues the ontological status of virtuality (Davies 1998). As a central metaphor within the notion of being, "space" provides a means of negotiating such a dilemma, having sufficient ambiguity to enable the discourse to drift between reality and mythic spaces, between the "space of the screen," the "space of the imagination," "outerspace," "cosmic space," and literal, three-dimensional physical "space." The power of "space" lies in the possibilities it implies: immersion, habitation, "being-there," unmediated presence, all fall within its domain. Without "space" there can be no concept of presence within an environment, nor, more importantly, can there be the possibility for authenticity that "being-in-the-world" allows.

Heidegger (1977) writes that "the essence of modern technology is by no means anything technological," the issues he raises are fundamentally ontological, dealing with the "being" of being human as much as the being of technology (cited in Dyson 1998). This link between two "essences", the human and the technological, is articulated in the popular discourse on cyberspace, thus constantly mapping and regulating perceptions of new communications technologies such as the Internet and the "information superhighway," and new media forms such as virtual reality (VR). Thus the "ontology" of cyberspace signals the attempts to assign being as an attribute to these new forms of media and communications, a play within the field of metaphor, fantasy, and what Gibson (1989), in coining the terms "cyberspace," identifies as "consensual hallucination." Cyberspace is nonetheless a nihilistic, debt ridden, impossible space, a space that, in denying the "reality" of the physical, tacitly acknowledges its hostility to "being" and its incommensurability with corporeality. Imaginative virtual space is used as a medium for "bringing forth" or "manifesting" abstract ideas into the realm of virtual "place" so that they can be kinesthetically explored and bodily lived in real events, suggesting alternative ways of seeing and being in the world.

5.3 Urban Future between Virtuality and Reality

Utilizing complexity theory and concepts fashioned on the paradigmatic logic of biological systems, Kelly (1995) envisions a technologically deterministic future with radically different forms of social and organizational control, which regards technology as the agency of a new economy, culminating in a transition from a hierarchical social order to a 'network culture based on counter-intuitive principles'. Accordingly he demonstrates a paradigm shift whereas everything ranging from literary texts to market institutions are seen as "complex" and/or "self-organizing" systems (Kelly 1998). Negroponte (1996) presents his vision of the post-information age or the future digital life of mediating technologies in terms of bits, interface and digital life. With decentralization, globalization, and harmonization, Digital Spatiality has emerged with five forces of change transforming culture, infrastructure, and economy and lifestyles: global imperatives; size polarities; redefined time; egalitarian energy; and meaningless territory. Negroponte's (1996) description of the growth of digital technologies as "almost genetic in its nature" evokes the organic metaphor of exponential growth to describe the dynamic rate and self-organizing character of change. Thus, not only is Negroponte's future here and now, in some regards, it is already past. Nevertheless forms of knowledge for the present and future demand critical theories of power, as well as normative and utopian visions that contextualize technology within a social, political, and economic framework, and that assess implications of new technologies in terms of their potential to enhance or restrict freedom and democracy, and to promote or undermine environmental sustainability and social justice

Furthermore urbanists are in conflict between the permanent requirements of organizing and constructing real space, with its land problems, the geometric and geographic constraints of the center and the periphery, and the new requirements of managing the real time of immediacy and ubiquity.' Nevertheless the virtual is real but not actual, ideal but never abstract. Indeed, the two sides of this purported dialectic, the real-actual and the virtual-imaginary are akin to oscillating forces in a shifting field, existing not side by side but through and across each other. If they are entities at all, they share functions and space over coterminous territories, or overlapping regions of nonexclusivity. An architecture capable of addressing and choreographing - the dance between the doubled worlds of the real-actual and the virtual-potential is beginning to present itself. Instead of trying to guarantee the eternal life of an existing architecture in a different medium, our strategy today should be the contamination of that architecture with other media and disciplines in order to produce a new and more robust urban experience. Whether "hypersurface," with investigations into a topology of relational, mediated human, or "trans-architectures," in terms of turning-inside-out of cyberspace, these experimental forms promise to occupy the coterminous territories of the real and the virtual. In them, we may begin to experience a world no longer divided by virtuality but one made rich with spaces of animated potentials and realities.

There are organizing metaphors that make virtual environments places to be. These virtual 'spaces' are concerned with being elsewhere and being other in an evolutionary, in the same powerful conflation of real space and simulation, of real life and virtuality. Returning to the futurism from which the neo-futurism of cyber-architecture has developed, the virtual future is laden with the dark nihilism that the visionary dreams of new, futurist cities produced. Contemporary cyberspace, with its emphasis on the future, re-enacts the nihilistic logic of early futurism in so far as the fulfillment of its dreams are necessarily deferred to a time that one can never witness. Since one cannot "be" in the future, one cannot comfortably "be" in the fiction that is cyberspace. Attempting to do so is like attempting to inhabit any dream or vision. And if the present is already lacking, the future is represented as already spent, mortgaged through national deficits and environmental destruction.

Finally, according to Boyer (1994) a 'crisis of collective memory', a shared disjunction of our relations to the past, is linked to rapid urban change as modernism and industrialization disrupts the myriad of ways in which cities house a collective sense of history. The crisis of collective memory provokes a desire to reframe the past in urban scenography. Such scenographic representations repress the mystery and disorder of urban life which is collapsed into 'scenes', as seen in the shopping malls and housing enclaves, where history becomes a product which is packaged and consumed. The deconstructive task leads to a play of formal imagery, whilst aiming to unpack and reconstruct the lifeworld and its spatial programs. Such a programmatic deconstruction would entail a systematic engagement with the ways in which the lifeworld has been sliced, its functions categorized, coded, juxtaposed and omitted. And in a decentred, disoriented and fragmented world the shock value may come from a reintegration and reorientation. The key role of future city designers is to deploy creative imagination in the public interest, yet it must be divorced from Plato's ideal 'forms' and authoritarian politics.

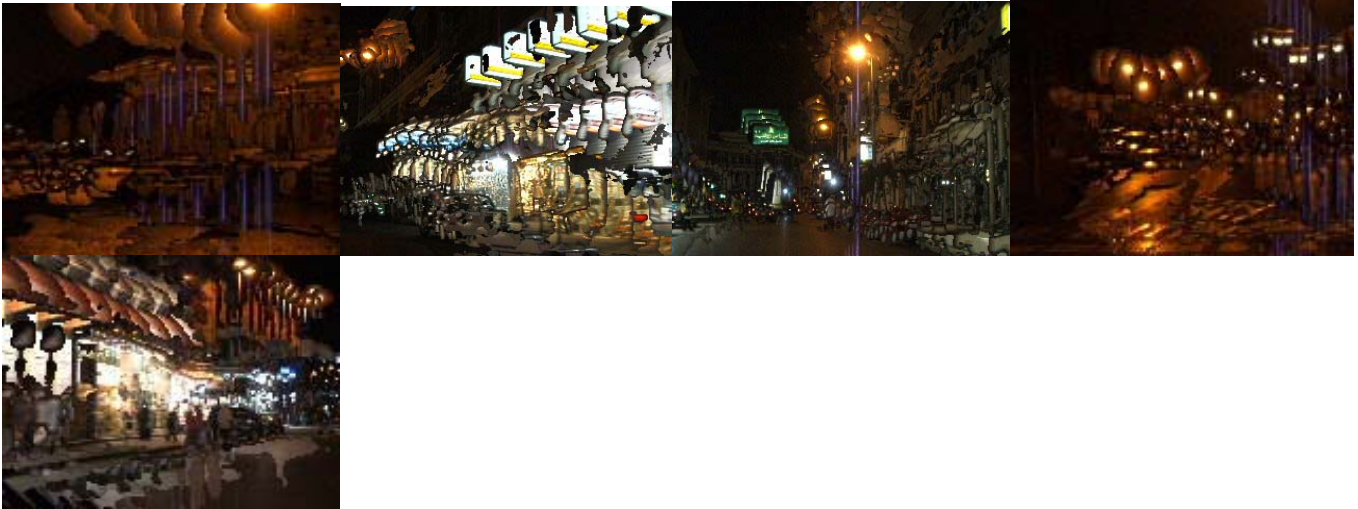
6 REFERENCES

- AUGE, M.: *Non-Places—Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*; translation. John Howe; New York: Verso, 1995
- BARTHES, R.: *The Pleasure of the Text*; translated in R. Milder; New York: Hill and Wang, 1976
- BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Hyperreal America*; *Economy and Society*, 11,1: pp 243-252, 1993
- BECKMANN, J. (ed): *The Virtual Dimension: Architecture, Representation and Crash Culture*; Princeton Architectural Press: New York: pp145-155, 1998
- BENJAMIN, W.: *One Way Street and Other Writings*; London: Verso, 1985; also published by New Left Books, 1979
- BENJAMIN, W.: "The Flâneur" Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism; translation. Harry Zohn., London : New Left Books, 1973
- BERGUM, C.: *Urban Form and Urban Representation*; in Dennis Crow (ed), *Philosophical Streets*; Misonneuve Press, pp 113-132, 1990
- BERMUDEZ, J.: *Aesthetics of Information: Cyberizing the Architectural Artifact*; proceeding of the 5th. Biennial Symposium on Arts and Technology Connecticut College, Center for the Arts and Technology, New London, Connecticut, pp.200-216, 1995
- BOYER, M. C.: *The City of Collective Memory*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994
- BRUNER, J.: *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986
- CALVINO, I.: *Invisible Cities*; London: Pan Books, 1979
- CASTELLS, M.: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 1: The Rise of the Network Society*; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996
- CASTELLS, M.: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 2: The Power of Identity*; Oxford: Blackwell, 1997
- CASTELLS, M.: *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: Volume 3: End of Millennium*; Oxford: Blackwell, 1998
- CHRISTENSEN, E.: *Mediation and Return: Ambiguous Identity of the City's Edge*; in M.QUANTRILL and B.WEBB (eds.) *Urban Forms, Suburban Dreams*; College Station: Texas A&M University Press, pp.9-14, 1993
- COATES, N.: *Ecstacy*; London: RIBA Publication, 2000
- COOKE, C.: *Russian Precursors*; in A. PAPADAKIS (ed), *Deconstruction: Omnibus Volume*, London: Academy Editions, p.13, 1989
- DAVIES, C.: *Virtual Reality as an Arena of Embodied Being*; in J. BECKMANN (ed), *The Virtual Dimension: Architecture, Representation and Crash Culture*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press: pp145-155, 1998
- DELEUZE, G.: *Essays: Critical and Clinical*; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997
- DERRIDA, J.: *Difference*, in J. Derrida (ed.) *Margins of Philosophy*; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp3-27, 1982
- DERRIDA, J.: *Of Grammatology*; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976
- DOVEY, K.: *Framing Places. Mediating Power In Built Form*; London: Routledge, 1999
- EISENMAN, P.: *Moving Arrows, Eros + other Errors, An Architecture of Absence*; Third International Architectural Biennale: Venice, Italy, 1985
- EISENMAN, P.: *Diagram Diaries*; London: Thames and Hudson, 1999
- ELLIN, N.: *Post Modern Urbanism*; New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996
- FAHMI, W. and HOWE, J.: *Deconstructing the Built Environment: Design Experimentation within Public Spaces*, in A. THORNLEY and Y. RYDIN (eds.) *Planning in a Global Era*; London: Ashgate, pp 163-189, 2003
- FAHMI, W.: *Re-Conceiving The Urban Experience: Deconstructive Experimentation with Cognitive Imaging in Postmodern Cities*, published in *Conference Proceedings (CD-Rom) of the 10th International Conference of Planning History*; London and Letchworth : University of Westminster, 10-13 July, 2002
- FAHMI, W.: *Reading of Post Modern Public Spaces As Layers Of Virtual Images and Real Events*; published on CD-Rom ISoCaRP 2001- ISBN 90-755 24-290-x, 2001 (also presented at the 37th International Planning Congress, "Honey, I Shrunk The Space" Planning in the Information Age, Utrecht, The Netherlands - 16 -20 September, 2001)
- FAHMI, W.: *Deconstructivism Of The Postmodern City: Architectural Experimentation Within Public Spaces*; proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Quality of Life in Cities, Volume 2, pp 107-136, School of Building and Real Estate, National University of Singapore, ISBN : 981-04-2363-2, (also presented at the 2nd International Conference on Quality of Life in Cities, Singapore 8th -10th March, 2000)
- FOUCAULT, M.: *Of Other Spaces; Diacritics*, pp 22-27, 1986
- GEERTZ, C.: *Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought*; *The American Scholar*, 49 (2): pp 165-79, 1980
- GENOCCHIO, B.: *Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference*; in S. WATSON and K. GIBSON (eds), *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*; Oxford: Blackwell, 1995
- GIBSON, W.: *Mona Lisa Overdrive*; New York: Bantam Books, 1989
- GRAHAM, S. and MARVIN, S.: *Telecommunications and the City : Electronic Spaces and Urban Places*; London and New York: Routledge, 1996
- GOTTDIENER, M. and LAGOPOULOS, A. (eds): *The City and the Sign*; NY: Columbia UP, 1986
- HARVEY, D.: *The Condition of Postmodernity*; Oxford: Blackwell, 1989
- HEIDEGGER, M.: *The Question Concerning Technology*; translation. William Lovitt, New York: Harper Torch-books, p 4, 1977
- HUANG, T.: *Hong Kong Blue: Flâneurie with the Camera's Eye in a Phantasmagoric Global City*; *Journal of Narrative Theory* 30, (3), (Fall), pp. 385-402, 2000
- IBELINGS, H.: *Supermodernism: Architecture in the Age of Globalization*; Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 1998
- JAMESON, F.: *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*; Durham: Duke University Press, 1991
- 10th International Conference on Information & Communication Technologies (ICT)
in Urban Planning and Spatial Development and Impacts of ICT on Physical Space

- JAMESON, F.: Cognitive Mapping; in C. NELSON and L. GROSSBERG (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, London: Macmillan Education, 1988
- KELLY, K.: *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems and the Economic World*; Addison-Wesley Pub Co, 1995
- KELLY, K.: *New Rules for the New Economy*; Viking, 1998
- KYMALAINEN, P.: Spacing Difference: Questions of Urban Experience; paper presented at the 9th International Conference of Planning History in Helsinki, Espo- Finland from 20th-23rd August, 2000, (abstract published in book of Abstracts, "Centre-Periphery-Globalization: Past and Present", Helsinki University of Technology, p 199)
- LASH, S. and URRY, J.: *Economies of Signs and Space*; London: Sage, 1994
- LEACH, N.: The Aesthetic Cocoon; in *Re: Generic City*, OASE 54 Winter, Nijmegen: SUN Publisher, Netherlands, pp. 105-121, 2001
- LEACH, N.: Introduction; in N. LEACH (ed), *The Hieroglyphics of Space: Reading and Experiencing the Modern Metropolis*; London and New York: Routledge, pp1-11, 2002
- LEFEBVRE, H.: *The Production of Space*; Oxford: Blackwell, 1991
- LIDDAMENT, T.: The Myths of Imagery; *Design Studies*, 21, pp 589–606, 2000
- LYNCH, K.: *The Image of The City*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1960
- MITCHELL, W.: *City of Bits: Space, Place and Infobahn*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995
- NEGROPONTE, N.: *Being Digital*; Vintage Books, 1996
- NOEVER, P. (ed): *Architecture In Transition -Between Deconstruction And New Modernism*; Munich: Prestel –Verlag, 1991
- PATTON, P.: *Imaginary Cities: Images of Postmodernity*; in S. WATSON and K. GIBSON (eds), *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*; Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 112-121, 1995
- PILE, S.: *The Body and The City*; London: Routledge, 1996
- PILE, S. and THRIFT, N.: *The City A-Z*; London: Routledge, 2000
- POLKINGHORNE, D.E.: Narrative Configuration In Qualitative Analysis; in J.A HATCH and R WISENIEWSKI (eds), *Life History and Narrative*, Washington DC, 1995
- RABAN, J.: *Soft City*; London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974
- RIEWOLDT, O.: *Intelligent Spaces : Architecture for the Information Age*; London: Calmann and King Limited, 1997
- ROWE, C. and KOETTER, F.: *The Collage City*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1978
- SASSEN S.: Digital Formations: Mapping a Field of Inquiry; Keynote Address to the IFIP WG 8.2 - IFIP WG 9.4 Conference, 'IS Perspectives and Challenges in the Context of Globalization', Athens University of Economics & Business, (15 - 17June) 2003: (based on LATHAM, R. And SASSEN, S. (ed): *Digital Formations: New Architectures for Global Order*; Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press, 2004
- SASSEN, S.: Globalization or Denationalization ?; *Review of International Political Economy*, 10, 1 (February),pp. 1-2, 2003
- SASSEN, S.: The global city: Strategic Site/New frontier in GLOBALIZATION a Symposium on the Challenges of Closer Global Integration-India, (July), 2001
- SASSEN, S.: Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global; *Public Culture*, Millenium Issue on Globalization, 2000 (<http://www2.uchicago.edu/jnl-pub-cult/>)
- SASSEN, S.: *The Global City*; Princeton, NJ : Princeton University Press. 1991
- SMITH, M.P.: Postmodernism, Urban Ethnography, and the New Social Space of Ethnic Identity; *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21, 4, 1992
- SOJA, E.: *Postmodern Geographies*, London: Verso, 1989
- SOJA, E.: Heterotologies: A Remembrance of Other Spaces in the Citadel LA; in S. WATSON and K. GIBSON (eds): *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*; Oxford: Blackwell, pp 13-34, 1995 (also published in *Strategies: A Journal of Theory, Culture and Politics*, 3: pp 6—39, The Falmer Press, 1990)
- THOMSEN, C. W.: *Visionary Architecture: From Babylon to Virtual Reality*; Munich/New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1994
- THRIFT, N.: Not A Straight Line But A Curve, Or Cities Are Not Mirrors Of Modernity; in D. BELL and A. HADDOUR (eds.) *City Visions*, Essex: Pearson Education United, pp233-263, 2000
- THRIFT, N.: *Spatial Formations*; London: Sage, 1996
- TSCHUMI, B.: *Architecture & Disjunction*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996
- TSCHUMI, B.: Notes Towards a Theory of Architectural Disjunction; in *Architecture and Urbanism*, 216, September, pp13-15, 1988
- TSCHUMI, B.: Parc de la Villette, Paris; in A. PAPADAKIS (ed), *Deconstruction in Architecture*; London: Architectural Design, Academy Editions, vol.58, no.3/4, p.38, 1989
- TSCHUMI, B.: *Event Cities*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1994
- VENTURI, R.: *Complexity & Contradiction in Modern Architecture*; New York : Museum of Modern Art, 1977
- VIDLER, A.: *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992
- WIGLEY, M.: *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt*; Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1995
- ZELNER, P.: Hybrid Spaces : The Effect Of Digitalisation And Virtuality On Spatiality And Architectural Representation; in P. ZELNER (ed), *Hybrid Spaces. New Forms in Digital Architecture*, London : Thomas and Hudson Ltd, 1999

FIGURE-1

Urban Disjunction:

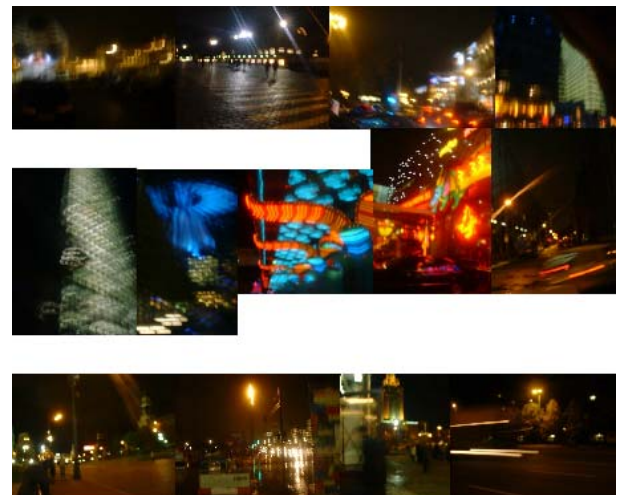
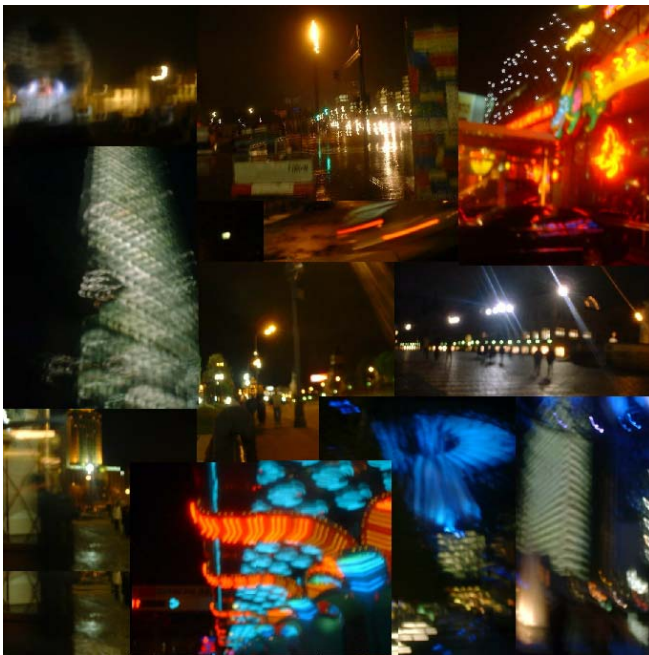


a) **Screen – Interface** (digi-code) (cogni-code) overlapping city images leads to 'de-solidifying' things and (de)constructing /dissolving spatial distinctions

Collages and Landscape Fragments

conceptualising the city of pixels as a collective collage—or a "theatre of memory' is a representation of the postmodern city being regarded, 'a series of stages', under space-time compression

b) [spacez] and [connectionz]

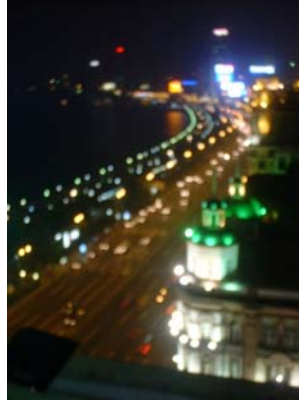
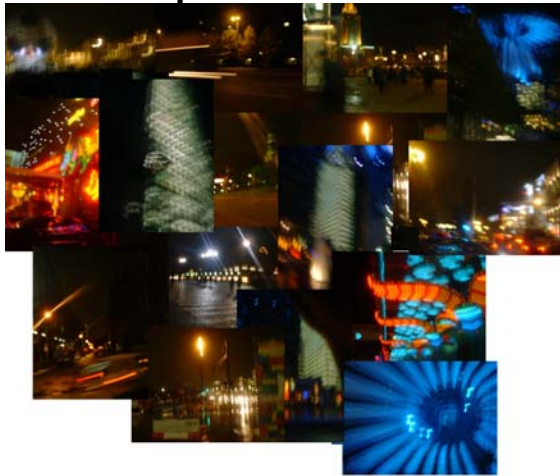


narratives seek to reaffirm spatial possibilities, drifting between mythical spaces, the screen, the imagery and the reality of 'postmodern other' spaces

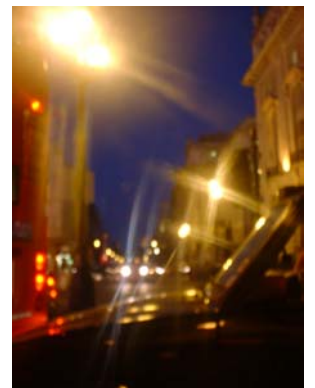
FIGURE-2

Urban Semiotics Transformation of space through collapsed geographies

Brandscape



semiotic matrix of postmodern other spaces 'at night' forms a text of aesthetic representation where signs coagulate, creating a hybrid identity for its inhabitants



sites of exchange through inscriptions and traces of urban signs and images

FIGURE-3
neurotics of the city



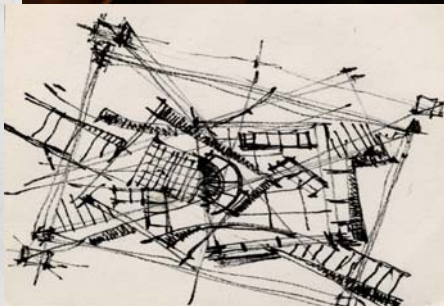
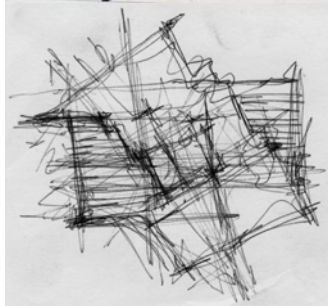
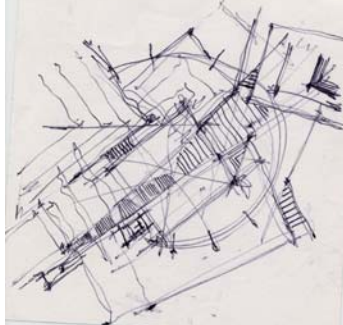
sites of fantasy / hallucinations

sites of anticipation

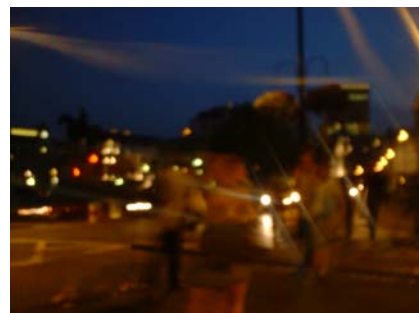
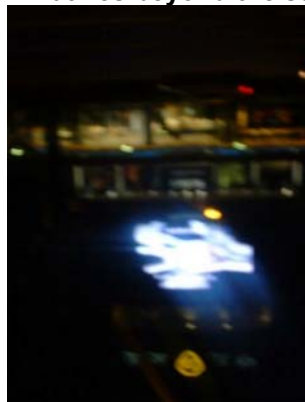
Urban Metaphors- Deconstructing the urban semiologically

Imageries of city of pixels intimate in the potential escalation of confrontation between image and text-
between human figure and city

mindspace and dreamscape



Contested landscape-what lies beyond the surface (buried geography of the urban)



pursuit of pleasure and sights (sites) of highly charged encounters

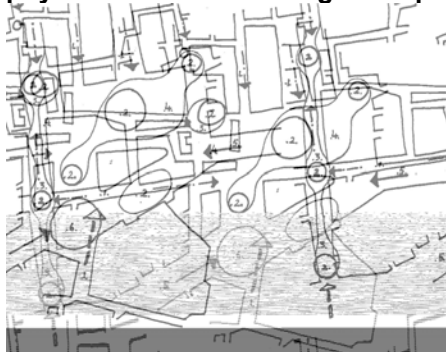
FIGURE-4

a) EventSpaces

multiplicity of reading signs as signified (context and meaning)
and signifiers (forms and urban elements) (deferred and never fixed)

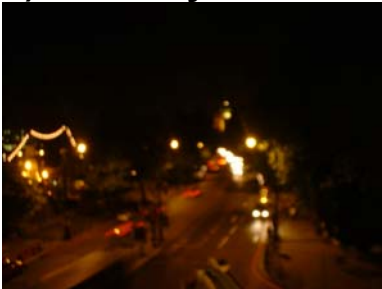


experiencing the city phenomenologically- our engagement with the physical world as ontological experience of spatial practices



Overlapping Urban Movements and Spatial Dynamics

b) Trans-system and URBA-NETworks



engagement into cityscape and the metropolitan saturation of movement in juxtaposition with the gestures of machinery of vehicles

FIGURE-5

OtherSide Digital territory

Urban adventures and interventions and multiple narratives

urban fragments stitched together with psychogeography being employed to capture spirit of urban landscape

