

Walking a Line: GPS, Maps and Satellite Technologies 2010

These lines were captured with my GPS (Geographical Positioning System). They represent daily activities: driving to work, shopping, visiting friends, walking around the neighbourhood, riding a bike around the park or running an established route. The emerging patterns anchor my memory and trace narratives with simple lines. They are collected in a scientific and systematic way and represent real lived patterns of daily life, while at the same time they become interesting evocative and abstract shapes. And although invisible, my body is agent of these drawings.

New technologies are increasingly part of our lives and have their effects on us. The GPS with its satellites and their histories, as military spy tools, can now be used to watch ourselves via space. As a weaver, the language of pattern is my field of inquiry: How are they established, maintained and broken and how can a new tool push these ideas. I have collected this data systematically since 2007 (for 10 years).

A track is defined as an event and several tracks in one day, may have different scales, going for a walk, driving a car, taking a boat ride. Different modes have different rhythms and shapes. On a recent trip in Italy I drove over a mountain pass with winding hairline turns only to arrive at a resort town hopelessly lost, driving around blocks and one-way streets to locate my hotel. Some tracks repeat very often, i.e. my drives to work or my runs in the neighbourhood, others are seasonal and some are caused by imposed changes, that might be pleasant or not.

Influenced by Richard Long's evocative walks in exotic or places, removed from the daily bustle of life, I want to instead make sense of those very mundane trips. The things we do daily, rather than those we dream about. Reading Rebecca Solnit's '*Wanderlust: A History of Walking*' shows that walking can have many different purposes from spiritual journeys to hikes, celebrating nature and pushing ones physical strength. I am also interested in the idea of exploring the city, or what Walter Benjamin calls '*to go botanizing on the asphalt*' and more absurdist structural approaches explored by '*Situationists*' and '*Psychogeography*', where we suspend habits and preconceptions and set up systems to discover places we have not seen before.

Different formats for outputting this work, ranges from **digital prints, stitched pieces**, the woven **White series** and "**Walking a Line**", part of '**Digital Threads**' (a web project involving 5 artists, hosted by the Textile Museum of Canada). They allow different interpretation and each has different technical requirements and presents different historical or cultural contexts.

Textiles, specifically silk, came to symbolize exchange between East and West, although many other things, spices, ideas, religions, technologies and diseases also traveled along the **Silkroad**. It is not a specific road, but a route that went through different countries, depending on local politics, wars and goods to be traded. Textiles are often the visible carrier of a culture, people wear or display in their home or take with them when they leave their country. Google Earth helps me to place specific textiles in a physical location and create stories with a mix of facts, illusions and histories. Some of the pieces are woven industrially, others I wove on a computer-assisted hand Jacquard loom, during a Tech lab residency at the Surrey Art Gallery in 2010.

For details please see my research paper for TSA in 2008 in the online proceedings: **Walking a Line: GPS and Satellite Technologies as Narratives**

