intermédialités
HISTOIRE ET THÉORIE DES ARTS, DES LETTRES ET DES TECHNIQUES

Between Security and Spectatorship: The Media of Transnational Mobility at Canadian Airports

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Hart, S. (2019). Between Security and Spectatorship: The Media of Transnational Mobility at Canadian Airports. *Intermédialités / Intermediality*, (34). https://doi.org/10.7202/1070873ar

Résumé de l'article

Noeuds importants des réseaux de mondialisation et de sécurité frontalière, les plus grands aéroports internationaux canadiens recourent à un large éventail de supports et de représentations liés à la mobilité humaine, qu'il s'agisse de manifestations artistiques ou culturelles, d'images biométriques ou de radiographies. La visualité de la sécurité aéroportuaire entretient-elle une relation épistémologique avec la visualité des représentations artistiques et culturelles dans les aéroports ? Cet article analyse les modèles culturels qui émergent des dispositifs de sécurité et de l'expérience des spectateurs, en portant attention aux notions de pouvoir pastoral et de gouvernementalité. De plus, les principaux aéroports du Canada ordonnent la mobilité et la sécurité au moyen de modes de représentation symbolique, jouant ainsi un rôle éducatif important. Les médias visuels de ces aéroports enseignent alors aux voyageurs comment naviguer dans l'espace environnant, tout en masquant les mouvements des personnes les plus affectées par une mobilité différenciée.

Between Security and Spectatorship: The Media of Transnational Mobility at Canadian Airports

Sydney Hart

Fig. 1. Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. Photography: Sydney Hart.

Airports are key sites for the control, surveillance, and representation of transnational human mobility in the twenty-first century. As sites of border security and as crucial nodes for globalized networks, they include a broad range of media designed to reflect and capture human movement. Canada's major international airports include a number of devices for security screening, such as biometric imaging and x-ray scans, but also artworks that represent and subtly direct human mobility. Canada's three busiest airports—Toronto Pearson International Airport, Vancouver International Airport, and Montréal-Trudeau International Airport—notably aim to cultivate aesthetic and sensory experiences that contrast with the stringent controls on people's movements that airports after 9/11 are notorious for. Do the roles of media in airport security bear any

epistemological relation to the roles played by art displayed at these airports? Could the forms of control deployed through digital media at security checks stem from the same forms of power manifested through the display of artworks? This article will analyze the cultural patterns that come into focus when the visual images of airports are examined through coextensive relations of power. I will argue that media representing human mobility, both through security and the spatial organization of artworks, solidify these airports' roles as educational spaces, i.e. spaces in which passengers are instructed how to move and behave following state-sanctioned forms of control. Furthermore, this educational capacity is formed largely through visual regimes that individualize the experience of transnational mobility, while actively obscuring social patterns of inequalities in mobility. This article will thereby significantly draw from sources in the fields of surveillance studies and mobility studies, to consider how particular visual and media projects manifest how power orders movement at airports. I thereby hope to contribute to interdisciplinary discussions in visual culture by undertaking a comparative analysis of the digital media of security and the digital media of artworks.

¶2   Through these analyzes, I will address the border not as an infrastructural or geographical site, but as an "epistemic viewpoint," [1] one that uses visual representations to control human mobility and forms "an epistemology performed and materialized, a way of seeing and sorting that's also, simultaneously, a mode of governing," [2] to echo the words of media studies scholar Shannon Mattern. After providing an overview of media and artworks supporting the inclusions and exclusions of the border, I will examine how airport technologies play an educational role for travellers, drawing notably from sociological analyses by Simone Browne [3] and Mark B. Salter, [4] scholars who have written on post-9/11 surveillance at North

[1] Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, "Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor," *Transversal,* European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies, March 2008, https://transversal.at/transversal/0608/mezzadra-neilson/en (accessed 4 April 2020).

[2] Shannon Mattern, "All Eyes on the Border," *Places Journal*, September 2018, https://placesjournal.org/article/all-eyes-on-the-border/ (accessed 18 February 2019).

[3] Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 2015, p. 131–160.

[4] Mark B. Salter, "At the Threshold of Security: A theory of International Borders," in Elia Zureik and Mark B. Salter (eds.), *Global Surveillance and Policing: Borders, Identity, Security*, Cullompton, UK, Willan, 2005, p. 36–50; Mark B. Salter, "Introduction," in Mark B. Salter (ed.), *Politics at the Airport*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2008, p. ix–xix.

American airports, albeit through vastly different methodologies and approaches. I will further examine this educational role as it relates to mobility, through Michel Foucault's concept of "pastoral power,"[5] Nicholas Mirzoeff's definition of visuality,[6] and theories of attention by scholar Louise Amoore[7] and art critic Jonathan Crary.[8] In a third section, I will delve into the strategic invisibility of certain mobilities (such as air deportations) and the inequality inherent to what geographer Doreen Massey calls "differential mobility."[9] In the final section, I will examine strategies of countervisuality and cognitive mapping through a particular artwork that unsettles the dominant modes of visuality at Toronto's airport.

¶3   While I recognize the synoptic and broad character of the following artwork descriptions, I will primarily be analyzing how they fit within, or diverge from, the institutional discourses that order movement at airports through processes of visuality. Visual culture scholar Nicholas Mirzoeff has defined visuality not as a regime of images, but a regime that visualizes and lends authority to power. It is, he writes, "the name for that process by which certain persons claim the authority to determine what may or may not be 'seen,' literally and metaphorically, in the operations of power."[10] Visuality, in other words, is always the result of how power seeks to perpetuate its authority, often naturalizing a visual order of relations. As with concepts such as "empire" and "global capital," visuality "does not act in and of itself but it seems to us that it does,"[11] for Mirzoeff. This concept thereby lends itself to an interdisciplinary analysis of cultural objects, as a way to decode the objects' forms through an assessment of the institutions and discourses shaping them.

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[5] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, transl. by Graham Burchell, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

[6] Nicholas Mirzoeff, "The Clash of Visualizations: Counterinsurgency and Climate Change," *Social Research*, vol. 78, no. 4, December 2011, p. 1185–1210.

[7] Louise Amoore, "Lines of Sight: On the Visualization of Unknown Futures," *Citizenship Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, February 2009, p. 17–30; Louise Amoore and Alexandra Hall, "Border Theatre: On the Arts of Security and Resistance," *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2010, p. 299–319.

[8] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1999.

[9] Doreen Massey, "Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place," in J. Bird et al. (eds.), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, London, Routledge, 1993, p. 65.

[10] Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 1189.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 1193.

VISUAL REGIMES OF NAVIGATION

¶4   As scholars Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson remind us,[12] beyond the border archetypes that easily fire up popular imaginations—such as the wall or the cartographic line—borders are social institutions that perpetuate asymmetrical relations between people through heterogeneous forms. Airports are important sites to analyze as border spaces because of their high volume of international arrivals every year,[13] but also because these spaces vividly materialize a variety of ways of understanding international borders in an immediate, physical sense, as well as through more diffuse structures, processes, and media. The airports addressed in this essay are thereby privileged sites for observing the technologies and media used by Canadian and US governments. In arguing for the border as an "epistemic viewpoint," Mezzadra and Neilson contextualize the processes of inclusion and exclusion of borders such as the US-Canada border in terms of heterogeneous spaces that encompass, and extend far beyond, the gates and ports that focalize political attention today.

¶5   Airports are designed for state-sanctioned human mobility, i.e. both mobility and security are the overarching concerns for authorities governing how travelers move through borders at these sites. Through virtually every one of their facets, as Salter reminds us, "airports are designed to survey, discriminate and control mobile bodies."[14] Artworks sanctioned by airport authorities are usually presented with this proviso, so that transience is structurally tied to the installation of artworks. Canada's three major airports are, therefore, sites that pose structural challenges to common standards for the curation, display, and appreciation of artworks, because of their institutional requirements to avoid

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[12] Mezzadra and Neilson, 2008.

[13] In Canada, the majority of international passenger traffic is funneled through the country's major urban centres and specifically the airports of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, with Toronto's airport accounting for roughly half of this traffic. See Statistics Canada, *Air Carrier Traffic at Canadian Airports, 2015*, Tables 1–2. In 2016, Toronto's airport recorded 42.3 million passengers (with Europe accounting for 23% of international destinations); Vancouver's airport recorded 21.4 million passengers (with Asia representing 29% of international destinations); while Montreal's airport saw 15.4 million passengers (with Europe representing 35%). See Transport Canada, *Transportation in Canada: Comprehensive Report*, 2017, https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/policy/transportation-canada-2017.html (accessed 11 May 2020).

[14] Salter, 2005, p. 43.

risk and reduce significant impediments to passenger mobility. The curation of artworks at these airports is essentially designed for a mobile and distracted spectator. In this way, airports differ strongly from more conventional exhibition structures such as the white cube,[15] in which the objects directing spectators' movements are the artworks themselves. They also tend to differ from open-air public artworks through the scripted itineraries closely determined by government agencies and private organizations limiting how people move through airports.

¶6   Understood through the epistemic viewpoint of the border, the artworks teach mobile subjects ways of orienting themselves and navigating the spaces of each airport. Each of Canada's major airports is run by a private, non-profit organization, which forms a distinct airport authority for its metropolitan area, mobilizing the curation of artistic and cultural objects to competitively position its airport over others internationally. Notable examples of this process of place branding are the international airports of Vancouver and Montreal with their curatorial titles—respectively, *A Sense of Place* and *Montreal Identity*—clearly attempting to solidify notions of place at sites of international mobility.[16] The curation of art in each site attempts to produce a sense of place[17] by representing work by local or regional artists, alongside celebratory displays of touristic or cultural destinations. The art objects thereby contribute to forming first and last impressions of place through evocative representations, while symbolically orienting travellers in relation to aspects of regional or cultural identity.

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[15] The convention of the white cube gallery standardizes the architectural context for exhibiting modern and contemporary art, by privileging the norm of white walls and rectangular rooms. The white cube was famously theorized by artist Brian O'Doherty, who called it "the single major convention through which art is passed." See Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, San Francisco, The Lapis Press, 1976, p. 80.

[16] As Christiane Beaulieu, Communications and Public Affairs Vice-President at Aéroport de Montréal, makes clear: "To represent Montreal through its artists and their works, that's the mission of the Aérogalerie."

AÉROGALERIE, Aéroports de Montréal, Youtube video, published 29 November 2016, 0:58, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVlpp3a9ZLE (accessed 31 January 2020).

[17] As discussed in my article "Senses of Place at the Border: Visual Cultures of Mobility at Canadian Airports," *Synoptique*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2019, https://synoptique.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/8.1-Hart.pdf (accessed 4 April 2020).

¶7   Through the personal journeys that first led me to navigate through Montreal and Vancouver's airports, I was struck by how many artworks worked around each airport's many structural limitations, appearing wrapped around corridors, attached to ceilings in a busy passageway, and only registered through momentary glances overhead, or from the corner of an eye. I observed the ways many artworks are instrumentalized to represent, and brand, their respective cultural regions. Airports, however, are often associated with the concept of "non-place," and their fundamental transitoriness can easily make cultural work in place-making seem contradictory. The concept of non-place, as popularized by anthropologist Marc Augé (who derived the term from Michel de Certeau[18]), describes non-places as transitory sites "invaded by text."[19] Augé's examples foreground proper nouns and the naming of places for touristic or navigation signs, e.g. "You are now entering the Beaujolais region."[20] In the context of this article[21] it is worth emphasizing how airports have always also been places (i.e. understanding place as "a locale whose form, function and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of physical contiguity," to follow Manuel Castells' definition[22]). After 9/11 and the US-led war on terror, airports arguably became "the place," i.e. a "charged and volatile domain punctuated by shifting regimes of biopower," as media scholar Lisa Parks has provocatively suggested.[23] I will now turn to the institutions determining the sanctioned displays of images for security and place-making at airports, to better assess institutional discourses shaping patterns in images.

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[18] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. by Steven Rendall, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1984, p. 80.

[19] Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity,* transl. by John Howe, London, Verso, 1995, p. 96.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] I have discussed the concept of the non-place in relation to airports at length in other articles, including "Mobile Horizons: Art and Mobility at Montréal-Trudeau International Airport," *Revue COMMposite*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2017, p. 44–58.

[22] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, vol. 1, Chichester, UK, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p. 453.

[23] Lisa Parks, "Points of Departure: The Culture of US Airport Screening," *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2007, p. 183–200.

ART DISPLAYS

¶8   There are many examples of how artworks are integrated into the architecture of airports to facilitate human mobility. Montreal's airport, for instance, includes several light columns guiding travellers while illuminating surrounding signage, such as Aliya Orr's *Orbit* (2015) (see Fig. 2). This artwork includes two oval-shaped screens wrapped around concrete columns surrounding the US Departures gate and shows a flux of abstract forms through the screens' LED displays. Several artworks directly support the airport's mobility by wrapping around, and enhancing, existing physical infrastructure. These oval screens have the added effect of enhancing the function of the concrete columns as physical gates, which befits a departures gate dedicated to the United States, the primary international destination of most travellers leaving Canadian airports. Christiane Beaulieu, the Vice-President, Public Affairs and Communications of Aéroports de Montréal (ADM), the governing body for Montréal-Trudeau and Mirabel airports, commented on how the particular design of these elliptical screens serve at least two purposes. In a 2015 press release for *Orbit*, she claims that "it was important for ADM to install signage marking the main entrance to the U.S. departures area," referring to a cavernous location between the entrance to the Marriott Hotel and other international gates. "With this technology-based, flexible structure," she says, "we are combining practicality and appeal: showcasing dynamic made-in-Montréal works of art while improving signage and wayfinding at the same time."[24] This artwork's navigational role is one that finds itself repeated so often across the visual culture of airports.

¶9   Many other works at this airport use integrated lighting installations while directly complementing wayfinding systems. Other examples of the curation of art as navigational aid include Axel Morgenthaler's *You Are Almost There!* (2005), which consists of twenty-nine computer-controlled tubes of LED across transborder and international jetties, and *Art en couleurs* (2015) (see Fig. 3), a series of nine lightbox columns wrapped around pre-existing airport columns, forming a visual dividing line between the departures terminal and the shopping area facing it. Such artworks thereby subtly help travellers navigate the spaces of the airport or identify

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[24] Aéroports de Montréal, "MONTRÉAL–TRUDEAU AIRPORT Innovates with Two Elliptical Screens for Art," Press Release, Montreal, Quebec, 11 May 2015.

areas to rest or dwell.[25] As with the airports of Vancouver and Toronto, Montreal's airport tends to include a larger number of artworks in areas before and after security, and specifically by areas for shopping and eating. This is the case with *Art en couleurs*, which is adjacent to the airport's pre-departure food court.
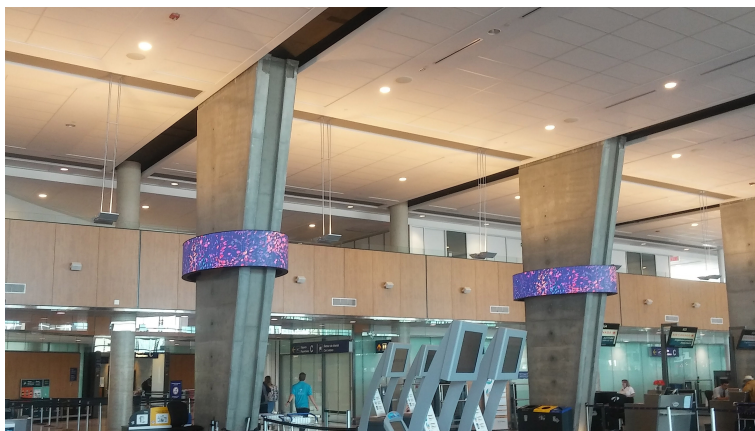

Fig. 2. The oval-shaped digital screens used by Aliya Orr's, *Orbit*, 2015, installation, Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. Photography: Sydney Hart.
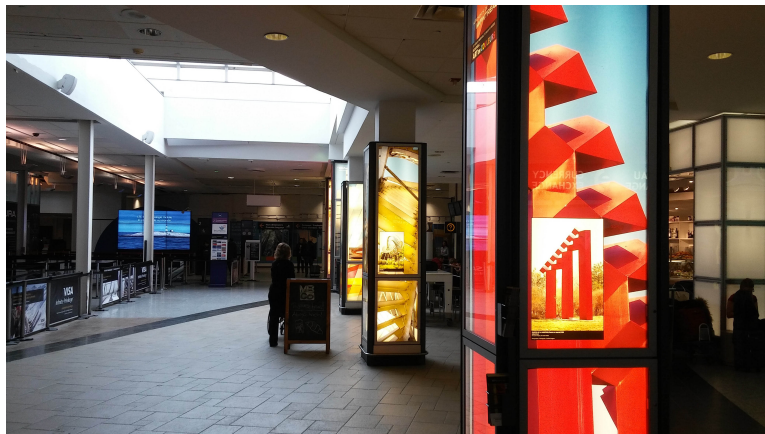

Fig. 3. *Art en couleurs*, 2015, installation, Montréal-Trudeau International Airport. The lightbox in the foreground features images of a public artwork installed in Parc Jean-Drapeau, Sebastian's *Puerta de la Amistad*, 1993. Photography: Sydney Hart.

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[25] These areas are physical infrastructure for what sociologists Justine Lloyd and Peter Adey describe as "dwell-time," waiting periods at airports such as those enforced before flight boarding. See Justine Lloyd, "Dwelltime: Airport Technology, Travel and Consumption," *Space and Culture*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2003, p. 94, quoted in Salter, 2008, p. 11.

¶10   Toronto's airport references regional institutions through curatorial showcases, and it has included cultural displays representing local museums, such as the Royal Ontario Museum and the Museum of Vision Science.[26] In this space, works are sited at different heights, thereby surrounding travellers as they navigate through its spacious atria. These include *Jetstream* (2003) by local artists Susan Schelle and Mark Gomes, an aluminium, granite, and bronze installation that hovers over travellers' heads, through swirling lines that evoke wind currents and weather patterns.

Fig. 4. Joe David, *Welcome Figures*, 1986, sculpture, red cedar, Vancouver International Airport. Photography: Sydney Hart.

¶11   On the West Coast, Vancouver's airport showcases art through a programme titled "Sense of Place," which references the sea, skies, and land of the province of British Columbia through art and design, particularly Musqueam cultural objects and Indigenous Northwest Coast art. Joe David's *Welcome Figures* (1986) (see Fig. 4), a particularly prominent work, includes one female and one male figure, carved from red cedar in the Clayoquot tradition of the Nuu-chah-nulth. This work is based on

[26] Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), *The Visual and the Visionary: Art, Architecture and the Airport*, 2005.

the carved figures traditionally placed on beaches and in front of a village or big house, designed to "look out to sea, arms raised, palms facing upward" in order to "greet guests invited to special events such as potlatches."[27] Currently sited in the arrivals terminal of Vancouver's airport, *Welcome Figures* is strategically placed to face the majority of people entering the city through international flights.

VISUAL REGIMES OF SECURITY

¶12   The airport media representing and reflecting processes of mobility are regulated at different institutional levels. Federal agencies such as the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) set standards for security and passenger screening procedures. On the other hand, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) sets guidelines that are recommended (rather than enforced) for airports across the world, while regulating standardized representations for passenger travel, such as passport photos and biometric imaging. The massive security overhauls that followed the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have greatly contributed to reshaping the process of air travel across the globe.[28] Business and state interests, however, were to a large extent able to turn the crises that followed mandatory security overhauls into opportunities. The government of Canada thus formed the CBSA in 2003 (replacing two federal agencies: Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency). Another government agency, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, is responsible for overseeing screening processes at Canadian airports, and contracts different private firms to conduct airport screening procedures (e.g. Securitas operates at Montreal's airport, GardaWorld at Toronto's, and G4S at Vancouver's).

¶13   Forms of political power at airports are deployed in diffuse ways, from physical contact with agents at security checks, to more indirect border processes that deter or facilitate transnational movement. The normalization of many of these processes results from a form of governmentality by which narratives of state security and hidden threats allow security processes and their oppressive effects to become ingrained in everyday life. Such governmentality is made manifest through forms of

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[27] Robin Laurence, *A Sense of Place: Art at Vancouver International Airport*, Vancouver, Figure 1 Publishing, 2015, p. 33. I have detailed the history behind this work and other works at this airport in Hart, 2019.
[28] Salter, 2008, p. xii.

sensory engagement and, notably, through the sense of sight and visual media such as video surveillance footage, x-ray scans, and biometric imaging. Furthermore, this visual economy includes spaces of control that are barred from view, in which the state exercises privileged control deprived of public scrutiny, e.g. detention centres for migrants.[29] The specific roles of sensory engagement, and the prominence of biometric and other visual representations, make the question of how mobility is controlled and regulated at airports, at least partly, an aesthetic one.

¶14   When travellers move through screening and arrivals sections of airports, they present identification in the form of passport photos, magnetic chips, and increasingly, part of their bodies—such as faces, fingertips, or the iris—for biometric scans. First introduced on a passenger-class basis (i.e. for passengers willing and able to pay for a service expediting security procedures), iris scans represent an alternative to the changes affecting other forms of identification over time, for instance passport photos and face scans. Biometric imaging, as sociologist Elia Zureik has outlined, relies on the recognition of patterns, which are then translated into binary code using algorithms.[30] Furthermore, such scans offer biometric data in the literal sense of "measuring" "life signs," since after death, muscles in the iris become relaxed, thus disrupting the machine legibility of vital information needed for iris scans. Learned processes of authentication at various stages of security—including iris scans, but also the airport "confessional," through which government agents question travellers[31]—can easily become second nature, through their mechanical repetition at airports across the world. For Salter, this is part of the pedagogical role of airports, whereby relations between travellers and representatives of state authority are performed in repetitive fashion, so as to normalize state-sanctioned processes of mobility.[32]

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[29] For drawn visual representations of Canada's detention centres, see Tings Chak, *Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention*, Montreal/Amsterdam: The Architecture Observer, 2014.

[30] Elia Zureik and Karen Hindle, "Governance, Security and Technology: the Case of Biometrics," *Studies in Political Economy: A Socialist Review*, vol. 73, no. 1, 2014, p. 117, as quoted in David Lyon, "Filtering Flows, Friends, and Foes: Global Surveillance," in Salter, 2008, p. 39.

[31] Salter, 2006.

[32] Salter, 2008, p. xii.

Pastoral Power at the Airport

¶15 Canada's major airports are thus educational spaces in three important ways. Visuality at each site instructs mobile spectators how to, firstly, move through the physical and architectural space of the airport; secondly, orient themselves in relation to aspects of regional or local senses of place; and thirdly, navigate through state-sanctioned security protocols in border spaces. In order to better understand how this educational capacity operates, we need to uncover the institutional forms determining it. I will now turn towards concepts shedding light on processes of mobility that shore up or reflect the influences of governmentality at the border.

¶16 In her analysis of surveillance at airports in the United States,[33] Browne highlights how security processes are made to seem routine, benevolent, and playful while nonetheless extending state-led and institutionalized bias. Browne specifically considers the processes regulating passenger mobility through Foucault's concept of pastoral power. For Foucault, pastoral power is not defined by its influence over a space, territory, city, or state. Instead, it is exercised essentially "over a multiplicity on the move."[34] Pastoral power therefore involves a process of guidance, direction, or control for a group of people in movement. This form of power appears as an aid to navigation, with the ultimate goal of helping a multitude reach a promised destination. Foucault describes the Judeo-Christian symbolic roots of pastoral power, manifested notably in the figure of the shepherd, leading a flock from place to place.[35] This guidance in moving across space is at the root of the form of "care" that defines pastoral power, a form that Browne then applies to how movements at airports are regulated and controlled. The customs of security protocols, Browne writes, "all reveal the workings of pastoral power at the border. This is a power that is individualizing, securitizing, and said to be beneficent. It is a power mediated by new technologies of bodily surveillance that enable post-9/11 mandates concerning security.[36] Through this form of power, the sense of sight plays a critical role in leading and managing the movement of crowds through borders.

¶17 Delving further into how this sense of sight is imbricated in relations of power, Amoore[37] has discussed how the rituals of border security are ordered

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[33] Browne, 2015.
[34] Foucault, 2009, p. 115.
[35] *Ibid.,* p. 127.
[36] Browne, 2015, p. 146.
[37] Amoore and Hall, 2010, p. 3.

through the visual sense in such a way that modes of attention and distraction figure as complementary forms of sensory engagement. Drawing from Crary's analysis of the evolution of attention and distraction from the nineteenth century, Amoore notes how the rituals of border security, which identify and call attention to different categories of travellers, often distractedly evoke stereotyped representations that stoke fear or evoke the extraordinary character of security risks. As Crary has argued, distraction is not necessarily independent from forms of attention, but instead features as an effect, and sometimes a constituent element, of attempts to produce attentiveness in modern human subjects.[38] Indeed, it is worth extending Amoore's discussion of the complementarity of attention and distraction in border security rituals to the context of visuality at Canadian airports. This tension is here embedded in structures of representation and the materiality of cultural objects. For example, travellers routinely allow biometric information and baggage contents to be turned into imagery to facilitate movement through borders, and this imagery focuses the attention of security agents and travellers on particular details that evoke security risks.

¶18   It is telling that airports in Canada and in many other parts of the world are increasingly positioning themselves as commercial centres in their own right.[39] Understanding airports as commercial centres akin to shopping malls provides a material angle for understanding the value of distraction in terms of its direct consumer potential (geared towards, for example, the spectacularized displays of "duty-free" luxury goods common at international airports).[40] This form of distraction thereby contrasts from, and complements, the more granular, scrutinized, and anxiety-inducing modes of attention of security processes.

¶19   While it is overly reductive to divide spaces of distraction and attention along the lines of images for art and security, most sanctioned artworks at airports, such as those mentioned previously, are meant to be experienced in passing; they therefore contribute to an ambulatory, contemplative, and ultimately distracted form of

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[38] Crary, 1999, p. 49.

[39] The United Arab Emirates, for instance, have invested huge sums to create hub airports replete with "shops, cinemas, spas, hotels, gardens, churches, and medical facilities, so that the time spent on the ground at airports is not seen as 'dead-time'." See Mark B. Salter, "The North Atlantic Field of Aviation Security" in Mark B. Salter (ed.), *Mapping Transatlantic Security Relations: The EU, Canada, and the War on Terror*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 60–72.

[40] Menno Hubregtse, "Passenger Movement and Air Terminal Design: Artworks, Wayfinding, Commerce, and Kinaesthesia," *Interiors*, vol. 7, nos. 2–3, 2016, p. 155–179.

engagement. The distracted modes of engagement elicited by the airports' art and cultural displays, combined with the airports' security and state apparatus, therefore extend the individualizing force of pastoral power and distract from how security and mobility through border spaces directly impact some groups rather than others. Along the paths of pastoral power, airport authorities cultivate attention towards particular representations so as to order human mobility, while exclusions such as detentions or deportations are relegated to the airport's opaque spaces and relations. In the following section, I will argue that the dialectic of attentive and distracted forms of engagement supported by airport visuality serves to obscure particular manifestations of power, notably as these relate to racialized groups, and processes of deportation and detention.

CORRIDORS OF INDIGNITY AND INVISIBILITY

¶20   Because of the prominence of international borders and attendant forms of control, airports are privileged sites for the examination of how systems of power produce differential mobility through the institutional forms of the border. To understand the border as an epistemic viewpoint is also to understand the heterogeneity of border spaces: how they operate inclusions and exclusions, both overtly and covertly, at different intensities. These are manifest through the differing freedom of movement that varies according to race, gender, class, and religion (as determined by its racialization, or passengers' country of origin). The power dynamics of pastoral power at airports are inscribed within what geographer Doreen Massey has called differential mobility:[41] the social differences in how freely people can move based on race, religion, class, gender, or disability. Massey argues that we need to consider that the mobility that many people have the privilege of enjoying, and the power over mobility held by some, actually weakens the mobility of others: "[T]he mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak."[42] This is one way in which the inclusions shored up by borders entrench inequalities in mobility, notably by creating a discrepancy between different affective relations to travel. Such differentials in mobility can become starkly apparent in the confined spaces of

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[41] Massey, 1993.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

airport screening zones, or what Browne refers to as "corridors of indignity."[43] In relation to the ways that Black women in the United States are subject to a disproportionate number of security checks—including humiliating strip-searches and detentions[44]—Browne calls the process that thus slows down some over others "racial baggage." "Racial baggage," Browne writes, is "how certain acts and certain looks at the airport weigh down some travelers, while others travel lightly."[45] Similarly, Canadian airport security routinely displays evidence of discrimination and racism,[46] perpetuating power dynamics of differential mobilities, at the same time as US border control extends its reach in other jurisdictions to facilitate the flow of goods destined for the United States,[47] all the while excluding the flow of passengers destined for the same country.[48]

¶21   In her research on air deportations in Canada, scholar Leslie Muñoz has outlined a number of ways that government authorities have standardized secrecy in processes of deportation, as people board chartered or regular passenger flights. As Muñoz outlines, airplanes are also carceral spaces, deeply limiting the movements of deportees.[49] Muñoz details how the International Air Transport Association

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[43] Browne, 2015, p. 146.

[44] Browne cites the American Civil Liberties Union on a case in which eighty-seven Black women filed a federal class-action lawsuit in 1997 that accused the US Customs Service of racial profiling at the Chicago O'Hare International Airport, "on the grounds that they were subjected to humiliating, intimidating, and unconstitutional strip-searches and detentions," *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Catharine Tunney, "Rude Officers, Seized Items and Touchy Pat Downs Top CATSA Complaints List," *CBC News*, 20 May 2018, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/catsa-complaints-most-common-1.4667623 (accessed 18 February 2019).

[47] Geographer Deborah Cowen has examined this process through her analysis of the commercial corridors facilitated by maritime ports on Canada's west coast, to "make the border fade into the background as a means of strengthening logistics space." She writes that "[American Customs and Border Patrol] agents are now stationed at the Port of Prince Rupert [British Columbia] and carry out their inspections alongside their Canadian counterparts when containers reach the North American shore." See Deborah Cowen, *The Deadly Life of Logistics: Mapping Violence in Global Trade*, Minnesota, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2014, p. 74.

[48] This is a continuing threat at Canadian airports, notably with the new bill C-23, which gives several new powers to US Customs and Border Protection to conduct preclearance security checks at the Canada's major airports.

[49] However, Muñoz outlines ways that the architecture of air deportation has been used strategically by migrants, for instance, to draw the attention of foreign officials during connecting flights. This is the case, for example, of Jama Warsame who evaded his removal from Canada to Somalia "by getting the attention of a Dutch official in Amsterdam, a transit

(IATA), an organization representing the commercial interests of airlines, encourages those escorting deportees to discretely pre-board deportees before other passengers, to avoid "drawing undo [*sic*] attention" to a physically restrained deportee, and to sit at the back of planes, making sure escorts and deportees "are the last passengers to disembark."[50] From the charter or regular air carrier chosen by the CBSA, to the location deportees are asked to sit on a plane, and the detention facilities where migrants are held, opacity forms a concerted strategy for deportation and detention processes.[51]

¶22   The more opaque forms of mobility at Canadian airports are deeply intertwined with geopolitical relations, pointing towards distinct ways that media support the exclusion of racialized travellers and migrants with irregular status. In the following section, I will detail what it means to use artistic projects to draw disparate actors in relation to each other, and I will examine a particular example that brings to light the more obscure and contentious ways in which Canadian airports figure in transnational mobility, through processes of "cognitive mapping" and countervisuality.

Cognitive Mapping and Interrupted Flows

¶23   Regimes of visuality of borders at Canadian airports, as we have seen, are largely managed and enforced by state and commercial interests. These determine what is seen and experienced in the immediate context of the airports and air travel, but also impact images of place and nation. Transnational mobility through air travel involves a network of infrastructures that are by necessity geographically dispersed, with nodes and control centres that defy representation. Efforts to map, visualize, or otherwise represent transnational mobility pose an aesthetic problem today, largely

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point in his scheduled removal passage," and thereafter claimed refugee status in the Netherlands. Leslie Muñoz, *State-Led Forced Migration in the Canadian Context: A Look into Canada's Deportation Flights*, MA thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 2016, p. 73, https://curve.carleton.ca/14f9a5f9-5314-4a48-960a-fad7b2f6ec7c (accessed 4 April 2020).

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[51] The geography, demographics, and facts surrounding Canada's migrant detention centres are notably made public through the Global Detention Project, "a non-profit organisation based in Geneva that promotes the human rights of people who have been detained for reasons related to their non-citizen status." See the project's website: https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/americas/canada (accessed 18 February 2019).

through the sheer breadth and diffuse nature of networked relations. What counterpoints have artists offered to this regime of visuality? How can relations of power be more effectively captured and represented in border spaces?

¶24   Cognitive mapping is a methodology and a conceptual framework usually associated with philosopher Fredric Jameson,[52] who draws the term from an earlier formulation by urban planner Kevin Lynch.[53] Echoing Jameson's formulation, scholars Jeff Kinkle and Alberto Toscano describe processes of cognitive mapping to be motivated by the claim that "an inability to map the gears and contours of the world system is as debilitating for political action as being unable mentally to map a city would prove for a city dweller."[54] What is at stake with this methodology, then, is a strategic cartography of power: "In a strong interpretation, the mapping of capitalism is a precondition for identifying any 'levers,' nerve-centres or weak links in the political anatomy of contemporary domination."[55] International airports tend to act as such "nerve-centres" coordinating and linking different transnational flows. Jameson's and Kinkle and Toscano's interpretations of cognitive mapping evoke the potential of positioning the subject in relation to a social totality, while acknowledging the ways in which such a project can most truthfully be created as a "desire" with aesthetic value, rather than as a deliberately totalizing representation.[56] Cognitive mapping is also a significant strategy for understanding and artistically representing the shifting relations between situational positions and the social totality that governs in hidden and unrepresentable ways. As media theorist Alexander Galloway has outlined, the methodology of cognitive mapping encourages the subject to be "engulfed" by its particular sociohistorical situation, thereby inflecting the subject's representations of the present while, crucially, preventing the state from "dictating the terms of the debate, as any meditation on political violence (Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, the Twin Towers) would tend to do."[57]

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[52] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1991, p. 399–418.

[53] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1960.

[54] Jeff Kinkle and Alberto Toscano, *Cartographies of the Absolute*, Washington D.C., Zero Publishing, 2015, p. 7.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] Alexander Galloway, The Interface Effect, Cambridge, UK, Polity Press, 2012, p. 98.

¶25   One artistic project radically diverges from the projects mentioned above and forms an example of cognitive mapping. *Passage oublié*,[58] an artwork launched in 2007, included touchscreens at Toronto's airport.[59] It was created by Maroussia Lévesque, Jason Lewis, Yannick Assogba, and Raed Mousa, and produced by Obx Laboratory for Experimental Media at Concordia University in Montreal. This artwork produced visualizations of rendition flights[60] across the world and allowed spectators to interact with them through screens displayed in the airport's public area. *Passage oublié* focuses on user-generated documentation of these flights, which often occur through regular, civilian aircraft. At Toronto's airport, people were thereby encouraged to interact with the work by text message and answer questions such as: "Does the end justify the means when it comes to pre-emptive war on terror?" Projects like these have the potential of reframing the educational role of art to how transport hubs fit within a broader logic of US imperialism, neoliberal governmentality, and pastoral power. They identify the unjust ways in which transnational aerial mobilities are perceived and experienced today. As its creators put it, "*Passage oublié* is an undercover radical agent in a neutral setting. If renditions can camouflage themselves in airports, so can we."[61] Such artistic projects have the capacity to not only identify the state's abuses of power on differential mobilities, but to evoke countervisualities, prefiguratively imagining new ways of navigating through social space. *Passage oublié* gestures to the desire to uncover hidden journeys and networks, raising questions that interrupt the habitual modes of attention in such spaces through a process of cognitive mapping. The work porously shapes, and is shaped by, interactions with passersby, who are given a brief reprieve to otherwise pervasive forms of visuality.

¶26   This project, while serving to expose particular mobilities that the state has an interest in keeping opaque and invisible, also draws patterns of mobility at airports into relation with each other. Through such countervisuality, the pastoral

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[58] We could not obtain the copyright for this artwork. For more information, see the project's dedicated website: http://obxlabs.net/passageoublie/ (accessed 11 May 2020).

[59] For a video introduction to the project produced by Obx Labs, click on the Vimeo link below: Passage oublié, Obx Labs, Vimeo, posted February 2008, https://vimeo.com/686139 (accessed 4 April 2020).

[60] Rendition flights are covert and illegal military operations that transport detainees, often Muslim men, towards interrogation sites. This process offers no protection for the detainees, many of whom have subsequently reported human rights abuses at the hands of military personnel.

[61] Quoted in Browne, 2015, p. 158.

power that otherwise determines transnational mobility at airports can be contested through its individualizing influence and appearance of benevolence. Projects like *Passage oublié* thereby provide a counterpoint to the prevailing aesthetics of mobility at airports, while on another scale literally mapping relations of power in a way that defies the epistemological view of mobility as individualized, local, and fragmentary. As Mirzoeff claims, against the authority that orders and represents what is visible (through processes of visuality), "popular countervisuality claims autonomy, or what [Mirzoeff has] called the 'right to look.' Such seeing and looking are not perceptual processes but claims to relations of what is culturally and politically visible and sayable."[62] In this respect, the project is politically more akin to collective activist interventions at airports, such as the "Borders are Bonkers" action by the collective Solidarité sans frontières / Solidarity Across Borders at Montréal's airport, protesting Canada's exclusionary system of regular migrant detentions and deportations.[63] *Passage oublié* thereby exemplifies the possibility for artworks to critically engage spectators on the subject of aerial mobilities at airports, in a way that also defies prevailing logics of mobility, as it demands viewers' time and attention and contextualizes the question of security in terms of hidden manifestations of the state.

CONCLUSION

¶27   In this article, I have outlined different ways that visuality at Canada's major airports orders mobility and security through visual regimes, extending the educational capacity of these spaces through individualizing and differential mobilities. This educational capacity occurs through pastoral power, which exerts control over a multiplicity in movement, and through forms of visual engagement that complement distraction with attention through symbolic representations. Such representations thereby prioritize individual travellers' experience, while obscuring the movements of those most negatively impacted by differential mobility. The transnational character of airport mobilities renders the question of representing transnational flows all the more challenging. Cognitive mapping is one methodology through which transnational relations of power, and geopolitics, can be represented critically and aesthetically. Such cognitive mapping projects can instrumentalize

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[62] Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 1189.

[63] *Borders Are Bonkers // La Folie des Frontières // Las Fronteras están Chifladas*, Sans frontières MTL, Youtube video, published on 27 June 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gacEaue3EE (last accessed 31 January 2020).

modes of distraction in order to draw attention to particular forms of injustice. Attention and distraction are often tightly intertwined in such aesthetic projects, in ways that contest forms of visuality. Sanctioned artworks counterbalance the visuality of security checks at airports, softening the rigid—and for many, overly intrusive—interactions dreaded in these spaces. The artworks tend to ingrain, through an ambulatory and distracted form of spectatorship, the function of media to order, verify, and direct passengers through gates and security checks, extending how the border regulates mobility and security. Dominant forms of visuality at airports thereby determine how spectators experience art in these spaces, that is, unless artworks interrupt the dominant ways of seeing imposed by the state, turning distraction into incongruous forms of attention.

Between Security and Spectatorship: The Media of Transnational Mobility at Canadian Airports

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ABSTRACT

As crucial nodes for networks of globalization and border security, Canada's major international airports include a wide range of media for the visual representation of human mobility, including artistic and cultural displays, biometric imaging, and x-ray scans. Does the visuality of media at airport security bear any epistemological relation to the visuality of art and cultural displays at airports? This ¢paper analyzes the cultural patterns that come into focus when processes of security and spectatorship are examined through forms of power such as pastoral power and governmentality. Furthermore, Canada's major airports order mobility and security through modes of symbolic representation, thereby playing significant educational roles. Visual media at these airports thereby educate travelers on ways of navigating space, while obscuring the movements of those most negatively impacted by differential mobility.

RÉSUMÉ

Nœuds importants des réseaux de mondialisation et de sécurité frontalière, les plus grands aéroports internationaux canadiens recourent à un large éventail de supports et de représentations liés à la mobilité humaine, qu'il s'agisse de manifestations artistiques ou culturelles, d'images biométriques ou de radiographies. La visualité de la sécurité aéroportuaire entretient-elle une relation épistémologique avec la visualité des représentations artistiques et culturelles dans les aéroports ? Cet article analyse les modèles culturels qui émergent des dispositifs de sécurité et de l'expérience des spectateurs, en portant attention aux notions de pouvoir pastoral et de gouvernementalité. De plus, les principaux aéroports du Canada ordonnent la mobilité et la sécurité au moyen de modes de représentation symbolique, jouant ainsi un rôle éducatif important. Les médias visuels de ces aéroports enseignent alors aux voyageurs comment naviguer dans l'espace environnant, tout en masquant les mouvements des personnes les plus affectées par une mobilité différenciée.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sydney Hart is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies and a Teaching Fellow in Film and Media at Queen's University, Canada. He obtained an MA in Aesthetics and

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