

The place of being mobile:
Reconfiguring urban spaces via
location-based mobile gaming



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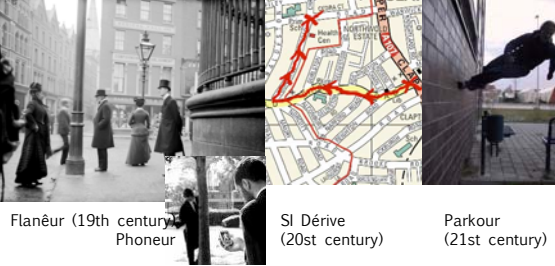
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City spaces as playful spaces?



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City spaces as playful spaces?



Flanêur (19th century)
Phoneur

SI Dérive
(20th century)

Parkour
(21st century)

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From a definition of playful space

Defining play:

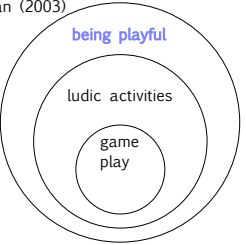
“Free activity standing quite consciously outside ‘ordinary’ life as being ‘not serious’, but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. (...) [Play] proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner.” (Huizinga,1955)

immersion rules
“magic circle” freedom

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From a definition of playful space

Defining play:
Salen & Zimmerman (2003)



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From a definition of playful space

What happens to urban spaces when they are constructed as playful spaces?

How can the concept of play be understood when the playful activity ebbs in and out of the magic circle?

How can we understand the forms of playful spaces constructed by mobile games compared to previous forms of urban “play” as seen in the activities of the *flâneur*, the *dérive* and the parkour?

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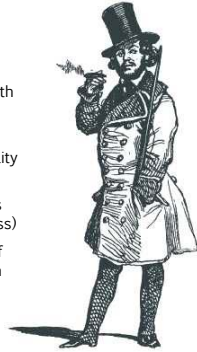
From *Flâneur* to Phoneur

→wandered and consumed the city with detracted gaze, exploring new angles and avenues.

→symbolized new dimensions of mobility within modernity.

→ludic character by excellence (shows spontaneous and undirected playfulness)

→Term 'ludic' = casual play /a act of wandering (casual walk) through urban spaces.



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From *Flâneur* to Phoneur (Luke, 2006)



→physical connected mobility.

→Inability to escape surveillance and tracking.

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The *dérive* as a drift through space

Attempt to restore meaning to the spaces of circulation of the city.

Amsterdam *dérive* (walkie-talkies)

-connect spatially separated areas of the city

Algorithmic *dérive*

- follow a specific set of rules without knowing the final outcome



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Parkour: The 21st century flâneur



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So what do the *flâneur*, the *dérive* and the parkour have to do with mobile games?

- urban games
- location-based mobile games
- hybrid reality games

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A classification of mobile games: Urban Games

Big Urban Game (B.U.G.)

- St. Paul and Minneapolis, 2003



Urt

A classification of mobile games: Urban Games

Shoot Me If You Can (*Urban Vibe*)
-- Seoul, 2005



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www.shootmeifyoucan.net

A classification of mobile games: Urban Games

Conqwest (*Frank Lantz*)
-- USA, 2004



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A classification of mobile games: Location-based mobile games

Botfighters (*It's Alive*)
-- Europe (2001-2005)



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A classification of mobile games: Location-based mobile games

Alien Revolt (*M1nd Corporation*)
-- Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2005)



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A classification of mobile games: Hybrid reality games

Can You See Me Now? (*Blast Theory*)
-- London, Tokyo, Barcelona, etc. (1-2008)



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Conclusion

--> Mobile gaming, mobility and play have a long history in earlier play activities that already transformed public spaces into playful spaces.

--> Demonstrate how the concept of playful urban spaces comes into fruition with mobile games through the early tropes of urbanity (*flâneur*, *dérive*, parkour)

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Conclusion

- > Differences from earlier uses of public spaces:
- Spatial perception: HRGs merge physical and digital spaces
- New issues of surveillance / trust
- New types of collaboration / tracking (co-presence awareness)

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