



***THE FLÂNEUR IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF FRANCIS ALÿS***

by

ESTELLE McDOWALL

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
MASTER OF ARTS degree in VISUAL STUDIES

in the
DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

DATE: 30 APRIL 2011

Supervisor: Prof Elfriede Dreyer

This dissertation is subject to regulation G.35 of the University of Pretoria and may in no circumstances be reproduced as a whole or in part without written consent of this University.

Acknowledgements

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor Elfriede Dreyer, for her expert guidance, time and encouragement and above all, her confidence in me. Thank you for sharing your vast knowledge with me and for leading me in this endeavour.

I wish to extend my appreciation to the staff at the Merensky library, especially Interlending Services, who always made the study material I requested available.

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

To Estie Serfontein, your words of encouragement have convinced me to continue on many occasions. Thank you.

Finally I would like to thank Steyn McDowall for his unwavering support and belief in me.

Summary

The contemporary *flâneur* is confronted with a radically different world in comparison to the Parisian arcades of the nineteenth century during which the idea of the *flâneur* was conceptualised. The current urban milieu of the *flâneur* is dominated by consumerism, computer systems and surveillance, and the research posed here explores the *flâneur* within this environment. The *flâneur* was originally visualised on the streets and arcades of the city; however, cities do not only exist as buildings and streets and have become global entities that are constituted from the physical and the virtual. Throughout this study reference is primarily made to the work of Francis Alÿs to elucidate theoretical concepts.

This study proposes that there is an absence of the teleological goal in the journey of the *flâneur* and as such, the *flâneur* wanders the streets without aim; however, in the process creates narratives and leaves traces of his journey. The ubiquity of surveillance in the contemporary metropolis complicates the *flâneur's* relationship with the latter. Consequently the impact of surveillance on the *flâneur* and the *flâneur's* daily wanderings are examined to ascertain its influence on the *flâneur* in a hyperreal society.

In contemporary thinking, the traditional idea of the male *flâneur* requires reassessment and this research investigates the possibility of the female *flâneur* and women's presence in the public spaces of the city and the virtual realm of cyberspace. Furthermore, women are intricately linked to consumerism and their experience and position in the city are influenced by being seen as objects of the gaze.

Alienation; City; Consumer society; Cyberspace; *Dérive*; Desire; Duplication; Experience; *Flânerie*; *Flâneur*; *Flâneuse*; Fragmentation; Gaze; Gender; Virtualisation; Ludic behaviour; Metropolis; Nostalgia; Outsider; Sisyphian; Sisyphus; Surveillance; Surveillant assemblage; Teleology.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
1.1. Space.....	1
1.2. The city.....	4
1.3. The <i>flâneur</i>	7
1.3.1. Origin of the concept of the <i>flâneur</i>	8
1.3.2. The contemporary <i>flâneur</i>	10
1.4. Francis Alÿs.....	14
1.5. Need and aims of the study.....	17
1.6. Methodology and theoretical approach	19
1.7. Literature review.....	21
1.8. Overview of chapters	24
CHAPTER 2: TRAVEL WITHOUT A GOAL	27
Introduction	27
2.1. Teleology.....	29
2.1.1. Physical travel.....	30
2.1.2. Roaming cyberspace	34
2.1.3. The Sisyphean quest	36
2.2. Walking	42
2.2.1. Walking narratives	42
2.2.2. Drawing maps	45
2.2.3. Bearing traces.....	48
2.2.4. The anonymous walker.....	50
2.3. The city.....	52
2.3.1. Desire in the city	53
2.3.2. Fear	58
2.3.3. Absence.....	64
2.4. Ludic behaviour	69
2.4.1. Play.....	70
2.4.2. <i>Dérive</i>	72
2.4.3. Chance	75



Concluding remarks	77
CHAPTER 3: SURVEILLANCE	78
Introduction	79
3.1. Spaces	80
3.1.1. The street.....	81
3.1.2. Cyberspace.....	85
3.1.3. Virtualisation	87
3.1.4. The Sisyphus effect	93
3.2. The surveillant gaze	95
3.2.1. The surveyor	97
3.2.2. The surveyed	103
3.2.3. The outsider	108
3.3. Experience	111
3.3.1. Duplication	112
3.3.2. Disembodiment	117
3.3.3. Fragmentation.....	120
3.3.4. Alienation	124
Concluding remarks	126
CHAPTER 4: WOMEN AND THE CITY	127
Introduction	127
4.1. The street and other paths	130
4.1.1. Women on the street.....	131
4.1.2. The mall	135
4.1.3. Women in cyberspace	137
4.2. Women in the city.....	139
4.2.1. The female <i>flâneur</i>	140
4.2.2. The prostitute	144
4.2.3. A female Sisyphus	148
4.3. Experience	152
4.3.1. The gaze.....	153
4.3.2. Object of desire.....	155
4.3.3. Nostalgia.....	158
Concluding remarks	162



CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	163
5.1. Summary of chapters	163
5.2. Contribution.....	167
5.3. Limitations	167
5.4. Suggestions	168
5.5. In closing	170
SOURCES CONSULTED	173

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Francis Alÿs, <i>The collector</i> , 1990-1992.....	31
Figure 2: Francis Alÿs, <i>The collector</i> , 1990-1992.....	31
Figure 3: Francis Alÿs, <i>Los Zapatos Magneticos (Magnetic shoes)</i> , 1994.....	32
Figure 4: Francis Alÿs, <i>Doppelgänger</i> , 1999-present.....	33
Figure 5: Francis Alÿs, <i>Paradox of praxis 1</i> , 1997.....	37
Figure 6: Francis Alÿs, <i>Rehearsal 1</i> , 1999-2001.....	39
Figure 7: Francis Alÿs, Preparatory sketch for <i>Rehearsal I</i> , 1999 – 2001.....	40
Figure 8: Francis Alÿs, <i>When faith moves mountains</i> , 2002.....	40
Figure 9: Francis Alÿs, <i>Fairy tales</i> , 1995/1998.....	44
Figure 10: Francis Alÿs, <i>The leak</i> , 1995.....	45
Figure 11: Francis Alÿs, <i>The green line</i> , 2004.....	46
Figure 12: Map of Palestine on which Alÿs based his performance <i>The green line</i>	47
Figure 13: Steven Cohen, <i>Golgotha, Wall Street #1 N.Y.</i> , 2007.....	48
Figure 14: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Hidden identity</i> , 2006.....	51
Figure 15: Francis Alÿs, <i>The seven lives of garbage</i> , 1995.....	54
Figure 16: Francis Alÿs, <i>The seven lives of garbage</i> , 1995.....	54
Figure 17: Francis Alÿs, <i>The swap</i> , 1995.....	56
Figure 18: Francis Alÿs, <i>Barrenderos (Sweepers)</i> , 2004.....	57
Figure 19: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Lucky escape</i> , 2006.....	59
Figure 20: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Clocking off I</i> , 2006.....	60
Figure 21: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Clocking off II</i> , 2006.....	60
Figure 22: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Clocking off III</i> , 2006.....	60
Figure 23: Francis Alÿs, <i>Gringo</i> , 2003.....	62
Figure 24: Francis Alÿs, <i>Re-enactments</i> , 2000.....	63
Figure 25: Francis Alÿs, <i>Narcotourism</i> , 1996.....	65
Figure 26: Francis Alÿs, <i>Turista</i> , 1994.....	66
Figure 27: Dale Yudelman, Cyril from <i>i am ...</i> , 2008.....	67
Figure 28: Dale Yudelman, Edward from <i>i am ...</i> , 2008.....	67
Figure 29: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Invisible woman I</i> , 2006.....	68
Figure 30: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Invisible woman II</i> , 2006.....	68
Figure 31: Sabelo Mlangeni, <i>Invisible woman III</i> , 2006.....	69
Figure 32: Francis Alÿs, <i>If you are a typical spectator, what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen</i> , 1996.....	71
Figure 33: Francis Alÿs, <i>Milky way</i> , 1995.....	74
Figure 34: Francis Alÿs, <i>Duett</i> , 1999.....	76
Figure 35: Titus Matiyane, <i>Atteridgeville (detail)</i> , 1990.....	82
Figure 36: Francis Alÿs, <i>Sleepers</i> , 1999-2006.....	84
Figure 37: Minnette Vári, <i>Cyclops</i> , 2004.....	86
Figure 38: Minnette Vári, Installation view of <i>Cyclops</i> , 2004.....	87
Figure 39: Francis Alÿs, <i>The loop</i> , 1997.....	89
Figure 40: Francis Alÿs, <i>The loop</i> , 1997.....	90
Figure 41: Titus Matiyane, <i>New York – Manhattan (detail)</i> , 2002.....	91
Figure 42: Titus Matiyane, <i>Panorama of Gauteng (detail)</i> , 2010.....	92
Figure 43: Titus Matiyane, <i>Panorama of London (detail)</i> , 1999.....	92
Figure 44: Titus Matiyane, <i>Panorama of the Netherlands (detail)</i> , 2000.....	93



Figure 45: Francis Alÿs, <i>Walking a painting</i> , 2002.....	95
Figure 46: Francis Alÿs, <i>Zócalo</i> , 1999.	98
Figure 47: Francis Alÿs, <i>Zócalo</i> , 1999.	99
Figure 48: Francis Alÿs, <i>Looking up</i> , 2001.	100
Figure 49: Francis Alÿs, <i>Choques</i> , 2005.....	101
Figure 50: Francis Alÿs, <i>Vivienda para Todos (Housing for all)</i> , 1994.....	103
Figure 51: Francis Alÿs, <i>The nightwatch</i> , 2004.....	104
Figure 52: Francis Alÿs, <i>The nightwatch</i> , 2004.....	105
Figure 53: Francis Alÿs, <i>Beggars</i> , 2001 – present.....	106
Figure 54: Francis Alÿs, <i>Guards</i> , 2004-2005.....	107
Figure 55: Francis Alÿs, <i>La Malinche</i> , 1997.....	110
Figure 56: Francis Alÿs, <i>Sign-painters project (Rotulistas)</i> , 1993 – 1997.	114
Figure 57: Francis Alÿs, Studio installation of three copies of <i>The liar / The copy of the liar</i> (1997).	115
Figure 58: Francis Alÿs, <i>Déjà vu</i> , 1996 – present.....	116
Figure 59: Minnette Vári, <i>Riverrun</i> , 2004.....	119
Figure 60: Minnette Vári, Installation view of <i>Riverrun</i> , 2004.....	120
Figure 61: Vuyisa Nyamende, <i>Random footage</i> , 2004.....	122
Figure 62: Francis Alÿs, <i>As long as I'm walking</i> , 1992.	123
Figure 63: Francis Alÿs, <i>Cantos Patrióticos (Patriotic songs)</i> , 1998 – 1999. ...	125
Figure 64: Bridget Baker, <i>The blue collar girl (New Delhi)</i> , 2005.....	133
Figure 65: Francis Alÿs, <i>Ambulantes (Pushing and pulling)</i> , 1992 – present..	134
Figure 66: Merry Alpern, <i>Shopping #16</i> , 1999.....	136
Figure 67: Minnette Vári, <i>The calling</i> , 2003.....	138
Figure 68: Dineo Bopape, <i>Dreamweaver</i> , 2008.	142
Figure 69: Usha Seejarim, <i>Eight to four</i> , 2001.....	143
Figure 70: Tracy Payne, <i>Coastal resort</i> , 1996.....	145
Figure 71: Francis Alÿs, <i>Rehearsal 2</i> , 2001-2006.	147
Figure 72: Berni Searle, <i>Approach</i> , 2006.	149
Figure 73: Berni Searle, <i>Approach</i> (details), 2006.....	149
Figure 74: Bridget Baker. <i>The blue collar girl (Cape Town)</i> , 2004.....	151
Figure 75: Bridget Baker. <i>The blue collar girl (Gent)</i> , 2004.	151
Figure 76: Bridget Baker, <i>The blue collar girl (Maputo)</i> , 2005.	151
Figure 77: Bridget Baker, <i>The blue collar girl (Valais)</i> , 2006-7.	151
Figure 78: Celia de Villiers, <i>Post-human consumerism</i> , 2009.	156
Figure 79: Minnette Vári, <i>Aurora australis</i> , 2001.	158
Figure 80: Senzeni Marasela, <i>Theodora goes to Johannesburg</i>	159
Figure 81: Karin Preller, <i>Brixton 2</i> , 2010.....	161
Figure 82: Karin Preller, <i>Brixton 5</i> , 2010.....	161
Figure 83: Karin Preller, <i>Montgomery park I</i> , 2010.....	162

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The figure of the *flâneur* is an integral part of any metropolitan area and needs to be revisited as he¹ is faced with new impressions and experiences in the contemporary city. *Flânerie*² as an activity of strolling and looking carried out by the *flâneur*, is a persistent motif in literature, sociology and art concerned with urban and specifically metropolitan existence (Tester 1994:1). The *flâneur* and urban space are in a symbiotic relationship with each other as both generate meaning from each other. The *flâneur* becomes an important figure in the urban milieu as this is his habitat. According to Michel de Certeau (1984:117), “[s]pace occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalise it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into space by walkers.” Furthermore one can say that “space is like a word when it is spoken – dependent on context, time and use” (De Certeau 1984:117).

1.1. Space

Space is seen as a moment in the intersection of the arrangement of social relations, resulting in a certain dynamic, articulated by Doreen Massey (1994:265) as a complex network of “relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation.” The very social relations that define space are not static by nature and as such, space is full of power and symbolism, since it

¹ Baudelaire envisages the *flâneur* as male in his writings and Benjamin continues in this tradition (Tester 1994:2). According to Dreyer (2005:5), the *flâneur* is “less gender-specific and more diversely applied” since the second half of the twentieth century. For the purpose of this study the term *flâneur* is used as a generic and genderless term, unless where gender is the theme of the discussion. However, I continue the use of the pronoun he and his, as the continued gender inclusion of he / she and his / her or avoiding gender with it and its lead to awkward reading. Therefore, Chapter one, two and three generally use the male form of address, whereas in Chapter four the *flâneur* is specifically identified as being male or female.

² *Flânerie* as activity is more than just strolling and according to Rob Shields (1994:65), it “is more specific than strolling. It is a spatial practice of specific sites: the interior and exterior public spaces of the city.”

is theorised as a result of social relations (Massey 1994:265). Space needs to be conceptualised as being composed of interrelations, “as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelation and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local level to the most global” (Massey 1994:264).

Space is defined in terms of what time is not. Time is paralleled with the concepts of progress, civilization, science and reason, whereas space is aligned with stasis, reproduction, nostalgia, emotions and the body. However, the static nature of space as being subordinate to time as the privileged signifier is questioned in the contemporary era of capital accumulation, specifically commodification, and digitalisation (Harvey 1993:7). For Edward Soja (1996:2,3), the “spatiality of human life” has become an important facet as a “third existential dimension” in the traditional coupling of historicity and sociality. Space consists of the physical, the mental and the social and for this reason social relations are fundamental in the production of space (Lefebvre 2002:133).

The Western intellectual tradition of separating body and mind, nature and culture, reason and emotion is integral in repudiating the importance and integrity of emotional experience (Burns 2000:69). These dichotomies result in that experience is located in the realm of urban spaces, where it is associated with femininity and irrationality as the hierarchy establishes a supremacy of reason (Burns 2000:69). The symbolic gendering of space has an effect on and reflects the manner in which gender is constructed and understood in a specific society. For instance, places of consumption are usually seen as feminine and places of business as masculine (Van Eeden 2006:64).

The perception of space in contemporary times has changed from the modern view that space is quantifiable, indifferent and impersonal and for Heidegger (1971:165) “[p]lace is the locale of the truth of Being” (Bauman 1998:32). ‘Space’ is created out of the vast intricacies, the incredible complexities, of the interlocking and the non-interlocking, and the networks of relations at every scale from local to global. The spatial organization of a society is not merely the result of the social but is integral to the production of the social (Massey

1994:4). Space is not merely a neutral backdrop to our being as it can never be omitted from any experience. Consequently space is both an abstract concept and physical reality.

The multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales is seen as constructing that which is known as ‘the spatial.’ Power and symbolism permeates space, since it is theorised as a result of social relations and is furthermore a complex network of “relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation” (Massey 1994:265). Place becomes space once it is used and thereby given meaning by those inhabiting it. Space is therefore a social product to some degree and the manner in which it is organised and experienced is fundamental to the individual existence (Cavallaro 2001:170). Even though the idea exists that there is a “universally shared image of the world,” space is rather experienced as a “hierarchy of images” (Bauman 1998:32). According to Massey (1994:265) the spatial is socially constituted and she states that:

The spatial spread of social relations can be intimately local or expansively global, or anything in between. Their spatial extent and form also changes over time ... but, whatever way it is, there is no getting away from the fact that the social is inexorably also spatial.

Space is characterised by a growing divide as there is the local, which relies on shared identity and the interconnected global space (Bauman 2007:74). It seems that place is no longer the most important factor when examining space, specifically when looking at concepts such as globalisation, information economy and telematics (Sassen 2001:13). However, it cannot be ignored. Moreover, these complex interrelationships between the digital and the physical world result in a destabilisation of existing hierarchies of scale (Sassen 2001:15). That which is perceived as ‘local,’ for instance, is rather a “microenvironment with global span” even though it can be represented as a topographic entity (Sassen 2001:15). Space is no longer confined to a geographic locality as it becomes virtual and William Mitchell (2000:3) states that: “[t]raditional urban patterns cannot coexist with cyberspace.”

1.2. The city

The importance of the urban environment, which consists of a myriad of social and individual processes, cannot be neglected in the study of individual experience. Physical aspects of the city: the streets, buildings, parks and other spaces, are not only situated in the ambit of urban planning, but also, if not more pronounced, in the realm of human experience. The experiential realm in context of the city is situated in the everyday places and objects of life. Therefore, the corporeality of the city, as object, feature or image, is dissolved into perceptual experience and becomes continuous with human life (Burns 2000:69).

The city may be described as a “state of mind,” consisting of a “body of customs and traditions” as well as the attitudes and sentiments inherent to these customs which are conveyed with the traditions (Park, Burgess & McKenzie 1996:1). It is involved in the essential processes of the people who compose it and is not merely a “physical mechanism and artificial construction” (Park, Burgess & McKenzie 1996:1). Becoming an entity within itself, the city is no longer defined by architecture and borders alone. Its inhabitants play a crucial role in its definition; however, they are not the identity of the city. According to Guy Debord (1994) the spectacle of the city can be seen as both the media according to as well as the pure visibility of the city and the visual information that can be garnered from the city.

Cities have changed tremendously and rapidly in the previous century and such changes have not been seen since the beginning of industrialisation (Miles 2010:1). For Debord (1994:2,4), the contemporary society is characterised by a market driven economy that is dominant, if not oppressive, and filled with the “excesses of the media.” Public space is taken over by advertising and everything is centred on consumption (Baudrillard 1988:19,20). Ideologically, the city becomes a “site of consumption” and shopping “*the* defining activity of public life” (Miles 2010:8,9). Consumption has taken over from production and consumer goods and places of consumption have become the main ingredients in the postmodern city and cities “are what and where we consume”

(Featherstone 1991:13, Miles 2010:1). Individuals place a high importance on leisure and consumption, which even though it seems to entail free choice, are fraught with ideological manipulation (Featherstone 1991:13).

According to Georg Simmel (1997b:184) the individual loses his/her connection with progress, spirituality and value within metropolitan society. The culture industry of a hyper-industrial society has a similar effect, where the individual becomes depersonalised under its impact. The hypertrophy of objective culture at the expense of individual culture makes life easier with fewer choices to be made; however, the individual struggles to become unique within this society where value becomes a commodity that is perceived to be for sale (Stiegler 2006:sp).

Saskia Sassen (2001:12) states that to examine a metropolitan area only “in terms of its built topography” is no longer adequate in a global digital era. However, the material and the local of a global city cannot be disregarded when considering the global and the digital. Sassen (2001:12) continues that “topographic representations of such a city fail to capture the fact that components of a city’s topography may be spatialisation of global power projects and/or may be located on global circuits, thereby destabilising the meaning of the local or the cited, and hence the topographic representation of such a city.” Cities become global or even cyborg cities, as they are interconnected by networks and flows of information.

The effects of globalisation are pervasive and play an integral part in the life of any city dweller. Globalisation is supported by the all-encompassing communication networks that have permeated everyday life. The integration of the digital and the non-digital results in the transformation of the physical entity. Even though the physical entity still has the same properties as prior to the entering of cyberspace, certain elements are ‘liquefied’ and circulate in digital networks. The resultant hypermobility or dematerialisation of the physical entity produces a number of material outcomes and significant changes in the physical entities place-boundedness (Sassen 2001:16). The city is increasingly a networked entity or process rather than a ‘structure’ or place. It exists as a

“matrix of random connections and disconnections and of an essentially infinite volume of possible permutations” (Bauman 2007:3).

The activities in cyberspace are greatly influenced by the cultures outside of cyberspace and the manner in which cyberspace is perceived is reliant on the way in which meaning is created of the ‘outside’ world (Sassen 2001:15). An individual’s sense of place and time is determined by the web of communications, rather than the physical space that is occupied (Bertol 1996:87). This web of communication includes, but is not limited to, telecommunication as well as cyber communication which extends one’s existential space far beyond physical space. This results in a reduction of urban space to a series of images (Bertol 1996:87).

Digital technology results in a blurring of the boundaries between social and technological and natural and artificial. Moreover, computer networks provide opportunities to overcome physical limitations, such as geography, time zones and conspicuous social status (Burns 2000:76). There is no longer a clear distinction between physical and virtual places and the latter blends and coexists within the contemporary metropolis (Burns 2000:76). The impact of digital technology is without doubt considerable on human experience within the contemporary city.

The emergence of surveillance as “an institutionally central and pervasive feature of social life” is analogous with the rise of the consumer society (Lyon 1994:24). In the surveillance society contact with the surveillant assemblage is constant and inescapable (Lyon 2007:8). The implications for the city dweller is two-fold, firstly, the perception exists that a surveyed society affords the individual increased safety, and secondly, constant surveillance as an inconvenience, since it does not respect privacy and anonymity. Surveillance plays a significant role in consumerism as consumer data is continually collected and matched to marketing campaigns, extending its influence in the individual’s autonomy.

The architecture of a city carries as much power in its symbols as do the actions and relationships of those living in the city. The acknowledgement of the marginalised and less powerful cultures within the urban realm is not represented within the architecture of the city, but rather in the places of the everyday, the homes, parks and shantytowns (Burns 2000:75). The physical nature of cities is therefore influenced by this increase of fear as city planning and architecture change to accommodate the changing needs of the city dweller.

1.3. The *flâneur*

The *flâneur* is seen as the symbolic representation of “modernity and personification of contemporary urbanity,” specifically in the realm of social and literary analysis (Ferguson 1994:22). The *flâneur* garners meaning from urban space and thereby adds meaning to the space itself. The *flâneur*, a masculine narrator according to the nineteenth century poet Charles Baudelaire, extricates aesthetic experience and existential fulfilment from the crowds in the city (Tester 1994:2).

According to De Certeau (1984:94), the city is a theoretical concept that is created by the city planner or cartographer, and that those strolling the streets of the city are not confined to this concept of the city, as they walk the streets according to their own rhythm and purpose. The *flâneur* is characterised by walking in the city. Even though his journey seems futile, it becomes the essence of his existence on the streets as walking is “an elementary form of [the] experience of the city” (De Certeau 1984:93). The practice of walking reveals the meanings that are embedded in the city (Cavallaro 2001:175). Walking gives rise to spaces in the city that cannot be seen (De Certeau 1984:93). Cuauhtémoc Medina (2007:77) argues that walking is intertwined with living and thinking and is part of a multitude of practices.

1.3.1. Origin of the concept of the *flâneur*

The origin of the concept of the *flâneur* can be traced back to the writings of Charles Baudelaire, specifically its interpretation by Walter Benjamin. The publication *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857) by Baudelaire forms the basis of the *flâneur* theory and the success of this publication resulted in a greater awareness of the concept. The success of Baudelaire's publication can be linked to the fact that his poetry related to the experience of its readers (Benjamin 1973:158). With the advent and rapid expansion of the Industrial Revolution of the late 1800s, increasing numbers of people inhabited urban areas and the extreme changes in the lived environment resulted in possibilities for novel experiences.

Baudelaire was by no means the only writer of the era of Industrialisation who concerned himself with the new experiences present in the city. Writers such as Edgar Allan Poe (1840), with the story *The Man of the Crowd* or Friedrich Engels's (1844) *The Condition of the Working Class in England* investigated the way that the city influences its inhabitants; however, none captured the essence of the *flâneur* as effectively as Baudelaire. It was mainly Baudelaire who saw the city as enchanting, and not a menacing force or the inhumanity so often associated with city life (Benjamin 1973:168,172,173). Engels described the crowds as brutally indifferent and repulsive (Benjamin 1969:58). It is Baudelaire who imbued the *flâneur* with enjoyment to be in the crowd, who can take pleasure from being absorbed in the masses of people (Benjamin 1969:58). The *flâneur*, even in distancing himself from the crowds, is still deeply involved with them, alternating between accomplice and oblivious observer (Benjamin 1973:174).

The *flâneur* has been a common figure in discourses on the city since his emergence in the nineteenth century. The city streets of the nineteenth century did not lend itself to strolling, since wide pavements were the exception and the threat of vehicles were ever-present (Benjamin 1969:36). Therefore, the arcades, described as passageways lined with shops, provided the city stroller

with a setting. The arcades of the Paris city streets were influential in the arrival of the *flâneur* and formed the basis of the *flâneur's* experiences.

Baudelaire never described the masses or the city in which the *flâneur* is so at home, but he placed the *flâneur* in a universal urban and overcrowded environment (Benjamin 1973:170). Fascinated by the crowds of the city Baudelaire's *flâneur* loses himself in the masses of the city and becomes intoxicated with this abandonment and experiences a love affair of delight and enchantment with the city (Benjamin 1969:55). There is no antagonism or opposition towards the crowds in which he finds himself (Benjamin 1973:171). Newcomers to urban life usually experience feelings of fear and loathing when encountering the crowds of the city; however, for Baudelaire the crowds held an immersive "reservoir of electric energy" resulting in an increase of nervous stimulation in the form of shocks and collisions (Benjamin 1973:176,177).

As a man of leisure, without the responsibility of having to attend to daily affairs, the *flâneur* can indulge in aimlessly wandering the streets and "is already out of place in an atmosphere of complete leisure as in the feverish turmoil of the city" (Benjamin 1973:174,175). The *flâneur* was privy to unexpected and unplanned sensual encounters on the streets, since the only women on the streets were prostitutes and working girls. It is here that the male gaze comes to the fore, where the *flâneur* has the opportunity to consume the women on the streets without the necessity of a monetary transaction.

Flânerie requires knowledge of the being of the city and for Baudelaire, the *flâneur* could only be a true artist if he knew the city and how to use it (Ferguson 1994:30). To be the creative artist-*flâneur* the capacity for obsessive and dispassionate observation and the ability to reduce the city to spectacle were paramount. However, while Baudelaire's *flâneur* attempted to negate the materialism of the urban spectacle, Benjamin's *flâneur* as artist does not wander the streets with a sense of indifference and detachment, but "is already looking for a buyer" (Birkerts 1982:167, Ferguson 1994:34).

Baudelaire's *flâneur* is not confined to the corporeal stroller who wandered the streets of nineteenth century Paris (Birkerts 1982:165). As motif, the *flâneur* can be re-conceptualised outside the parameters of the latter as he is a collection of attributes, real and imagined (Birkerts 1982:166). Furthermore, the *flâneur* is used conceptually to comment on the issues of urban life without limiting him in terms of time and place (Tester 1994:16). For Tester (1994:15) "*flânerie* is existence at a pace that is out of step with the rapid circulations of the modern metropolis." The *flâneur* is therefore no longer limited to the streets and arcades of nineteenth century Paris, and "has walked into the pages of the commonplace" and contemporary urban culture (Tester 1994:1). Susan Buck-Morss (1986:103) contends that:

If at the beginning, the *flâneur* as private subject dreamed himself out into the world, at the end, *flânerie* was an ideological attempt to reprivatise social space, and to give assurance that the individual's passive observation was adequate for knowledge of social reality.

1.3.2. The contemporary *flâneur*

The figure of the *flâneur*, in keeping with Postmodernism, is a diverse figure and a single definition is no longer adequate to describe his existence. According to Keith Tester (1994:1), "the *flâneur* has been allowed, or made, to take a number of walks away from the streets and arcades of nineteenth-century Paris." In contemporary times; however, the *flâneur* is no longer limited to the descriptions afforded to him by Baudelaire and Benjamin.

The emergence of the *flâneur* coincides with a period of great change in modern history, that of industrialisation and modern capitalism (Gleber 1999:vii). Therefore, since his inception, "rapid urbanization and industrialization and an increased influence of the visual" have been determining factors in his experience of reality and being (Gleber 1999:vii). As a result when investigating the contemporary *flâneur* the significant effects of the visual and technology cannot be discounted as these are fundamental in the experience and being of the *flâneur*.

The *flâneur* is both a product of the city and an author of the city in the way he experiences the city (Gleber 1997:67). The *flâneur's* experiences are gained from ordinary activities such as shopping, strolling and socialising, lured by the magnetism of the streets and the sensual pleasures of the crowds (Burns 2000:74). The *flâneur* is detached from the city and its enchantments; however, desires the city as a whole, and not only a specific part of it (Ferguson 1994:27). Even though *flânerie* is subject to certain universal experiences, the contemporary *flâneur* in the urban milieu is faced with additional and unique challenges and experiences.

It is apparent that the *flâneur* has undergone a major conceptual shift in the past century due to the massive changes occurring in urban societies. The change in the experience of the *flâneur* evident in the contemporary city results in the emergence of alienation. Primary traits of the contemporary *flâneur* include detachment from the ordinary social world, an attachment to the metropolis and an association to art (Ferguson 1994:26). The *flâneur* is known for egoism and is suspended from social obligation, as well as being disengaged, disinterested and dispassionate (Ferguson 1994:26). As the *flâneur* loses his connection to the city, he becomes without goal and origin and signifies failure (Ferguson 1994:23).

As society's focus has shifted from production to consumption, consumption has become the main signifier of contemporary life. The *flâneur* is drawn to the spectacle of the city and the commodities on offer and finds himself in a pervasive mass media society which consists of simulations that are not questioned by those exposed to it (Shields 1994:78). Faced with this excess of information the recipients are unable to respond and disseminate meaning from it, as such the *flâneur* as connoisseur of visual consumption "is a vicarious conqueror, self confirmed in his mastery of the empire of the gaze while losing his own self in the commodified network of popular imperialism" (Baudrillard 2001c:211, Baudrillard 2001d:13, Shields 1994:78). The world that the *flâneur* frequents is a world of the hyperreal, without referent, ground or source and is characterised by alienation from the environment and in keeping with this the *flâneur* finds himself in a position of conceptual alienation, thereby affirming the

flâneur's position as outsider (Baudrillard 2001a:175, Shields 1994:77). Surveillance has become a concern for the *flâneur* as it subverts the way in which he observes the city. No longer the anonymous walker, the *flâneur* is watched by clinical CCTV cameras and this affects the nature of his being.

Today the *flâneur* is free to roam much more than just the physical streets of the European city. New environments have emerged with the advent of the digital age and there is a new sense of space perception with the ease of international travel. The *flâneur* re-imagines the spaces to be travelled as well as the manner of travel and is no longer limited to the corporeality of the environment or the body. With the advent of the digital age, the *flâneur's* journeys are undertaken in the immaterial world of cyberspace. The journey can be vast, as there are no limits to what the *flâneur* can see or the 'places' that he can visit. Furthermore, within the realm of cyberspace this becomes even more complex as the *flâneur* is no longer an embodied entity. Within cyberspace, the *flâneur* becomes disembodied as his or her identity is electronic (Mitchell 1995:12). The "structures of access and inclusion are reconstructed in entirely nonarchitectural terms" as the journey is no longer defined by entering and exiting physical spaces, but "by simply establishing and breaking logical linkages" (Mitchell 1995:21).

The following of 'logical links' results in a journey that has no concrete end in mind or in sight. In addition it is characterised by being unplanned and arbitrary. Even in cyberspace the *flâneur* finds himself conducting a journey that is not methodical or systematic. The places that the *flâneur* roams in cyberspace are varied and can be private or public, where access is uncontrolled. According to Hille Koskela (2000:252), "a city is a space of endless encounters" and this idea is not only limited to the physical city, but also very relevant in cyberspace.

The *flâneur* was originally conceptualised as being exclusively male, since women were not able to walk around the city with the same freedom as men, especially during the nineteenth century which saw the emergence of the *flâneur*. Women were firmly entrenched in the domestic sphere and it was only lower and working class women who entered the masculine public sphere on a

regular basis (Wolff 1990:35). Therefore, the experiences of the city stroller of the modernist era were mainly attributed to the male and the idea of the female *flâneur* contested as the basis of the *flâneur* is his maleness. However, in contemporary times, where gender roles are no longer seen as being exclusive binary oppositions but rather fluid between the two poles, it is difficult to accept the notion that there can be no female *flâneur*.

Women on the streets have traditionally been the victims of the gaze and are “absent as subject and yet overpresent as object” and this seems to be the case even in contemporary times (Petro 1997:43). Furthermore, the female *flâneur* is usually the victim of discrimination, harassment and the fear of crime, whether these are justified or not in her surroundings. Anke Gleber (1997:74) states that: “Despite women’s formal equality and democratic rights, the uncommented, uninhibited, and unobserved presence of a female person in the streets is in no way acknowledged as a self-evident right.” Therefore, women’s movement in the city is restricted to a much greater degree than that of men, and thus a marked difference between their respective experiences which is not readily quantifiable. Regardless of the latter, women are still present on the city streets and it is necessary to position their presence in terms of the reasons they frequent the streets.

In my view, aimless wandering is seldom the goal of a woman’s journey on the street: purpose informs her presence. Women are more likely to engage in *flânerie* in the shopping mall, which is seen as a ‘safe’ area. Economies of scale are important regarding the *flâneur* today. Working class people are more likely to be walking the streets whereas the middle class is safely ensconced in their vehicles. The economic position of a person influences where he or she will spend his or her time and money as well as how areas are perceived in terms of desirability and safety.

1.4. Francis Alÿs

Alÿs's interventions are not a mere continuation of the Baudelairean *flâneur*. Instead it can be seen as a critique of the *flâneur*, since he does not simply indulge in the sights and sounds of the city, but rather actively comments on a certain aspect of the contemporary city and society by both focusing on the actions of the stroller as well as the impact of the stroller on his surroundings (Medina 2007:77). Furthermore, his solitary walks pursue a simplicity that makes it easy for the viewer to grasp and is at the same time complex, leaving the viewer with much to ponder, resulting in an enduring legacy (Stiffler 2007:sp). His art is enhanced by the social setting in which it takes place and the locale cannot be discounted.

Francis Alÿs is Belgian by birth and currently resides in Mexico City. Alÿs is originally from Antwerp, Belgium, which is a world removed from the sprawling megalopolis of Mexico City, both in culture and design. Alÿs's decision to make Mexico City his home was not necessarily by choice, as he found himself unable to leave Mexico in 1989 after completing a commitment to the Belgian army in the city, due to some "private and legal matters" (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8). It was here where he started practicing his art as a reaction to the large metropolis that he was faced with (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8).

Alÿs came to Mexico as an architect shortly after the devastating earthquake of 1986. He rejected his roots as an architect and turned to traditional art making practice, starting with sculpture and painting, followed by performances as actions and interventions which are perhaps his enduring legacy (Anton 2002:146). Alÿs's move to Mexico City was not undemanding and stress-free. He states that the city seemed "dysfunctional" and that he could not understand the city's codes and how it functioned (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8). Alÿs is frequently viewed as a cultural outsider where he works as a result of his heritage and his actions (Markle 2008:sp). He comments that his status as an immigrant in Mexico released him from the constraints of his European ancestry, providing him with a "permanent disjunction" (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8).

Even though most of Alÿs's interventions take place in Mexico City, it is not limited to the latter. He works in many urban areas across the Americas and Europe as the setting for his interventions (Baume [Sa]). He is specifically interested "with how we³ inhabit spaces" and the manner in which meaning is derived from these (Baume [Sa]). When working in South American countries, such as Mexico, Peru and Patagonia, he focuses on the general problems plaguing those areas, such as the increasing gap between rich and poor, political corruption, the inability to reform and the monotonous everyday routines of the working poor (Johnson 2007:sp).

The city is Alÿs's main inspiration and his works narrate the manner in which we inhabit spaces (Baume [Sa]). Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:25) asserts that when he started practicing as an artist in Mexico City his "first impulse was not to add to the city, but to absorb what was already there, to work with the residues. Or with the negative spaces, the holes, the spaces in between." He continues by stating that: "[m]y first reaction was to insert a story into the city rather than an object. It was my way of affecting a place at a very precise moment of its history, even just for an instant" (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:25,26).

Alÿs is not only concerned with the physical spaces of the city, but rather the spaces of memory and imagination (Baume 2007:sp). He declares that "[i]n my city everything is temporary" (Alÿs in Medina 2007:78). In addition, places are fragmentary (De Certeau 1984:108). The imprints of steps on the routes of the *flâneur* do not last and strolling in the city gives the *flâneur* a reprieve from time as the city is characterised by beginnings, or an eternal present not encumbered by the past (Bauman 1994:140). The activities of the *flâneur* are the practice the possibilities of meaning, where life is a series of indefinite, irreversible and unequivocal episodes (Bauman 1994:142). In this the *flâneur* is rooted in fleeting and ephemeral moments, even though these do not reveal deeper meaning (Morawski 1994:184).

³ Alÿs is concerned with inhabitants of cities, specifically the "urban spaces in the Americas and Europe, from São Paulo to Venice" (Baume [Sp]).

Moreover, Alÿs is concerned with the creation of myths through storytelling and states that: “Each of my interventions is another fragment of the story I am inventing, of the city I am mapping” (Alÿs in Baume [Sa]). He does not attempt to tell a specific story, but concentrates on active interpretation (Anton 2002:146). Alÿs (2002:sp) continues by saying that:

In this sense, myth is not about the veneration of ideals – of pagan gods or political ideology – but rather an active interpretive practice performed by the audience, who must give the work its meaning and its social value. After all, isn't the story of modern and contemporary art and its cult of the object really just a myth of materialism, of matter as an ideal? For me, it is a refusal to acknowledge the transitory, a failure to see that art really exists, so to speak, in transit.

Alÿs avoids resolution when creating an artwork and this is important when investigating the contemporary *flâneur's* actions in the city. He evades the Western ideal of working towards an end or goal and is often concerned with illustrating that a great deal of effort does not necessarily result in an end-product of equal value. He thereby negates the Western ideals of the value of progress (Knight 2007:sp). Furthermore, in correlation with the above, Alÿs engages in ritual and repetition to further enhance the endless deferral of completion (Markle 2008:sp). Contradiction is another important aspect of his work as the effort required to complete a task is far removed from the result. Frequently it seems that he is taking the longest or most labourious route to reach a goal which is often not tangible and sometimes seems like nothing. It is through these concepts that Alÿs looks “for the quality of instantaneous presentness” (Ferguson 2008:sp). He blurs the boundaries between what is commonly accepted as artistic intent, which is to create something, and the result of having an end-product (Johnson 2007:sp).

The work of Francis Alÿs is the main focus of this research; however, in places, South African artists (with the exception of Merry Alpern) are used to elucidate certain aspects of this study. In my opinion, it is necessary to include South African artists, firstly, as this study originates in South Africa and secondly, as their works are in certain respects better equipped to illustrate certain points. There is not a specific South African artist that can be singled out as a main source of reference apart from Alÿs, as their concerns are varied and not so

singularly focussed on the act of walking. The experience of the *flâneur* is usually relayed one level removed from the principal experience as can be seen with Sabelo Mlangeni and Dale Yudelman. In the case of Matiyane, the act of walking is not the principle event, but rather surveying, even though this takes place on foot. Where the artist is also the object of the work, such as Steven Cohen, Dineo Bopape and Minnette Vári, the primary concern is not with walking; however, elements of these works are relevant to the conceptualisation of the *flâneur*. In the section dealing with the gender of the *flâneur* mention is made mostly to female artists, such as Minnette Vári, Bridget Baker and Dineo Bopape.

1.5. Need and aims of the study

The concept of *flânerie* is concerned with the way in which the perception of the outside world influences experience. The visual is crucial to the *flâneur*, thereby making the study of the *flâneur* a relevant endeavour in the field of Visual studies. In addition the interpretation of images, visual literacy, power and public space, gender and identity are all aspects related to *flânerie* and these are many of the fields of interest of Visual studies (Gleber 1999:vii).

The way individuals experience their urban environment is rapidly changing as the world is undergoing major changes in relatively short periods of time. These changes need to be addressed, since they are so pervasive. Concepts relating to the *flâneur* form an appropriate backdrop for the investigation of these changes. The study of the influence of surveillance on the experience of the *flâneur* is a field that has not been fully explored, since theories regarding surveillance tend to focus on concepts of privacy and technology. As such, the manner in which individuals experience the world and create meaning for themselves is a field that is very relevant in Postmodernism and its presence in this study is accordingly justified.

Gender cannot be ignored in a study regarding the urban environment as gender experiences are still polarised (Gleber 1999:173). Moreover, walking in

the city is problematic for women, for a variety of reasons and this is explored with the backdrop of the *flâneur*. In my opinion, Alÿs is the quintessential *flâneur* and therefore his artistic endeavours form the basis of this study, even though his work and its interpretation is not a new field of study. The *flâneur* in an African context is very sparsely theorised and this study attempts to introduce certain ideas regarding the *flâneur* with reference to selected South African artists.

The main argument of this study centres on the investigation of the experiences of the *flâneur* within the urban environment. My aim is to show how the concept of the *flâneur* is underpinned by certain aspects, such as the aimless wanderings of the *flâneur*, the influence of the surveillance society and the issue of gender in the city, both the gender of the *flâneur* and the women he encounters in the city. The specific aims are as follows:

- To explore the concept of the contemporary *flâneur* within the context of the urban environment.
- To illustrate the ideas relevant to the *flâneur* with specific reference to Francis Alÿs and selected South African artists.
- To situate the *flâneur* in consumer society and the spectacle of the urban milieu.
- To consider the *flâneur* as consumer on the public streets and semi-private space of the mall and the role of nostalgia in an aggressive consumer society.
- To explore the *flâneur* with regards to the notion of teleology: travelling without a specific goal with reference to both physical travel and travel in cyberspace.
- To compare the *flâneur's* journey to the Sisyphean quest.
- To explore the nature of the *flâneur's* journey associated with the creation of narratives, leaving physical and ethereal evidence of the journey and to situate the *flâneur's* anonymity in the city.
- To investigate the emotions associated with *flânerie* that arise from being in the city, such as desire, fear and absence.

- To compare the similarities between the *flâneur's* journey and the Situationist International's practice of *dérive*.
- To investigate the manner in which the proliferation of surveillance systems is affecting the *flâneur's* impression of space, specifically the city streets and cyberspace.
- To provide insight into the notion of virtualisation as it pertains to *flânerie*.
- To examine the gaze on the *flâneur*, both as looking at the object and being the object of the gaze.
- To situate the *flâneur* as outsider in the city.
- To explore the manner in which surveillance influences the experiences of the *flâneur* specifically in the creation of a digital counterpart and how this results in fragmentation, disembodiment and alienation.
- To consider women in the city and whether the *flâneur* can be female within the traditionally male space of the public streets of the city.
- To explore the progression of the presence of women on the street from the prostitute to objects of the gaze and desire within the parameters of this study.
- To situate the female experience on the street in the matrixial borderspace.

1.6. Methodology and theoretical approach

The main focus of this research is the *flâneur* in the contemporary urban environment, specifically an environment that is characterised by consumerism and surveillance. The manner in which this research is conducted is to elucidate the theoretical aspects with visual examples that are situated in the realm of fine art. Consequently, the theoretical framework within which this dissertation is situated lies in the discourses underpinning Visual studies and Social theory.

The research methodology entails an analysis of the visual art of Francis Alÿs as well as other artists, albeit to a lesser degree. Visual material not accredited to Alÿs is included where it provides a greater potential to clarify the theoretical aspects. Alÿs's work is not confined to a single genre and includes, although is

not limited to, performances, as interventions and actions, video, animation, photography and painting. Most of his interventions and actions are extensively documented for 'artistic purposes' by means of photography and video. However, the main theme of his work is the act of walking through the city similar to the *flâneur*. For this reason his work is of particular importance to this study.

As with most research undertaken in a postmodern setting, the nature of the study is interdisciplinary. The field of Visual studies draws extensively from sources other than just the History of art, since it has transcended the traditional categorisation of visual material that is typically found in the field of History of art. The origins of the *flâneur* are rooted in literature and the figure has been appropriated by many fields of study that deal with urban spaces. Furthermore, for the purposes of this investigation, a post-structuralist approach regarding meaning and interpretation is followed as it is impossible to classify the artworks and the theoretical underpinnings of this study to a single discipline.

The research posed here is concerned with the actions and experiences of the city walker. For this reason it is necessary to include discourses related to the human condition in a postmodern society which is usually based on a philosophical school of thought. Furthermore, discourses on the urban environment are essential, since the *flâneur* is situated in the city. The influence of the spectacle cannot be discounted, since the *flâneur* is completely immersed in a consumerist society, and I suggest that this has a significant influence on discourses on the *flâneur* and the manner in which experience and meaning is formulated in a contemporary environment.

Not only is the contemporary city a site of the spectacle, but also of surveillance and therefore Surveillance studies form an important part of this research. Moreover gender has a pervasive presence in the field of Visual studies and it is necessary to refer to the *flâneur* in terms of Feminism and Gender studies.

1.7. Literature review

The literature used for this study relies primarily on texts that are concerned with the human condition in an increasingly urbanised environment. Throughout this study reference is made to Zygmunt Bauman and Michel de Certeau. Bauman is aptly referred to as the “prophet of modernity,” indicated by the title of the 1999 publication authored by Dennis Smith. Bauman (1994, 1998 & 2007) provides this study with useful perspectives in postmodern society, with specific reference to the monumental changes that society is undergoing and the changes in experience the latter bring about. The ‘networked’ nature of society has a massive influence on city dwellers as human relations are defined by this and their lives are divided into short term occurrences without developing into meaningful sequences (Bauman 2007:3). Continuing on the topic of contemporary society, Bauman (2007) sheds light on the aggressive consumerism and its effects on society.

De Certeau (1984) conveys the issues relevant to the spectacle and in light of these perspectives the experience of the *flâneur* is articulated. The spectacle of the metropolis has become an overwhelming phenomenon and its influence on the *flâneur* is significant. De Certeau develops a theory of the banal in life, with reference to a society that has transcended production and focuses its everydayness on consumption. De Certeau’s treatise on the everyday, although not specifically descriptive of the *flâneur* as a man of the crowd and the quintessential city dweller who thrives on the spectacle, may just as well have been written as such.

As urban space forms the foundation of this dissertation, it is imperative that the social nature thereof is theorised, as is done by Massey (1994) and Cavallaro (2001). They continue the work of Henri Lefebvre who conceptualises space on three levels, spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces. Space is therefore a product of the social interaction that takes place within it. The postmodern city is no longer a collection of buildings, streets and parks and has become an entity that is globally ‘connected’ by countless electronic links. The nature of the globalised city as it exists in cyberspace is

voiced by Sassen (2001) and Mitchell (1995, 2000). Sassen focuses on globalisation in the urban environment and provides an overview of the phenomenon. In comparison, Mitchell gives a personalised view of cyberspace and its implications for the individual.

The field of the contemporary *flâneur* is well theorised in visual culture. Benjamin's (1969, 1973) interpretation of the literary work of Charles Baudelaire is used as the point of departure for the conceptualisation of the *flâneur*. Baudelaire is seen as a seminal writer with relation to the *flâneur* of nineteenth century Paris, specifically in the publication *Les Fleurs du Mal* in 1857. Walter Benjamin interpreted these literary works to form a theory of the *flâneur* that is still relevant in contemporary society.

The theory of the *flâneur* needs to be reconceptualised from the arcades of nineteenth century Paris into postmodern society. The anthology compiled by Tester (1994) provides debates positioning the *flâneur* in contemporary society. There are a variety of different views on the *flâneur* in this publication and it is therefore an important source for this study. Chapters that are of significance include those of Ferguson, Shields and Morawski. In addition Anke Gleber (1999) also offers valuable insight into the theory pertaining to the *flâneur*. She seeks to "revise and expand approaches to modernity, perception, and representation" in relation to Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin (Gleber 1999:vii). This source evaluates the *flâneur* both as historical and contemporary figure.

The activities of the *flâneur* denies the Western concept of progress and completion of tasks and in this sense Seigel (2005) presents an overview of human nature and this is used as background to the *flâneur* walking in the city. Furthermore, Blanchot (2001), Camus (2005) and Solomon (2006) impart some compelling arguments regarding the nature of Sisyphus and the Sisyphean quest in the actions of the *flâneur*. Interestingly, even though the figure of Sisyphus is fascinating, very little is written about the existentialist nature of his doomed existence.

Due to Lyon's (1988, 1994, 2004 & 2007) specific emphasis on surveillance and the way it is constantly changing through technological advances, Lyon is an influential author in the field of surveillance. Interestingly, some of the abstract concepts set forth in his earlier work (1988, 1994) are part of everyday life today and one can only assume that the abstract concepts of the latest publication (2007) will become reality long before the turn of the decade. The *flâneur* finds himself in a society permeated by surveillance, which is becoming more prevalent and sophisticated in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, specifically electronic surveillance.

As such, surveillance is seen as a means to control society and the result is often conformity. This has a profound effect on the experience of the *flâneur* in terms of the awareness of the self, both the rational and real self (Lyon 1994:192). Koskela (2000 & 2003) discusses the manner in which surveillance is changing the nature of space with reference to the proliferation of surveillance cameras in urban spaces. An exploration of Koskela reveals that many of his concerns are similarly voiced in Visual studies discourse, such as the gaze and gender in spaces of surveillance. Furthermore, the anthology published for the *CTRL [SPACE]* exhibition at the ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany is particularly useful in light of the many different views that it presents. Levin, Frohne and Weibel (2002) not only offers interesting artistic endeavours, but also significant debates on many levels regarding surveillance.

The gender of the *flâneur* is questioned and explained by Gleber (1997) as it manifests in contemporary society. Gleber highlights the obstacles in the presence of women on the streets; however, consensus regarding the existence of a female *flâneur* is still elusive. The development of the presence of women on the street is well articulated by Buck-Morss (1986), and together with Buci-Glucksmann (1986), the prostitute as metaphor for the commodity is explained. Continuing with the idea of the prostitute as commodity, women seen as objects to be gazed at and desired. Van Eeden (2005, 2006) argues that spaces of consumption are gendered female for a variety of reasons. Not only are the spaces gendered female, they are also aimed at female consumers, since, even though women theoretically enjoy the same privileges as men, women are still

the main purchasers of everyday items used for the family. In addition, women use the act of shopping as a leisure activity.

The anthology by Medina, Ferguson and Fisher (2007) and the catalogue for the recent Alÿs exhibition, *A story of deception*, edited by Godfrey, Biesenbach and Greenberg (2010) provide the majority of visual material regarding Alÿs. In addition, Medina et al and Godfrey et al are rich sources of Alÿs's personal motivation for much of the work that is discussed in this dissertation. These also contain expert views on the work Alÿs, such as essays and interviews by Medina (2007) and Ferguson (2007).

1.8. Overview of chapters

Chapter one included the background and introduction to the study, the scope and focus of the investigation, the methodology and theoretical approach as well as an overview of the chapters to follow. It also stated the aims of the study. Furthermore the concept of the *flâneur* with reference to its origins in nineteenth century literature and its progression to its interpretations in contemporary social theory was explained together with the importance of this aspect to the academic field of Visual studies.

A brief history of Francis Alÿs and an overview of the major trends in his work were provided as well as his relevance to this study as an example of a contemporary *flâneur*. Alÿs is the main focus of this study; however, mention is made of a variety of mostly South African artists whose work carry important ideas regarding the *flâneur*.

Chapter two focuses on the contemporary *flâneur* engaged in aimless wanderings, whether it is on a physical level, such as wanderings in the streets or malls of contemporary cities, or travelling in cyberspace. Furthermore, the manner in which the Western ideals of progress is negated by investing huge amounts of effort into certain actions without any concrete or substantial results is explained and compared to the quest of Sisyphus. The artificial and

unattainable desires that are a result of contemporary living in the urban environment are considered as the *flâneur* wanders the city streets and are confronted with the spectacle. In contrast to ancient times, the city is not a safe haven, but rather a place where fear, specifically the fear of crime is common and the manner in which this affects the *flâneur* is examined. The *flâneur's* sense of being present is withheld and his experiences relating to absence is explored. Chapter two concludes with the ludic nature of the *flâneur's* wanderings through the city. Strolling aimlessly through the city is emblematic of the carefree nature of the *flâneur* as he drifts between interesting sights and goods. In this section the ideas of play, *dérive*⁴ and chance are investigated with regards to the *flâneur*.

Chapter three entails an investigation of the surveillance society and the *flâneur* in a consumer society. Being watched is no longer a clear power relation where the few watches the many, but is subverted in a surveillance society driven by consumerism. The *flâneur* is the object of surveillance systems in the physical streets of the city as well as the virtual realm of cyberspace. Specific attention is given to the different ways in which surveillance influences the *flâneur*, such as being the surveyor, being surveyed, and his position as outsider. In this regard it is my intention to investigate the effects of surveillance on the experiences of the *flâneur*. The multi-faceted nature of surveillance augments the creation of a data-double of the *flâneur* and thus duplication of the self and disembodiment are articulated. In the course of the investigation the effects of surveillance is revealed as it results in a sense of fragmentation, dehumanisation and alienation of the individual.

Chapter four questions the gender of the *flâneur*.⁵ This chapter suggests that the female *flâneur* does not have the same freedom to stroll the streets as her male counterpart as a result of the intricate connection women have with consumerism, specifically being the object. It can be argued that the spectacle

⁴ *Dérive* is a Situationist practice of “rapid passage through various ambiances” (Debord 1958:sp).

⁵ This study considers only a Western paradigm of thinking regarding the place of women in society, i.e. cities where women have the same legal rights as men and are not seen and treated as second class citizens.

of the metropolis has become an overwhelming phenomenon and its influence on the *flâneur* is significant. On that account women's position on consumer society is explored from being the prostitute and the object of the gaze and desire. In addition, the *flâneur* is a typical consumer and the relationship with areas associated with consumption is investigated in terms of public and semi-private spaces. Finally due to the radical changes in the ontology of the city mention is made of the nostalgia that the *flâneur* experiences for earlier times.

Chapter five is the final and concluding chapter of this study. The conclusion offers closing remarks regarding the findings of the study. At this point the line of reasoning as set out in the introduction is reviewed and the validity of the initial contentions is discussed. The manner in which this study has added to the current field of visual arts is articulated. The limitation of this research is pointed out, the reasons for the shortcomings listed as well as indicating how this can be corrected. Finally suggestions for further study are noted as the subject of the *flâneur* is still a field of study containing vast possibilities.

CHAPTER 2: TRAVEL WITHOUT A GOAL

In this chapter, the focus is on the journey of the *flâneur* and the physical acts associated with his travelling in the contemporary city. The city is the birthplace of the *flâneur* and is still his central milieu, even though the corporeality of the city has changed in the advent of the digital age. The argument is voiced that walking creates imagined spaces and mythical journeys that materialise in traces and maps. The *flâneur* is imagined as a meaningful figure on the streets, but whose actions are also infused with whimsy.

The *flâneur* wanders around aimlessly negating the utopian ideal of teleology,⁶ where a specific end goal is fundamental to any journey. It is therefore imperative that the act of walking is investigated both as a physical act and abstract idea. In addition, the *flâneur* is no longer constrained to the corporeal world, and his wanderings in the physical streets and intangible realm of cyberspace are examined. In this regard, his actions are likened to the quest of Sisyphus, where great effort leads to nothing.

Introduction

The *flâneur* is seen as an observant pedestrian who roams the city without a goal, simply observing and immersing himself in the urban spectacle. According to Bauman (1994:139) the “aimless stroll *is* the aim” for the contemporary *flâneur* and there is no need for any other purpose. Bauman (1994:139) continues that the *flâneur* lives a life searching for the goal of his wanderings and is therefore entangled in a succession of absolute beginnings without any ends. Even though the *flâneur* has a sense of purposiveness as an essence of his own being, his journey never reaches an end or *telos* as a higher level of understanding his environment or being in the environment (Seigel 2005:592). *Flânerie* is therefore posited as a condition of modernity, and urban modernity in particular.

⁶ Immanuel Kant developed the concept of teleological ethics in his theory of the hypothetical imperative, where the goal informs the action (Seigel 2005:296).

In the nineteenth century the *flâneur's* journey started when he ventured out on the streets of Paris on foot. The physical act of walking is therefore the primary act of the *flâneur*. Walking is contrary to the norms of industrial means of transport and “persists in defining human life as a matter of territorial and political activity” (Medina 2007:77). It can also be considered as the “last private place, safe from the phone or e-mail” in the opinion of Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:31).

Cyberspace and urban space are not mutually exclusive, since the digital realm is firmly embedded within the larger social, cultural, economic and subjective structures of the systems and experiences in which we exist and operate (Sassen 2001:15). However, these complex interrelationships between the digital and the physical world result in a destabilisation of existing hierarchies of scale (Sassen 2001:15). That which is perceived as ‘local’ for instance is rather a “microenvironment with global span” even though it can be represented as a topographic entity (Sassen 2001:15).

The communication technology that has become prevalent in the second half of the twentieth century standardises the desire and consciousness of the individual similar to the manner in which the machines of the industrial era standardised the body. Consumerism is premised in the arousal of desire and the production of “attractions and temptations” (Bauman 1998:78). Cities are no longer the safe havens they used to be and due to the rise of crime within the confines of the city, the *flâneur* is disempowered by feelings of fear. Furthermore, the absence of place is explored with reference to the rootless nature of the city dweller.

It is argued that the aimless nature of the *flâneur* can be likened to ludic behaviour, since spontaneity and random actions are characteristic of his walks. In this regard the idea of play is examined. In keeping with the idea of play, the role of chance encounters is explored together with the Situationist practice of *dérive*.

2.1. Teleology

Teleology is the study of purposiveness and is related to the Greek word *telos*, which can be translated as purpose, goal or end. It is therefore the idea that, when undertaking an action an end-goal should be envisioned and actively pursued. Accordingly, teleology is a system of thought where the mind aspires to a state of complete understanding of its purpose and being based on the accumulation and understanding of principles (MacIntyre 1990:5). Being is therefore infused with an essential purposiveness (Seigel 2005:590).

In contemporary times, the manner in which people spend their time has changed. Time dedicated to leisure has increased dramatically as Western society has shifted from production to consumption. For this reason, travel no longer requires to be undertaken with a specific goal in mind in contemporary urban spaces, as is demonstrated by the aimless wanderings of the *flâneur*. For Baudrillard (2001b:255) in the era of the hyperreal, the absence of an end or *telos* has become characteristic of the traveler. This is contrary to the teleological idea that any action is the fulfilment of an inner need and purpose (Seigel 2005:524). The actions of the *flâneur* are therefore not a reflection of a world that is infused with an inner purpose (Seigel 2005:297).

The *flâneur* is concerned rather with the processual instead of the teleological arrival. According to MacIntyre (1990:26), the end goal of systematic activity is the very reason why the activity is carried out. The *flâneur* is certainly concerned with systematic activity; however, the *telos* in the undertaking of the activity alludes to the lack of a teleological framework. As a result the validity or necessity of an action without apparent achievement is questioned (MacIntyre 1990:27). The intentions of the *flâneur* are uncertain as rational justification for his actions is lacking as there is no movement to a specific end (MacIntyre 1990:60,61).

The question remains of why the *flâneur* chooses to actively engage with the urban milieu. According to Tester (1994:7), the *flâneur* engages with the city to be a “secret spectator of the spectacle of the spaces and places of the city” and

as such it can be speculated that the purpose of his perambulations is to “find the things which will occupy his gaze and thus complete his otherwise incomplete identity; satisfy his otherwise dissatisfied existence; replace a sense of bereavement with life.” Furthermore, *flânerie* is a process through which the *flâneur* attempts to “find the truth of his being” however futile this might be (Tester 1994:7). In his failure to transcend the banality of his everyday existence it is in the city where the *flâneur* finds meaning and pleasure.

2.1.1. Physical travel

As a contemporary *flâneur*, Alÿs is primarily concerned with the act of walking and is the quintessential city dweller, as he is constantly on the move (Sharpe 1990:1). Walking is not only a physical act, since the walker changes the space by passing through it and making certain choices, thereby the pedestrian follows the idea of spatially acting out place (De Certeau 1984:98). This continual remapping of space by tracing new routes illustrates how the walker defines spaces, specifically the city streets, without being subjected to strict boundaries of identity, power relationships and knowledge (Cavallaro 2001:175). In keeping with this, Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:31) sees walking, specifically wandering or strolling, as a kind of rebellious act in contemporary culture, since it is antithetical to the very nature of speed and haste that characterise the urban landscape.

Alÿs emphasises the importance of walking in the city in *The collector* (1990-1992) (Figures 1 & 2).⁷ In this action he pulls a magnet on wheels reminiscent of a child’s toy through the streets of Mexico City. He stated that they are “tak[ing] a daily walk,” and in the process the toy becomes covered with a myriad of metal objects that were discarded on the streets (Medina 2007:72). The work gives him the opportunity to explore the narratives of the city by means of its waste (Medina 2007:73).

⁷ *The collector* is significant in Alÿs’s *oeuvre* as it positions the idea of walking to create narratives or fables that would inform his actions for many years to come (Medina 2007:73).



Figure 1: Francis Alÿs, *The collector*, 1990-1992.
In collaboration with Felipe Sanabria.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:72).



Figure 2: Francis Alÿs, *The collector*, 1990-1992.
In collaboration with Felipe Sanabria.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:72).

Not only does *The collector* accumulate all sorts of detritus from the streets, it also makes the effect of the journey tangible. Even though the walk is not specifically documented, remnants of the journey remain on the *The collector*. In addition *The collector* gathers that which people discarded, resulting in the accumulation of losses. A similar work is *Los Zapatos Magneticos (Magnetic shoes)* (1994) (Figure 3) where Alÿs walked through the streets of Havana wearing magnetised shoes on a daily basis during the 5th Havana Biennale. Focussing attention on the waste of the city, Alÿs makes visible that which is ignored and seen as being without value. In an aggressive consumer society value is measured in terms of monetary worth, contrary to the idea that value cannot be completely calculated (Stiegler 2006:sp). Thus, the collection of discarded fragments of consumerism is an attempt to negate quantifiable value in a capitalist system. Similarly, by drawing attention to the abject of the city, Alÿs emphasises the manner in which the *flâneur's* journey is tainted by the urban environment as he searches for meaning in the city. Faced with the rejected scraps of the banal, the *flâneur's* experience is fraught with anxiety and uncertainty (cf 3.3) (Morawski 1994:183).

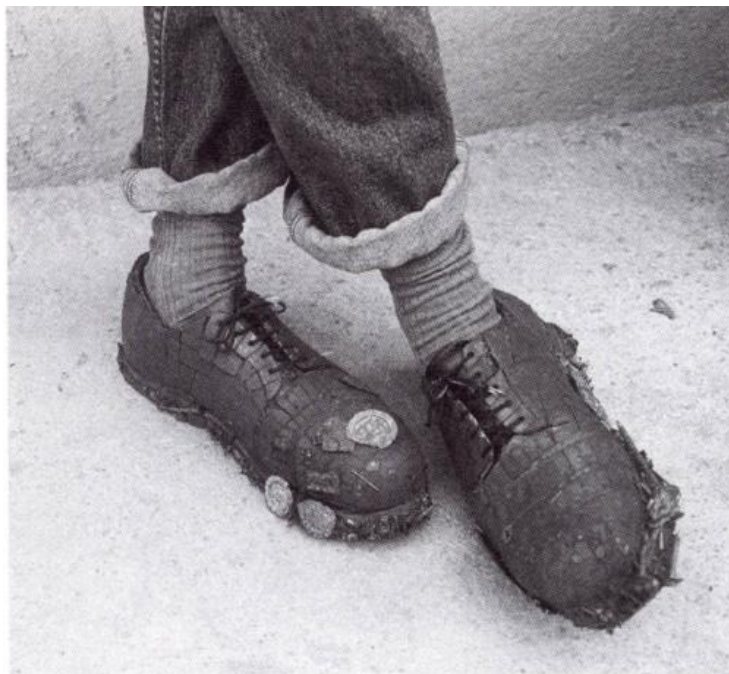


Figure 3: Francis Alÿs, *Los Zapatos Magneticos (Magnetic shoes)*, 1994.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:74).

Walking for Alÿs is not merely aimlessly wandering through the streets, but also a way of amassing experiences and creating narratives (cf 2.2.1). In the work *Doppelgänger* (1999-present) (Figure 4), Alÿs creates a type of following piece, similar to Vito Acconci's *Following piece* of 1969. He looks for someone who is similar to him in terms of physical appearance and follows him closely, almost like a shadow. He states that “[w]hen arriving in a new city, wander, looking for someone who could be you. If the meeting happens, walk beside your *doppelgänger* until your pace adjusts to his/hers. If not, repeat the quest in the next city” (Medina 2007:71).



Figure 4: Francis Alÿs, *Doppelgänger*, 1999-present.
Slide projection. 2 of 80 35 mm slides.
(Medina 2007:71).

2.1.2. Roaming cyberspace

Travelling without a goal is contrary to the traditional notions of the teleology where the journey is defined by its goal or its destination. This phenomenon is specifically evident in the journey within cyberspace, where there is no end destination and where the immersion within cyberspace can carry on indefinitely where the traveller never reaches a destination of any sort.

Cyberspace, specifically within the realm of hypermedia systems and games, leaves the *flâneur* with a myriad of options of which route to follow, often resulting in a labyrinth as each area presents multiple entry points which lead to a random amount of new spaces to explore (Mitchell 1995:23). The *flâneur* is free to wander at will through these spaces. As the *flâneur* enters the realm of cyberspace, he becomes a cyborg and is at once nowhere and everywhere (Haraway 2003:478). When in cyberspace the essence of being becomes fluid and the limits of corporeality are no longer fixed in time and space (Haraway 2003:478).

In this regard, Alÿs's *1-866-FREE-MATRIX* (2002) is a departure from his typical strolls through the city, and gives the participant the opportunity to take a virtual walk through the artwork, by navigating the interactive telephone service. The inspiration for this work came to Alÿs after a phone call to an art museum in which he failed to make contact with a person as he was navigating through the different options offered by the recording (Baume [Sa]). Even though *1-866-FREE-MATRIX* seems to be a huge step away from ambling through the city, it is still informed by the idea of strolling, even if it takes place in the intangible realm of cyberspace.

Digital technology allows for the phone to become a truly interactive device and Alÿs utilises this technology to produce “a virtual walk into virtual space” (Alÿs in Baume [Sa]). This entry into cyberspace leads to several journeys without a specific route or destination devoid of the constraints of the physical laws of reality. This artwork is completely dematerialised and is not bound by geographical limitations (Baume [Sa]).

Similar to the *flâneur* roaming the streets at will, being confronted by a myriad of possibilities, so too is the caller to *1-866-FREE-MATRIX* faced with many options. The caller is constrained by the logical order of the options as set out by the artist; however, increases the number of possibilities by making certain choices (De Certeau 1984:98). As a result the roles, expectations and essential skills are being revised for both artist and participant (Merritt 2001:403). Alÿs surrenders his status as *flâneur* as the participant wanders through the labyrinth of *1-866-FREE-MATRIX*.

The introduction of interactive technology into the artwork confuses the idea of the author as well as the identity of the work (Saltz 1997:117). Moreover these ‘collaborations’ result in a modified view of the understanding of artistic identity (Green 2000:37). A physical and mental discontinuity exists between the artist and the viewer, since the viewer has an active role in the work of art. The artist does not directly produce the virtual journey that the viewer will experience, but rather a “blueprint for performances” which is subject to variation (Saltz 1997:118).

The artwork is no longer a material object, but is still perceived as an ‘aesthetic object,’ even though its existence is limited to the time that the caller engages with *1-866-FREE-MATRIX*. The interactive artwork cannot exist without the input of a participant and the artwork fails to culminate its potential without some sort of interaction where it will only exist as a possibility contained in software. The consequence of interactive art is that the artist relinquishes control over the sequence of events that the caller encounters and a work such as *1-866-FREE-MATRIX* can therefore continue to surprise the artist (Saltz 1997:117).

2.1.3. The Sisyphean quest

The work of Alÿs is often likened to a Sisyphean quest,⁸ which is unending and repetitive and can also be seen as a task that is futile and unrewarding. Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:52) agrees that some of his work is similar to the myth of Sisyphus; however, asserts that the Sisyphus myth has an absolute fatalistic element to it and that it is doomed to repeat itself into eternity. In contrast to the latter, his work contains an element of redemption, which he sees as a type of progress, even though it is vastly different from the Western notion of linear progress.

Alÿs's work is not concerned with completion or resolution as he favours the ideas of repetition and adjustment (Ferguson 2007:sp). The moment of completion is therefore always deferred and there is a refusal to closure (Ferguson (2008:sp). In addition, much of Alÿs's work is concerned with action, often requiring a great deal of time and effort without producing a visible result (Ferguson 2008:sp). In keeping with the idea of repetition in a Sisyphean sense, "it is reflection on repetition" that exposes the futility and therefore absurdity of those actions (Solomon 2006:50).

When considering *Paradox of praxis 1* (1997) (Figure 5), the title is a clear indication of the inherent contradiction contained in the work. A literal explanation is a contradiction of the accepted practice or custom or a contradiction in putting the concept into practice. However, this work also indicates the idea that process is more important than progress and that the work is concerned with process rather than reaching a specific end or goal. Furthermore the nature of the work asserts the idea that sometimes something leads to nothing as an inherent theme in the work of Alÿs. The act of walking is

⁸ The concept of the Sisyphean quest is related to the curse of Sisyphus. The character of Sisyphus is from Greek mythology and is described in Homer's *Odyssey* (c 800 B.C.). He was a deceitful king and tricked the gods on several occasions, even cheating his way out of Hades. Upon his death of old age he was cursed to roll a huge boulder up a hill; however, before reaching the top the boulder would always run down again (Camus 2005:115)). His punishment was therefore an eternity of frustration and the knowledge that his task would never come to an end. It furthermore refers to the idea that when man is released from purpose and obligation a sense of absurdity prevails (Lewis 1959:66).

integral to the execution of *Paradox of praxis 1*, as it highlights the theme of the work, which indicates that physical labour does not always end up with a tangible result.



Figure 5: Francis Alÿs, *Paradox of praxis 1*, 1997.
Video, 5 minutes.
(Ferguson 2007:46,47).

Paradox of praxis 1 is the translation of an abstract concept into a material undertaking and the idea behind this work is the entrenched conviction that hard work results in concrete results (Knight 2007:sp). However, the paradox lies in the result of the exercise, as there is nothing to show at the end of the day. Instead of considering the nature of the artwork, Alÿs deliberates the nature of work in art (Knight 2007:sp). The inherent paradox lies in the manner in which hard labour sometimes leads to nothing, a contradiction to the Western values of progress (Knight 2007:sp). *Paradox of praxis 1* indicates that “Alÿs was looking for metaphors to describe the tension between the violence of development and the frustration of its arrest, which in turn can be experienced as a form of progress” (Medina 2007:96). *Paradox of praxis 1* bears testimony to this concept, as the beginning stages of this intervention is a slow and laborious process. However, even though the process becomes easier as the day progressed, the pace of the intervention did not increase accordingly to match the urgency of travel in contemporary society.

Medina (2007:93), a Mexican art critic and curator who has collaborated with Alÿs, states that: “[w]ith hindsight, *Paradox of praxis 1* is also important in the sense that it helped Alÿs to explore an aesthetics based on failure.” Many of Alÿs’s works contain this aesthetic based on failure, such as *Rehearsal 1* (1999 – 2001) (Figures 6 & 7), which shows a small Volkswagen going up and down a hill in Tijuana. The process becomes hypnotic and the end is suspended. Another example is *When faith moves mountains* (2002) (Figure 8), when Alÿs organised five hundred volunteers to move a large sand dune, 500 metres long, 10 centimetres from its original position. According to Medina, Alÿs’s interventions, specifically *Paradox of praxis 1*, comments on Latin America’s “general problem of the entropy of daily economic life, that is, the unimaginable effort we all make in getting nowhere” (Johnson 2007:sp). This is in keeping with the myth of Sisyphus where fruitless effort is seen as punishment as well as the “absurdity of infinite repetition” (Solomon 2006:49).



Figure 6: Francis Alÿs, *Rehearsal 1*, 1999-2001.
In collaboration with Rafael Ortega.
Video. 29 minutes 25 seconds.
(Ferguson 2007:49).

Alÿs's *Rehearsal* works refer to the manner in which conclusion can be delayed, similar to the way that progress is delayed in Latin America (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:45). In *Rehearsal 1* (Figure 6) a Volkswagen Beetle is repeatedly driven up a hill, never to reach the top. The driver listens to a recording of a musical rehearsal session, and while the music is playing ascends, when the music stops the car stops, and when they are discussing their session, the car rolls down the hill (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:49). Eventually the aim of the action is no longer reaching the top, but rather the process, the hypnotic movement of the car going up and down the hill.

Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:48) contends that: "Postponement or delaying does not mean stagnation. There is always progression, but through a different mode." This is in contrast to the Western ideal of reaching a goal through the most sufficient process possible. As a result, the concept of linear progress is denied. The quest of Sisyphus is similar, as he is condemned to the same actions for eternity, even though, being conscious of his predicament, does not abandon his task (Solomon 2006:53). For Alÿs the task is not a curse, unlike that of Sisyphus, but a means to convey a message of the state of affairs in Latin America (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:45).

Based on these assumptions, the negation of pursuing a teleological goal is similar to the quest of Sisyphus. The *flâneur* is used as "a figure to illuminate issues of city life irrespective of time and place" (Tester 1994:16). By ambling through the city and engaging in cyberspace the *flâneur* does not find meaning and value in attaining a goal in the completion or conclusion of his journey, but rather in the process. It is through his wanderings that he finds meaning and value.

2.2. Walking

Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:31) finds significance from walking in the city and contends that:

Walking here from the Zócalo⁹ ... there have been fifty different situations happening, with fifty incidental noises, smells and images. They've all just been furtive glimpses, bits of incidental information, but while walking lost in your thoughts you have somehow integrated them all, and they have shaped your thoughts at the arrival point

Walking through the city streets therefore leads to the subconscious assimilation of the sensory information of the city and this information adds to the overall experience gleaned by the artist. Thus the contemporary *flâneur's* experiences are enhanced by seemingly futile acts, since it is not only the primary mission that augments experience, but rather that which is not absorbed through conscious processes.

The narratives produced by wandering the city streets becomes a random collection of acts and anecdotes, resulting in a symbolic whole articulated by the unfilled gaps of the urban text (De Certeau 1984:107). Furthermore, for Alÿs the invention of a language is similar to the invention of a city and sees his interventions as fragments of invented narratives which are simultaneous to the mapping of the city (Alÿs in Medina 2007:78). De Certeau (1984:107) declares that: “[s]tories about places are makeshift things. They are composed with the world’s debris.”

2.2.1. Walking narratives

Walking in the city can create meaning for the individual as its meaningless text is illuminated by the very act of walking (De Certeau 1984:103). It is not solely a medium for Alÿs as he maintains that instead walking is an attitude, a convenient and immediate way in which to interact and interfere with a specific situation (Alÿs in Biesenbach & Starke 2010:41). Producing narratives outside

⁹ Zócalo is the town square in the historic centre of Mexico City. For Alÿs it is a “negative space of the city” in comparison to the dense and busy urban fabric of the city (Biesenbach & Starke 2010:42). This is a popular site with Alÿs and many of his works are directly related to it.

the individual's frame of reference, walking leads to the discovery of abandoned memories similar to dreams and imagination as a result of displacement (De Certeau 1984:107).

The collector (Figures 1 & 2) and *Los Zapatos Magneticos (Magnetic shoes)* (Figure 3) are examples showing that walking is the primary medium for Alÿs. For De Certeau (1984:97), the paths followed by pedestrians give shape to spaces and their excursions become the "real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city" (De Certeau 1984:97). As a result, these works illustrate the tangible nature of the journey, where every footstep does not only have a qualitative character, which is concerned with the physical act of walking, being tactile and concerned with movement, but also a material character, in picking up physical items from the street. As a result, it is clear that spaces are conceived based on conscious and unconscious experiences such as the physical act of walking and the collection of that which others have left behind (Cavallaro 2001:172).

Walking becomes a means to surrender to the city, as the action of the stroller becomes dependent on the whims of others. Accordingly, a multitude of possibilities crystallises in the spaces traversed by the walker. Not all of these possibilities are actualised, as some are discarded, ignored or even reinvented by changing the initial intention as he goes along. These possibilities, whether made real or not, transform and abandon spatial realms (De Certeau 1984:98).

On that account, the unravelling yarn of *Fairy tales* (1995/1998) (Figure 9) manipulates the space traversed by the walker, revealing that space is not a rigid construct, but rather a fluid or organic entity. Numerous encounters and possibilities change space and this manipulation of space results in diverse experiences and as such, "every image and idea about the world is compounded of personal experience, learning, imagination, and memory" (Cavallaro 2001:172).



Figure 9: Francis Alÿs, *Fairy tales*, 1995/1998.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Ferguson 2007:27).

Universal tales are often themes of Alÿs's actions and *Fairy tales* refers to Ariadne's thread of red fleece given to Theseus in the Minotaur's labyrinth, Hansel and Gretel marking their path in the woods and Penelope who unravels Odysseus's burial shroud every night for three years (Alÿs & Medina 2010:90, Smart 2010:sp). Marking a path in the labyrinth transforms the route into an urban drawing of an imaginative space. Furthermore, the unravelling of the sweater is symbolic of Penelope's shroud, a futile exercise of replication without reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

2.2.2. Drawing maps

The seemingly everydayness of his interventions confirms the idea that within these spatial practices a narrative is contained, a travel story as such (De Certeau 1984:117). The narrative of his artworks does not only supplement the experiences of pedestrians, but produces a map of actions and becomes part of the everyday. As such, these narratives or travel stories play a role in organising.

For Alÿs walking is a direct and candid method of developing narratives. He claims that walking is an “easy, cheap act to perform or to invite others to perform” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). Walking in the city becomes the material used to produce the artwork as well as the manner in which the work is executed by the artist (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). *The leak* (1995) (Figure 10) exemplifies the way that the artist uses the act of walking to create an artwork. He starts his journey from the gallery with no itinerary and carries on until the paint runs out (Medina 2007:74). He returns to the gallery by following the path left by the dripping paint and completes the artwork by hanging the empty can on the gallery wall (Medina 2007:74).



Figure 10: Francis Alÿs, *The leak*, 1995.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:74).

The green line (2004) (Figure 11) is emblematic of the manner in which maps are not a true representation of the actual environment. In the opinion of Cavallaro (2001:171), “maps are never fully accurate – since they fix into images a shifting reality.” Alÿs demonstrates how the map is no longer an objective representation of reality as the path he follows no longer corresponds to the physical barriers on the streets. Therefore, the map is not a permanent representation of space or a complete “representation of geographical reality” since space is constructed by its inhabitants (Cavallaro 2001:168). Consequently the map (Figure 12) on which Alÿs bases his performance is fraught with the absence of the pedestrians which gives it meaning. Hence the artwork is a representation of absence (cf 2.3.3).



Figure 11: Francis Alÿs, *The green line*, 2004.
Video, 17 minutes 45 seconds.
(Ferguson 2007:41).



Figure 12: Map of Palestine on which Alÿs based his performance *The green line*.
(Ferguson 2007:40).

The green line is an allegory for the way that what the artist produces is made up of loss (Medina 2007:74). However, this loss is not limited to artistic production; it is also related to the loss of memory. De Certeau (1984:97) claims that: “[s]urveys of routes miss what was: the act of passing by.” As a result, the trace that Alÿs leaves behind with his leaking tin of paint during his journey is a record of the path travelled and makes it visible. On that account, Alÿs is repudiating the “procedures of forgetting” as the line that he draws is not just a line on a map or the trace that is left behind as a replacement for the action (De Certeau 1984:97). The green line on the map and the physical journey are fused into a unitary action by the dribble of paint on the road. With this Alÿs creates a metaphor of the physical barrier that exists as it relates to the historical event (Cottard 2007:sp).

2.2.3. Bearing traces

Walking in the street reveals hidden meanings of the city and imbues the street with narratives (Cavallaro 2001:175). The artist as *flâneur* articulates these stories as “the city becomes a ghost town of memories without a language to articulate them because walking is a transient and evanescent practice” (Pile in Cavallaro 2001:175). Steven Cohen in his video *Golgotha* (2007) (Figure 13) reveals hidden narratives by means of his performance by carefully choosing his location and attire. Cohen’s attempt to reintroduce the reality of death into the public sphere produces many possible narratives into the spaces in which he performs (Cohen 2009:87). Due to his performance, the act of walking in a city street and consequent invention of stories the spaces are reinvented by the displacement of preconceived ideas (De Certeau 1984:107). Cohen’s performance exposes hidden memories of the streets as its intention is to raise questions without providing answers (Cohen 2009:87).



Figure 13: Steven Cohen, *Golgotha, Wall Street #1 N.Y.*, 2007.
Photographic documentation of a performance.
(Dreyer & Lebeko 2009:89).

For De Certeau (1984:107) walking is an alternative to the narratives that give space meaning. It leads to the “exploration of the deserted places of memory” (De Certeau 1984:107). Alÿs’s *The green line* (Figure 11) is an attempt to disseminate the hidden memories regarding the events that took place in Jerusalem from December 1947 to June the following year.¹⁰ In addition, this deliberate path taken by Alÿs, repudiates the *flâneur*’s wandering without a goal; however, it demonstrates how the act of walking reveals the narratives embedded in the street.

Even though many of Alÿs’s artworks, such as *Paradox of praxis 1* (Figure 5) and *Fairy tales* (Figure 9), cease to exist in a corporeal form at its conclusion, a narrative endures and this narrative has the potential to transform into an urban myth or fable. Alÿs aspires for his work to become urban myths or fables as an attempt to transcend the ephemeral realm. He does not disregard the importance of the viewer, and claims that: “If the script meets the expectations and addresses the anxieties of that society at that time and place, it may become a story that survives the event itself. At that moment, it has the potential to become a fable or urban myth” (Johnson 2007:sp). It is therefore clear that even though it seems like the work is pointless, especially for the amount of effort it took, Alÿs has a desire for his interventions to continue to exist as abstract concepts as well as to enhance the society in which it was executed. The city streets are therefore transformed into a meaningful space by the intervention (De Certeau 1984:117).

Paradox of praxis 1 (Figure 5) highlights Alÿs’s rebellious interest in the ephemeral nature of art as it commences with a corporeal object and concludes with nothing to behold. He intervenes with urban space to produce a type of social research (Medina 2007:93). Instead of creating a tangible art object Alÿs creates urban myths or fables that mirrors the conditions of contemporary urban existence (Medina 2007:93). Alÿs rejects the idea of permanence of art and explores physical and social connections that can be found in the city (Medina

¹⁰ During this time Jerusalem was divided in two when Moshe Dayan drew a line on the map of the city with a green pencil. The reason behind this dividing of the city was a cease-fire agreement that was signed in November 1948. The path of the line on the map is the path that Alÿs followed with his leaking can of green paint (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:40).

2007:70). It can be argued that *Paradox of praxis 1* leaves the city in the same position as before its execution. However, the traces it leaves are not confined to the damp trail it left behind which evaporated almost instantaneously. Instead its traces can be defined as the alteration in the fabric of the urban environment by adding to the rich text of fables and myths that define a city.

2.2.4. The anonymous walker

The anonymity that the city offers as a sense of “being in the crowd,” gives the *flâneur* the opportunity to extricate meaning and significance from the urban spaces in which he travels (Tester 1994:4). Furthermore continuous acts of doing by the *flâneur* become a quest to find the meaning of being in the world (Tester 1994:5). The *flâneur* as spectator in the city presents the opportunity to observe the spectacle of the spaces and places of the city.

The *flâneur* is an ambivalent figure in the city since in his anonymity he appears to be powerful in his ability to absorb the images that the city offers. However, in the absence of the latter, he would cease to exist (Cavallaro 2001:176). This ambivalence is further enhanced by the fact that he possesses power in his anonymity as well as being a “lonely and dispossessed onlooker” unable to form lasting relationships with the individuals of the crowd (Cavallaro 2001:176).

The photographs from the series *Invisible women* (2006) by Sabelo Mlangeni bear testament to the idea of the ambivalent character of the *flâneur*. The women portrayed in these images are cleaners who work at night in the city. *Hidden identity* (2006) (Figure 14) shows an anonymous and solitary figure on a city street. She is a cleaner and her existence is affirmed only by this image, as she is invisible to the masses: she works only at night, and the fruits of her labour are seldom, if ever, acknowledged by those who benefit from it.



Figure 14: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Hidden identity*, 2006.
Silver gelatine print. 48 x 70 / 31 x 45.3cm
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).

Although cleaners are well-known figures on the street, the woman from *Hidden identity* is unknown. Her anonymity lies in the fact that she is encountered on a daily basis and never becomes someone (Dreyer 2005:8). According to Dreyer (2005:8) those wandering the city streets “seem to be purposely on their way somewhere and yet simultaneously appear to be casual and unimportant persons.” This specific figure seems to be a loiterer, as she does not appear to be going anywhere specific and is in no rush to get her job done. She is staring into the almost deserted street and is not conforming to the ideals of a society obsessed with industry (Buck-Morss 1986:126,136). There is no sense of haste and speed that signifies the city in her actions and she defies the urgency associated with the city (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). Conversely, the cleaner is not the quintessential stroller, as she has a task to complete; however, the nature of her activity reminds strongly with the aimless wanderings of the *flâneur*. She is also emblematic of Sisyphus, since her nightly labour is negated every day.

2.3. The city

The street is a delimited surface; however, the manner in which the concept of the street is entrenched within human experience refers to behaviour patterns more ancient than the built environment of the city (Rykwert 1982:106). The character of the city is both a result of and dependant on the myriad of pedestrians traversing its streets. The city streets are the home of the *flâneur* and the city streets are seen as interiors and the traffic and commodities of the city are images of reflection (Gleber 1999:i). Alÿs does not want to add to the city and attempts to understand the city through that which is absent, its “negative spaces” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:25). For him the city is saturated, and he endeavours to insert narratives in the fabric of the city instead of objects (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:25).

The relationship between people and cities are

Collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or micro-groupings ... their interrelations involve a fundamentally disunified series of systems, a series of disparate flows, energies, events, or entities, bringing together or drawing apart their more or less temporary alignments (Grosz in Haggerty & Ericson 2000:613).

Even more so the relationship of the *flâneur* with the contemporary city, as the *flâneur* is more disconnected from the contemporary city, since he does not actively engage with his fellow pedestrians and other aspects of the city.

Alÿs’s interventions are based on ephemeral social and corporeal events or incidents and he states that in his city everything is transient (Medina 2007:70). Medina (2007:70) states that “[r]ather than dwelling on social and mental structures, he [Alÿs] was inclined to investigate the cracks in the urban narrative.” It is this ephemerality of the *flâneur*’s relationship with the city that increases his inability to travel with a specific goal in mind.

2.3.1. Desire in the city

The focus on consumption¹¹ in the contemporary city engenders the exploitation for the desire of the new as well as its eventual destruction when desire is over stimulated or when the object of desire is no longer exclusive. There is a sense that consumption is based in the pursuing of desires and the inability to satisfy the latter (Bauman 1998:79). Thus people suffer from desire fatigue which manifests as a loss of purpose. The consumer's desire is standardised through the formatting and artificial fabrication of his desires. He loses his capabilities which are the possibilities for his existence. Norms are replaced by brand names (Stiegler 2004:37).

The artist questions the notion of consumption and desire for the new by the work *The seven lives of garbage* (1995) (Figures 15 & 16). Alÿs placed seven bronze sculptures in seven different garbage bags and left these in various areas of the city (Medina 2007:90). Subsequently wandering the streets, he kept looking for the reappearance of his sculptures and to date, has found two. In this perpetual recycling of garbage, the continual consumption of the new is subverted, largely as a result of poverty. There is not a desire for the new as the sculptures are sought in the wares offered by flea markets and street traders of the city (Medina 2007:90). The object, a painted bronze snail, takes on the role of the *flâneur* as it follows an indeterminate path without any specific goal in sight. Finding the snail is a result of pure chance. Moreover the circulation of the objects and the "slow progression of the snails along different social strata" illustrate the manner in which "city life is interconnected by means of its informal circuits" (Medina 2007:90).

¹¹ Hyper-industrial capitalism attempts to control production as well as consumption resulting in the production of products that consumers do not need, but by means of marketing are convinced that the products are necessary (Stiegler 2004:30).



Figure 15: Francis Aljys, *The seven lives of garbage*, 1995.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:92).



Figure 16: Francis Aljys, *The seven lives of garbage*, 1995.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:92).

The focus on the development of desire of consumption by the culture industry results in the increase of the death drive and the undermining of the life drive (Stiegler 2004:44). Consumer culture places an emphasis on the pursuit of pleasure and the development of egotistic and narcissistic personality types (Featherstone 1991:113). Individuals substitute political and cultural energy for a frantic pursuit of personal needs (Rossouw in Stiegler 2004:32). Often in the culture industry money is spent only because the person derives pleasure from the act of spending.

According to Horkheimer and Adorno (2002:41), the content of cultural products depends on a few “ready-made clichés.” The culture industry focuses on the creation of the desire of consuming mass-produced products, although desire is rooted in that which is unique to the individual. Through this the death drive is reinforced by the emphasis on numerous similar commodities. The life drive is thereby undermined, resulting in a self-destructive process since consumption requires desire (Stiegler 2004:44). Debord (1994:23) states that

The more readily [the spectator] recognizes his own needs in the images of the need proposed by the dominant system, the less he understands his own existence and desires ... the individual’s gestures are no longer his own, but rather those of someone who represents them to him.

In *The swap* (1995) (Figure 17) Alÿs trades objects with fellow commuters in the Metro of Mexico City (Platt 2010:sp). He differs from the nineteenth century *flâneur* as he is not inconspicuous and deliberately leaving traces of his presence (Platt 2010:sp). Alÿs exchanges items with the commuters who in turn exchange the items with others. Alÿs concludes the trade with a final exchange and leaves with an object. Desire for the consumer object is thus created; however, the economic system of money exchange is subverted. Alÿs plays with the notion that the modern day city dweller is driven by desire for consumer goods, as some of the objects traded are typical mass produced goods, whereas others are unique handmade items. In most cases the items are not useful and the trade merely happens as a desire for obsolete consumer goods are created by the media and society in general. Moreover Alÿs comments on

the journey of the object and the way the object fulfils the role of the *flâneur* (Medina 2007:90).

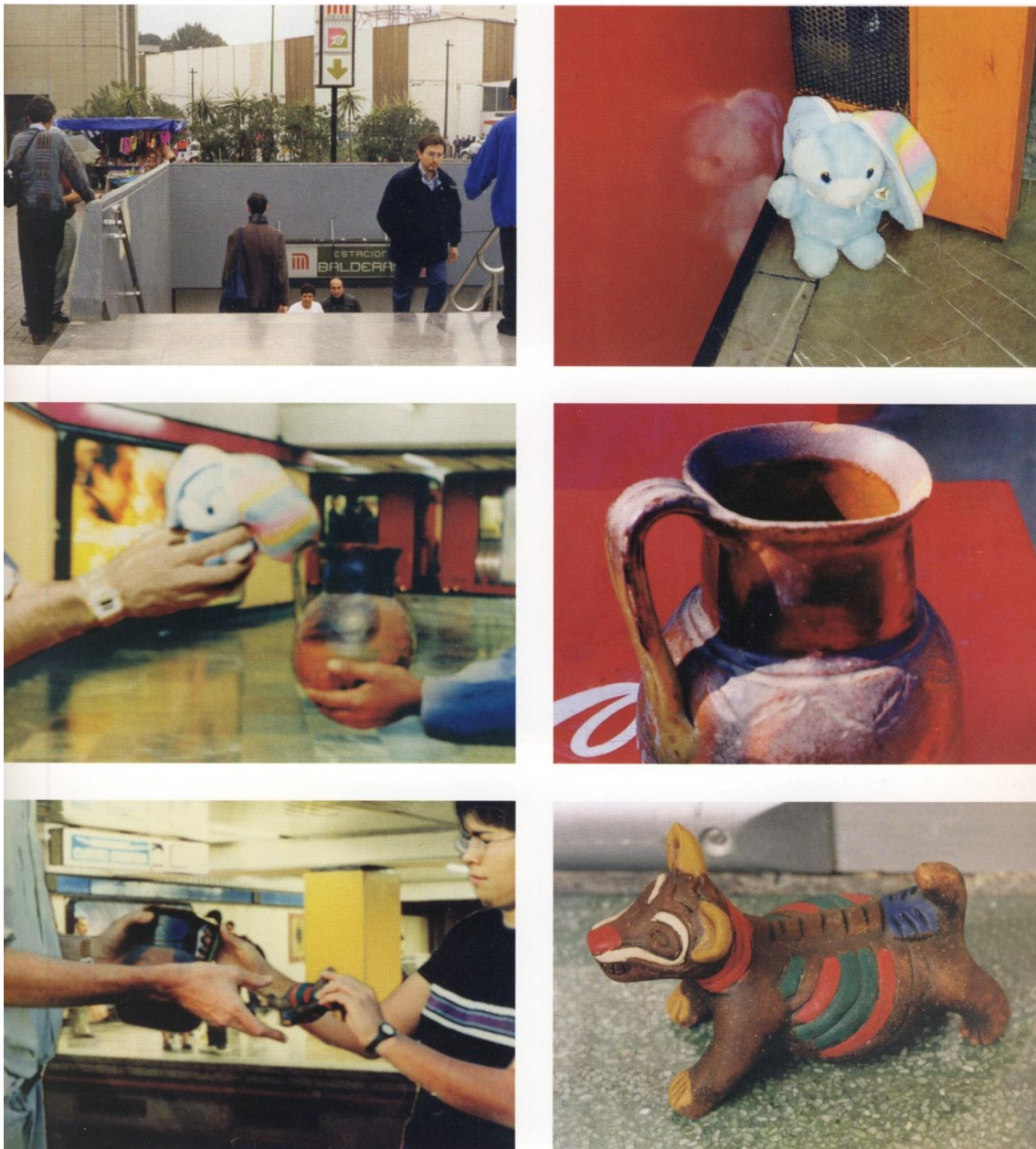


Figure 17: Francis Alÿs, *The swap*, 1995.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:91).

Barrenderos (Sweepers) (2004) (Figure 18) illustrates the *flâneur's* view of a city driven by consumerism. As the by-products and discarded items of consumerism litter the street, the *flâneur's* progress is interrupted by the wall of refuse that the street sweepers have been pushing along until the overwhelming

amount of it halts their progress. Debris from city life characterises the streets and the *flâneur* is continually confronted with its existence. The *flâneur* is no longer capable to derive pleasure from his environment as the continual bombardment of the senses leads to complete indifference (Tester 1995:95). Simmel (1997:178) states that “[t]his does not mean that the objects are not perceived ... but rather that the meaning and differing values of things, and thereby the things themselves, are experienced as insubstantial.” The city produces many experiences and desires overwhelming the senses (Amin & Thrift 2002:111). The contemporary *flâneur* is continually bombarded with new stimuli and this results in a feeling of apathy towards the gratuitous offerings of the city.¹²



Figure 18: Francis Alÿs, *Barrenderos (Sweepers)*, 2004.
In collaboration with Julien Devaux.
Video. 6 minutes 36 seconds.
(Ferguson 2007:50).

¹² Saturation within a hyper-industrial society affects the higher functions of the nervous system, such as conception, sensibility and affective life and becomes the source for spiritual deprivation. Cognitive and affective saturation produce a loss of knowledge, incoherence and generalised disaffection, resulting in an inability for reflection and decision-making as well as the inability to regard fellow human beings. This disregard for fellow man results in political hatred and violent interactions between social groups (Stiegler 2006:sp).

2.3.2. Fear

The city has always been celebrated for its diversity and ability to give meaning to modern life. However, in recent times, the city is increasingly viewed in a negative light: unruly, unsettling, disorderly and above all dangerous. Crime rates have soared in many countries, specifically in urban areas during the second half of the twentieth century. The fear of crime in cities is becoming a greater concern than crime itself and has damaged the fundamental spirit of cities: its celebration of difference (Bannister & Fyfe 2001:807).

Fear imposes upon the well-being of many city-dwellers and subsequently has a significant impact on the manner in which space is produced and perceived. Fear adversely affects the quality of urban life and is damaging the very foundation of cities and urban life (Bannister & Fyfe 2001:808). According to Ferguson (1994:27) the nineteenth century *flâneur* remains detached from the city and its crowds, even though these are requirements of the action of *flânerie*. The contemporary *flâneur* however, cannot remain aloof from the city, since an acute awareness thereof is crucial to safety and even survival.

Fear lies in the manner in which people experience and interpret urban space and not necessarily in direct experiences of crime (Bannister & Fyfe 2001:809). Fear is integral to the individual's familiarity with a certain space and is embedded in the physical and social characteristics of place (Bannister & Fyfe 2001:809). Therefore, it affects the way that urban spaces are used and given meaning.

Even though Sabelo Mlangeni does not include himself in his photographs, the photographs are often a result of his experience on the street. More specifically, *Lucky escape* (2006) (Figure 19) suggests an experience infused with fear as it reflects the danger that is present on the city streets as it was taken moments after Mlangeni was accosted by muggers toting a gun (Mlangeni 2007:sp). Mlangeni was fortunate to escape the incident unharmed and none the poorer as one of the men was sympathetic to his situation (Mlangeni in Siebrits 2007b:sp).



Figure 19: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Lucky escape*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 70 x 48 cm / 45.3 x 31 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).

In addition, Mlangeni shoots images from a moving vehicle as can be seen from *Clocking off I* (Figure 20) (2006), *Clocking off II* (Figure 21) (2006) and *Clocking off III* (Figure 22) (2006). Taking the photographs from a moving vehicle affords the images with a sense of dynamism. The figures are not in focus and therefore appear fleeting and ephemeral (Mlangeni in Siebrits 2007b:sp). The fact that the artist is relatively safe being in a vehicle contrasts sharply with the conditions under which these women occupy the streets (Siebrits 2007a:sp). The artist is further removed from their reality by being in a vehicle.



Figure 20: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Clocking off I*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 48 x 70 cm / 31 x 45.3 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).



Figure 21: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Clocking off II*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 48 x 70 cm / 31 x 45.3 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).



Figure 22: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Clocking off III*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 48 x 70 cm / 31 x 45.3 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).

In keeping with this, it is clear that the contemporary city no longer allows the *flâneur* to stroll aimlessly through the streets. City spaces are to pass through, from the point of departure to destination, as quickly as possible without unplanned interruptions (Bauman 1994:148). Furthermore it is contrary to the “social, physical and psychic development of modern capitalism” (Medina 2007:77). Evidence exists that fear aggravates personal feelings of being vulnerable and reduces the inclination to participate in social encounters, specifically unplanned encounters and experiences (Bannister & Fyfe 2001:808).

Alÿs's *Gringo* (2003) (Figure 23) is symbolic of the fear that is evident in cities. The attempt to pass through a narrow passage with several dogs bears testament to the way in which the city stroller can no longer wander aimlessly through the streets. He has to be aware of his surroundings and this, together with preconceived ideas surrounding certain areas, result in an increase of fear. It is natural for people to avoid being in a position of fear, and therefore unexpected and spontaneous encounters are limited.

Walls and gates played an important role in creating feelings of safety and security for those inhabiting the pre-modern city. With the emergence of the modern city in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the idea that the city is dangerous rather than safe materialised. Within the postmodern city form follows fear and spaces are created to control and order human behaviour (Bannister & Fyfe 2001:810).

Safety in residential areas is a significant problem for its inhabitants. Measures such as enclosures around certain areas result in and enforce restricted access. These exclusive localisms entail the construction of tightly bounded place-identities by means of these contrasting enclosures around suburbs as a way to protect the inhabitants (Massey 1994:162). These ‘new enclosures’ are evident in more affluent suburbs of urban areas and serve as protection by means of simple spatial definition (Massey 1994:162).



Figure 23: Francis Alÿs, *Gringo*, 2003.
In collaboration with Rafael Ortega.
Video, 5 minutes.
(Ferguson 2007:16).

The lifestyle proposed by images in the hyper-industrial society is often out of reach to the average consumer and creates unattainable desires, thereby placing individuals in a position of suffocated desire, a condition of humiliation and despair. The individual experiencing suffocated desire easily turns to violence especially in dysfunctional communities (Rossouw 2006:sp). Alÿs expresses the violence evident in the city in the video *Re-enactments* (2000) (Figure 24). The action consists of two parts, the first is where Alÿs buys a gun and walks down the street. The public responds and he is apprehended by the police. The next seems to be exactly the same scenario; however, all the role players are informed of what is going to happen (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:42). This overt show of violent behaviour in an urban setting becomes emblematic of the individual who experiences suffocated desire and is almost a scene that is expected in a city such as Mexico City where poverty and desperation prevail.

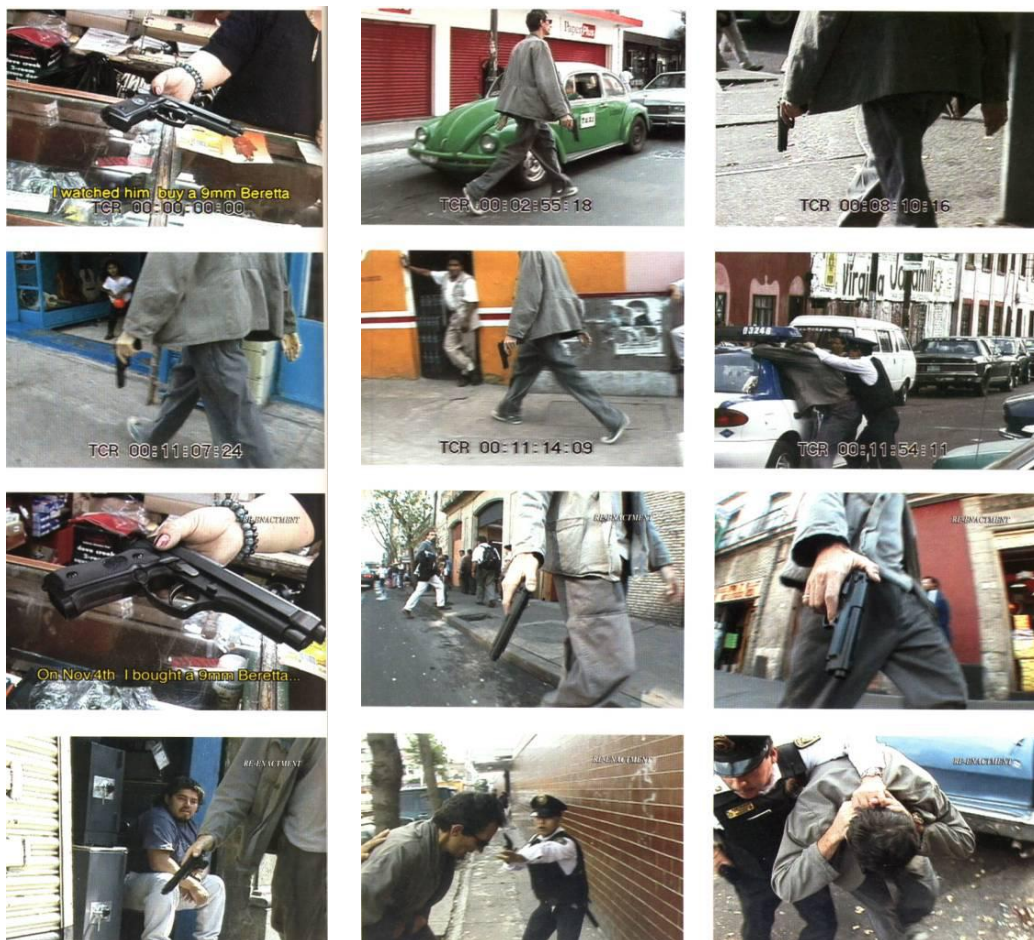


Figure 24: Francis Alÿs, *Re-enactments*, 2000.
In collaboration with Rafael Ortega.
Two channel video, 5 minutes 20 seconds.
(Ferguson 2007:43).

2.3.3. Absence

Walking in the city becomes a social experience which relates to the absence of place (De Certeau 1984:103). De Certeau (1984:103) maintains that “[t]o walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper.” Moreover, this absence of place is compensated for by the myriad of relationships and connections that constitutes the urban fabric (De Certeau 1984:103). The nature of the place therefore becomes symbolic as it is only given meaning by the numerous acts of walking in the urban landscape (De Certeau 1984:103). It is therefore the act of walking which gives the city meaning and identity and the physical aspects of the city are thereby appropriated by those walking the streets.

Alÿs experiments with the concepts of absence and presence in the work *Narcotourism* (1996) (Figure 25). When invited to produce a work in Copenhagen, Denmark, the city held no appeal for Alÿs as it is in his opinion “a real archetype of the bourgeois European city” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:32). To solve his predicament, he decided to be physically present and mentally absent. His mental absence is achieved by the ingestion of various narcotics over seven days and wandering through the city. This action is not only an attempt to document the effect that various drugs have on his experience of the city, but also to show that presence and absence are not concrete constructs.

Many of Alÿs’s actions, such as *Paradox of praxis 1* (Figure 5) and *The collector* (Figures 1 & 2) highlight the idea that the city is permeated with “presences of diverse absences” (De Certeau 1984:108). The artworks can no longer be seen; however, and the path travelled designates their existence, even though it is no longer there. It acts as the invisible characteristic of that which is still present and visible. The journey of Alÿs is therefore an important aspect in the very definition of the place, since it assimilates and integrates the displacements and effects of the different layers of meaning evoked by the journey itself.



NARCOTOURISM / KBH 5-11 MAY 1996

(2) I will walk in the city over the course of seven days, under the influence of a different drug** each day. My trip will be recorded through photographs, notes, and any other media that become relevant.

*the project is about being physically present in a place, while mentally elsewhere.

**dosage: drugs were consumed in order to maintain a continuous effect for 14 h.a day.

- May 5 Spirits (1)
- May 6 Hashish (2)
- May 7 Speed (3)
- May 8 Heroin (4)
- May 9 Cocaine (5)
- May 10 Valium (6)
- May 11 Ecstasy (7)

- (1) Spirits. (due to practical problems in finding the stuff, I decide to start with local liquors and alcohol). Difficulties in connecting mentally with my physical state. Inner resistance. inability to trust my reflexes or sight. I walk clumsily among many strange occurrences.
- (2) Hashish. Slow motion. Awareness of every muscle in action. everything is enormously funny. Soundless speech. Walking with my eyes closed. A pastrami sandwich tastes heavenly.
- (3) Speed. Deambulatory paranoia. Cold feet. I fear the signs of my own presence, and avoid encounters on the street. As I walk, I always keep a familiar spot in sight.
- (4) Heroin. feeling of inner warmth which helps me break the ice and feel attuned to the place. A sequence of frozen images as I walk along the Danube. The effects fade fast, but they return at the end of the day. Difficulty breathing at night.
- (5) Cocaine. Awareness of a change of state, but not followed by a visual echo. Auditory acuity enhanced. Appetite gone. Smoking diminished. At night, nausea and thirst.
- (6) valium. Weariness. Aesthesia. Indifference to context. regular smoking. frequent pissing and occasional vomiting. while walking, bittersweet memories pop up at regular intervals.
- (7) Ecstasy. visual brightening and erotic impulses. My shoes move and I feel the urge to walk out. everything I turn to moves, not physically but conceptually. I feel like the epicenter of the world.
- (8) The journey was followed by a period of depression. I understood it but could not help sinking into it.

Figure 25: Francis Alÿs, *Narcotourism*, 1996.
Graphic documentation of an action. 46 x 32 cm.
(Medina 2007:76).

Alÿs analyses his position as a foreigner and thus his position of being away from home in the action *Turista* (1994) (Figure 26). This idea of homelessness comes about when one questions his or her being in the world. According to Tester (1995:129), “[h]omelessness emerges when we no longer know for sure who, where or why we are in the world” (Tester 1995:129). Alÿs positions himself as a tourist among plumbers, electricians and carpenters and thereby questions his status as an artist as he contemplates whether he is a “participant or just an observer” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:11). Due to his heritage Alÿs is continually seen as an outsider (cf 3.2.3) in Mexico City and is therefore always without place in the city.



Figure 26: Francis Alÿs, *Turista*, 1994.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:10,11).

As the *flâneur* roams the city streets, the city becomes a “social experience of lacking a place” (De Certeau 1984:103). Dale Yudelman’s images from the *i am ...* series (2008) (Figures 27 & 28) convey the idea of the *flâneur* being homeless and not having a place in the city. Dreyer (2009:17) states that “[b]eing out-of-place articulates with the conditions of have-not, homeless and

jobless.” The space that the traveler occupies is unsure and he composes meaning from it by the relationships between the journeys that are undertaken (De Certeau 1984:103). The city becomes an abstract concept that cannot exist without the journeys of the pedestrians as their presence in the space creates the city’s identity.

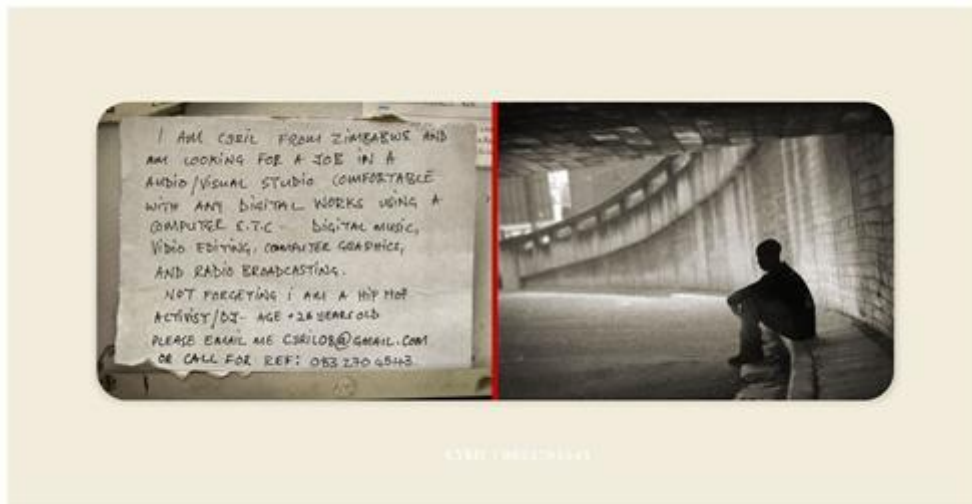


Figure 27: Dale Yudelman, Cyril from *i am ...*, 2008.
 Chromogenic colour prints. 43 x 82 cm.
 (Dreyer & Lebeko 2009:45).



Figure 28: Dale Yudelman, Edward from *i am ...*, 2008.
 Chromogenic colour prints. 43 x 82 cm.
 (Dreyer & Lebeko 2009:45).

The stroller as a mythic figure suggests a non-existence of corporeality. Mlangeni’s *Invisible woman I, II and III* (2006) (Figures 29, 30 & 31) display the

unseen characters that roam the city at night. Their invisibility is strengthened by the ephemeral and ethereal quality of the figures in these images. In the opinion of De Certeau (1984:102) “[f]igures are the acts of stylistic metamorphosis of space” and “[t]hey transform the scene, but they cannot be fixed in a certain place by images.” Mlangeni’s street sweepers give the impression that their being is not tangible since their existence is only validated by the photographs. The nomadic drifters of Yudelman, who are without place, similarly suggest an intangible existence on the streets, as their stories are fragmented remnants contained on scraps of paper (Yudelman 2009:44).



Figure 29: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Invisible woman I*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 48 x 70 cm / 31 x 45.3 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).



Figure 30: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Invisible woman II*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 48 x 70 cm / 31 x 45.3 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).



Figure 31: Sabelo Mlangeni, *Invisible woman III*, 2006.
Silver gelatin print. 48 x 70 cm / 31 x 45.3 cm.
(Siebrits 2007a:sp).

2.4. Ludic behaviour

In keeping with the experience of the *flâneur* the act of walking in the city is an opportune activity for the creation of narratives and myths through unplanned social encounters. On that account the behaviour of the aimless *flâneur* is similar to the act of play, where actions are not scripted and encounters are based on chance. Navigating through the streets without a goal in mind leaves the *flâneur* to follow his journey based on impulses and chance, rather than reason and calculation (Veel 2003:159). To transcend the physical journey is not possible in the frantic and chaotic structure of the city and as thus “the journey becomes an end in itself” and the *flâneur* becomes part of the secular city (Veel 2003:159). On that account the fragmented experience (cf 3.3.3) of the *flâneur* prevents an authentic perception of the city as his navigation is driven by chance without a sense of direction (Veel 2003:160).

The wanderings of the *flâneur* are infused with the concept of play, since play is an activity with a purpose in itself. The Situationist practice of *dérive* is greatly influenced by the idea of play, since it involves unstructured, random behaviour which allows the individual to explore the urban landscape and the experiences it offers (Debord 1958:sp). The work of Alÿs has a definite ludic element to it, enhancing the spontaneous and directionless characteristics thereof. It reminds of the Situationist International and neo-dada movements through its seemingly

randomness and playfulness (Markle 2008:sp). Alÿs's interventions can be seen as episodes, fables and metaphors that display the experience of time (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:18). Furthermore his work always contains elements of playfulness and whimsy and has a certain "lightness of touch" (Baume 2007:sp). Recurrent themes in Alÿs's work are displacement, uncertainty, metaphor and contradiction (Baume 2007:sp).

Alÿs's interventions are not random, as some are fastidiously planned. Even though certain events are planned, the outcome is not a certainty, as Johnson (2007:sp) points out. According to Johnson (2007:sp), the action "at some crucial, unforeseen moment acquires its own momentum and takes on its own life." Alÿs's actions are usually planned with a time-frame in mind even though it defies a final moment of completion. It invoke a sense of the ephemeral and whimsy and Alÿs (2002:sp) mentions that "in my city, everything is temporary" (Ferguson 2008:sp). However, he aspires that his work endures in the minds of those who witnessed it (Ferguson 2008:sp).

2.4.1. Play

Play is an unjustified activity which is construed as being unnecessary and without reason (Bauman 1994:143). According to Bauman (1994:145), the *flâneur's* wanderings are rooted in play and the purpose of the *flâneur* is to "play the game of playing." The pleasure derived from walking in the city without any specific goal is understood as the ultimate play (Bauman 1994:142). Play is not concerned without any goal but itself and is the ultimate autotelic¹³ phenomenon (Bauman 1994:142).

Aimless wandering in the city is an attempt to avoid the finality of conclusion (Tester 1994:7). Similar to play, it is concerned with an eternal present as it does not refer back to previous events or future possibilities (Bauman 1994:144). Many of Alÿs's works do not seem to serve any rational or functional purpose, specifically those that are concerned with the idea that "sometimes

¹³ Autotelic (self + end) means of an activity or a creative work that has an end or purpose in itself (New Oxford Dictionary 2003:115).

making something leads to nothing,” especially when taking into account the amount of energy these works require for completion (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:48).

Similarly play is not concerned with survival or self-preservation and gives the impression that it is a complete and irrevocable excess (Bauman 1994:143). Furthermore play, the part of life reaching for freedom away from work, allows one to “positively glimpse the giddy success of chance” (Bataille 1997:40). Play as an escape permits one to see beyond the limits of reason (Bataille 1997:40). Alÿs’s *If you are a typical spectator, what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen* (1996) (Figure 32) demonstrates play in various forms. The most obvious is the way that the people interact with the bottle by kicking it and jumping over it (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:15). In the context of play, the work reveals no reason for its existence, nor does it serve any functional purpose.



Figure 32: Francis Alÿs, *If you are a typical spectator, what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen*, 1996.

Video, 10 minutes.

(Ferguson 2007:14,15).

In keeping with the concept of play, *Paradox of praxis 1* (Figure 5) and *If you are a typical spectator, what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen* have a definite beginning and an end; however, the end only presents the opportunity for another beginning. Consequently it cancels the direction of the flow of time due to its ability to be repeated (Bauman 1994: 144).

For Alÿs the journey of *Paradox of praxis 1* and the filming of *If you are a typical spectator, what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen* revolve around surrendering to the immediate present, as he is completely absorbed with the act itself, without acknowledging the past or the future. The result of the previous journey does not affect the result of current or future journeys, similar to play, which is not cumulative (Bauman 1994:144). Play is random and without memory, the present state is not dependent on the past or the future. Aforementioned actions exist only in the moment and are not dependent on other journeys or interventions. Debrosie (in Medina 2007:78) states that “[t]he trip has no other goal than the trip, a state of consciousness.”

Alÿs’s interventions are described as “fleeting adventures” and even though they may seem unusual at times, they are firmly grounded in the everyday of the activities of the street. (Anton 2002:146). It almost seems plausible to push a block of ice through the streets of Mexico City, to walk with a dripping can of paint or with an unravelling sweater. However, they contain a strong element of whimsy.

2.4.2. *Dérive*

Dérive refers to the passage through the corporeal city and explains the “attractions of the terrain and the encounters” of the city streets for the *flâneur* (Debord 1958:sp). It is a technique of free-association within the city and is defined as a “technique of locomotion without a goal” where a person or several people abandon what they are doing or “drop their usual motives for movement and actions” and allow themselves to be “drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there” (Plant 1992:58). The practice of *dérive* or drift is the main method of psycho-geography. The Situationists states that the

intention of psycho-geographers is to become aware of how everyday life is controlled and to expose this notion. Furthermore their aim is to subvert and critique the conditions of everyday life and “experiment with the possibilities of everyday experience” (Plant 1992:58).

Alÿs’s interventions remind of the practice of *dérive*, a Situationist practice of ludic behaviour and appreciation of psycho-geographic effects involving travelling through varied urban settings (Debord 1958:sp). It allows for new encounters with places and people and allows for behavioural disorientation (Debord 1958:sp). These playful, innovative strategies for exploring the urban landscape lead to a newfound awareness of the latter (Debord 1958:sp). Moreover, the act of *dérive* insists that immediate presence in the moment has the highest potential for change in society (Debord 1958:sp).

Dérive is not based on the surrealist concept of automatism or limited by the power and requires the participant “to notice the way in which certain areas, streets, or buildings resonate with states of mind, inclinations, and desires, and to seek out reasons for movement other than those for which the environment was designed” (Plant 1992:59). For Alÿs, walking in the city is an attempt to find a position in the city (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:64). He allows himself to explore the city in without being impeded with a plan or itinerary and thereby fulfils the practice of *dérive*. In these walks he records what he sees, and these “street installations,” such as *Milky Way* (1995) (Figure 33), becomes the visual material on which his works are based.



Figure 33: Francis Alÿs, *Milky way*, 1995.
Colour photograph.
(Ferguson 2007:65).

The city streets present the perfect setting for a *dérive*, as it is the perfect background for unplanned occurrences (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). Alÿs appropriates the streets of Mexico City with the execution of *Fairy tales* (Figure 9) and *The leak* (Figure 10) in this way, as he does not follow a specific route or plan. In addition *Fairy tales* resulted in an unexpected encounter: as Alÿs was tracing his journey back following the path of the unravelled wool in Stockholm, he chanced upon an old lady gathering the wool who was unconsciously repeating his journey (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:29).

Alÿs presents another *dérive* in the video *If you are a typical spectator, what you are really doing is waiting for the accident to happen* (Figure 32). The protagonist, the bottle, follows no specific path as it is blown about by the wind. It therefore uses the environment for its own purpose and not what it is intended for (Plant 1992:59). As time progresses, fellow pedestrians start to interact with the bottle, altering its aimless drifting in the wind. Alÿs does not interact with the bottle and is simply following its journey with the camera. The work ends when Alÿs blindly follows the bottle across a busy street and is knocked over by a car (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:15). The video illustrates a journey that is informed solely by whim and desire and it inverts the perspective of both the viewer and the artist, through the accident, (Plant 1992:59).

2.4.3. Chance

The idea of chance plays an important role in the journey of the *flâneur* in the metropolis, since the route is not planned and the lure of alternate areas are great and often irresistible. According to Bataille (1997:39), the whims of chance decide upon everything without the presence of reason. Chance does not occur as a result from regularity, but arises from disorder and insists on disorder (Bataille 1997:41). Alÿs takes a dissident approach to artmaking and takes advantage of spontaneous and fleeting opportunities whilst favouring randomness (Ferguson in Johnson 2007:sp).

Duett (1999) (Figure 34) illustrates Alÿs's concerns with the idea of chance as Alÿs and Honoré D'O arrive in the city of Venice on the same day each carrying one half of a tuba. The aim of their presence in the city is to find each other and unite the tuba (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:37). In searching for each other they wander the streets of Venice without knowing when, where or if they will meet each other. Neither reason nor order was involved in their journey or the conclusion thereof.



Figure 34: Francis Alÿs, *Duett*, 1999.
In collaboration with Honoré D'O.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Ferguson 2007:36).

The existence of chance dictates the undetermined nature of being in the world as can be seen with Alÿs's *Doppelgänger* (Figure 4) (Bataille 1997:45). As Alÿs searches for and consequently follows someone in a city, he questions his being in the world and attempts to reinvent himself as a different character (Medina 2007:70). Finding a potential counterpart in the city is not certain and is seen as "a state of grace, [or] a gift of heaven" according to Bataille (1997:45). In addition chance is always at the mercy of chance itself (Bataille 1997:45).

Walking allows the individual to be lost in his or her own thoughts while being aware of peripheral sensory input (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). The performance of *Paradox of praxis 1* (Figure 5) took place over nine and a half hours and considerable distance; however, apart from the artist and the videographer, city dwellers only came into contact with the work for a few minutes at a time and by chance, and mostly took no notice of it (Knight 2007:sp). In spite of this, the mutual peripheral contact with each other is not meaningless, since these fleeting meetings leave mental traces on both parties.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter it was established that even though the *flâneur's* journey seems futile, it is infused with layers of meaning. As he roams the streets anonymously, he creates narratives, traces and maps. He is most at ease in the city, although never at home. This homelessness is compounded by being an outsider and by fear. His wanderings through the streets are an activity in itself which is governed by randomness and chance. The next chapter deals with the notion of surveillance and its effect on the *flâneur* which is followed by an exploration of gender as related to the *flâneur*.

CHAPTER 3: SURVEILLANCE

The previous chapter dealt with the contemporary *flâneur* and the manner in which the city influences his wanderings. I have argued that the *flâneur* is subject to the changes of the city and that the latter has a definite influence on his experiences in the city. Continuing with the changes in the contemporary city, the influence of surveillance on the *flâneur* is investigated in this chapter. The study of surveillance and the *flâneur* includes the spaces in which he is subjected to surveillance, the notion of who is watching whom, and the effect of surveillance on the manner in which the *flâneur* experiences the city.

Surveillance is ubiquitous in the contemporary metropolis and impossible to escape. Being under surveillance is no longer reserved for individuals who have come to the attention of authorities who deal with unlawful activities, but has become “a description of our culture” and metropolises are “communities of surveillance” (Dreyer 2001:75, McGrath 2004:19).¹⁴ The traditional view of surveillance in the Panopticon model, where the masses are being watched by a few, has changed to that of the Synopticon,¹⁵ where the masses are watching a small number of people or a mass media society (Lyon 2007:140). Typically those who do the watching are seduced into doing so as the Synopticon is not driven by coercion (Bauman 1998:52). The *flâneur* finds himself in a global city which is made up of information from all over the world and is a process rather than a place (Castells 2000:286).

¹⁴ Interestingly, Lyon (2007:1,16) states that the majority of information gathered by surveillance systems are not images of people (watching), but rather data, for instance access cards and global positioning systems. Dataveillance is used to collect large amounts of personal information in order to create profiles of the people in question. Where there is an electronic interface between the subject and system, it is referred to as postmodern surveillance (Lyon 2007:75).

¹⁵ The term Synopticon was coined by Thomas Mathiesen and is a fundamental transformation of Bentham's Panopticon where discipline is enforced by the possibility of being watched. In the Synopticon mass media plays a crucial role as celebrities are being watched by the disenfranchised masses. In the Panopticon the masses are disempowered as there is always the possibility that they could be watched; however, in the Synopticon watching is voluntary. As such, the masses are empowered (Bauman 1998:53).

Introduction

Surveillance is becoming more and more interactive with the widespread use of computing devices and its 'presence' thereby increases exponentially (Lyon 2007:149). In addition, individuals are not alarmed by the many surveillance cameras and upon noticing that surveillance is used to monitor a specific area accept it as part of daily life in the city (Lyon 2004:300). The presence and also the implications of surveillance are not questioned and are being taken for granted, even though it regulates daily urban life (Lyon 2004:300).

According to Koskela (2000:248), surveillance is changing the nature of space and is ultimately producing a new kind of space. In keeping with this, the ever-present nature of surveillance systems in the city diminishes the city dweller's privacy as there is always the possibility of being the object of surveillance at any given moment while roaming the streets. Furthermore, the importance of anonymity is threatened in a "panoptic media culture" as private moments are recorded and viewed by unseen operators (Frohne 2002:256). Privacy becomes 'transparent' under the continual gaze of the surveillance camera (Virilio 2000:60).

Since the *flâneur*¹⁶ is most at home on the streets of the metropolis, it is reasonable to expect that he is almost constantly under surveillance.¹⁷ Most modern metropolises have some sort of surveillance system and in some, such as London,¹⁸ a person working or living in the city is 'seen' by a surveillance camera approximately 300 times a day (Grose 2008:sp). The *flâneur*, together with the city's inhabitants, are transformed into obsessive surveyors of each

¹⁶ Lyon (2004:300) notes that surveillance focuses especially on those who are idle, hence leaving the *flâneur* in a catch 22 of wanting to be anonymous, but also idle.

¹⁷ For the purposes of this study I focus mainly on CCTV based surveillance, basically that which is concerned with the visual. Surveillance in terms of data yield and identity, such as personal information and consumption patterns, are not included as this is not the focus of this study.

¹⁸ There are approximately 4.2 million CCTV cameras in the UK according to conservative estimates by civil liberties groups (Grose 2008:sp). According to Mitchell (1995:157) the exponential increase in surveillance cameras in cities resulted in a "vast swarm of Little Brothers" instead of a single Big Brother and every computing device is a potential surveillance apparatus.

other in a surveillance society and subsequently are also surveyed as objects of the other's gaze (Denzin 1995:14).

Surveillance is a “global phenomenon” as an individual's personal information spreads out over local contexts and national borders (Lyon 2007:118). The networks that make up global cities are situated in cyberspace and any activity in cyberspace leaves a record of the individual's cyber-journey (Mitchell 1995:158). For Mitchell (1995:159), city life and a cyber-presence have similar concerns regarding surveillance, as privacy in both is tenuous at best. Surveillance is present in many areas of everyday life and differs from context to context both in appearance and what it is used for (Lyon 2007:44). As such it is not necessarily a singular and negative entity as many of its uses benefit individuals (Lyon 2007:44).¹⁹

3.1. Spaces

Increasing video-surveillance is changing the nature of urban space and surveillance is most prevalent in spaces that are focused on consumerism and the mass media (Koskela 2000:243, Lyon 2007:155). Surveillance does not offer a neutral space as the idea of watching and being watched reveals a definite power relation; however, power is not possessed by anyone as it is anonymous (Koskela 2000:253,256).

Space is not a single reality and its understanding differs in terms of context and experience. Its existence is based on a collection of dissimilar realities that creates a “hybrid and composite world” (Cavallaro 2001:174). As a consequence there can never be a true representation of space and with the addition of another mode of representation, that of surveillance, the experience of space is even further distorted (Cavallaro 2001:167). As surveillance becomes more and more widespread, the idea of the Synopticon is more

¹⁹ When individuals believe that parting with their personal information will lead to some benefit, e.g. loyalty cards, they are more likely to do so without questioning what the information will be used for or to whom it will be distributed (Lyon 2007:44).

relevant than Bentham's Panopticon (Lyon 2007:140). As a result the power relation inherent to the presence of surveillance is destabilised. The watchers in the Synopticon are not limited to location as the act of watching is now global as it exists in cyberspace (Bauman 1998:52).

The contemporary *flâneur* finds himself in a fundamentally different world to the nineteenth century Parisian arcades as cities are permeated with surveillance and the spectacle. In addition, the city is an interconnected web of information which is augmented by the proliferation of surveillance systems. Moreover, space becomes a relative concept that is based on the time it takes to be overcome in a globalised society and travel is not necessarily an act of physically moving as a journey can be undertaken by switching on the television or browsing the web (Bauman 1998:12,77). For Bauman (1998:77) "space stopped being an obstacle" and can be conquered in moments. The *flâneur's* journey is not limited to the physical traversing of space, but is articulated by its existence in virtual networked environments. Whether the journey takes place on a physical or conceptual plane, the *flâneur* is continually 'seen' by the various surveillance systems and he becomes part of the data in cyberspace. The cyber-presence of the *flâneur* has many implications for the latter as the loss of control results in feelings of anxiety and uncertainty (Bauman 1998:5).

3.1.1. The street

The *flâneur's* presence on the streets of the metropolis is subjected to the notion of seeing and being seen (cf 3.2), even though he attempts to remain anonymous in the crowd. His presence in the contemporary metropolis is inevitably recorded by some sort of surveillance system and the *flâneur* has no choice other than to be seen in the city (Koskela 2003:30).²⁰ The *flâneur* as the silent observer is replaced by the camera as observer, as technological means of surveillance becomes omnipresent and replaces the eye and as such, "the

²⁰ In the main city centres of South Africa, such as Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town, surveillance systems in public spaces are not as ubiquitous as in its Northern hemisphere counterparts. It is however widely used in the semi-private spaces of the retail industry. Furthermore, to escape dataveillance in South Africa is becoming increasingly difficult and the widespread use of cellular phones is attributing to the 'visibility' of individuals.

ties between vision and the eye are therefore irrevocably severed” (Schmidt-Burkhardt 2002:31).

Matiyane has an intimate knowledge of his city and the work representing the township of Atteridgeville to the west of Pretoria is emblematic of this. *Atteridgeville* (1999) (Figure 35) is drawn completely from memory without the aid of maps or photographs. Matiyane says that “I know this place well. I don’t have to use maps” (Silverman 2007:20). This intimate knowledge of the city is obtained by Matiyane’s daily commute to work from Atteridgeville to the city, where he keenly observes the city streets. Not only does Matiyane look at his city as he traverses its streets, but he also observes it from a distance, in order to portray it in an idealistic manner, without the harsh living conditions faced by the residents of Atteridgeville on a daily basis (Silverman 2007:22). Consequently the figure of the *flâneur* is inherently ambiguous and is both a stroller and an interpreter and producer of urban and visual texts (Frisby 1994:83).

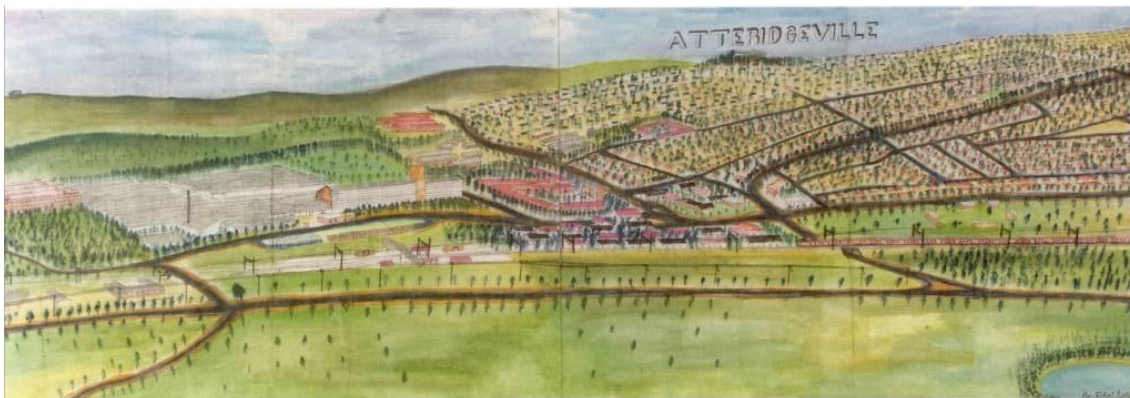


Figure 35: Titus Matiyane, *Atteridgeville* (detail), 1990.
Mixed media on paper. 150 cm x 500 cm.
(Silverman 2007:21).

Matiyane’s view of Atteridgeville is contradictory in the drawing, as he represents it from a bird’s eye view, even though he has only experienced it on ground level. Matiyane’s panoptic gaze of Atteridgeville is not the result of any technological devices and he manipulates and changes the perspective as well as selectively including and excluding elements of the landscape (Hobbs 2007:38). However, he retains the “functional characteristics” of the city as it is

experienced by those walking its streets and the drawing allows the viewer to explore the city as the *flâneur* physically present on the street (Hobbs 2007:39).²¹ Matiyane's drawings function as survey mapping, since the landscape is immediately identifiable and nothing seems to be excluded (Hobbs 2007:39).

Alÿs's *Sleepers* (1999 – present) (Figure 36) challenges the familiar idea of the surveyor looking down onto the subject, as the images are taken from the same level as the subject, either by the photographer crouching down or placing the camera on the ground (McDonough 2010:173). Alÿs makes it clear that the panoptic gaze or divine view is significantly challenged by new techniques and patterns of observation (Schmidt-Burkhardt 2002:31). Challenging the elevated view of the viewer, the slides are projected at floor level to force the viewer to be on the same level as the subjects (McDonough 2010:173).

A further subversion is effected by the subjects of this series of images as they use the public space of the street for an intimate aspect of life, such as sleeping, which is usually protected from the view of strangers (Buck-Morss 1986:118). According to Virilio (2002:109) the increasing popularity of surveillance on a global scale or the "democratization of voyeurism" results the private being made public. Furthermore, the seemingly random images of people and dogs sleeping on the streets are at odds with the function of societal control that surveillance is traditionally used for and this aesthetic is similar to the encounters of the *flâneur* strolling the streets without any specific purpose in mind (Joseph 2002:246).

²¹ Interestingly, Matiyane does not include people and vehicles in his panoramas as in his view they would be too small (Hobbs 2007:38). Most of Matiyane's panoramas are represented from a similar vantage point in terms of distance from the city.



Figure 36: Francis Alÿs, *Sleepers*, 1999-2006.
Slide projection. 2 of 80 35 mm slides.
(Ferguson 2007:22).

In contrast to Matiyane, Alÿs interprets the social conditions inherent to Latin America by actively commenting on the latter. This is not merely limited to his own personal experience in the city, but also general social issues and problems (Medina 2007:93). Alÿs, being an outsider to Mexico City, actively engages with the socio-economic issues of his adopted city. Conversely, Matiyane is a detached observer, even when he depicts areas with deplorable social conditions and that are ravished by poverty. Thus he performs the role of an outsider (cf 3.2.3), contradicting his personal association and knowledge of the areas in question. The stark contrast between his monumental drawings and the cramped conditions where he lives bears testament to this (Hobbs 2007:41).

3.1.2. Cyberspace

Contemporary life is unimaginable without electronic systems, specifically computer systems, and together with recording devices and software, urban life has undergone radical changes and subsequently has entered the realm of cyberspace. Being watched in the urban environment is not limited to being exposed to a surveillance camera and the computerisation of surveillance has resulted in it being less overt, but nevertheless much more intense (Koskela 2003:294). For Koskela (2003:294,304) the Panopticon of urban space exists in electronic environments and that it is in the computer or cyberspace that individuals are truly visible without knowing who has access to their data image.

The postmodern city is characterised by displacement and is without definite borders. Moreover its symbiotic relationship with cyberspace is changing the way individuals experience the city and also the way they are 'experienced' by the city. As such, surveillance is changing the body into "pure information," where the corporeality of flesh is transcended. (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:613). The body is therefore able to escape the constraints of the material world as it enters cyberspace as a posthuman entity (Conrad 2009:384). Surveillance results in the individual becoming a cyborg as it is an interface between technology and materiality (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:611).

Minnette Vári comments on the monitored body and its presence in the digital arena in the work *Cyclops* (2004) (Figures 37 & 38). Vári juxtaposes the corporeality of the body with the abstraction of the digital realm in this kaleidoscope of ephemeral images (Sey 2005:78). The continual shifting of images adds to the disjointed nature of surveillance imagery and the obvious digital manipulation of the body illustrates the manner in which the body becomes an electronic entity in the surveillant assemblage. However, Vári challenges the standardisation of digital individuals with the intricate imagery *Cyclops* offers. As such, the body in *Cyclops* is not part of the compilation of information regarding individuals used for categorisation and comparison and is characteristic of the posthuman (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:613).

Cyclops is a comment on the proliferation of digital technology and what it means for society (Dreyer 2009:25). The use of a single eye that is disconnected from reason and a point of view is reminiscent of Big Brother iconography: the all-seeing eye. *Cyclops* refers to the disappearance of the real in a contemporary society as the artist uses her body to re-enact gestures found in news items (Dreyer 2009:25; Vári 2009:74). The artist attempts to remain neutral amid the ideology laden imagery that she bases her work on (Dreyer 2009:25). As Vári “trace[s] the gestures” of images found in the media, she loses her individuality and becomes a signifier for which there is no real entity in the world (Vári 2009:74).



Figure 37: Minnette Vári, *Cyclops*, 2004.
DVD, single channel video and sculpture installation. 2 minutes 20 seconds.
Available: <http://www.divafair.com/mydiva/images/medcycops1.jpg>
Accessed 21 April 2011.

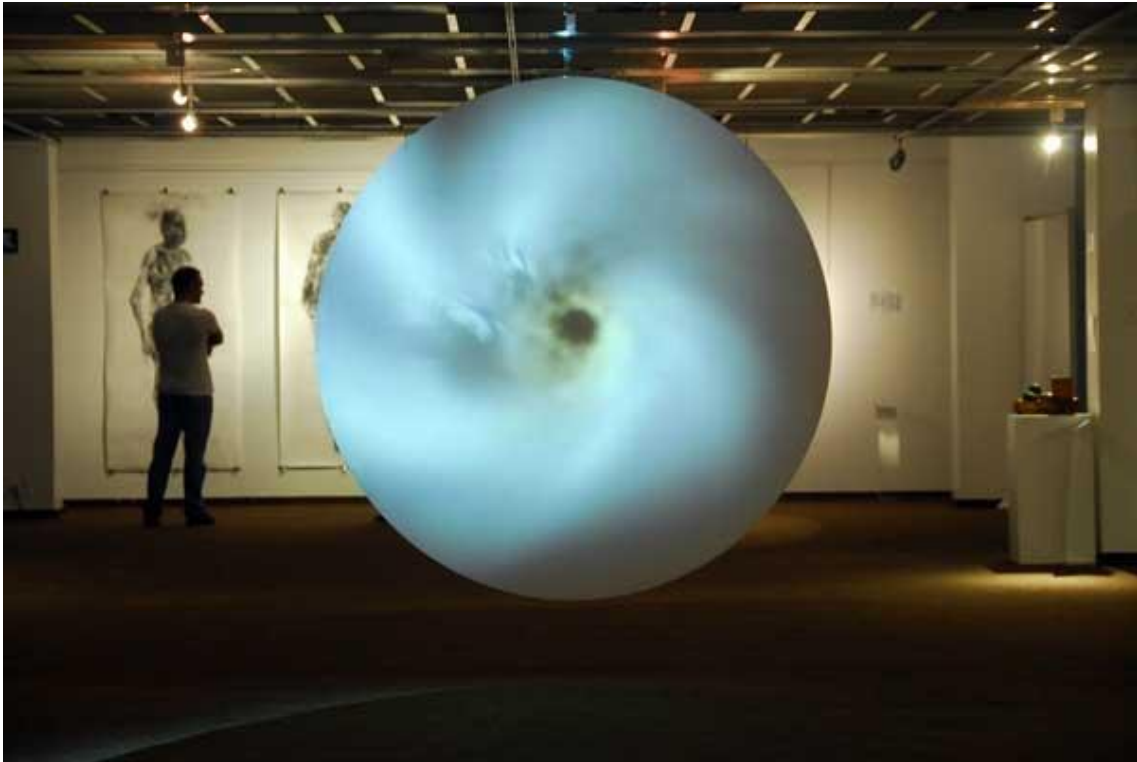


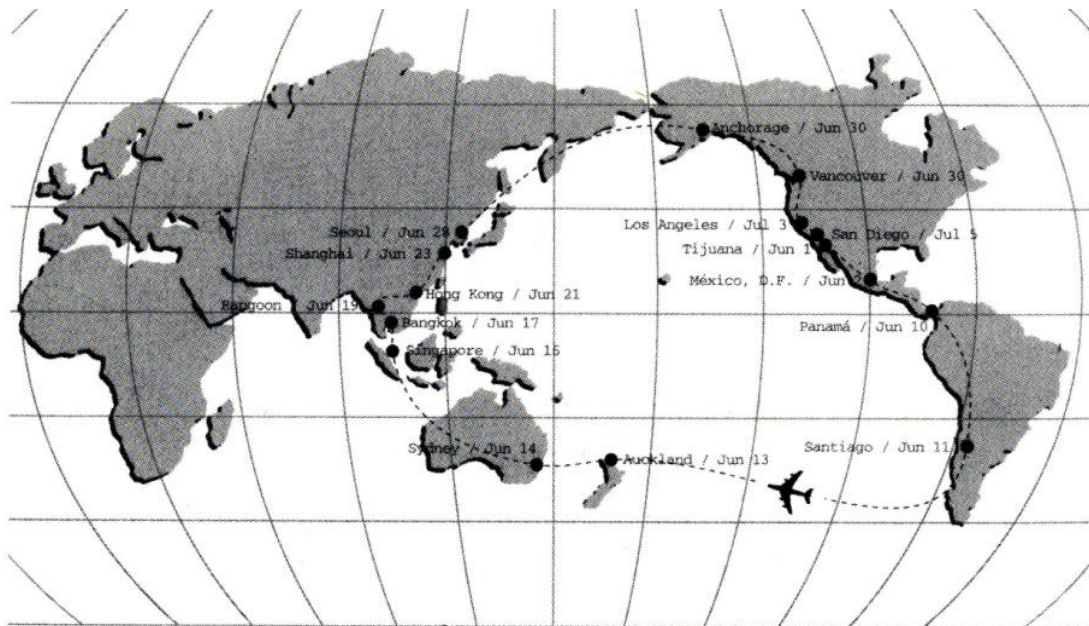
Figure 38: Minnette Vári, Installation view of *Cyclops*, 2004.
DVD single channel video and sculpture installation. 2 minutes 20 seconds.
Available: <http://www.friedcontemporary.com/Vari-Victor-web.jpg>.
Accessed 02 March 2011.

3.1.3. Virtualisation

According to Paul Virilio (1995:sp), immediacy or the primacy of real time as a result of globalisation, or in his words “virtualisation,” is superseding the perspective of real space, and with this comes a loss of orientation for the urban citizen. Virilio (1995:sp) is of the opinion that the term globalisation is incorrect and that it should be replaced with virtualisation as it is time and not space that is globalised as we now live in a world where everything happens in real time. Local time is replaced by global time as a result of “information superhighways” (Virilio 1995:sp). Surveillance is closely linked to virtualisation, as the advances in technology are necessary and complementary to both. In contemporary society there is a “mobilisation of information” which affords individuals to be present in global time (Mitchell 2000:133). Furthermore, the importance of the city as a physical construct becomes less important as space is now virtual and physical space an obstacle (Ebsen 2011:sp).

Due to the world being known as a result of technological advances in recording and connectivity, it becomes 'smaller' and more 'contained' (Tester 1995:7). In addition, distances are shortened as travel and communication are becoming faster. Alÿs subverts the idea of time-space compression due to virtualisation and deliberately makes physical space an obstacle to overcome and focuses attention on geographical location in *The loop* (1997) (Figures 39 & 40). *The loop* consists of a journey that graphically illustrates the concept of globalisation and virtualisation as Alÿs travelled from Tijuana, Mexico to San Diego, United States taking the perpendicular route along South America, Australia, Asia and North America (Figure 39). Alÿs extends his relatively short journey, in terms of distance to destination by his deliberate attempt to avoid the physical border between the United States and Mexico turns into a journey of 29 days. Thereby he focuses attention on and negates the notion that "speed has conquered space" and that "distance is made meaningless" (Tester 1995:7).

During his journey, Alÿs passes through many indistinguishable airports and his presence is recorded in each, surreptitiously by surveillance cameras and blatantly by passport control. His journey is therefore not only recorded by his personal documentation by means of photographs and e-mails, but also by the Panopticon of international travel. Correspondingly, the *flâneur* has become a global traveller with relative ease and is 'known' in many cities as a result of visual surveillance and dataveillance and his anonymity is refuted.



Subject: SHANGHAI /23 June 1997
Sent: 6/23/97 10:11 AM
Received: 6/23/97 11:15 PM
From: FRANCIS ALYS, 110123.630@compuserve.com
To: Olivier Debroise, debroise@laneta.apc.org

Not much to do with the Tintinesque Shanghai of my childhood, but
exoticism still flourishes. Insignificant details transport me,
Is it just a matter of geography?
At this point, whether I travel east or west, it would take me a
week to reach a homeland.
As I become progressively unable to read the local codes, I'm
happily losing knowledge of my self.
At night I crash, emptied.
I don't even dare resist the vain romanticism which disguises the
crude reality of a mutating Shanghai.
Pure present.

Hardly any dogs around.
The few I saw are discreetly being walked late at night.
Most have been killed during a cleansing of the city.
They are the advance victims befe a three year plan of
"modernization" of the whole downtown area.

After a methodic packing ceremony, the morning's next ritual is the
quest for coffee.

Figure 39: Francis Alÿs, *The loop*, 1997.
Graphic documentation of an action.
(Ferguson 2007:52)



Figure 40: Francis Alÿs, *The loop*, 1997.
Graphic documentation of an action.
(Alÿs & Medina 2010:86,87).

Contemporary cultural life requires people to change the manner in which they are thinking, engaging with technology to facilitate more interactive and faster flows of information. This new understanding of time-space comprehension produces a sense of disorientation and fragmentation (cf 3.3.3), specifically on the level of culture and a sense of place (Massey 1994:162). Alÿs attempts to counteract this loss of orientation by walking and argues that the act of walking is “just a consciousness” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). Walking involves insight and becomes an attitude (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:31). In so doing, Alÿs becomes a commentator on society and culture and through these wanderings becomes a “witness of a shrinking world” (Medina 2007:78).

Contrary to Alÿs, Matiyane is an observer rather than traveller. He draws his cityscapes based on an inherent understanding of the contemporary metropolis, key landmarks and topography (Silverman 2007:19). His panoramic drawings of major cities (Figures 41, 42, 43 & 44) read like satellite images; however, on closer inspection the cities are a personalised reflection of Matiyane’s vision of the particular city. Matiyane bears witness to global events in his drawings, and alters the landscapes to include them. In *New York – Manhattan* (Figure 41) he adds the burning towers of 9/11 and in *Panorama of Gauteng* (2010) (Figure

42) he includes all the venues for the FIFA World Cup Soccer that was held in South Africa in 2010 to ensure that his landscapes conform to the collective memory of society. These drawings bear witness to the fact that society has become a global community as the world is known and observed by virtue of mass media images (Tester 1995:7).

Matiyane uses a variety of reference material for his panoramas. Excluded from the digital realm until recently, he consults popular media, atlases and tourist maps as inspiration. He now also consults Google maps which gives him access to a city in real time, without being hampered by geographic location (Dreyer 2010:sp). As such he becomes a citizen of the virtualised city.



Figure 41: Titus Matiyane, *New York – Manhattan* (detail), 2002
Mixed media on paper. 150 cm x 1200 cm.
(De Kler 2007:55).



Figure 42: Titus Matiyane, *Panorama of Gauteng* (detail), 2010.
Mixed media on paper. 150 cm x 3600 cm.
Available: <http://www.friedcontemporary.com/>
Accessed 26 April 2011.

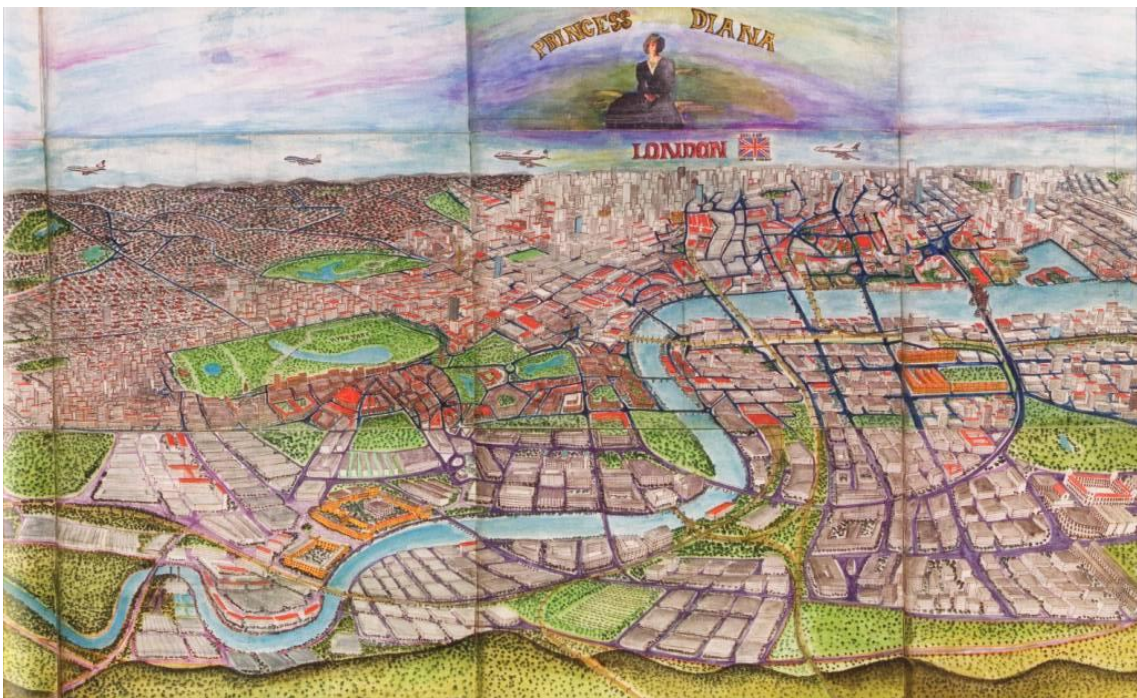


Figure 43: Titus Matiyane, *Panorama of London* (detail), 1999
Mixed media on paper. 150 cm x 1000 cm.
(De Kler 2007:47).



Figure 44: Titus Matiyane, *Panorama of the Netherlands* (detail), 2000
Mixed media on paper. 150 cm x 2300 cm.
(De Kler 2007:89).

3.1.4. The Sisyphus effect

The value of surveillance is often questioned as it does not really conform to the notion that it is for the purpose of crime prevention. It is rather a means to reduce the fear of crime instead of reducing crime itself. Surveillance is more effective in reducing property crime as what it is in the control of violent crime as the latter is more likely to take place in places that are not monitored (Koskela 2000:244,246). Furthermore, the proliferation of surveillance in public spaces results in the reduction of spontaneous social behaviour which is essential to the existence of the *flâneur* (Koskela 2000:247).

Equally, the *flâneur* is unable to be a passive spectator, as surveillance cameras epitomise a complete one-way act of looking, and the *flâneur's* position is negated in this way (Tester 1994:14). He is powerless in the gaze of the camera as there is no possibility to respond to or oppose the latter as he can only be the observed (Koskela 2003:298). The *flâneur*, like Sisyphus, is

aware of his powerless condition, as he is constantly reminded of his visibility by the hegemonic view of the many cameras in the city. Koskela (2003:304) states that “while more may be seen, less may be known” and it is for this reason that surveillance is similar to the quest of Sisyphus. The ubiquity of surveillance devices and the many hours of footage it records are a great effort that accomplishes very little at the end of each day.

Alÿs’s *Walking a painting* (2002) (Figure 45) shows an individual removing a painting from the gallery wall when the gallery opens for the day and then walks with the painting under his arm through the city. He returns to the gallery at closing time, places the painting on the wall and covers it with a cloth for the night. The process is repeated for the duration of the exhibition, similar to Sisyphus who repeats his impossible task on a daily basis (Ferguson 2007:33).

The action subverts the traditional notions of viewing art as the painting is removed from its traditional milieu and taken to the public streets of the city and as such, a great deal of effort is exerted and the goal of gallery visitors viewing the painting is not accomplished. The artwork is seen by the many public surveillance cameras on the streets of Los Angeles; however, the presence of an actual person viewing the footage is questionable (Koskela 2000:249). The presence of the painting in the public sphere of the street disallows the gaze, as the painting is carried through the streets, only allowing furtive glances. The nature of the gaze is transformed, as its purpose of the painting of being on display is thus subverted. However, being ‘taken for a walk’ the painting is subjected to a different type of gaze, that of the impersonal surveillance cameras and pedestrians.



Figure 45: Francis Alÿs, *Walking a painting*, 2002.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Ferguson 2007:33).

3.2. The surveillant gaze

In contemporary society the act of gazing has become multifarious and is no longer limited to the traditional idea that men look at women.²² In society today people have a desire to watch, but also to be watched as can be seen with the

²² For the purposes of this section, the gaze departs from the view of John Berger (1972:47) that “*men act and women appear*,” since in the surveillance society the traditional hierarchy of looking is not unequivocal.

immense popularity of reality shows²³ on television. The gaze is therefore omnipresent and commonplace and no longer distanced from everyday life (Lyon 2007:152). In keeping with this, David Lyon (2007:25) states that “the gaze is ubiquitous, constant, inescapable.”

The surveillant gaze is not just about control as was its purpose in the Panopticon. The widespread use of surveillance in public as well as private spaces reveals an intense change in urban life, and being subjected to this phenomenon has implications for the way the city is experienced (Koskela 2003:292, Waiton 2010:61). Moreover, the gaze is not just the act of watching someone else. According to Denzin (1995:48): “[t]he gaze is not simply voyeuristic. It is regulated, has a trajectory, evokes emotions and conduct which are differentially reciprocated, and erotic. It will always be engendered, reflecting a masculine or feminine perspective.” The power relation underlying the gaze in surveillance is obvious, since the surveyor is often unseen and mostly anonymous and the surveyed is subject to the control inadvertently suggested by surveillance (Friedberg 1998:255).

Lyon (2007:141) is of the opinion that contemporary society is a “cinematic society” where the position of the surveyor and surveyed is not clearly identifiable and has become fluid, contrary to Koskela (2003:298) who states that “one can only be the observed, not the observer.” Therefore, the gaze is interchangeable and more often than not mediated by electronic technology (Lyon 2007:157). For this reason the mutual expectations that are present with a face to face encounter are undefined (Lyon 2007:3). Subsequently, the gaze of the camera is indifferent; however, the experience thereof is not as it can be met with a sense of security, unease or even harassment. This democratisation and also domestication of surveillance is a direct result of its relationship with entertainment media with ideas of interactivity and the monitoring and control of

²³ Baudrillard’s opinion on reality television is rather disapproving as he states that “[b]ut, this fascination is itself the object of fascination for the critical gaze. In all of this, where is the original event? There isn’t one ... The mass effect is beyond manipulation, and without common measure to its causes. This makes it fascinating, like everything that resists intelligence” (Baudrillard 2002:480).

leisure sites (Lyon 2007:156). As such, the *flâneur* is no longer in control of the gaze, and is also the object of the gaze, whether consciously or not.

3.2.1. The surveyor

The *flâneur* takes possession of the city by visually appraising its surroundings and offerings (Shields 1994:74). Due to the *flâneur's* focus on observation the argument is voiced that he needs to be a surveyor²⁴ of the city in order to complete his identity and satisfy his existence (Tester 1994:7). The *flâneur* is drawn to the different sights the city offers in order to engage his gaze and this dictates his journey (Shields 1994:65). The contemporary *flâneur* continues the *blasé* attitude of his nineteenth century counterparts and views the world in an indifferent way without actively participating in the spectacle of the city, as is evident in Matiyane's panoramas (Dreyer 2001:75).

When imagining surveillance, one is easily appeased by the thought that it is passive electronic technology with little or no human intervention operated from a great distance (Phillips 2010b:141). However, as can be seen with Alÿs, surveillance is not necessarily just an abstract concept since he wanders the streets identifying and documenting those individuals who he finds interesting or who complies with a specific artistic concern of his. Alÿs illustrates a sense of "detached alertness" by watching and registering the offerings of the city, usually without becoming involved in the fabric of the city (Gili 2010:241). Surveillance plays a big role in social control; however, its authority is faceless and without physical intervention (Koskela 2000:250). When looking at Alÿs, surveillance becomes similar to looking out of a window onto the street and observation becomes a form of entertainment, rather than control (Joseph 2002:246, Weibel 2002:215).

²⁴ According to the New Oxford Dictionary of English (2001:1869), "surveyor" refers to a person who examines the condition of land and buildings professionally. For the purposes of this study surveyor refers to an individual who is watching another.

Zócalo (1999) (Figures 46 & 47) is a video that spans a twelve hour period of a single day.²⁵ Alÿs films the town square from dusk until dawn and the camera follows the shadow of the flagpole and by association the people who follow the shade (Alÿs & Medina 2010:100). The camera is invisible to the people on the square and its distance and anonymity allow the event unfolding in the shade of the flagpole to be seen as a pattern of objects, instead of distinct individuals (Phillips 2010b:142). *Zócalo* is not invasive to the privacy of the individuals captured on the film, even though urban dwellers expect to remain anonymous, and it becomes part of the spectacle of the city that the *flâneur* observes (Gili 2010:242, Koskela 2003:303, Mazlish 1994:47).



Figure 46: Francis Alÿs, *Zócalo*, 1999.
Single screen DVD projection with soundtrack. 12 hours duration.
Available: http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/56/work_2073.htm
Accessed 08 April 2011.

²⁵ 22 May 1999.



Figure 47: Francis Alÿs, *Zócalo*, 1999.
Single screen DVD projection with soundtrack. 12 hours duration.
Available: http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/56/work_2073.htm
Accessed 08 April 2011.

In contrast to *Zócalo*, Alÿs subverts the subject/object dichotomy of the gaze in *Looking up* (2001) (Figure 48). Alÿs stands on the Zócalo looking upwards, as time passes, people join him looking up at the sky to see what he is looking at. He stays an anonymous observer, since when he slips away, those who joined him do not notice and continue to peer at the sky (Alÿs & Medina 2010:120). Surveillance is centred around anonymity as those watching are not visible to the objects of their gaze (Koskela 2003:303). In *Looking up* Alÿs is physically visible, but onlookers fail to see him as the surveyor. The onlookers are negated as surveyors as they are visible and therefore become the objects of this action. Alÿs is not only the surveyor, he plays the role of surveyed as well, since he is recorded by an anonymous surveyor, watching from a high angle view similar to the position of a surveillance camera.



Figure 48: Francis Alÿs, *Looking up*, 2001.
 In collaboration with Rafael Ortega.
 Video. 4 minutes.
 (Medina 2007:94).

Choques (2005) (Figure 49) is a comment on the pervasive and also invasive nature of surveillance in the contemporary metropolis. As the nine cameras from nine different vantage points record the artist tripping over a dog and falling on the pavement the spectator is entertained, but also reminded of the role of surveillance in social control. The different angles of the cameras leave the viewer with a 'complete' view of the event, as it includes perspectives from street level, from the window of a building, across the street and eye level. As

such it is an attempt to refuse the personal, as all events are necessarily mediated and communicated from a personal point of view.

The installation expands on the nature of surveillance as the monitors are placed at ceiling level and spread throughout the exhibition space. The monitors take the traditional place of the cameras and the viewers are persuaded to acknowledge their presence as they watch the action of the accident unfold. Furthermore, the dispersal and placement of the monitors facilitate an invitation to further accidents, as the viewers do not necessarily watch where they are going as they are searching for the next monitor (McDonough 2010:173). Since it is impossible to view the monitors at the same time and compare the imagery, the viewer is trapped between moments, similar to those in CCTV control rooms (Alÿs & Medina 2010:155).



Figure 49: Francis Alÿs, *Choques*, 2005.
9-Channel video.
(Ferguson 2007:34).

Alÿs's *The collector* (Figures 1 & 2) moves away from surveying the city by visual means, since it collects debris from the city streets as it is being pulled along by the artist on a walk. The pull-along toy physically connects Alÿs with the street and in addition brings the viewer into the street (McDonough 2010:173). *The collector* is a metaphor for a hidden camera that collects physical artefacts instead of images of the street and bears witness to the character of the city. Accordingly, *The collector* is a serious 'observer', as it brings a new vision to the act of looking; however, it is incapable to have any effect on what it is witnessing (Denzin 1995:51, McGrath 2004:36). It becomes the viewer who sees, but does not act upon or recognise that what it is witnessing (McGrath 2004:36).

In addition to observing and being observed in the city, the *flâneur* is a witness to events that shape the identity of a city. In the case of the *flâneur*, he is invariably a witness as bystander, as his wanderings on the street are an attempt to find things to occupy his gaze (Tester 1994:7). As such, he is a displaced native or outsider (cf 3.2.3) (Shields 1994:66). Being the witness in a society allows the *flâneur* to confront the banality of everyday life and allows him to question the status quo of a society. The *flâneur* has the opportunity to "unravel the untruths that others tell" (Denzin 1995:54).

Vivienda para Todos (Housing for all) (1994) (Figure 50)²⁶ is a biting commentary on the empty promises of politicians that is typically used in campaigns. As Alÿs lies under the makeshift shelter of political banners being held aloft by hot air blowing through the vent from the subway, he communicates the incommensurability of experiences in being a foreigner in a country attempting to speak out on political ideologies (Van der Watt 2005:30). Alÿs fulfils the role of the 'surveillance expert' to illuminate things about a society that is not visible to those entrenched within that society as a result of heritage (Denzin 1995:54).

²⁶ This work certainly finds resonance in a South African context.



Figure 50: Francis Alÿs, *Vivienda para Todos (Housing for all)*, 1994.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Medina 2007:88).

3.2.2. The surveyed

The *flâneur* in the city is profoundly affected by the prevalence of surveillance on the city streets and is no longer the only one who gazes, but is also continually the object of the camera's gaze. Going unnoticed in the streets of the contemporary city is no longer a possibility with the proliferation of surveillance devices, thereby undermining the very anonymity that the *flâneur* thrives upon (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:605,606). Being watched is not a threatening position to be in and surveillance is generally accepted, if not ignored, and in addition people enjoy being watched as a type of "inverse voyeurism" (Ernst 2002:461).

The omnipresence of visible surveillance cameras reminds city dwellers of their own visibility and as their visibility increases their lives become the spectacle for those who are watching (Koskela 2000:253,258). *The nightwatch* (2004) (Figures 51 & 52) comments on the increasing number of surveillance cameras

in the city of London as well as the manner in which increasing urbanisation forces wildlife to exist in the urban environment which is hardly an ideal situation (Alÿs & Medina 2010:149). Surveillance is based on the principle of exclusion since the act of looking is not mutual as the object of the gaze can never respond to or oppose the gaze (Koskela 2003:298). The fox, as the object of the gaze, is doubly disempowered as it is not aware of the purpose of the surveillance cameras and it is a complete stranger to its surroundings. The gaze is secret and passive (Denzin 1995:48). The footage of the surveillance cameras is sterile and clinical and only of interest once the fox appears. While the fox explores the Tudor and Georgian rooms of the National Portrait Gallery, the artworks are not gazed upon, thus the gaze becomes impotent and is rendered indisposed.

The fox is emblematic of the *flâneur* who is no longer able to be an anonymous spectator of metropolitan life as he is constantly being watched, and in contrast to the fox, is constantly aware of being under surveillance and thus a victim of the “internalisation of control” (Koskela 2000:253). Subsequently the *flâneur* is unable to be entirely carefree or anonymous in the crowd as the threat of being watched is constant (Koskela 2000:253, Shields 1994:65).



Figure 51: Francis Alÿs, *The nightwatch*, 2004.
20 videos on 20 monitors.16 minutes.

Available: http://www.artangel.org.uk/images/postershot_0.jpg
Accessed 26 April 2011.



Figure 52: Francis Alÿs, *The nightwatch*, 2004.
20 videos on 20 monitors.16 minutes.
(Medina 2007:60).

Alÿs creates a “spirit of distance” from the subjects of *Beggars* (2001 – present) (Figure 53) as they are photographed directly from above. This reinforces their inferior position in society as people physically and psychologically look down on them (Alÿs & Medina 2010:125, Phillips 2010b:143). Projecting the images onto the floor further entrenches their inferior position; however, as with the majority of surveillance images, it fails to elicit emotion (Phillips 2010b:143). In addition, the vantage point of the photographer and viewer are a reflection of divine eye acquiring an impression of human weakness and imperfection (Schmidt-Burkhardt 2002:19). The short interval between images provides only a quick glance at each subject, similar to typical CCTV footage, and refers to the unexpected encounters on the street by the *flâneur*.

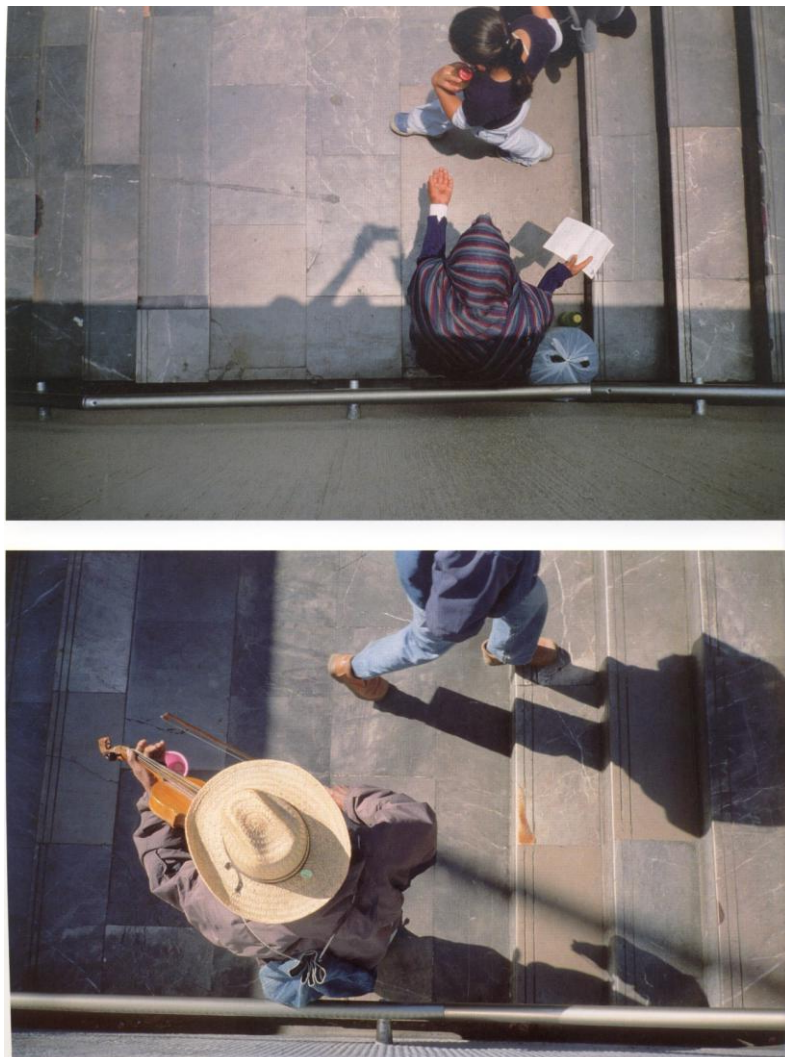


Figure 53: Francis Alÿs, *Beggars*, 2001 – present.
Slide projection. 2 of 80 35 mm slides.
(Ferguson 2007:66).

Guards (2004-2005) (Figure 54) consists of 64 Coldstream Guards who walk in the city of London looking for each other without being aware of the routes taken by their fellow men (Alÿs & Medina 2010:151). Upon meeting one another they change their step to marching in formation. As they march through the streets they are constantly 'seen' by the myriad of surveillance cameras on the streets of London. Furthermore, they are filmed by the artist and his collaborators²⁷ and they have cameras in their bearskin hats (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:37). The different vantage points of the surveillance cameras comment on the position of the surveyed in this work. Not only are the guards overtly filmed from above, those that they pass are covertly filmed by the hidden cameras. Therefore, the gaze takes place on many levels, it is active and passive, direct and indirect and above all, indifferent (Denzin 1995:48).



Figure 54: Francis Alÿs, *Guards*, 2004-2005.
In collaboration with Rafael Ortega and Artangel.
Video. 30 minutes.
(Ferguson 2007:38).

²⁷ They were not allowed to use the city's original surveillance footage due to privacy issues.

3.2.3. The outsider

The nineteenth century *flâneur* is represented as an archetypal figure of the growing cities of Europe and embodies the ambivalence that is evident in these cities (Wilson 1992:93). Equally, the contemporary *flâneur* is a solitary figure who exists on the margins of urban society and consequently is seen as an outsider (Wilson 1992:95). The *flâneur's* status as outsider affords him the opportunity to view the city and its customs from the perspective of a tourist. The tourist gaze has its roots in colonial times, where the exotic was of interest. In addition, the tourist gaze has a hierarchical aspect to it, as the colonial subject is seen as inferior. However, Alÿs as *flâneur* attempts to move beyond being a mere tourist,²⁸ as he critically questions his position in a foreign country, as can be seen in *Turista* (Figure 26).

Alÿs, being a cultural outsider in Mexico City, attempts to create meaning from his walks in the city. He states that: "I think what I'm trying to do is twist the plot, slightly, so that people can look at the situation from a different perspective ... The little you can do as an artist, is to offer for a few minutes or a few seconds the possibility of another reading or observation" (Johnson 2007:sp). For Alÿs, the moment of the aforementioned shift in consciousness, presents the opportunity to garner understanding of a place, culture or idea whose meaning seemed insurmountable before (Johnson 2007:sp). Alÿs reaches these conclusions through incidental strolling permeated with contradiction and sometimes seeming absurdity (Johnson 2007:sp).

Alÿs, as an exile in Mexico City, exploits this sense of disconnectedness with the city with interventions and this becomes an attempt to find meaning in the city (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8). Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:8) states that one needs to find your role and identity in the city, and that this action gives an outsider such as himself a means to function in the city. Being an outsider to the city provides Alÿs with a "permanent disjunction," which he sees as a filter between himself and being (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8). Alÿs's search for meaning is

²⁸ Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:31) mentions that he walks fast in order not to be mistaken for a tourist and asserts that "[i]n Mexico City only innocent tourists go slowly."

articulated as “the moment of coincidence between the experience of living and the consciousness of existence” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:8-9). The city has given him the opportunity to experiment without any limitations (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:9). Alÿs can therefore be compared to Simmel’s concept of the Stranger, who is like a foreigner who becomes a native (Shields 1994:68). Furthermore, Alÿs approaches the city with a tourist gaze, as he is able to assimilate the city’s character with an outsider’s perception. He asserts that: “I think my status as an immigrant freed me from my own cultural heritage” (Alÿs in Demos 2010:178). As such, he is a “displaced native” (Shields 1994:66).

In *La Malinche* (1997) (Figure 55),²⁹ Alÿs accentuates his status as outsider by carrying a small Mexican girl on his shoulders. His own face and subsequently also his view is obstructed by a coat. As a blind stroller, he cannot observe the city with a typical colonial gaze and needs to be guided. This performance highlights the way in which foreigners’ view of a country is clouded by preconceived ideas and misconceptions (Abaroa 2010:172). Alÿs (in Ferguson 2007:14) mentions that he is “too tall” to fit in as a local and *La Malinche* is a quirky symbol of his inappropriate physical size in Mexico City. Yet, the increase in height affords the girl on his shoulders an improved view of the city, similar to surveillance cameras placed on high vantage points in order to have a better ‘view’ of the surroundings.

²⁹ La Malinche is the name attributed to the woman who was the interpreter and later the lover of Hernán Cortéz during the Spanish conquest of Mexico. As interpreter, she played a crucial role in helping Cortéz defeat the native people. Her name is used for Mexicans who love foreigners and foreign culture more than Mexican culture (Abaroa 2010:172).



Figure 55: Francis Aljys, *La Malinche*, 1997.
Photographic documentation of an action.
(Ferguson 2007:9).

3.3. Experience

Experience is a continuous occurrence, given that the interaction between person and environment is the very process of living (Dewey 1934:35). For Bauman (2007:1), metropolitan life is characterised by a fluidity of experience, since things change continually at a rapid pace. He maintains that the artificiality of contemporary cities leaves the city dweller with an inability to create meaning and identity when faced with the “secure anonymity and functional specialisation of space” (Bauman 1998:46). As a result the individual finds it difficult to find his or her place in the world and everyday existence is fraught with feelings of fragmentation, dehumanisation and alienation of the self. As articulated by Benjamin (1973:158),

Since the end of the last century, philosophy has made a series of attempts to lay hold of the ‘true’ experience as opposed to the kind that manifests itself in the standardized, denatured life of the civilized masses.

Furthermore, Benjamin (1973:161) states that the manner in which different modes of communication have competed with each other has a direct influence on the increasing degeneration of experience.

Walking in the city is fundamentally about the meaning of existence and the *flâneur* is significant in the existentialist attempts to uncover the secrets of being in the metropolis (Tester 1994:8). Within contemporary society underscored by aspects of surveillance and the spectacle, the real is experienced in diverse ways. Debord (1994:12) argues that the spectacle “is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” and not merely a collection of images. As a result the *flâneur* surrenders to the spectacle. The experience of the *flâneur* is therefore no longer directly lived, but has become mere representation. This results in the questioning of the authenticity of experience relating to an overload and non-synchronicity of information.

The surveillance society has implications for the individual in terms of a sense of identity and therefore the sense of self (Lyon 1994:4). Surveillance is experienced on a material level and as an emotional event. When being aware

of being watched many emotions are experienced, ranging from feeling safe and secure, guilty, self conscious and scared (Koskela 2003:300). For Koskela (2003:259,300), the “emotional space” that is a result of surveillance is always unstable, unpredictable and ambivalent. The *flâneur* finds himself in an ambivalent position on the streets, as he is faced with being watched in his attempt to occupy his gaze and subsequently has to accept the loss of anonymity and become part of the “display and regeneration of the self” and being “the voyeur and the victim” at the same time (Ernst 2002:461).

3.3.1. Duplication

The development of surveillance assemblage leads to the existence of a person’s digital double that is not confined to the material world, even though its existence is solely based on the movement and actions of its ‘real’ double (Lyon 2007:6). Such duplication in the digital sphere happens when the various surveillance systems continually collect, store and compare information regarding its subjects. As such, the *flâneur’s* digital double has a greater capacity for travel than its corporeal counterpart and its journeys have no goal at all, as it is merely information contained in cyberspace (Lyon 2007:6).

Virilio (2000:61) states that

Today, control of the environment is very largely supplanting the social control of the constitutional state and, to this end, it has to establish a new type of transparency: the transparency of appearances instantaneously transmitted over a distance ... This is the meaning of the commerce of the visible, the very latest form of publicity.

The decline in privacy as a result of ever-present surveillance in the city is called the “disappearance of disappearance” (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:620). The *flâneur* is unable to view the city and its inhabitants from an anonymous distance and becomes part of the crowds of people recorded by ever-increasing surveillance systems and thereby is transformed into the myriad of signifiers of the city’s surveillance system (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:605).

For Alÿs the metropolis results in continual duplication of the individual as is seen in *Doppelgänger* (Figure 4). He recognises himself in the anonymous

crowd of the city and links the image of the individual to the image he has of himself. In this Alÿs simplifies complex surveillance systems with face recognition technology that is becoming a reality in the metropolis by watching passers-by and following an individual that could be him (Koskela 2003:294). The crowd is therefore no longer an anonymous mass of people, but individuals are 'recognised' and matched to a digital double (Koskela 2003:294). However, this process is meaningless as it merely accentuates that which is not finished as the *flâneur* continually looks to complete his identity (Tester 1994:7). The futile pursuit of a *doppelgänger* is an attempt to find unity in representation that is not possible (Medina 2007:98).

Surveillance is focused on a "virtual body of data" instead of the traditional notion that surveillance is concerned with the visual (Ernst 2002:463). Alÿs illustrates the creation of duplicated 'digital individuals' in the *Sign painters project* (1993 – 1997) (Figure 56)³⁰ and *The liar / The copy of the liar* (1997) (Figure 57) in the unlikely medium of painting (Koskela 2003:305). The continual copying of images is emblematic of the simulacrum that defines urban life amplified by widespread surveillance systems linked to computerised databases. As a result individuals disappear in the simulacrum that has become their lives and individual experiences dissolve into the "collective imagination of the urban" (Koskela 2003:305).

³⁰ Alÿs became aware of the prolific use of hand painted signs in downtown Mexico City during his many walks in the area (Medina 2007:82). The project entails the process where sign writers or *rotulistas* copy a painting that Alÿs supplies. Alÿs keeps copyright over each painting; however, the edition is open-ended. During the process Alÿs re-copies the reworked and 'improved' versions of the sign writers. The works are numerically categorised according to the 'generations' of paintings and a collector does not know if the copy he purchases is from the hand of Alÿs or a *rotulista* (Medina 2007:86).



Figure 56: Francis Alÿs, *Sign-painters project (Rotulistas)*, 1993 – 1997.
In collaboration with various local sign painters.
(Medina & Alÿs 2010:58).



Figure 57: Francis Alÿs, Studio installation of three copies of *The liar / The copy of the liar* (1997).

In collaboration with Juan Garcia and Enrique Huerta.
Enamel on metal sheet. Dimensions variable.
(Medina 2007:83).

Alÿs uses the idea of duplication to interact with the viewer of his art. In *Déjà vu* (1996 – present) (Figure 58) Alÿs places two identical paintings in different spaces of the exhibition space. Upon seeing the second painting the viewer is led to question where or whether the work has been seen before. The French word *déjà-vu* means ‘already seen’ and refers to the feeling that the present has been experienced already. This sense of *déjà vu* is similar to the notion of surveillance, where an electronic copy, and in some instances several copies, are made of an individual’s passage through a certain space, even though the individual will hardly ever have the opportunity to experience this duplication of actions³¹ by viewing the recordings. However, upon noticing the cameras, the individual is aware of this duplication of events.



Figure 58: Francis Alÿs, *Déjà vu*, 1996 – present.
Paired paintings. Dimensions variable.
(Alÿs & Medina 2010:72,73).

³¹ One does get to experience this ‘doubling’ of self when the monitor on which the feed from the CCTV camera is visible as it sometimes is in shopping malls.

3.3.2. Disembodiment

As the traveller's presence is continually recorded and replicated by surveillance systems, he becomes "disembodied information" in the virtual realm of cyberspace (Conrad 2009:380). The posthuman physical body is an 'artificial' component for the individual's being and is viewed as an "accident of history rather than an inevitability of life" (Hayles 1999:4). The proliferation of information bodies does not only convey a concern regarding representation, but moreover a change in the ontology of the lived body as new uses for information bodies are created (Conrad 2009:381). The *flâneur's* sense of presence is questioned, as he is 'present' on so many different platforms of urban life.

Alÿs questions the notion of presences in the action *Narcotourism* (Figure 25),³² executed in Copenhagen, Denmark. The action comprises of Alÿs taking a variety of drugs while wandering the city over the course of a week. He takes a different narcotic each day as is set out in the graphic documentation of this action and relates its effects on him. Even though he is physically present on the streets of Copenhagen and his image is captured by many surveillance cameras, he is mentally absent. His physical body and information bodies are therefore equally disembodied of his essence and the boundary between these two entities are blurred (Conrad 2009:381). Consequently the disembodiment of an individual, by means of narcotics or its existence in cyberspace as a result of surveillance, has many implications for the lived experience of the individual. In the opinion of Conrad (2009:381): "[t]he information gleaned from the body surveillance is not merely a 'data' image, an irrelevant or circumstantial collection of information, but indeed is constitutive of the body."

In *Narcotourism*, Alÿs attempts to be mentally present in a different place to the one in which he is physically present in an attempt to escape the "civilised living conditions" of Copenhagen. According to Horrocks (2003:212) one can

³² It seems that ecstasy can be the drug of choice for the *flâneur*, since Alÿs claims that it increases and enhances visual acuity and erotic desires as well as the compulsion to walk (Medina 2007:76).

transcend the embodied reality of the world which is characterised by fragmentation towards unity. This endeavour to surpass the material body and fragmentation of the world and embrace the unity of the 'ideal real' is linked to the idealism of the Neoplatonic concept of *ecstasis*: the liberating of the soul from the body (Horrocks 2003:213). However, the result of this action was not what Alÿs had anticipated, as its documentation had no artistic value and is seen as possibly the most aimless of his wanderings ((Alÿs & Medina 2010:81, Ferguson 2007:32).

Vári investigates the notion of the construction of reality and highlights the concept of the simulacra and maintains that "[i]n my work, I undertake an analytical and ironic scrutiny of the way concepts of reality are created." For Vári there is a fissure in the reality that people experience and she attempts to highlight this aspect of human nature (Williamson & Jamal 1996:98). The installation of *Riverrun* (2004) (Figures 59 & 60) consists of two video projections at right angles to each other accompanied by two stereo sound recordings. The four elements of the installation are out of sync and the viewing experience is always different (Vári 2004:sp).

The body in *Riverrun* becomes a multi-faceted entity in this kaleidoscope of shifting images and is transformed into code and mathematical possibilities and exists only in digital space (Ernst 2002:463). Vári makes it clear that the data double is not a representation of the real, as surveillance changes the body into pure information which challenges the ontology of the body (Conrad 2009:380, Haggerty & Ericson 2000:614). 1996:98). As the bodies in *Riverrun* transform it becomes clear that surveillance is not used to create depictions of real individuals, but rather uses the data to form patterns that is compared to models (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:614). The result of surveillance is the proliferation of cyborgs that are "comprised of pure information" and devoid of the 'real' (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:614). The journey that the artist depicts moves backwards as she visits spaces of personal importance, in contrast to the teleological ideas of progress and moving forward (Vári 2004:sp, Williamson 2004:390). There is a sense of virtual historical *flânerie* as she represents "a reflection on her own history" (Williamson 2004:390).

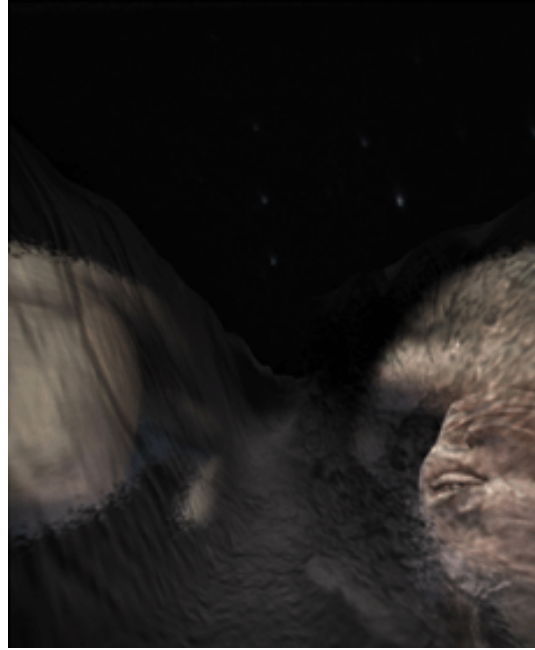


Figure 59: Minnette Vári, *Riverrun*, 2004.
DVD. 2 channel video installation. Duration variable.
Available: http://minnettevari.com/MV_stills.htm#Riverrun
Accessed 21 April 2011.

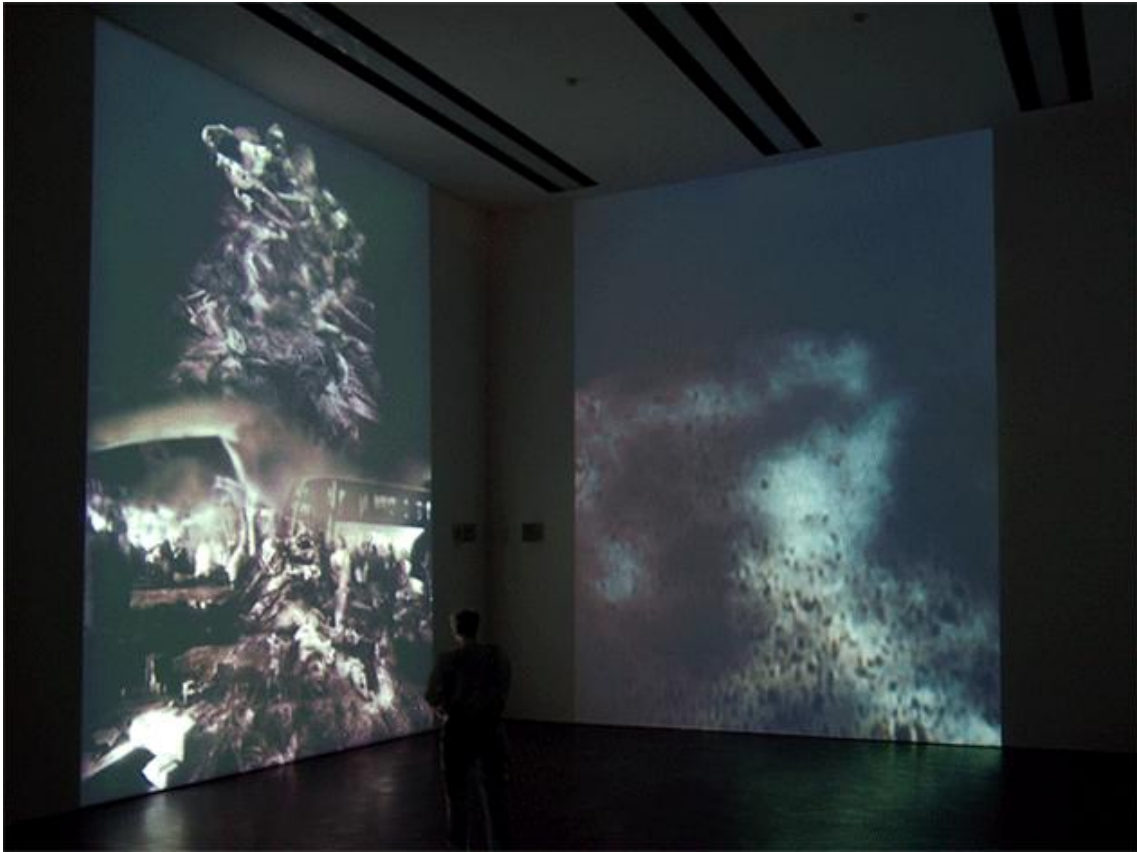


Figure 60: Minnette Vári, Installation view of *Riverrun*, 2004.
DVD. 2 channel video installation. Duration variable.
Available: http://minnettevari.com/MV_stills.htm#Riverrun
Accessed 21 April 2011.

3.3.3. Fragmentation

According to Simmel (1997b:178) the blasé attitude arises from the crowding of changing images and eventually the individual fails to react at all since he or she has reached his or her limit in terms of nervous stimulation. The blasé attitude leads to the blunting of discrimination where things in themselves are experienced as insubstantial (Simmel 1997b:178). The *flâneur* is faced with many images on the streets and this sensory overstimulation leads to a fragmentation of experience and indifferent attitude to the city. The importance placed on the temporal products of the culture industry causes individuals to divert their desire from spontaneous love objects exclusively to consumer objects leading to an indifference to their environment provoking a menacing apathy (Stiegler 2006:sp).

The spectacle of the city has become a force in itself and has a defining influence on the traveller. The positive aspects of the spectacle are slowly becoming a negative force in society. Simmel (1997b:175) states that “the psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the *intensification of nervous stimulation* which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli.” Simmel’s metropolis can be likened to the characteristics of a contemporary culture industry, where the “rapid crowding of changing images” takes up more consciousness than the lasting impressions previously associated with rural life or culture before the advent of mass-distribution of culture products (Simmel 1997:178).

Vuyisa Nyamende sources imagery from the mass media and his *Random footage* (2004) (Figure 61) reflects an unsystematic sequence of images recorded from television juxtaposed into a seemingly jumbled narrative (Lampbrecht 2004:282). This random selection of images illustrates the crowding of continuous diverse impressions as well as the type of images that individuals are exposed to through the media. As such, the *flâneur’s* vision is limited and fragmented and he is unable to make sense of his surroundings. His experience becomes one of fragmentation and disorder in his inability to comprehend an overview of the multitude of images (Veel 2003:156).

The surveillance society is characterised not only by the few who watches the many, but also by the many watching the few, as a result of the proliferation of the mass media (Lyon 2007:140). According to Simmel (1997b:178) the blasé attitude arises from the barrage of changing images and eventually the individual fails to react at all since he or she has reached his or her limit in terms of nervous stimulation. The importance placed on the temporal products of the culture industry causes individuals to divert their desire from spontaneous love objects exclusively to consumer objects leading to an indifference to their environment (Stiegler 2006:sp).



Figure 61: Vuyisa Nyamende, *Random footage*, 2004.
 Video.
 (Lampbrecht 2004:285).

Being in the contemporary metropolis is characterised by fragmentation as there is constant, though superficial and unresolved, contact with strangers (Wilson 1992:107). The contact with strangers is exacerbated by the knowledge that even more strangers are watching via the myriad of surveillance systems. Moreover, the *flâneur* is constantly inundated with the stimuli of urban life and his emotional state becomes one of fragmentation (Simmel 1997b:178). *Choques* (Figure 49) makes it clear that several viewpoints of a single event is in existence as the viewer is confronted by the different monitors displaying the event in the exhibition space; however, is unable to view it as a single unit due to the placement of the monitors in different areas. As such, the *flâneur* is only confronted with fragments of the urban narratives and meaning becomes insubstantial, ambiguous and surreal (Wilson 1992:107). The urban experience is incomplete and it is difficult to obtain meaning that is not obscure or disconnected (Wilson 1992:107).

For Alÿs walking in the city is an activity to counteract the feelings of fragmentation that city dwellers are so often faced with, as can be seen on the list he compiled of things that he does not do while he is walking (Figure 62). Even though he does not discount the overabundance of stimuli in the metropolis, he uses it as a “philosophy of living” (Alÿs & Medina 2010:52).

```

AS LONG AS I'M WALKING, I'M NOT CHOOSING
" " " " " , I'M NOT SMOKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT LOSING
" " " " " , I'M NOT MAKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT KNOWING
" " " " " , I'M NOT FALLING
" " " " " , I'M NOT PAINTING
" " " " " , I'M NOT HIDING
" " " " " , I'M NOT COUNTING
" " " " " , I'M NOT ADDING
" " " " " , I'M NOT CRYING
" " " " " , I'M NOT ASKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT BELIEVING
" " " " " , I'M NOT FREAKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT DRINKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT CLOSING
" " " " " , I'M NOT STEALING
" " " " " , I'M NOT MOCKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT FACING
" " " " " , I'M NOT CROSSING
" " " " " , I'M NOT CHANGING
" " " " " , I'M NOT CHEATING
" " " " " , I'M NOT FAKING
" " " " " , I'M NOT REACHING
" " " " " ,
" " " " " ,
" " " " " ,
" " " " " , I WILL NOT REPEAT
" " " " " , I WILL NOT REMEMBER

```

Figure 62: Francis Alÿs, *As long as I'm walking*, 1992.
Graphic documentation.
(Alÿs & Medina 2010:53).

3.3.4. Alienation

The essential experience of the *flâneur* is rooted in the social space of the metropolis even though the relationship between the *flâneur* and the city is one of estrangement (Frisby 1994:94). The *flâneur* is largely alienated from the social fabric that makes up urban life (Shields 1994:77). Due to Alÿs's status as outsider, he is greatly influenced by the space-time dislocation and disorientation affecting the *flâneur* as a result of the ever-increasing social relations or social spatialisation (Shields 1994:77). This alienation is further enhanced by conceptual displacement (Shields 1994:78).

Alÿs demonstrates the manner in which the over stimulation in the city leads to alienation and even disorientation in *Cantos Patrióticos (Patriotic songs)* (1998 – 1999) (Figure 63). *Cantos Patrióticos (Patriotic songs)* is similar to works such as *Rehearsal 1* (Figure 6) and *Rehearsal 2* (Figure 71) as its progress is based on music that is interrupted. The music rules a game of musical chairs on a different screen. The continual interruption of the lyrics results in confusion of the narrative and eventually falls apart completely (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:18). Similarly, the *flâneur* is continually faced with disorienting and distracting stimuli in the city that is not consciously assimilated (Buck-Morss 1986:128).

The *flâneur* loses his authentic self in the spectacle of contemporary life and his constant search for things to look at is an attempt to complete his identity and satisfy his existence (Shields 1994:78, Tester 1994:7). He becomes alienated in the commodification of everyday life and attempts to “find the truth of his being” through the act of *flânerie* (Tester 1994:7). In a society characterised by mass media and surveillance, the *flâneur* becomes a “passive consumer of life” and is unable to produce an authentic life (Swyngedouw 2002:162). Due to the “psychic and collective congestion” that inhabitants of the city suffer from as a result of mass media, they are becoming dissatisfied and disaffected (Stiegler 2006:sp).

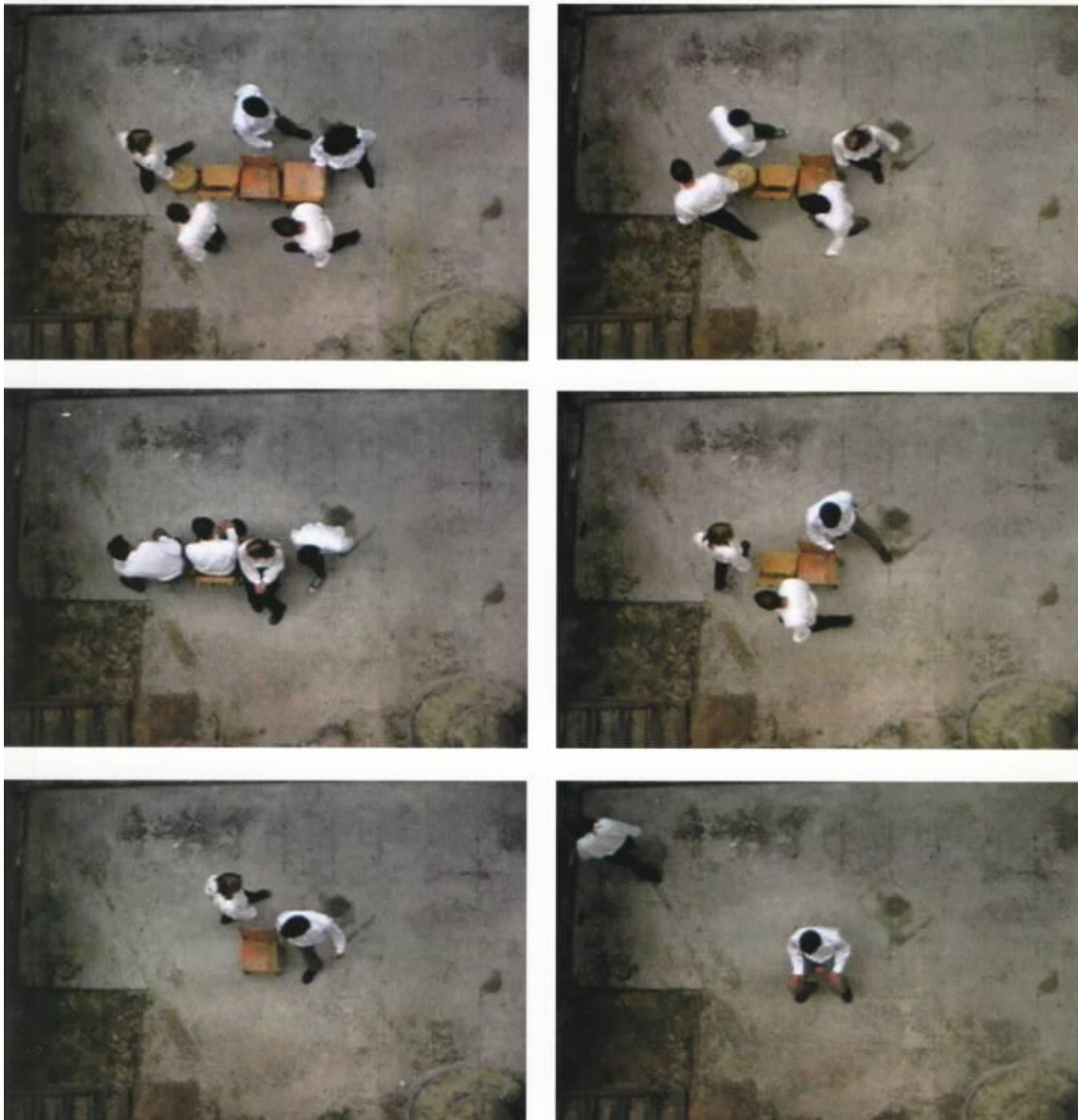


Figure 63: Francis Alÿs, *Cantos Patrióticos (Patriotic songs)*, 1998 – 1999.
In collaboration with Rafael Ortega.
Three-channel video. 28 minutes 30 seconds.
(Ferguson 2007:19).

Beggars (Figure 53) is a stark reminder of the negative impact of a consumer society as Alÿs accentuates their position in society by ‘looking down’ on them and presenting the images on the floor of the exhibition space. Commodification of every aspect of life leads to the visible denial of a productive life and therefore an authentic life (Swyngedouw 2002:162). Where the commodity has an encompassing presence in everyday life, there is a feeling of alienation and disempowerment (Swyngedouw 2002:159). In an aggressive consumer society the majority are compelled by advertising to subscribe to narrow interests as it

imposes a “false standard of what is and what is not desirable” (Berger 1972:154). For Debord (1994:23) alienation is a result of the false desires that are set by consumer society and becomes the projected actual needs and desires of those in the latter (Haggerty & Ericson 2000:615).

The process of alienation continues as the consumer is unable to comprehend his or her own desires and can no longer be the master of his or her own existence. City dwellers are ‘forced’ to be “passive consumers of the spectacle” as surveillance of consumer patterns covertly leads consumer behaviour and consequently they are unable to make free choices to be “active producers of life” (Swyngedouw 2002:162). As is seen in *Beggars*, individuals in the city are often unable to express their capabilities since alienation due to the conditions produced by the spectacle disconnects the association between being, the process of becoming and the mastery of the world (Swyngedouw 2002:162). Equally they are vulnerable and oppressed on the city streets and are more likely to be the objects of surveillance (Buck-Morss 1986:118).

Concluding remarks

This chapter positioned the *flâneur* in a surveillance society and as such argued that surveillance affects the *flâneur* in many ways and locations, as society is becoming increasingly concerned with the virtual. Surveillance by implication is concerned with the gaze; however, it became evident that traditional notions of the gaze are being subverted in the surveillant assemblage. It is my contention that the continual replication of the self and the visual elements of the city leaves the *flâneur* in a disempowered position where experience is fragmented and being alienated. The following chapter deals with the gender of the *flâneur* and moves away from the surveillance camera to the gaze with the *flâneur* as object and as purveyor of the gaze.

CHAPTER 4: WOMEN AND THE CITY

Thus far the study has commented on the journey of the *flâneur*, the spaces in which he finds himself and the things that he is faced with. It was established that the aimless nature of the journey is exacerbated by the contemporary city, as consumerism and surveillance have become aggressive forces to be dealt with. Furthermore, the latter has shown that the *flâneur* experiences the city in a different manner to earlier times, and the changes are not always positive.

In this chapter the *flâneur* is imagined as a woman, a radical shift from the nineteenth century *flâneur*, who merely consorted with prostitutes and shopgirls, never seeing them as equals or as having a rightful 'place' in the public arena of the city. As such the concept of the female *flâneur* or *flâneuse* is investigated to ascertain the validity of her existence as well as the concerns regarding her presence in the city. Even though the female is often used as a metaphor for the city, women in general have an ambiguous relationship with the city and being present in the city. The urbanisation of people has resulted in the symbolic marginalisation and 'entrapment' of women as cities are designed to isolate women³³ and subject them to the patriarchal system (Soja 1996:110).

Introduction

The *flâneur* was originally conceptualised as being exclusively male, since women were not able to walk around the city with the same freedom as men, especially during the nineteenth century which saw the emergence of the *flâneur*. Women were firmly ensconced in the domestic sphere and it was only lower and working class women who entered the public sphere on a regular basis (Wolff 1990:35). As such, the experiences of the city stroller of the modernist era are mainly attributed to the male. Janet Wolff (in Pollock 1988:71) claims that there is "no female equivalent of the quintessential masculine figure, the *flâneur*; there is not and could not be a female *flâneuse*." As women were

³³ The design of cities is not only a contested site in terms of gender, but also of race (Soja 1996:110).

not allowed to roam the city streets freely in the nineteenth century, their position has been questioned in the urban milieu ever since.

The presence of women on the street is no longer seen as a taboo in current times, although their experiences on the streets are informed by different aspects of life than that of men on a psychological level as well as in terms of identity. Entrance to the urban milieu for women took place as cities transformed into vast geometric spaces with wide and traffic laden roads (Swanson 1995:88). Women's 'problematic' relationship with the city is thereby entrenched as they are "seen to 'enter' the city through the route of commerce and consumption" (Swanson 1995:89). In addition, the nature of women's presence on the street has changed significantly from the nineteenth century, as women are allowed similar freedoms to that of men in the public sphere. For these reasons, it is necessary to investigate women on the street as a separate entity to that of the male *flâneur*. Edward Soja (1996:110) maintains that:

Cityspace is no longer just dichotomously gendered or sexed, it is literally and figuratively transgressed with an abundance of sexual possibilities and pleasures, dangers and opportunities, that are always both personal and political and, ultimately, never completely knowable from any singular discursive standpoint.

Contemporary cities are the backdrop to consumer society, and therefore the *flâneur* in this environment becomes a relevant notion to examine. The *flâneur* is a common feature of commodified spaces and his presence is typical in the latter. Commodified spaces or spaces where everything is for sale are liminal spaces, specifically shopping malls, as they are both private and public to a certain extent (Wilson 1992:96). Women in the public sphere are associated with consumption rather than production and their presence in shopping malls is ubiquitous (Van Eeden 2006:71). The shopping mall is emblematic of "physical domination of consumption upon the urban fabric" (Miles 2010:98). It is in the shopping mall where women conform to the constructs associated with the *flâneur* as they are afforded a sense of anonymity and the freedom to roam without a goal in mind (Van Eeden 2006:72). Furthermore, the *flâneur* in the private realm of the department store becomes feminised to such an extent that

the urban identity and tradition of the *flâneur* is altered beyond recognition (Ferguson 1994:23).

Since women have always been inextricably involved with technology, the female *flâneur* is no stranger to cyberspace (Plant 1997:63). Furthermore, as gender is seen as a performance, within the realm of cyberspace the performativity of gender becomes more pronounced as virtual cross-dressing is based on what data you enter and not on how you look. This affords the female *flâneur* as cyborg a greater degree of freedom than she experiences on the physical streets of the metropolis.

Women in the city are seen as part of the urban scene, something to be observed by the *flâneur*, therefore they become part of the urban drama to be 'consumed' together with the other components of the city (Ferguson 1994:28). The presence of women on the street in the nineteenth century is associated with prostitution, and thereby women's position as commodity is well-established (Van Eeden 2006:69). Through the advances of feminist thinking and subsequent women's rights, it is unfair to conjecture that this is the way women are perceived in general. However, much of the advertising seen on the city streets perpetuates this ideal and leaves women confronting this gendered stereotype (Sachs 1990:4, Slachmuislder 2000:97).³⁴

The male *flâneur* can roam the city streets relatively unimpeded by insecurity, anxiety, the fear of assault or being seen as a commodity or object of desire (Gleber 1997:68). Due to women's position in society,³⁵ they cannot enjoy the same freedoms as men. Women and images of women are objects of desire due to their implicit association with commodification where consumer products are the objects of desire in the city. To further expand the concept of the female

³⁴ Advertising in general tends to revert to traditional stereotypes of women and fails to portray women consistently in diverse roles and situations, thus failing to keep up with the changes in women's position in society at large (Slachmuislder 2000:97).

³⁵ In a South African context the position of women is even more precarious, since violence against women, specifically sexual violence, is rampant (Hart 2011:sp, Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle 2009:sp). In my opinion, even though violence against women is more likely to take place in the private sphere of the home, the fear of such crime spills over to women's presence in the public sphere.

flâneur the gaze is of significance, as women are usually the objects of the gaze (Berger 1972:47). The current position of the *flâneur* has changed drastically and there is a sense of nostalgia to earlier times before the intense commodification of most aspects of life (Bourriaud 2002:8).

4.1. The street and other paths

Women's presence on the streets of the city displays the disparity of gender distribution in terms of "physical and psychological power" (Gleber 1999:176). Women are still more likely to be victims of harassment, assault and verbal abuse (Gleber 1999:176). As such, women are limited in their movement on the street, thereby confronting the street and its occupants with more caution and anxiety than their male counterparts.

In contemporary times shopping is still seen as a female activity, even though the traditional notions³⁶ of the woman as gatherer and being excluded from the world of commerce are no longer irrefutable. In addition, shopping is gendered as female due to the fact that in the department stores and bazaars of the nineteenth century women were both the shop assistants and patrons (Van Eeden 2005:61). Women's tentative freedom from the constraints of the patriarchal system is facilitated by the "privilege of shopping" (Friedberg 1991:421). Shopping is seen as being part of domestic labour and a leisure activity related to femininity and a system of false needs (Van Eeden 2005:61,62).

Shopping is not only an activity to obtain goods but also a leisure activity or means to escape the confines of patriarchal domesticity. Shopping is an overwhelming female activity and is therefore responsible for the increasing visibility of women on the streets as well as shopping malls being aimed at

³⁶ According to Van Eeden (2006:73,74), shopping is gendered female based on the nature over nurture and nurture over nature theory. Nature over nurture dictates that since prehistoric times women have been responsible for gathering around the home, thereby making them biologically better at shopping. Nurture over nature states that patriarchy excludes women from the commercial sector and confines them to the home and they are therefore consumers.

female consumers (Van Eeden 2006:75). Consumers are constantly navigating space in the search for items that can satisfy the desires advocated by the capitalist system and satisfying these desires is not the end-goal as the journey is what is enjoyable in this endeavour (Bauman 1998:83). Bauman (1998:84) affirms that “arrival has that musty smell of the end of the road” and that consumers are enjoying the journey for its own sake as the excitement of the sensations collected during the journey is what keeps these travellers going. The seduction of consumerism is, similar to watching, voluntary and active and not coerced (Bauman 1998:84).

According to Ferguson (1994:27), women cannot disconnect themselves from the attraction of the city, specifically in the activity of shopping. Shopping undermines the “posture of independence” that identifies and defines the *flâneur* (Ferguson 1994:27). It becomes an intense engagement and integration with the urban environment, therefore the objectivity and neutrality required from the *flâneur* is no longer possible (Ferguson 1994:27).

Publicity images, or advertising, are a language in itself, and does not only compete with another, but also enhances and confirms each other (Berger 1972:131). It does not only offer choices between products, it persuades the viewer to transform him or herself by being shown others who have been transformed. This results in being envied, and that which is envied, constitutes glamour (Berger 1972:131). The empowerment of women as a result of consumer society is paradoxical given that women are subject to the false desires created by targeted marketing and ‘free choice’ is essentially a myth (Friedberg 1991:422).

4.1.1. Women on the street

People tend to create their own “social and territorial niches” in the urban environment and through this are able to develop “a sense of identity and comfort in the modern metropolis” (Burns 2000:70). The disenfranchised; however, cannot create these niches, since danger and oppression in the urban environment keep them from doing so. Women’s position on the streets has

always been marginal and her experiences limited and regulated (Gleber 1997:69). This inequality is not limited to the city streets and is part of Western culture in general, where women's position is always informed as being inferior to those of men. Gleber (1997:72) affirms that: "the female *flâneur* is considered to be absent, "invisible"; she is not presumed to have a presence in the street".

Women's journeys on the streets are still regulated by boundaries and limitations permitting them to take certain routes and not others, not as a result of free will, but rather by how they will be perceived in a certain section of the metropolitan based on society's codes and judgments (Gleber 1997:75). Due to society's conventions regarding the public presence of women and their images, the female *flâneur* is usually filled with the feeling of unease when entering the public sphere of the city (Gleber 1997:80).

Women who do venture on the streets are faced with many obstacles and must have the confidence to overcome these obstacles. Since women are by no means absent from the metropolitan pavements, it is evident that they have a desire to have an experience of the city (Gleber 1997:73). Even though women are present on city streets, it is not necessarily to stroll around aimlessly, as their presence is usually informed by a specific goal, such as running errands or shopping (Gleber 1997:71).

Women's mobility is restricted in many ways, specifically by physical violence, being stared at as well as simply made to feel 'out of place'. These restrictions are not based on a specific locality but enforced by traditional gender roles of a patriarchal society (Massey 1994:148). According to Massey (1994:179) the limitation of women's mobility has been a crucial means of subordination in some cultural contexts. Women are still faced with incidences of prejudice and harassment that their male counterparts are not confronted with (Gleber 1997:74). As such, women simply do not have the freedom to explore the city in the same fashion as men, since the danger of being attacked is always a very real possibility, thereby resulting in a "continual containment of women" (Gleber 1997:73).

The first frame of Bridget Baker's *Blue collar girl (New Delhi)* (Figure 64) shows the protagonist in the position of the female *flâneur* in the process of shopping as she is being measured in a tailor's shop. Women in front of the mirror or shop window, as illustrated by Baker, position them as consumers as it becomes "the site of seduction for consumer desire" (Friedberg 1991:422). However, in the second frame she subverts her femininity and is seen pulling a seemingly heavy cart loaded with merchandise. She is thoroughly entrenched in consumer culture, both as consumer and commodity in the tailor's shop and as vendor on the street. This comments on the inherent contradiction of women on the street as they are not only part of a system of buying and selling, but also the desire (cf 4.3.2) to possess through the act of looking (Friedberg 1991:422).



Figure 64: Bridget Baker, *The blue collar girl (New Delhi)*, 2005.
Lambda print and diasec. 54.5 x 241.5 cm.
Available <http://www.bridgetbaker.co.za/photos/>
Accessed 13 September 2010.

The collection of slides making up the work *Ambulantes (Pushing and pulling)* (1992 – present) (Figure 65) demonstrates the manner in which the street is used for informal trade. This work shows how the *flâneur's* position on the street is influenced by commodity culture, since he is a streetwalker and a vendor at the same time. More specifically, it seems as if these vendors are taking their goods for a walk in the city (Alj's & Medina 2010:56).



Figure 65: Francis Aljés, *Ambulantes (Pushing and pulling)*, 1992 – present.
Slide projection. 2 of 80 35 mm slides.
(Aljés & Medina 2010:56,57, Platt 2010:sp).

4.1.2. The mall

Shopping malls have become “icons of urban space” as a result of the radical changes in the ontology of capitalism that reflects a complete embracing of consumerism and are also sites of social interaction (Koskela 2000:246, Van Eeden 2006:61). The purpose of the shopping mall is not only to make economic transactions convenient, but rather a space associated with leisure and the search for pleasure, thereby making shopping an experience (Featherstone 1991:103, Miles 2010:7,99). For Bauman (1998:25) the mall is designed to keep people moving without lingering too long for meaningful social encounters; its design underpins the idea that time spent should be for commercial value of the consumerist system. Koskela (2000:246) continues that shopping malls have become “an essentially contradicting space” as it is characterised by exclusiveness rather than the openness it suggests. Conversely, the surveillance in malls is aimed at maximising profit by keeping shoppers moving and undesirable elements out rather than for the safety of patrons (Koskela 2000:246).

The emergence of shopping malls as an extension of the department store changes the ontology of the *flâneur* drastically. According to Benjamin (1969:54) the bazaar or department store is the final retreat for the *flâneur* and “he roamed through the labyrinth of merchandise as he had once roamed through the labyrinth of the city.” In the mall, as in the department store, there is no longer distance between the *flâneur* and the commodity and his aloof approach to the city is compromised by being the observer as well as the observed (Ferguson 1994:35). It is here where *flânerie* is feminised and the *flâneur* becomes part of the process of commodity exchange.

Even though woman’s position as a *flâneur* is contested in the city, women have relative freedom in the liminal spaces of shopping malls to engage in the pleasures of looking, socialising and strolling (Wilson 1992:101). The mall allows women to escape from the confines of the domestic sphere as set upon them by a patriarchal system (Van Eeden 2006:63). Moreover it affords women a relatively safe environment to wander at will even though privacy is reduced

as a result of the intense use of surveillance as a system of control and exclusion. For this reason, the perceived dangers of the street are kept at bay in the mall (Friedberg 1991:424). Although it is mostly women who visit shopping malls and who do window shopping, they do not have the same goalless presence on the streets as is possible for the male *flâneur* (Gleber 1999:185) Window shopping affords women with an escape from the domestic sphere as well as the opportunity to compare and evaluate goods (Van Eeden 2006:73).

Merry Alpern uses her position as female *flâneur* in the shopping mall to surreptitiously record women as they shop. The photos in the series *Shopping* (1999) (Figure 66) are the result of footage recorded by hidden recording equipment as Alpern wandered about in various stores. The photographs reveal consumerism on an intimate level as the women appraise themselves in various reflective surfaces. The fragmented nature of the images as a result of various mirrors and other reflective surfaces as well as the image quality contribute to the disorientation often experienced in shopping malls (Caniglia 1999:sp). Similar to the experiences of the *flâneur*, the images are arbitrary, distant and floating in nature as they are reminiscent of surveillance footage and not anchored by the presence of the photographer (Caniglia 1999:sp).



Figure 66: Merry Alpern, *Shopping #16*, 1999.
Dye destruction print. 41.91 cm x 58.42 cm.
(Phillips 2010:153).

4.1.3. Women in cyberspace

In the realm of cyberspace, women have a less precarious position than in the embodied world. Computer technology has from its inception included women, and its ideological hierarchies are less oppressive and less pronounced in relation to gender (Murphie & Potts 2003:25). Furthermore, there is a sense of freedom of gender, as the cyber traveller is not limited by the body and appearance (Wakeford 2004:264). Women can choose their characteristics at will in cyberspace and are not bound by the restrictive notions of gender (Sim 2003:30, Turkle 1998:397). For Haraway (2003:476) the cyborg is a “creature in a post-gender world”.

Haraway (1991:163) sees the cyborg as “a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self” and continues that women in cyberspace must release themselves from the constraints of Western thinking regarding the self as well as the distinctions between human body and machine. In addition, the cyborg is not limited by the public/private dichotomy and as such women are also not constrained by the latter (Haraway 2003:476).

Technology is central to Vári's works and in addition to being medium and concept, becomes a metaphor for the way in which reality is mediated by electronic images (Murinik 1999:sp). Vári uses images of her own body together with images from mainstream media in creating her videos (Peffer 2003a:sp). Concerned with the limits of her understanding of the world, Vári engages with reality on many levels by attempting to remove it from the confines of the familiar (Vári 1999:sp).

The cyborg is a combination of the real and the imagined, a “chimera” of machine and living being (Haraway 2003:476). Vári as cyborg is evident in the video *The calling* (2003) (Figure 67) as the protagonist changes form and dissolves into the city (Williamson 2003:sp). The body, with its strange accessories strapped to its back, is no longer only human or organism as it morphs with the structures in the city (Williamson 2004:390). The metropolis that forms the backdrop is not recognisable as a single city and is an

assemblage of different cities,³⁷ thereby referring to the universal nature of cyberspace. The protagonist is not physically traversing the streets and observes the city and its inhabitants from a precarious ledge (Peffer 2003b:28). This highlights her position as cyborg, as she is not specifically part of the city, nor completely apart from the city; the boundaries between the physical and non-physical are contested and ultimately vague and undefined (Haraway 2003:478).



Figure 67: Minnette Vári, *The calling*, 2003.
Two-channel video installation. 3 minutes.
(Peffer 2003b:29).

³⁷ Mainly Johannesburg, but also New York, Brussels and other places.

4.2. Women in the city

According to Wilson (in Massey 1994:259), the notion of city culture has been developed relating to men, in which women pose a threat in two ways. Firstly, women are more likely to escape the rigidity of patriarchal social controls which can be prominent in a smaller community within a metropolitan setting. This freedom from patriarchy however, is marred by the attendant dangers of the city. Secondly, women are seen to represent disorder, and therefore are not compatible with a Western view of the metropolis. The city as “realm of uncontrolled and chaotic sexual license” results in the rigid control of women, since the feminine represents chaos and sexuality, and the masculine rationality and control (Wilson in Massey 1994:259).

Women are no longer purely classified under the archetype of the mother, but are now rising beyond that image as an independent entity no longer constrained with the responsibility of procreation (Lauter 1985:80). The independent woman is now attaining a greater position of importance in society. Independence is also no longer regarded as being negative (Lauter 1985:80). However, for women to entertain the idea of complete freedom and independence whilst venturing on the streets to engage in the activity of *flânerie* they need to break “with the values that confine them within ordinary life” (Lauter 1984:95).

Women’s presence in public spaces has conflated the concepts of commodity and seller, as they embody both (Friedberg 1991:421). They are “not the observers, but objects in the Panopticon of the sexual market”, since they are usually the objects of the gaze in urban space (Friedberg 1991:421, Koskela 2000:255). It is for this reason that prostitution is seen as being symbolic of the rise of consumer culture, urbanisation and the loss of nature (Wilson 1992:105,106). Van Eeden (2006:72) is of the opinion that the liminal or in-between spaces of the department stores of the nineteenth century encourage “a culture of sexual display” analogous to the display of wares in the stores. In the context of the latter, it is clear that shopping is a continuation of the prostituted female body as a commodity.

4.2.1. The female *flâneur*

Women are socialised in such a way that their ‘containment’ is self-imposed to a certain degree and Pollock (1988:71) contends that: “Indeed woman is just a sign, a fiction, a confection of meanings and fantasies” (Gleber 1997:74). Therefore, the position of the female *flâneur* or *flâneuse* is a contentious issue, even in contemporary times where women are perceived to be free from discrimination in principle.

Women have never enjoyed the freedom of the male *flâneur* who has the ability to gaze without being watched in return (Pollock 1988:71). Unable to escape their position as object, women remain situated as the object of the *flâneur’s* gaze (Pollock 1988:71). They are seen as objects to be gazed at, and find it difficult to free themselves from this association. Women cannot take ownership of the streets as they are always subject to public conventions that affirm their position as object of the male gaze (Gleber 1997:72).

Dineo Bopape illustrates the concept of the female *flâneur* in her video *Dreamweaver* (2008) (Figure 68). The rather oversized glasses remind of blindness and refer to the inability of the protagonist to find her way in the city. She creates the impression that she is groping in the dark, without knowing what her purpose in this environment entails. The mind can therefore not attain the knowledge that is necessary to reach its end goal or *telos* (MacIntyre 1990:5). In addition, the protagonist’s metaphoric blindness alludes to the false sense of security the independent woman fosters when strolling the streets.

Bopape repudiates the mainstream ideas regarding female objectiveness as the protagonist is not presented as someone to be desired as she does not conform to society’s concepts of attractiveness. Moreover the glasses suggest that she is blind to the ideals of society. She conforms to Lauter’s statement that women need to part with conventional ideas in order to undertake a journey in the public sphere (Lauter 1984:95). Bopape (in Bosland 2008:114) states that the protagonist is “multi-sexed” and the “figure become[s] androgynous” as it is combining masculinity, the beard and white y-front underpants, with femininity,

the presence of breasts. She thereby negates the idea of gender stereotypes where women are the object of the gaze. However, the dress made of stuffed plastic bags reinforces the female aspect of the figure, as women are typically associated with shopping.

The fear of crime has a significant impact on urban form in space in South Africa. Attempts to mitigate fear result in the creation of fortified communities and a withdrawal from public space. *Dreamweaver* conveys the idea of enclosure and fear, as the video is filmed in an underground basement and the protagonist carries an umbrella. Women on the streets are specifically vulnerable at night and this is magnified by the ineffectual light that Bopape employs to illuminate the scene. The umbrella is a metaphor for protection, usually as a literal barrier from the elements of nature, but in this case the potential threat is unclear and unseen. This enhances the vulnerability of the female *flâneur* who even when she is defying the dangers of the street is still at risk of that which cannot be seen or articulated. Furthermore the use of the umbrella as protection is reminiscent of earlier times when women carried umbrellas as part of their general attire when stepping out from the relative safety of the domestic sphere to the public streets. This reminds of times where women were not able to walk unaccompanied in public.



Figure 68: Dineo Bopape, *Dreamweaver*, 2008.
Video. 7 minutes 53 seconds.
(Dreyer & Lebeko 2009:51).

Women negotiate the city for various reasons, such as shopping, running errands and employment. Their manner of travel has also evolved, and women are no longer confined to walking or public transport, but are able to travel in the relative safety and privacy of a motor vehicle. In *Eight to four* (2001) (Figure 69),

Usha Seejarim represents her daily commute from Lenasia³⁸ to Johannesburg by recording the shadows that passing objects cast on the passing landscape of her journey. As a *flâneur*, Seejarim's journey is undertaken with a specific purpose, to get to work; however, its banal and mundane nature results in illusion of aimless travelling as the trip becomes "an endless routine journey" (Khan 2004:338). The shadows as "enigmatic, visible yet intangible" images become an illusion that Seejarim follows on her journey (Seejarim 2006:81). Seejarim (2006:81) declares that "everything is in a state of flux; nothing is constant, as every moment becomes a memory at the very advent of the next moment." Focussing attention on the ethereal, Seejarim as passive spectator continues the act of *flânerie* by presenting aspects of city life, often overlooked by its inhabitants (Tester 1994:16).

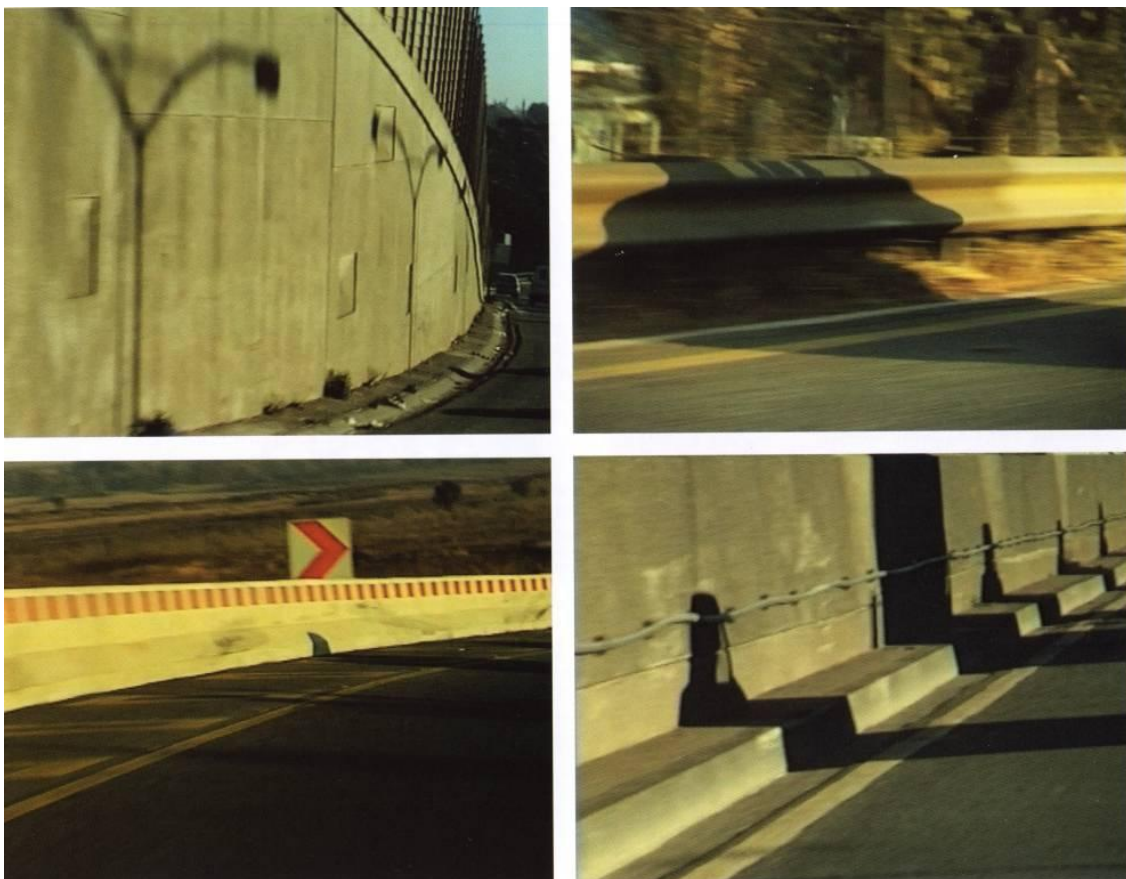


Figure 69: Usha Seejarim, *Eight to four*, 2001.
DVD, single channel projection. 8 minutes.
(Khan 2004:341).

³⁸ Lenasia is a suburb south west of Johannesburg and was specifically demarcated as an Indian area during apartheid.

4.2.2. The prostitute

The commodification of women in a society of the spectacle can be traced back to the presence of the prostitute in the metropolis (Buci-Glucksmann 1986:224). Contrary to the traditions of the nineteenth century, where women are limited to the domestic sphere, the prostitute is visible on the street and is there to be purchased and consumed (Buci-Glucksmann 1986:224). The prostitute on the street and commodity culture are analogous with each other, since both represent wares to be displayed, purchased and consumed. As a result the idea of woman as commodity is further entrenched in popular thinking. Buci-Glucksmann (1986:224) makes it clear that the prostitute is the precursor for the manner in which women are equated with commodities in the city and thus by association also as an object to give pleasure.

The *flâneur* has an intricate connection with prostitution, even though he frequents the streets, he does not need to choose or pay for the women on display and conveys an illusion of disinterest and disillusion (Ferguson 1994:28). Although the prostitute is often mentioned as a female equivalent of the *flâneur*, she does not have the freedom of the male *flâneur* to pursue the pleasures of the street and her presence is a result of economic necessity (Gleber 1997:78). Gleber (1996:78) makes it clear that women, whether it is the prostitute, the homeless or the shopper, are not equal to the male *flâneur*, and that “within the public facets of female lives, these women form nothing if not the cynically distorted female images of consumption and *flânerie* in an age of capitalist and sexist exploitation.” Not only does the prostitute represent the commodified female on the street, but she is also representative of the “sexual, social and economic relations” in the city as a “reflection of sexual difference and the mainstream secure forms of masculine social identity” (Swanson 1995:85).

Women’s disempowered position in the public sphere is reinforced by the presence of the prostitute on the street (Gleber 1997:72). The prostitute is seen as the origin of the female *flâneur* and therefore women who loiter on the street are at risk of being seen as prostitutes (Buck-Morss 1986:119, Gleber

1997:168). The *flâneur* is seduced by the city streets and everything that the streets offer; as such, the prostitute is part of the commodities found on the street and is an “objective emblem of capitalism” (Pile 1996:233). The prostitute becomes the object of desire (cf 4.3.2) for commodities and power for the *flâneur* (Pile 1996:233). In keeping with this, Tracy Payne’s *Coastal resort* (1996) (Figure 70) illustrates the notion that women are treated in a similar fashion to commodity items. The broken mannequin of *Coastal resort* lies discarded amidst the debris of the city, an item that is no longer needed, without value. Conversely, the prostitute is regarded as an “unproductive commodity, without value and eroding value” (Swanson 1995:83). Dreyer (2005:10) states that “the imagery of the disfigured woman and the technological debris of manufacture surrounding her comment on the devastating effects of urban artifice and lifestyle.”



Figure 70: Tracy Payne, *Coastal resort*, 1996.
Pastel on paper. 115 x 84.5 cm.
(Williamson & Jamal 1996:116).

The prostituted body as a metaphor for the disorder, waste and abjection evident in an urban environment is suggested by the disarray of debris surrounding the mannequin (Wilson 1992:92). Furthermore the meticulous rendering of the model of *Coastal resort* reveals the artist's fascination with the domination of surface in a hyper-real world (Williamson & Jamal 1996:115). As a result, the fragmentation and disfigurement of the body represents the prostituted body as a commodity and a simulation of reality (Buci-Glucksmann 1986:226). *Coastal resort* is a celebration of waste, fetish, beauty and degradation, similar to the prostitute who is an emblem of the instabilities of the city (Swanson 1995:80, Williamson & Jamal 1996:115). Furthermore, the prostitute is clearly associated with the sexual, and "the public woman [is] used as a sign of urban pathology" (Swanson 1995:80).

Mlangeni's street sweepers are in a similar position as the prostitute, as they exist on the margins of society. Besides the obvious fact that they frequent the streets at night out of economic necessity, they are in an ambivalent position of being the object of the male gaze, and consequently in a subordinate and vulnerable position. The nature of their employment relates to *Coastal resort* as they clean the debris in the city. Their purpose is therefore related to that which is discarded and without value. Moreover, like the prostitute, they are familiar with the labyrinthine structure of the city and form an integral part of the city (Benjamin 1973:53).

The stripper from *Rehearsal 2* (2001 – 2006) (Figure 71) is emblematic of the prostitute, and enhances women's disempowerment. Buck-Morss (1986:119) is of the opinion that the sexual degradation of women and their presence on the street result in furthering the oppression of women. Koskela (2000:255) affirms this and states that "looking connotes power, and being looked at powerlessness." Conversely, the stripper is in a position of simulated power, as the viewer is subject to her actions in the process of gratification. There is a sense of deception and illusion in the actions of the stripper, and the *flâneur* is disempowered by the disjointed nature of her performance. The stripper plays an active role in the erotic spectacle, placing the *flâneur* who is constantly

looking for novel visual lures in a moment of suspension, as he has to linger passively at one scene for the conclusion of the act.



Figure 71: Francis Alÿs, *Rehearsal 2*, 2001-2006.
In collaboration with Rafael Ortega.
Video, 14 minutes 30 seconds.
(Medina 2007:97).

4.2.3. A female Sisyphus

As Sisyphus is condemned by the gods to repeat an impossible task for eternity, his journey on the mountain is without end and every time the rock rolls to the bottom, seemingly without purpose (Blanchot 2001:53).³⁹ Observing women in the city, it seems like their presence is informed with purpose. Correspondingly, due to a number of reasons, aimless lingering is not afforded to women, again questioning the possibility of the female *flâneur*. Moreover, in a patriarchal society, women is seen as “signifier for the male other,” negating her being to merely an object, as something to be looked at (Berger 1972:47, Mulvey 1989:15).

Berni Searle’s *Approach* (2006) (Figures 72 & 73) reminds of the endless journey of Sisyphus as she traverses a mound of grape skins. She continuously climbs and descends the mound without ever reaching an end in her journey similar to Sisyphus who scales a mountain and upon reaching the top, has to return to the foot of the mountain to start his journey again. A linear progression of her journey is questioned, since she appears repeatedly in the landscape (Farrell 2006:154). Even though she does not carry the burden of Sisyphus, the work is concerned with an endless task, scaling the small mountain of grape skins. The nature of the mound is also of significance, it is merely waste, as the grapes have served their purpose in the process of wine production. Therefore her presence and labour ascending and descending the mound have no purpose other than that of a futile journey. As a *flâneur*, Searle’s journey is even more fruitless, she finds herself in a barren landscape of waste isolated from the city.

³⁹ Camus (2005:116) contends that Sisyphus is the “absurd hero” and that he achieves purpose every time he reaches the top of his wretched mountain, his effort “measured by skyless space and time without depth.” The tragedy of the myth lies in the fact that the hero is conscious of his fate and therefore without hope (Camus 2005:117).



Figure 72: Berni Searle, *Approach*, 2006.
7 Lambda prints. 88.5 x 100 cm each.
Available: http://www.bernisearle.com/Berni_Searle/Prints.html.
Accessed 13 September 2010.

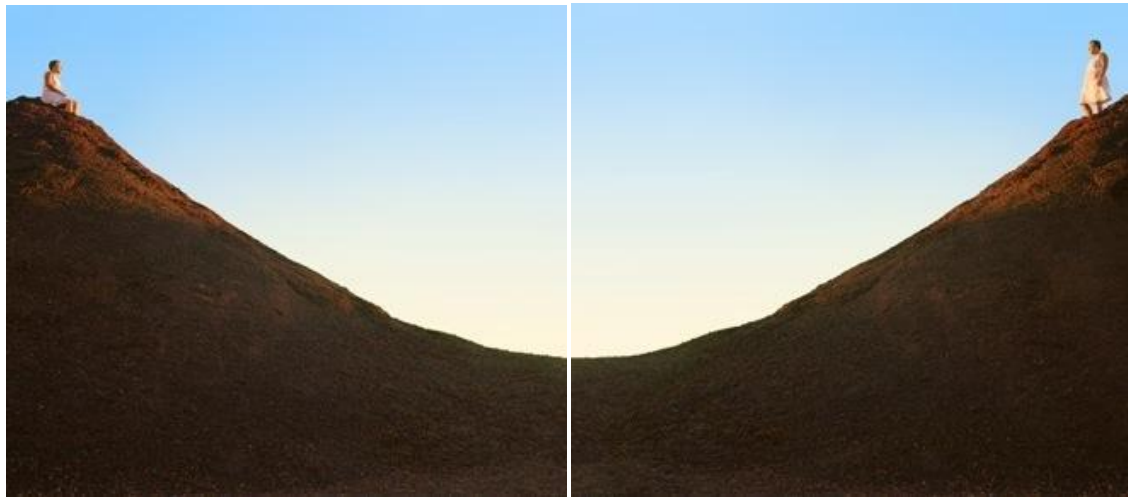


Figure 73: Berni Searle, *Approach* (details), 2006.
7 Lambda prints. 88.5 x 100 cm each.
Available: http://www.bernisearle.com/Berni_Searle/Prints.html.
Accessed 13 September 2010.

Dineo Bopape's protagonist in *Dreamweaver* (Figure 68) continues the idea of the female *flâneur*. The protagonist is sporting a pair of sunglasses and umbrella dances around in an area that is difficult to define since it is only illuminated by a single weak light source. The dance seems to be without purpose and does not conform to any specific style of dancing. The protagonist appears to be moving just for the sake of movement and there is not a definite beginning or end to her routine. Unlike Searle, she is in the city; however, she is contained within a structure which is representative of the private and domestic sphere.

Bridget Baker's *The blue collar girl* triptychs present us with a female protagonist who is engaged in a variety of actions and settings. The first panel of all the triptychs represent a staged setting reminding of a woman in a 1950s Elizabeth Taylor film (Williamson 2006:159). She is seen in a domestic setting

evaluating her image in a mirror (Figure 74), on the street (Figure 75), visiting a tailor (Figure 64), sitting in an upmarket bar (Figure 76) and reading a German magazine in an Art Deco cinema (Figure 77). In all of these she is in a position of being watched surreptitiously as she never confronts the viewer's gaze or acknowledges its existence. The activities that she is engaged in is either typically feminine or leisurely and is reminiscent of the task of Sisyphus, as no goal is achieved (Blanchot 2001:54). The protagonist is comparable to the nineteenth century dandy⁴⁰ as she follows similar pursuits in the city, and in contrast to the *flâneur* does not engage with the crowds on the street. The reason for the latter is twofold: she is limited by her gender to stroll aimlessly amongst the crowds and she is more comfortable in the enclosed spaces of the city reminding of the domestic sphere.

The middle panel shows the protagonist in the distance, performing tasks in contrast to the sophisticated woman in the first panel reminding of a superhero or mythical woman on a quest (Malcomess 2009:22). She embodies the idea of Sisyphus in a contradictory position of being damned, but also of having the strength to continue his quest (Blanchot 2001:53). Rejecting her status as passive female, she engages in action adventures in a three-dimensional space, escaping her reality of spectacle burdened with sexual objectification (Mulvey 1989:20). She subverts the notion of stereotypical gender roles as most of the activities are associated with the masculine, such as being outdoors and requiring physical strength to complete. In this she takes *flânerie* further, above and beyond the streets of the city. The final panel reveals the fruits of her labour and the words 'only you can' are presented in various guises. This personalises her labour in an era where mass production by mechanical means are standard (Malcomess 2009:28).

⁴⁰ Even though the figure of the *flâneur* and the dandy can easily be conflated, the dandy celebrated wealth and lineage, whereas the *flâneur* protested against the increasing materialism and speed of modern city life and valued insight and observation (Birkerts 1982:167).



Figure 74: Bridget Baker. *The blue collar girl (Cape Town)*, 2004.
Lambda print and diasec, 54.5 x 241.5 cm.
Available <http://www.bridgetbaker.co.za/photos/>
Accessed 13 September 2010.



Figure 75: Bridget Baker. *The blue collar girl (Gent)*, 2004.
Lambda print and diasec, 54.5 x 241.5 cm.
Available <http://www.bridgetbaker.co.za/photos/>
Accessed 13 September 2010.



Figure 76: Bridget Baker, *The blue collar girl (Maputo)*, 2005.
Lambda print and diasec, 54.5 x 241.5 cm.
Available <http://www.bridgetbaker.co.za/photos/>
Accessed 13 September 2010.



Figure 77: Bridget Baker, *The blue collar girl (Valais)*, 2006-7.
Lambda print and diasec, 54.5 x 241.5 cm.
Available <http://www.bridgetbaker.co.za/photos/>
Accessed 13 September 2010.

4.3. Experience

The *flâneur* is searching for pleasure in the metropolis and takes “visual possession of the city” and is seen as “the embodiment of the male gaze” (Wilson 1992:98). Even though female *flânerie* is limited by women’s vulnerable position in the city, it does not mean that women are not pursuing a sense of freedom from oppression in the streets of the city. Women are in the position to go beyond the limits of being a mere object of the gaze especially when acting with a sense of independence (Lauter 1985:80). However, women are unable to be completely at ease in the metropolis, especially at night when the level of danger rises and as a result are unable to “indulge their full fascination with the metropolis” (Gleber 1999:176,177).

The female stroller has to continually assert her position as *flâneur* on the street in order not to be perceived as the object of the male gaze, thereby further negating the possibility of having the disinterested attitude of the *flâneur* during his aimless walks along the streets (Gleber 1997:76). Contemporary social life is characterised by the accumulated products of the economy and the question of ‘having’ is now most notably associated with the status of appearances. Moreover individual reality is completely dependent on social power and has developed into social character (Debord 1994:16). The teleological process of the money economy consists of three stages: to have money, to spend it, and to possess the object (Simmel 1997a:235). Furthermore, the belief that all happiness and satisfaction are connected with possessing a certain amount of money arises when the acquisition of money is the immediate goal of one’s efforts (Simmel 1997a:235).

Women are intricately linked to consumption, both as those who are responsible for shopping, and being a metaphor for commodity, as object to be consumed (Buci-Glucksmann 1986:228). Correspondingly, women are still the object of the gaze even though they are able to resist the oppression of the sexualised gaze by means of direct eye contact and technologically mediated looking (Koskela 2003:301). Women are looked at and objectified in a different manner to men as

“the offensive gaze belongs to men” and thus the “cultural codes and politics of seeing and being seen” is continued with surveillance (Koskela 2003:301).

4.3.1. The gaze

Being the object of the male gaze⁴¹ cannot be reversed or changed, as it is so deeply entrenched in the psyche of both men and women (Gleber 1997:74). Gleber (1997:74) argues that these naturalised views that women are objects of the gaze allow “the absence of female *flânerie* [to] appear not as any individual lack or incapacitation but as a crucial blind spot of society that converges to illuminate the limitations that conventions impose on women’s lives.” Furthermore, Gleber (1999:177) maintains that “confronted with a social environment in which they cannot be present as undisturbed observers, as they themselves are made the ‘natural’ objects of observation, women are excluded at once from public present and spectatorship.” Looking for pleasure is informed by the societal model of active male and passive female where women signify “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey 1989:19).

The feminisation of consumerism, especially shopping, ensures the continual dominance of the patriarchal gaze (Friedberg 1991:422). The male gaze informed by the image of woman as commodity is reinforced by the “modern sexual economy” and “enjoys the freedom to look, appraise and possess, in deed or in fantasy” (Pollock 1988:79). Even though *Rehearsal 2* (Figure 71) is not directly concerned with the position of women in society,⁴² it is difficult to ignore the obvious connotations of objectification, such as a woman deliberately placing herself as the object of desire as well as the visual effect reminding of voyeurism. The woman undressing reaffirms the scopophilic notion of looking,

⁴¹ Norah Vincent (2006) confirms this notion by her social experiment where she presented herself as a man to society for a year. As she walks the streets disguised as a man, she realises that she is now afforded some sense of respect by not being stared at. She mentions that “as a woman, you couldn’t walk down those streets invisibly. You were an object of desire” and the stares of the men assert their dominance over the women passing them in the street (Vincent 2006:2,3).

⁴² The artist’s intention of *Rehearsal 2* (2001-2006) is to highlight the seduction of development and consequent postponement of progress evident in Latin America. The alluring power of capitalism and the failure of its success are parodied by the backward and forward process of undressing by the stripper (Aljys & Medina 2010:110).

as those watching her experience pleasure by using her image as an object of sexual stimulation (Mulvey 1989:18). Her identity is thereby reduced to erotic commodity, an object to be appraised and purchased.

The progress of the woman undressing in *Rehearsal 2* is continually disrupted as the music stops when the musicians are discussing some finer points of their performance. The woman puts her clothes back on when the music stops, thereby delaying a conclusion in the act. In this “ebb and flow of desire,” she is symbolic of women on the streets who are constantly appraised for their desirability and availability (Medina 2007:98). Moreover, she subverts her position as object of the scopophilic gaze by arresting the flow of the act of undressing as soon as the music stops.

In order for the female *flâneur* to exist with the same freedoms as her male counterparts, she has to realise a new subject position, someone who becomes a “new figure of a resistant gaze” (Gleber 1997:84). This position must be in opposition to the traditional roles of women and their reality as images to be looked at and to be offered on the streets as a visual commodity (Gleber 1997:84). However, Gleber (1997:75) maintains that:

As long as a woman’s movement in the streets involves facing more forms of intrusion, surveillance, and violence and requires more self-determination and self-confidence than a man’s, female *flânerie* does not really come into its own. As long as the empowered position of the male gaze prevails, females are unable to move at will.

In the psychoanalytical writings of Bracha Ettinger, the argument is voiced that feminine sexual difference⁴³ is not a result of being the Other, as a figure who is defined in opposition (and lacking) to the male (Ettinger 2006b:218). The gaze of the stripper in *Rehearsal 2* has power to transform the viewer and places the *flâneur* in a disempowered position. As such, the *flâneur*’s journey is interrupted as he is caught in a moment of fascinum as the stripper holds his gaze and he

⁴³ Bracha Ettinger is of the opinion that gender identity should not be understood under the traditional model of the “castrative model of the subject” as is typical in the psychoanalytical writings of Freud and Lacan, but rather “elements of several subjectivities” in shared borderspaces (Pollock 2004:6). Therefore, women are not seen as the Other, but rather as a link in the matrixial borderspace instead of that which is lacking (Ettinger 2006b:218). “Feminine is to be understood, matrixially, as a differential potentiality before and beyond this [phallic] dichotomy” (Ettinger 2006a:68).

is forced into a position of contemplation (Ettinger 2006a:61). Berger's (1972:47) notion that "men act" and "women appear" is thereby questioned in the liminal space of the encounter as the *flâneur* is transformed. In this moment of fascination the "private subjectivity of the individual is momentarily unbounded" (Ettinger 2006a:62).

4.3.2. Object of desire

The commodification of women is used to stimulate desire as they are both there to be consumed as well as to be consumers (Lefebvre 2002:135). As such women are seen as being mass-produced and generally available (Buci-Glucksmann 1986:222). Women's status has been reduced to being on "constant display, exhibition and exposition as the object of male desire" and she experiences being visually evaluated and assessed whenever she roams the streets (Gleber 1997:81). However, the commodity in a culture industry has become an image and representation and it becomes the core of social life (Swyngedouw 2002:159). Images of women are typically rendered fragmented and abstracted and therefore becomes symbolic of the spectacle and "as object of desire and endless exchange" (Petro 1997:56).

Berger (1972:142) makes it clear that the purpose of publicity is to make the viewer dissatisfied with his life within society and offers the viewer an improved alternative to him or herself. Furthermore it focuses on creating anxiety where if you have nothing you will be nothing or that having money to spend increases your status as a desirable individual. The constant bombardment of unattainable desires leads to despair whereby the economic misery of many people provoke symbolic misery in being the "victims of the everyday despair of the intoxicated consumer" (Stiegler 2006:sp). Even though in the commodity culture the actual purchase of goods is not a necessity, "the shopper who buys nothing pays a psychic penalty – the unpleasure of unsated consumer desire" (Friedberg 1991:424).

Celia de Villiers's use of shoes⁴⁴ in *Post-human consumerism* (2009) (Figure 78) is emblematic of the erotic object⁴⁵ and plays on the desire that is created by the culture industry (De Villiers 2009:34). The shoe is no longer valued for its use as De Villiers has altered the original that it cannot be worn, and it becomes a fetishistic object of desire (Dreyer 2009:25). Accordingly the arrangement of shoes is a reflection of the manner in which the media creates desire for objects by means of display and the way the latter manipulates artificial ideas surrounding women (De Villiers 2009:34). The negation of the use-value of the shoe is in keeping with the constrained position of the female *flâneur* on the streets of the metropolis, as it focuses attention on the inability of the female *flâneur* to function in the same manner as her male counterpart.



Figure 78: Celia de Villiers, *Post-human consumerism*, 2009.
Resin casting, plexiglass. Dimensions variable.
(Dreyer & Lebeko 2009:35).

⁴⁴ The purchase of shoes far beyond obvious need is seen as a quintessentially female weakness in popular thinking.

⁴⁵ Foot fetishes are traditionally explained by Sigmund Freud who claims that the reason for such fetishes is that the foot resembles the penis; however, Dr VS Ramachandran, a neuroscientist, claims that it has nothing to do with the anatomical shape of feet, but rather is a result of brain mapping as described by Dr W Penfield (Ramachandran & Blakeslee 1999:26).

Fascinace allows women on the street to fulfil their desire or longing to exist outside the margins of restrictive gender roles as this process allows women to be a “desiring subject” rather than “desired object” (Ettinger 2006a:72). This process is possible when feminine desire is removed from Oedipal sexual desire and the false desires created by the media. Vári uses imagery from scrambled signal television footage and inserts herself in the video stream where she continues and replicates recognisable images and sequences in *Aurora australis* (2001) (Figure 79) (Vári 2001:sp). The artist is presented as primitive, beastlike and in the nude - the classic image of male desire - but in a continual state of being present and absent simultaneously, apparent in the recurrent fading and morphing of the imagery. Ettinger (2006a:79) argues that desire is a borderlink that is never completely present and visible nor is it disappearing and that “the object of desire is not an object but rather a process of partial loss of relations in transformation” (Ettinger 2006a:79).

The aimless sequences of this video show disconnected images of faces and gestures reminding of the matrixial borderspace where desire becomes a moment of transformation (Ettinger 2006a:72). Ettinger (2006a:72) states that in this subjectivising of the woman the “fascinating potentiality” of the individual “that is created in co-presence and co-emergence and whose psychic waves, vibrations and grains are redistributed” boundaries open and the encounter is shared. She continues that “an image can carry a transformative potentiality for a subject when the subject enters into relations of fascination with its site ... of fascinace” (Ettinger 2006a:72). Similarly, Vári positions the female not as object of desire, defined by lack, but rather disengaged from the phallic order and self aware as subject (Pollock 2004:52).



Figure 79: Minnette Vári, *Aurora australis*, 2001.
Video animation, single channel video projection. 9 minutes.
Available: [http://minnettevari.com/MV_stills.htm#Aurora Australis](http://minnettevari.com/MV_stills.htm#Aurora%20Australis).
Accessed 21 April 2011.

4.3.3. Nostalgia

The city is no longer a place of personal interaction due to the continual escalation of the circulation and exchange of commodities (Amin & Thrift 2002:32). The processes that are responsible for the decay of relationships in the city are a money economy, a culture of things that is replacing a culture of human beings, the increasing pace of life and the rise of mass media (Amin & Thrift 2002:32,33). Alÿs maintains that the nineteenth century *flâneur* does not have a place in a city like Mexico City as there is not space for nostalgia in this city and asserts that “[t]he city is too crude and too raw, and everything seems to happen in an immediate present” (Alÿs in Ferguson 2007:32). In the opinion of Friedberg (1991:421), the *flâneur*'s decline is a result of the increase in traffic and the disappearance of the arcades; however, the distracted wanderings of the *flâneur* developed into the consumer doing window shopping.

Senzeni Marasela expresses the impact of the contemporary city on an individual from a rural setting in the series of embroidered napkins *Theodora goes to Johannesburg* (2007) (Figure 80) (Dreyer 2009:21). Not only do the

images depict the quiet reserve and rural sensibilities of Theodora, but also the process of embroidering refers to a time when the culture industry is not so ubiquitous and the creation of images is not instant (Dreyer 2009:21). Although Theodora comes to the city to escape poverty, the invasive consumer society results in her alienation and detachment from the city (Ferguson 1994:23). The alienation of Theodora in the city is revealed by the repetition of her solitary figure in all the images where she becomes an outsider who is observing the banality of everyday life in the city (Smith 2006:sp). Even though the scenes with which she is presented are often violent, in a South African context they are neither shocking nor unusual. Eventually Theodora rejects the life of the metropolis and longing for the close human relations that a rural community has to offer she returns home, disillusioned with urban life.



Figure 80: Senzeni Marasela, *Theodora goes to Johannesburg*
Cotton table napkins and thread. 40 x 40 cm
(Dreyer & Lebeko 2009:85).

Theodora, as migrant worker and woman, exists on the margins of the urban community, unable to find a place in the strangeness of the city. As she is faced with unknown elements, she finds herself in the shared borderspaces where

“subjectivity as encounter” occurs (Pollock 2004:7). The otherness of these events in the city in relation to Theodora’s frame of reference allows her to “become into subjective existence” (Ettinger in Pollock 2004:9). Leaving the city is therefore not a failure, but rather a realisation of her individual otherness, “emerging from a space in which [she] unknowingly inherits the trauma and desires of others” which places her in a shared borderspace with those she encountered (Butler 2004:97,98).

Karin Preller presents us with a sense of nostalgia of times past with the series of paintings *City and suburban* (2010). Preller attempts to return to a period before the decline of the city as her images are reminiscent of a time where the mass media was not so prevalent in South Africa. The men are conducting their business in the public sphere as can be seen in *Brixton 2* (2010) (Figure 81) and *Brixton 5* (2010) (Figure 82) and in *Montgomery park I* (2010) (Figure 83) the women are hidden from our view in neat suburban houses. The images do not have traces of the prevailing presence of mass media and seems to be of an era before ubiquitous public advertising. The paintings carry a sense of discomfort and displacement as a result of the passage of time as the serenity of the images is in direct contrast to the bustling reality of a contemporary Johannesburg and a sense of nostalgia for times past becomes clear (Du Plessis 2010:sp).

The absence of women in these paintings is important as it affirms women’s negated position on the street. Even though her presence is implied in *Montgomery park I*, the loss is clear, as Preller does not represent her overtly and this “presence does not deny the loss” (Butler 2004:96). The suggestion of the presence of women in this scene becomes the link with the borderspace and “trace, the sign of loss, the remnant of loss, is understood as ... the occasional and nearly impossible connection, between trauma and beauty itself” (Butler 2004:99).



Figure 81: Karin Preller, *Brixton 2*, 2010.
Oil on canvas. 83 x 108 cm.
Available: <http://www.art.co.za/karinpreller/default.htm>
Accessed 26 September 2010.



Figure 82: Karin Preller, *Brixton 5*, 2010.
Oil on canvas. 83 x 108 cm.
Available: <http://www.art.co.za/karinpreller/default.htm>
Accessed 26 September 2010.



Figure 83: Karin Preller, *Montgomery park I*, 2010.
Oil on canvas. 83 x 108 cm.
Available: <http://www.art.co.za/karinpreller/default.htm>
Accessed 26 September 2010.

Concluding remarks

Although the traditional view of the *flâneur* as male was questioned in this chapter, it was also found that the female *flâneur* indeed has an uncertain presence in the streets of the city. The female *flâneur* exists in the liminal spaces of the city and it is in these spaces where becoming is a possibility within the matrixial borderspace. Yet, cyberspace affords her freedom from the constraints of gender and shopping conflates her with the commodity. It is thus my contention that in this process of becoming the traditional binary notions of gender and by implication also the male gaze and desire are repudiated.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1. Summary of chapters

Chapter one provided an introduction to this study, exploring the social nature of space, the relevance of the city and the concept of the *flâneur*. The *flâneur* was proven to be a historical figure with literary origins that has a place in the contemporary city. Francis Alÿs was introduced as the primary artist of this study and the place of additional artists, mainly South African, was established. Furthermore, this chapter presented the need and aims for this study as well as the methodology that was used throughout. The literature that is seminal to this research was appraised and finally a chapter overview was given.

In chapter two it was argued that the *flâneur's* travels are undertaken in the absence of a teleological goal. As the *flâneur* is originally concerned with walking in the city, this formed the departure point of this study. In De Certeau's view, during walking the *flâneur* experiences the banal and through the exploration of Alÿs's wanderings through the city it was ascertained that the physical presence of walking on the street increases possibilities of the *flâneur's* journey. The narratives created by the *flâneur* are enduring additions to the urban fabric and aid in the search for meaning of being in the world. It was evident that walking, resulting in many encounters, is instrumental for the *flâneur* to amass many experiences and thereby being afforded the opportunity to create narratives and fables, which in turn function to 'complete' the urban text for the city dweller.

It is my contention that the *flâneur* is similar to Camus's absurd hero as his Sisyphean nature should not be seen as punishment, since physical results do not inform his journey. Even though the journey is without aim, it is not without value. The contemporary *flâneur* has ventured into cyberspace and the exploration of his journey in the latter has made it apparent that cyberspace is emblematic of his journey, since, as a cyborg, space and time overcome the electronic labyrinth. In comparing the journey of the *flâneur* to his posthuman

counterpart it is evident that their journeys are concerned with the processual rather than teleological arrival.

Chapter two introduced the city as an aggressive site for consumerism and the effect this has on the experience of the *flâneur*. I have argued that a capitalist system produces false needs and desires and that these result in a negative experience of the city. This is due to the exploitation of desire and the fact that desire is never satisfied in such a system. As such, as argued by Stiegler, indifference and the inability to derive pleasure from the city are consequences of the over circulation of objects and inauthentic desires. The debris and garbage on the city streets are metaphors for the obsession with the new. In my opinion, fear and crime in the city limit the *flâneur's* ability to aimlessly wander through the streets of the city and it was established this leave the *flâneur* no choice other than to reconsider his wandering in the city. Due to the endless and meaningless encounters the *flâneur* is faced with, he is unable to find a place for himself in the city and this affirms De Certeau's argument that the city is infused with absences.

This chapter concluded by demonstrating that even though the contemporary city has many pitfalls, *flânerie* is not necessarily a serious activity. The premise on which these assumptions rest is that in the opinion of Bauman the actions of the *flâneur* are infused with playful encounters based on unchecked impulses that are not informed by structure and reason. Since the city is chaotic and disorderly, the *flâneur* takes this as inspiration for his walks that, for this reason, do not need purpose outside of itself. In fact, his *dérives* are a continuation of play as he is lead through the city by unexpected sights and interactions. The fortuitous nature of his journeys is emblematic of the disorder of the city and in addition leaves traces in the unfinished urban fabric.

The *flâneur* is concerned with the act of observation, and apart from strolling, is his most important feature. However, Baudelaire and Benjamin's *flâneur* was not faced with surveillance as it manifests in contemporary society as discussed in Chapter three. It is my contention that surveillance is not a tool for the prevention of crime, but rather a tool to further the ideals of an aggressive

consumer society. I have argued that surveillance, even though not a new phenomenon in the city, has become increasingly visible as its interactive nature in a globalised society is evolving and becoming more effective. The question has to be asked, more effective in what aspect, as I have indicated that it is Sisyphean in nature since it requires a great deal of effort; however, does not function as a great crime prevention strategy and focuses on control and the reduction of spontaneous behaviour. I agree with Koskela that surveillance changes the nature of space and in conjunction the experience and behaviour of those living in the city as it undermines anonymity that is central to the *flâneur's* existence. New technologies in 'seeing' exacerbate the disempowered position of the *flâneur* who is mostly 'seen' on the street, without the ability to see in return. In this chapter I posed the argument that the surveillant gaze alters the dynamics of looking and as such, the traditional hierarchy of the gaze, as expressed by Berger, is subverted in an exceedingly surveyed environment. This does not mean that there are no hierarchies in the system of looking, as those who are being watched are disempowered in different ways even though their disempowerment is not driven by gender.

In a hyperreal environment where the *flâneur* is bombarded with visual stimulation, the *flâneur* finds it difficult to complete his identity through the act of looking, as being inundated with meaningless visual stimuli intensifies his *blasé* and indifferent attitude towards the city. Correspondingly the *flâneur* is finding it more and more difficult to have an authentic existence in the contemporary city. In my view, the *flâneur* disappears in the simulacrum as he 'exists' on many different electronic platforms. His existence is negated by the presentness of the self as reality has become multi-faceted. In fact, the *flâneur's* being is predetermined by the false desires of the spectacle. Virilio is of the opinion that technological advances have resulted in a society where space and time are compressed to such a degree that it becomes inconsequential. The symbiotic relationship between computer technology and surveillance allows for the *flâneur* becoming a cyborg as the individual is transformed into information. Not only is the nature of space altered, in Lyon's opinion the very idea of the Panopticon is negated to make place for the Synopticon. Even though surveillance is used as a method of control, it has also been turned into

entertainment. The desire to watch as voyeur has been surpassed by the desire to be watched, similar to Andy Warhol's notion that in a televisual society everybody will be famous for fifteen minutes.

In light of the problematic position of women in the public spheres of the city, Chapter four posed the question whether a female *flâneur* can indeed exist. Women's continuing oppressed position was investigated and the conclusion was reached that women are still not enjoying the same freedom on the city streets as men due to a variety of reasons. Although Lauter states that women can overcome their vulnerability, I agree with Gleber, that women are at a disadvantage and marginalised as a result of their innate relationships with commodification and physical limitations and the consequent danger of assault and harassment.

After considering the position of women in society it is my contention that their empowerment is not real, as it is based on the false desires of the spectacle. Women's disempowerment in the public space of the city streets are a continuation of the prostitute whose presence on the streets were accepted in the nineteenth century as commodity to be consumed as argued by Buci-Glucksman and Buck-Morss. The research revealed that women's presence on the street is equated with pleasure, whether to be consumed or be the consumer. As with the abundance of commodities and the eternal deferral of satisfaction, disorder and waste are attributed to women. Furthermore, Van Eeden maintains that the feminisation of consumerism continues women's position as object of the gaze which is magnified by their socialisation as being the object of the gaze. After considering the consumer/commodity position of women on the street, I have come to the conclusion that women are still in an inferior position on the street and cannot fully function as a *flâneur*.

I agree with Van Eeden that the only physical space where women have the opportunity to function as *flâneur* is in the semi-public space of the shopping mall. In addition, women are free from the constraints of their gender in cyberspace as the cyborg is not a gendered entity in the view of Haraway.

5.2. Contribution

The research revealed that the *flâneur* is still important to the field of Visual studies, as the urban environment and those who walk its streets are continuing the original concerns of the *flâneur*, specifically Francis Alÿs, as his work is an active engagement with *flânerie*. The contribution of this study is specifically in the context of the effect of consumer society on the *flâneur*, as the endless encounters and bombardment with external stimuli do not aid the *flâneur* in making sense of the city and he becomes a victim of the capitalist system.

It has been indicated that the changes in the experience of space, specifically with reference to cyberspace the *flâneur* is able to overcome the physical constraints of time and space. However, as argued, the *flâneur* negates the ruthless speed of the urban environment by the very act of walking, thereby continuing the interests of the nineteenth century *flâneur*, proving his relevance. With reference to surveillance, it was demonstrated that the gaze is not only about control as is often conveyed in Gender studies. The gaze has been transformed into the locus of entertainment without the traditional gender roles ascribed to it.

This dissertation has provided a debate regarding the gender of the *flâneur* and has concluded that the female *flâneur* does not exist on an equal plane to that of her male counterpart. The investigation of the female *flâneur* and the male *flâneur's* relationship to her brought to light some interesting ideas of gender relations in the city as well as important aspects of women's perception of and experiences on the street. Furthermore, the application of the *flâneur* theory to contemporary art contributed to discourses on Visual arts and provided insight of the manner in which the *flâneur* functions in contemporary society.

5.3. Limitations

This research focuses on a Western paradigm of thinking and does not take into account the local views and opinions on the work of Alÿs as might be described

by the actual pedestrians who come into contact with his wanderings in cities like Mexico City. It is therefore a mainly theoretical appraisal of his work that is based on mostly Western discourses about art practice. Correspondingly, an investigation of the *flâneur* on African soil is largely overlooked. In a South African context there are very few artists who use walking in the city as a primary inspiration. The artists mentioned in this study are not as involved with the city like Alÿs for instance. For this reason this study was did not focus solely on South African artists and was not situated in a South African city.

5.4. Suggestions

An existential investigation of the city dweller is parallel to the examination of the *flâneur* as Sisyphus in this dissertation. This could continue as an exploration of city life in view of the absurd man put forth by Camus (2005). To further elucidate the experience of cyberspace in this regard is also an option. It would be interesting to compare the characteristics and experiences of the *flâneur* on a generational level as is put forth by Codrington and Grant-Marshall (2004). Every generation experiences life essentially in a different way and the manner in which these differences manifest in the process of undertaking a journey in the urban and global milieu is interesting.

The labyrinthine structure of the city as well as cyberspace is an interesting concept to investigate further, specifically within the ambit of surveillance as the double perspective of the city in terms of near and far is further complicated by surveillance, which adds another level to the viewing of the city. The journey in cyberspace is an abstract concept, even though the experience thereof is material to a degree.

This study focuses on the surveillance of public areas where individuals generally do not have a choice in being the object of the surveyor's gaze. However, with the rise of social networking, such as Facebook and Twitter, the reduction in cost and ease of use in being 'connected,' the voluntary surrender of privacy and also the need to be 'connected' is certainly an area worth

investigating. Already social psychologists and life coaches are advocating the need to 'detox' from technological devices and setting time aside in which one is not 'connected' as real-life relationships suffer.

An in-depth investigation of the surveillant assemblage in a South African context is certainly a field of study worth investigating, as South Africa has such a varied history in the arena of surveillance. In this there is scope for the investigation of the influence of surveillance on different race groups, referring to concepts such as the pass system, security police and profiling in the apartheid system and the way this is interpreted in Visual arts. This sees a shift away from the *flâneur*, however, it is still related to those on the streets of South African cities. In addition, the increase in surveillance in the semi-private and private sphere as a security measure is also of concern in a South African context and the uncertainties regarding being watched and for what purpose is becoming an issue to be explored in the field of Visual arts.

In keeping with the idea of the *flâneur*, this study can be extended by focussing solely on the experiences of the *flâneur* in a South African context, as South African cities are unique in their own right due to their interesting and often troubled history. In addition, the notion of race is largely ignored in terms of the *flâneur*, even though it is a very valid concern in this field of study. Artists such as Titus Matiyane and Robin Rhode are of particular interest, even though their respective focuses on the city vary immensely in scale. In the context of the myth of Sisyphus, Rhode is of particular interest. Rhode presents a commentary on South African street culture by employing a variety of media and techniques and even though he is not the quintessential stroller, an investigation of his work is merited in terms of extending the discourse on South African artists and city culture.

The concept of the female *flâneur* is still problematic and can be investigated in-depth to ascertain how women experience the city and if they see themselves as being oppressed and objectified on the streets. A theoretical study that includes case studies or information gathered from women who walk the city streets on a daily basis, whether they are on the streets as a matter of

economic necessity, as a passage to work or for pleasure, is certainly of value, and, in my opinion, even more so if this study is situated in a South African context where there are so many disparate experiences due to social and economic circumstances. Furthermore, the *flâneur*'s existence and experiences from the point of view Ettinger's matrixial borderspace can give new insight into the position of women on the street with reference to the ideas of identity, the gaze and the object of desire.

5.5. In closing

In retrospect, this study is a following piece of outsiders, inspired by Vito Acconci's *Following piece* (1969). The *flâneur* is by nature an outsider and never attempts to fully integrate with the urban milieu in which he finds himself. Following visual lures, the *flâneur* continues the tradition of the following piece.⁴⁶ So too is Francis Alÿs, the main focus of this research. Unscripted paths draw Alÿs through the city, the quintessential *flâneur* in a city where he will never be at home. He traverses the liminal spaces of the city, unable to find his place in the city. His journeys are not informed by any specific purpose or method and in the process he creates quirky artworks commenting on serious social issues. In the process of creation there is "a liberating encounter between Self and Other, in which Self becomes Other in order to finally become itself" (Dos Santos 2010:189).

Accordingly, using a European artist operating in a Latin American setting as the protagonist in this research establishes my position as outsider author. My following Alÿs through the streets of Mexico City is influenced with a mental comparison to South African cities. I continually ask myself the question: Could or would Alÿs do the same in for instance the historic centre of Johannesburg, rife with crime but alive with possibility? Even though South Africa is classed as a developing country, similar to Mexico, circumstances in Mexico and South

⁴⁶ It can also be argued that Acconci used the *flâneur* as model for his *Following piece*. However, the argument of which comes first is not of consequence for the purposes of this study.

Africa from a cultural point of view are vastly different, specifically as it pertains to the *flâneur*. As I have not traveled to Mexico City, the comparison remains theoretical. Furthering my position as outsider is the fear I have of my cities. Too afraid with the knowledge of the dangers lurking in the city streets, I only venture there in the relative safety of my car, unable to directly experience the city as a pedestrian, walking the streets without aim or purpose. Driving in the city places me in the position of the surveyor, as I watch passers-by disinterestedly, the scenes are similar to the screens that the surveillance operator watches.

In my view, the female *flâneur* occupies the position of outsider even more than her male counterpart. Inasmuch she attempts to follow the same path as the *flâneur*, her position in the city remains precarious. Looking at South African cities, women's presence on the streets is seldom informed by aimless wandering. Purposeful walking interspersed with economic necessity characterise South African women on the street, they are not outsiders, nor are they *flâneurs*. Superseding predetermined gender identity in the Oedipal sense of lack and the negative view of consumption is necessary before women can be equally involved in the modern urban experience (Swanson 1995:93). Suggestions that women should move beyond being the object of the gaze and desire require a radical shift in popular thinking and in my opinion, entail the same 'total revolution' that Frantz Fanon (1963) speaks of in *The wretched of the Earth* to move beyond racial binary oppositions.

The *flâneur* is an author in the many urban spaces of contemporary society and his wanderings become fables which are woven into the fabric of the city - a fluid surface where the *flâneur's* stories are preserved - and become part of the collective urban memory (Careri 2010:183). In my opinion, the city is a positive experience in the articulation of identity, even though city life can easily deteriorate into meaningless existence as consumerism becomes the main driving force of city dwellers. For the *flâneur* and his/her aimless wanderings, the urban is a continual source of wonder and as maintained by Solomon (2006:44): "Sisyphus's existence is meaningful, because he has his ongoing project." Alÿs is not disillusioned by the urban landscape and sees the city as a

place where collective desires and fears can be expressed as “the site for shared dreams” (Medina 2007:103). In addition Alÿs suggests a change in perspective by intervening in social situations, “... showing in particular that no matter how slight its effects, action is neither fruitless nor meaningless” (Medina 2007:103).

Therefore the city can be posited as an archival site of endless encounters which take place on a multitude of “representations of space” (Koskela 2003:306).

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Abaroa, E. 2010. The moment something is understood it begins to be forgotten, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:170-172.
- Alÿs, F. 2002. *A thousand words: Francis Alÿs talks about When faith moves mountains*. [O] Available: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_10_40/ai_87453239/ Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Alÿs, F & Medina, C. 2010. Entries, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:44-169.
- Amin, A & Thrift, NJ. 2002. *Cities: Re-imagining the urban*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Anton, S. 2002. A thousand words: Francis Alÿs talks about *When faith moves mountains*. *Artforum* 3:146-147.
- Appignanesi, R (ed). 2003. *The end of everything: Postmodernism and the vanishing of the human*. Cambridge: Icon.
- Bannister, J & Fyfe, N. 2001. Introduction: Fear and the city. *Urban Studies* 38(5-6):807-813.
- Bataille, G. 1997. Chance, in *The Bataille reader*, edited by F Botting & S Wilson. Oxford / Massachusetts: Blackwell:37-54.
- Baudrillard, J. 1988. *The ecstasy of communication*, translated by B Schutze & C Schutze. New York / Brooklyn: Semiotext.
- Baudrillard, J. 2001a. Simulacra and simulations, in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings*, edited by M Poster. Cambridge: Polity:169-187.
- Baudrillard, J. 2001b. The illusion of the end, in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings*, edited by M Poster. Cambridge: Polity:254-265.
- Baudrillard, J. 2001c. The masses: The implosion of the social in the media, in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings*, edited by M Poster. Cambridge: Polity:210-222.
- Baudrillard, J. 2001d. The system of objects, in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings*, edited by M Poster. Cambridge: Polity:13-31.
- Baudrillard, J. 2002. Telemorphosis, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:480-485.
- Bauman, Z. 1994. Desert spectacular, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:138-157.

- Bauman, Z. 1998. *Globalization. The human consequences*. New York: Columbia University.
- Bauman, Z. 2007. *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Baume, N. [Sa]. *Listen carefully, as our menu has changed*. [O] Available: <http://www.postmedia.net/alys/freematrix.htm>
Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Bendelow, G & Williams SJ (eds). 1998. *Emotions in social life: Critical themes and contemporary issues*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Benjamin, W. 1969. *Charles Baudelaire: A lyric poet in the era of high Capitalism*, translated by H Zohn. London: NLB.
- Benjamin, W. 1973. *Illuminations*. Glasgow: Fontana.
- Berger, J. 1972. *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC
- Bertol, D. 1996. "Architecture of images:" An investigation of architectural representations and the visual perception of three-dimensional space. *Leonardo* 29(2): 87-94.
- Biesenbach, K & Starke, C. 2010. Francis Alÿs: A to Z, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:34-43.
- Birkerts, S. 1982. Walter Benjamin, *flâneur*. a *flânerie*. *The Iowa Review* 13(3/4):164-179.
- Bird, J, Curtis, B, Putnam, T, Robertson, G & Tickner, L. 1993. *Mapping the futures: Local cultures, global change*. London: Routledge.
- Blanchot, M. 2001. *Faux pas*, translated by C Mandell. Stanford: Stanford University.
- Bourriaud, N. 2002. *Relational aesthetics*, translated by S Pleasance & F Woods. Dijon: Les presses du réel.
- Bosland, J (curator). 2008. *Disguise: The art of attracting and deflecting attention*. Exhibition catalogue for *Disguise: The art of attracting and deflecting attention* at Michael Stevenson gallery. Cape Town: Michael Stevenson.
- Botting, F & Wilson, S (eds). 1997. *The Bataille reader*. Oxford / Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- Brown, RD. 2000. Virtual unreality and dynamic form: An exploration of space, time and energy. *Leonardo* 33(1):21-25.

- Buci-Glucksmann, C. 1986. Catastrophic utopia: The feminine as allegory of the modern. *Representations* 14:220-229.
- Buck-Morss, S. 1986. The *flâneur*, the sandwichman and the whore: The politics of loitering. *New German Critique* 39:99-141.
- Burns, A. 2000. *Emotion and urban experience: Implications for design*. *Design Issues* 16(3):67-79.
- Butler, J. 2004. Bracha's Eurydice. *Theory, Culture & Society* 21(1):95-100.
- Camus, A. 2005. *The myth of Sisyphus and other essays*, translated by J O'Brien. London: Penguin.
- Caniglia, J. 1999. *Merry Alpern*. [O] Available: <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/MERRY+ALPERN-a057475797>
Accessed 27 September 2010.
- Careri, F. 2010. The storyteller, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:183-185.
- Castells, M. 2000. *The information age: Economy, society and culture. Volume 1: The rise of the network society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cavallaro, D. 2001. *Critical and cultural theory: Thematic variations*. London: Athlone.
- Codrington, G & Grant-Marshall, S. 2004. *Mind the gap!* London: Penguin.
- Cohen, S. 2009. Artist's statement, in *Dystopia*. Exhibition catalogue for *Dystopia* at Unisa art gallery, curated by E Dreyer & J Lebeko. Pretoria: Unisa:87-88.
- Conrad, K. 2009. Surveillance, gender, and the virtual body in the information age. *Surveillance and Society* 6(4):380-387.
- Cottard, H. 2007. *Thoughtful wanderings of a man with a can*. [O] Available: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/13/arts/design/13chan.html?_r=1
Accessed 15 July 2010.
- De Certeau, M. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California.
- De Kler, A (ed). 2007. *Titus Matiyane: Cities of the world*. Rotterdam: 010.
- De Villiers, C. 2009. Artist's statement, in *Dystopia*. Exhibition catalogue for *Dystopia* at Unisa art gallery, curated by E Dreyer & J Lebeko. Pretoria: Unisa:34-35..

- Dear, MJ & Flusty (eds), S. 2002. *The spaces of Postmodernity: Readings in human geography*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Debord, G. 1958. *Theory of the dérive*. [O]. Available: http://www.ubu.com/papers/debord_derive.html
Accessed 12 July 2007.
- Debord, G. 1994. *The society of the spectacle*. New York: Zone.
- Demos, TJ. 2010. Vanishing mediator, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:178-180.
- Denzin, NK. 1995. *The cinematic society: The voyeur's gaze*. London: Sage.
- Dewey, J. 1934. *Art as experience*. New York: Minton.
- Dos Santos, LG. 2010. Becoming Other to be oneself: Francis Alÿs inside the borderline, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:188-189.
- Dreyer, E. 2001. *Dystopia and artifice in late twentieth century visual culture*. Pretoria: Unisa.
- Dreyer, E. 2005. Articulations of the city as a gendered construct. *de arte* 71:4-13.
- Dreyer, E. 2009. Curatorial essay, in *Dystopia*. Exhibition catalogue for *Dystopia* at Unisa art gallery, curated by E Dreyer & J Lebeko. Pretoria: Unisa:6-28.
- Dreyer, E. 2010. *Cities in transition*. [O] Available: <http://www.friedcontemporary.com/>
Accessed 26 April 2011.
- Dreyer, E & Lebeko, J. 2009 (curators). *Dystopia*. Exhibition catalogue for *Dystopia* at Unisa art gallery. Pretoria: Unisa.
- Du Plessis, A. 2010. *Abstract: City and suburban*. [O] Available: <http://www.art.co.za/karinpreller/default.htm>
Accessed 26 September 2010.
- Du Preez, A & Van Eeden, J (eds). 2005. *South African visual culture*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Ebsen, T. 2011. *Building interfaces – Architecture and the virtual space*. [O]. Available: <http://darc.imv.au.dk/publicinterfaces/?p=327>
Accessed 25 April 2011.

- Ernst, W. 2002. Beyond the rhetoric of Panopticism: Surveillance as cybernetics, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:460-464.
- Ettinger, B. 2006a. *Fascinace* and girl to-m/Other matrixial feminine difference, in *Psychoanalysis and the image: Transdisciplinary perspectives*, edited by G Pollock. Malden, Oxford / Carlton: Blackwell:60-93.
- Ettinger, B. 2006b. Matrixial trans-subjectivity. *Theory, Culture & Society* 23(2-3):218-222.
- Fanon, F. 1963. *The wretched of the earth*, translated by C Farrington. New York: Grove.
- Farrell, LA. 2009. Berni Searle's soliloquies on strength and solitude. *Nka Journal of Contemporary African Art* 24:150-157.
- Featherstone, M. 1991. *Consumer culture and postmodernism*. London: Sage.
- Ferguson, PP. 1994. The *flâneur* on and off the streets of Paris, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:22-42.
- Ferguson, R. 2007. Russell Ferguson in conversation with Francis Alÿs, in *Francis Alÿs*, edited by C Medina, R Ferguson & J Fisher. London: Phaidon:7-56.
- Ferguson, R. 2008. *Francis Alÿs: Politics of rehearsal*. [O] Available: <http://www.hammer.ucla.edu/ehibitions/130/> Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Fisher, J. 2007. In the spirit of conviviality: When faith moves mountains, in *Francis Alÿs*, edited by C Medina, R Ferguson & J Fisher. London: Phaidon:109-121.
- Friedberg, A. 1991. *Les Fleurs du Mal(l)*: Cinema and the postmodern condition. *PMLA* 106(3):419-431.
- Friedberg, A. 1998. The mobilized and virtual gaze in modernity: *flâneur/flâneuse*, in *The visual culture reader*, edited by N Mirzhoeff. London: Routledge:253-262.
- Frisby, D. 1994. The *flâneur* in social theory, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:81-110.
- Frisby, D & Featherstone, M (eds). 1997. *Simmel on culture: Selected writings*. London: Sage.

- Frohne, U. 2002. "Screen Tests:" Media narcissism, theatricality, and the internalized observer, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:252-277.
- Fusi, L (ed). 2006. *ZA. Giovanne arte dal Sud Africa*. Exhibition catalogue for *Giovanne arte dal Sud Africa* at Centro Arte Contemporanea Palazzo della Papesse. Milan: Silvana Editoriale.
- Gili, M. 2010. From observation to surveillance, in *Exposed: Voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, edited by SS Phillips. London: Tate:241-245.
- Gleber, A. 1997. Female *flâneurie* and the *Symphony of the City*, in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and modernity in Weimar Culture*, edited by K von Ankum. Berkeley, Los Angeles / London: University of California:67-88.
- Gleber, A. 1999. *The art of taking a walk: Flânerie, literature, and film in Weimar culture*. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Godfrey, M. 2010. Politics/Poetics: The work of Francis Alÿs, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:9-33.
- Godfrey, M, Biesenbach, K & Greenberg, K (eds). 2010. *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*. London: Tate.
- Graham, S (ed). 2004. *The cybercities reader*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Green, C. 2000. Doppelgänger and the third force: The artistic collaborations of Gilbert and George and Marina Abramovich/Ulay. *Art Journal* 59(2):36-45.
- Grose, TK. 2008. *When surveillance cameras talk*. [O] Available: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1711972,00.html>
Accessed 11 October 2010.
- Haggerty, K & Ericson, RV. 2000. The surveillant assemblage. *British Journal of Sociology* 51(4):605-622.
- Haraway, DJ. 1991. *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, DJ. 2003. A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century, in *The feminism and visual culture reader*, edited by A Jones. London / New York: Routledge:475-497.

- Hart, J. 2011. *Rape: A national shame*. [O] Available:
<http://www.health24.com/news/Columnists/1-4618-4621,53648.asp>
Accessed: 05 April 2011.
- Harvey, D. 1993. From space to place and back again: Reflections on the condition of postmodernity, in *Mapping the futures: Local cultures, global change*, edited by J Bird, B Curtis, T Putnam, G Robertson & L Tickner. London: Routledge:3-29.
- Harvey, D. 2002. The condition of postmodernity, in *The spaces of postmodernity*, edited by MJ Dear & S Flusty. Oxford: Blackwell:169-176.
- Hayles, NK. 1999. *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature and informatics*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Heidegger, M. 1971. *Poetry, landscape, thought*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hobbs, S. 2007. Maps and immersions: Reading Matiyane's city, in *Titus Matiyane: Cities of the world*, edited by A de Kler. Rotterdam: 010:34-43.
- Hopkins, PD (ed). 1998. *Sex/machine: Readings in culture, gender, and technology*. Bloomington: University of Indiana.
- Horkheimer, M & Adorno, T. 2002. The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception, in *Cultural sociology*, edited by L Spillman. London: Blackwell:39-46.
- Horrocks, C. 2003. Marshal McLuhan and virtuality, in *The end of everything: Postmodernism and the vanishing of the human*, edited by R Appignanesi. Cambridge: Icon:189-240.
- Jewkes, R, Sikweyiya, Y, Morrell R & Dunkle, K. 2009. *Interface of rape and HIV in SA*. [O] Available:
<http://www.health24.com/news/Sexuality/1-944,51396.asp>
Accessed: 05 April 2011.
- Johnson, R. 2007. *On meandering journeys*. [O] Available:
<http://articles.latimes.com/2007/nov/11/entertainment/ca-aly11>
Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Jones, A (ed). 2003. *The feminism and visual culture reader*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Joseph, BW. 2002. Nothing special: Andy Warhol and the rise of surveillance, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:236-251.
- Khan, S. 2004. Usha Seejarim, in *10 years 100 artists: Art in a democratic South Africa*, edited by S Perryer. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts:338-341.

- Knight, C. 2007. *Artist rolls out his Sisyphus side*. [O] Available: <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/oct/06/entertainment/et-aly6>
Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Koskela, H. 2000. 'The gaze without eyes': Video surveillance and the changing nature of urban space. *Progress in Human Geography* 24(2):243-265.
- Koskela, H. 2003. 'Cam era' – the contemporary urban Panopticon. *Surveillance and Society* 1(3):292-313.
- Lampbrecht, A. 2004. Vuyisa Nyamende, in *10 years 100 artists: Art in a democratic South Africa*, edited by S Perryer. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts:282-285.
- Lauter, E. 1984. *Women as mythmakers: Poetry and visual art by twentieth-century women*. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Lauter, E. 1985. Visual images by women: A test case for theory of archetypes, in *Feminist archetypal theory. Interdisciplinary re-visions of Jungian thought*, edited by E Lauter & CS Rupprecht. Knoxville: University of Tennessee:46-92.
- Lauter, E & Rupprecht, CS (eds). 1985. *Feminist archetypal theory: Interdisciplinary re-visions of Jungian thought*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee.
- Lefebvre, H. 2002. The production of space, in *The spaces of postmodernity*, edited by MJ Dear & S Flusty. Oxford: Blackwell:131-141.
- Levin, TY, Frohne, U & Weibel, P (eds). 2002. *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*. Karlsruhe: ZKM.
- Lewis, RWB. 1959. *The picaresque saint: Representative figures in contemporary fiction*. Philadelphia / New York: JB Lippincott.
- Lyon, D. 1994. *The electronic eye: The rise of surveillance society*. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis.
- Lyon, D. 2004. Surveillance in the city, in *The cybercities reader*, edited by S Graham. London / New York: Routledge:299-305.
- Lyon, D. 2007. *Surveillance studies: An overview*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Malcomess, B. 2009. The egressions of a sensible woman, in three parts, in *Bridget Baker*. Exhibition catalogue for *Bridget Baker* at Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, edited by E Navarro. Burgos: Caja de Burgos:21-31.
- MacIntyre, A. 1990. *First principles, final ends and contemporary philosophical issues*. Milwaukee: Marquette University.

- Markle, L. 2008. *Francis Alÿs*. [O] Available:
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_6719/is/ai_n2851663
Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Massey, D. 1994. *Space, place and gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.
- Mazlish, B. 1994. The *flâneur*: from spectator to representation, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:43-60.
- McDonough, T. 2010. Trips and traps, in *Francis Alÿs: A story of deception*, edited by M Godfrey, K Biesenbach & K Greenberg. London: Tate:173-174.
- McGrath, JE. 2004. *Loving Big Brother: Performance, privacy and surveillance space*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Medina, C, Ferguson, R & Fisher, J (eds). 2007. *Francis Alÿs*. London: Phaidon:
- Medina, C. 2007. Survey, in *Francis Alÿs*, edited by C Medina, R Ferguson & J Fisher. London: Phaidon:57-108.
- Merritt, RK. 2001. From memory arts to the new code paradigm: The artist as engineer of virtual information space and virtual experience. *Leonardo* 34(5).403-408.
- Miles, S. 2010. *Spaces for consumption*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore / Washington DC: Sage.
- Mirzhoeff, N (ed). 1998. *The visual culture reader*. London: Routledge.
- Mitchell, WJ. 1995. *City of bits: Space, place and the Infobahn*. Cambridge: MIT.
- Mitchell, WJ. 2000. *E-topia: "Urban life, Jim – but not as we know it"*. Cambridge: MIT.
- Mlangeni, S. 2007. Sabelo Mlangeni in conversation with Warren Siebrits – 26 July 2007, in *Invisible Women*. Exhibition catalogue for *Invisible women* at Warren Siebrits modern and contemporary art gallery, curated by W Siebrits. Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits:sp.
- Morawski, S. 1994. The hopeless game of *flânerie*, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:180-197.
- Mulvey, L. 1989. *Visual and other pleasures*. Indiana: Indiana University.
- Murhpie, A & Potts, J. 2003. *Culture and technology*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Murinik, T. 1999. *FNB Vita art prize 1999: Minnette Vári*. [O] Available: <http://www.chico.mweb.co.za/mg/art/vita/artitsts/vari.html>
Accessed 02 April 2008.
- Navarro, E (ed). 2009. *Bridget Baker*. Exhibition catalogue for *Bridget Baker* at Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos. Burgos: Caja de Burgoss.
- Park, RE, Burgess, EW & McKenzie, RD. 1996. *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Pearsal, J (ed). 2001. *New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford: Oxford.
- Peffer, J. 2003a. *Media Work*. [O] Available: http://home.icon.co.za/~ersatz/Intro_page.htm
Accessed 02 April 2008.
- Peffer, J. 2003b. Strange utopia: John Peffer in conversation with Minnette Vári. *Art South Africa* 2(2):24-30.
- Perryer, S (ed). 2004. *10 years 100 artists: Art in a democratic South Africa*. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts.
- Petro, P. 1997. Perceptions of difference: Woman as spectator and spectacle, in *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and modernity in Weimar Culture*, edited by K von Ankum. Berkeley, Los Angeles / London: University of California:41-66.
- Phillips, SS (ed). 2010a. *Exposed: Voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*. London: Tate.
- Phillips, SS. 2010b. Surveillance, in *Exposed: Voyeurism, surveillance and the camera*, edited by SS Phillips. London: Tate:141-144.
- Pile, S. 1996. *The body and the city: Psychoanalysis, space and objectivity*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Plant, S. 1992. *The most radical gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern age*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Plant, S. 1997. *Zeros + ones: digital women + the new technoculture*. London: Fourth estate.
- Platt, E. 2010. *Telling stories with a life of their own*. [O] Available: <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue19/Tellingstories.htm>
Accessed 08 July 2010.
- Pollock, G. 1988. *Vision and difference: Femininity, feminism and histories of art*. London: Routledge.

- Pollock, G. 2004. Thinking the feminine: Aesthetic practice as introduction to Bracha Ettinger and the concepts of matrix and metramorphosis. *Theory, Culture & Society* 21(1):5-65.
- Pollock, G. 2006 (ed). *Psychoanalysis and the image: Transdisciplinary perspectives*. Malden, Oxford & Carlton: Blackwell.
- Poster, M (ed). 2002. *Jean Baudrillard: Selected writings*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Ramachandran , VS & Blakeslee, S. 1999. *Phantoms in the brain*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Rossouw, J. 2006. Waarom geweld SA oorspoel. *Die vrye Afrikaan*. [O] Available: <http://vryeafrikaan.co.za/>
Accessed: 31 March 2007.
- Rykwert, J. 1982. *The necessity of artifice*. London: Academy Editions.
- Sachs, A. 1990. The constitutional rights of women in a post-apartheid South Africa. *Agenda* 7:1-11.
- Saltz, DZ. 1997. The art of interaction: Interactivity, performativity and computers. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55(2):117-127.
- Sassen, S. 2001. *The city: Between topographic representation and spatialised power projects*. *Art Journal* 60(2):12-20.
- Schmidt-Burkhardt, A. 2002. The All-seer: God's eye as proto-surveillance, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:16-31.
- Seejarim, U. 2006. *The photograph and the ticket: Representations of travel in the works of David Goldblatt, Usha Seejarim and Carouschka Streijffert*. [O] Available:
<http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/6133/final%20research%20document.pdf?sequence=1>
Accessed: 21 April 2011.
- Seigel, JE. 2005. *The idea of the self: Thought and experience in Western Europe since the seventeenth century*. New York: Cambridge University.
- Sey, J. 2005. Minnette Vári. *Art South Africa* 4(1):77-78.
- Shields, R. 1994. Fancy footwork: Walter Benjamin's notes on *flânerie*, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:61-80.
- Siebrits, W (curator). 2007a. *Invisible Women*. Exhibition catalogue for *Invisible women* at Warren Siebrits modern and contemporary art gallery. Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits:sp.

- Siebrits, W. 2007b. *Nightlife*, in *Invisible Women*. Exhibition catalogue for *Invisible women* at Warren Siebrits modern and contemporary art gallery, curated by W Siebrits. Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits:sp.
- Silverman, M. 2007. The drawing table, in *Titus Matiyane: Cities of the world*, edited by A de Kler. Rotterdam: 010:18-33.
- Sim, S. 2003. Lyotard and the inhuman, in *The end of everything: Postmodernism and the vanishing of the human*, edited by R Appignanesi. Cambridge: Icon:4-48.
- Simmel, G. 1997a. On the psychology of money, in *Simmel on culture: Selected writings*, edited by D Frisby & M Featherstone. London: Sage:233-242.
- Simmel, G. 1997b. The metropolis and mental life, in *Simmel on culture: Selected writings*, edited by D Frisby & M Featherstone. London: Sage: 174-186
- Slachmuisder, L. 2000. Gender representations in advertising: No time for change? *Agenda* 44:97-101.
- Smart, A. 2010. *Francis Alÿs at Tate Modern*. [O]Available: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-reviews/7942912/Francis-Alys-at-Tate-Modern-Seven-magazine-review.html>
Accessed 24 April 2011.
- Smith, M. 2006. *Ranjith Kally, Senzeni Marasela and Ruth Motau at Goodman Gallery*. [O] Available: <http://www.artthrob.co.za/06sept/reviews/goodman.html>
Accessed 16 September 2010.
- Soja, E. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real – and – imagined places*. Malden / London: Blackwell.
- Solomon, RC. 2006. *Dark feelings, grim thoughts: Experience and reflection in Camus and Sartre*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Spillman, L (ed). 2002. *Cultural sociology*. London: Blackwell.
- Stiegler, B. 2004. Versmoorde begeerte, of hoe die kultuurindustrie die individu vernietig: Bydrae tot 'n teorie van massaverbruik, translated by J Rossouw. *Fragmente* 12/13:29-46.
- Stiegler, B. 2006. *The disaffected individual in the process of psychic and collective disindividuation*, translated by P Crogan & D Ross. [O] Available: <http://www.arsindustrialis.org/Members/pcorgan/disaffectedindividual>
Accessed 22 May 2007.

- Stifler, SL. 2007. *Hammer museum organizes first large-scale museum exhibition in the United States to explore the career of Mexico City-based artist Francis Alÿs*. [O] Available:
<http://www.hammer.ucla.edu>
Accessed 21 October 2008.
- Swanson, G. 1995. 'Drunk with the glitter:' Consuming spaces and sexual geographies, in *Postmodern spaces and sexual geographies*, edited by S Watson & K Gibson. Oxford: Blackwell:80-98.
- Swyngedouw, E. 2002. The strange respectability of the Situationist city in the society of the spectacle. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26.1:153-165.
- Tester, K (ed). 1994. *The flâneur*. London / New York: Routledge.
- Tester, K. 1994. Introduction, in *The flâneur*, edited by K Tester. London / New York: Routledge:1-21.
- Tester, K. 1995. *The inhuman condition*. London: Routledge.
- Turkle, S. 1998. Tinysex and gender trouble, in *Sex/machine: Readings in culture, gender, and technology*, edited by PD Hopkins. Bloomington: University of Indiana:395-416.
- Van der Watt, L. 2005. Witnessing trauma in post-apartheid South Africa: The question of generational responsibility. *African Arts* 38(3):26-35.
- Van Eeden, J. 2005. "All the mall's a stage:" The shopping mall as visual culture, in *South African visual culture*, edited by A du Preez & J van Eeden. Pretoria: Van Schaik:39-68.
- Van Eeden, J. 2006. Shopping for gender, in *Sex, gender, becoming: Post-apartheid reflections*, edited by K van Marle. Pretoria: PULP: 61-91.
- Van Marle, K (ed). 2006. *Sex, gender, becoming: Post-apartheid reflections*. Pretoria: PULP.
- Vári, M. 1999. *FNB Vita art prize 1999: Minnette Vári*. [O] Available:
<http://www.chico.mweb.co.za/mg/art/vita/artitsts/vari.html>
Accessed 02 April 2008.
- Vári, M. 2001. *Aurora australis*. [O] Available:
http://minnettevari.com/M_Vari_AuroraAustralis_2001.pdf
Accessed: 21 April 2011.
- Vári, M. 2004. *Riverrun*. [O] Available:
http://minnettevari.com/M_Vari_Riverrun_2004.pdf
Accessed 21 April 2011.

- Vári, M. 2009. Artist's statement, in *Dystopia*. Exhibition catalogue for *Dystopia* at Unisa art gallery, curated by E Dreyer & J Lebeko. Pretoria: Unisa:74-75.
- Veel, K. 2003. The irreducibility of space: Labyrinths, cities, cyberspace. *Diacritics* 33.3-4:151-171.
- Vincent, N. 2006. *Self-made man: My year disguised as a man*. London: Atlantic.
- Virilio, P. 1995. *Speed and information: Cyberspace alarm*. [O] Available: <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/mposter/syllabi/readings/alarm.html> Accessed 10 January 2008.
- Virilio, P. 2000. *The information bomb*, translated by C Turner. London & New York: Verso.
- Virilio, P. 2002. The visual crash, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:108-113.
- Von Ankum, K (ed). 1997. *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and modernity in Weimar culture*. Berkeley, Los Angeles / London: University of California.
- Waiton, S. 2010. The politics of surveillance: Big Brother on Prozac. *Surveillance and Society* 8(1):61-84.
- Wakeford, N. 2004. Gender and landscapes of computing in an internet café, in *The cybercities reader*, edited by S Graham. London / New York: Routledge:263-266.
- Watson, S & Gibson, K (eds). 1995. *Postmodern cities and spaces*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Weibel, P. 2002. Pleasure and the Panoptic principle, in *CTRL [SPACE]: Rhetorics of surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, edited by TY Levin, U Frohne & P Weibel. Karlsruhe: ZKM:206-223.
- Williamson, S. 2003. *Minnette Vári's ritual of penance*. [O] Available: <http://www.artthrob.co.za/03dec/reviews/bbr2.html> Accessed 26 August 2010.
- Williamson, S. 2004. Minnette Vári, in *10 years 100 artists: Art in a democratic South Africa*, edited by S Perryer. Cape Town: Bell-Roberts:390-393.
- Williamson, S. 2006. Should I stay or should I go: The dilemma of the artists of 'island' Africa, in *ZA. Giovane arte dal Sud Africa*. Exhibition catalogue for *Giovane arte dal Sud Africa* at Centro Arte Contemporanea Palazzo della Papesse, edited by L Fusi. Milan: Silvana Editoriale:151-163.

Williamson, S & Jamal, A. 1996. *Art in South Africa: The future present*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Wilson, E. 1992. The invisible *flâneur*. *New Left Review* 191:90-110.

Wolff, J. 1990. *Feminine sentences: Essays on women and culture*. Berkeley: University of California.

Yudelman, D. 2009. Artist's statement, in *Dystopia*. Exhibition catalogue for *Dystopia* at Unisa art gallery, curated by E Dreyer & J Lebeko. Pretoria: Unisa:44-45.