

Grace Cohen

Filming a Situationist Map of Portland

My overall goal for this LARC project is to create my own Situationist map of Portland through film, based on research gathered on the mapping techniques of the Situationists, as well as on their theories of psychogeography. Through the film, I will share my personal experience of the exploration of the city with an audience, showing them a different perspective of the city. This project will combine my interests in film and urban planning, and allow me to further explore the art theories I am currently researching for my Art History major.

Situationist theory can be appropriately applied to my project because it emphasizes experience and experimentation: the Situationists would create maps of a city only showing the areas important to the map maker, or they would explore an unfamiliar city with the map of a different but familiar city. Translating these moves into film will allow an audience to visually experience my personal map of Portland and by extension, my own experience of the city.

I have extensive knowledge in filmmaking, having been employed as a film editor on Willamette campus, as well as working as a student mentor for the UC Riverside's "Off the Block" Film Camp for Teens for two years. By working with Professor Holmes and the rest of the group, I will have the resources to discuss and more fully understand the theories presented by the Situationists and be able to better incorporate those theories into my film.

Recently, for an Art History class, I've been writing about Aby Warburg's work with icons. He created a method called iconographic migration, in which he maps out specific images chronologically and regionally, and then by studying the map, examines how the meanings of the icons or motifs have migrated and evolved throughout time. Portland is a relatively unknown city for me; most of my knowledge of it stems only from movies. I am interested in pursuing this notion of iconographic mapping within the context of a city—identifying Portland's icons, such as Powell's, or Voodoo Doughnuts, and creating a map that connects them. My map may draw on films that take place in Portland (for example, Gus Van Sant's *Paranoid Park*), as well as looking at the city from the metro, bus system, and pedestrian paths.

I'm very interested in architecture, and eventually in pursuing a career in urban development and planning. Through my research and eventual production of the film, I will have the unique chance to observe and consider the possibilities of urban space and to critique them. Upon completion of the film, I hope to submit it to the Conflux conference in New York City, an event where artists, urban planners, and others interested in psychogeography can share their projects with each other: <http://confluxfestival.org/>. It's a unique event that takes place, usually in October, and allows for both artistic and scholarly presentations.