

# UNDOING THE HIPERREAL CITY

## (DE-)COREOGRAPHING PERCEPTION AND RELATIONALITY FOR THE PRODUCTION OF EMERGENT SPACE

Jaime del Val - REVERSO - [www.reverso.org](http://www.reverso.org)

Cities are hiperreal surfaces where bodies are choreographed within narrow lines of motion and directionality that orient desires and articulate relationalities according to certain normative formations (macro-affects).

Perceptions that reify the subject-object divide rely upon the standardised use of such pervasive perception technologies as cameras-screens, that generate the political fiction of an abstract disembodied observer that looks onto an objective world.

But bodies-spaces are relational fields and processes, and never exterior to themselves. Common space can only be born out of the emergent relationalities of the common relational body.

Linear time-space is a political fiction, unthinkable unless as part of a perceptual framing, constituted through the parameters of fixity, distance, centralized perspective, focus and exposure time of the technical image.

How can bodies-spaces intervene in the linear grids and hiperreal surfaces of urban space in order to induce the proliferation of more diffuse and emergent relationalities (micro-affects)?

Whereas confrontational strategies, may have the risk of reifying the grids, what is proposed herein are more subtle non-confrontational disruptions of the legibility of the body-space that generate uncertain, sometimes imperceptible, mostly irrepresentable lines of flight.

The social is funded on contagious gestures/choreographies (as Harmony Bench suggests<sup>1</sup>). Such standardised choreographies constitute space. As long as we keep within the orbits of repeated, oriented movement space reifies its fictional extension. But if we deform, blur, expand the potential lines of flight of movement beyond choreographed space, then intensive space emerges in all its uncertainty.

This implies dealing with various levels of macro-choreographed structures:

- the longstanding disciplinary structures that have articulated public space as opposed to private space, in particular with regard to sexuality, these are foundational to certain normative choreographies of space.
- the more recent structures of affective capitalism, that are capable of assimilating difference into standardised niches of the market, as is the case with gay villages all over the world where difference is commodified and assimilated into highly choreographed regimes.
- the way macro-structures permeate other potential micro-spaces, as for example in the case of cruising areas, or spaces for semi-public sex, such as

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<sup>1</sup> [waiting for reference from author]

parks, where mostly gay men meet anonymously for sex: these tend to reproduce architectures of intimacy, whereby sex happens mostly behind the bushes and without socialisation.

The divide between intimate and public is an arbitrary one, foundational to the economic structuring of globalised sexophobic society, where the condemnation of sexuality to the closet of intimacy is key to all other regulations of relationality, kinship and affect, and of course, of consumption, work and production.

On the other hand, this historical divide has become merely instrumental within the machines of affective capitalism, it operates as a plane of standardisation of affects, a pure choreographic contagion which has lost any depth of symbolic power.

In both instances there is an attempt to erase corporeality: in sexuality-affects on the one hand, where the body is erased from public space, in hiperreal media culture on the other, with its disembodied interfaces appealing to the rational subject. Although this erasure is deceptive: it is all about bodies and affects, but as long as we ignore it the system will operate freely upon them.

How can we induce a proliferation of desire that is not to be assimilated into commodification niches, while at the same time opening up the grids of disciplinary space?

How can we disseminate **micro-affects** that act like antiviruses of the choreographic viruses of affective contagion that are the foundation of the social?

What kind of micro-relational bodies might emerge of such processes as opposed to the macro-bodies of the social such as we know it?

There is no one answer, but a multiplicity of movements that will act both as resistance strategies and as modalities of becoming, that will open up the limits of given relationalities, while at the same time setting to motion other potential modes of becoming.



Fig 2. Antibodies-Pangender Cyborg performance in Santiago de Chile 2008

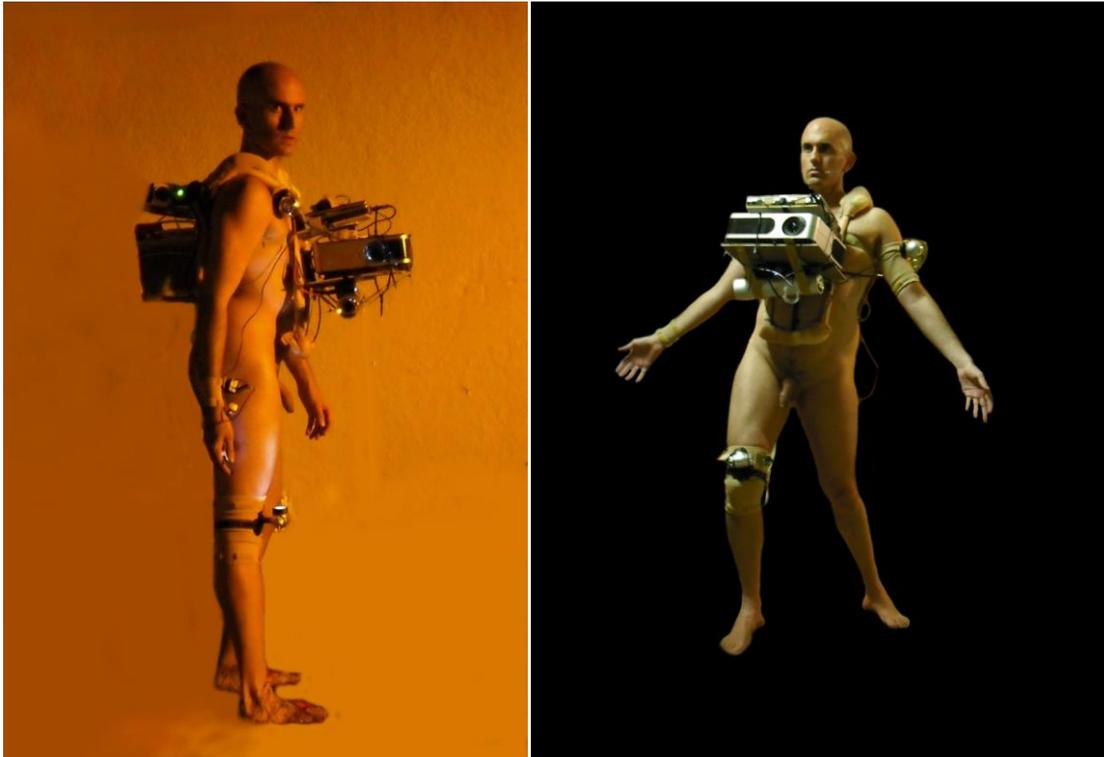


Fig 1. Antibodies-Pangender Cyborg-MICROSEXES- Jaime del Val-REVERSO - Photo by Reverso 2007

### **Relational technologies for undoing the hiperreal city - (De)-choreographing space**

#### **De-Choreographing perception - microsexes (Image 1)**

Cameras placed on the skin become the eyes of the body, they are no longer fixed in the face of the subject. The body moves according to what the cameras see (the skin itself) with a lack of perspective, a blurred macro-vision, a distorted framing in permanent motion... the images are being projected onto the hiperreal city surfaces generating micro dimensions of relationality... diffusing microsexes, amorphous movements, that disorient desire beyond the cartesian grid...

Case Study: The image shows an urban intervention of the Pangender Cyborg, a metaformance of Reverso-Jaime del Val, that has been performed in different cities and countries since 2008. <http://www.reverso.org/microsex.htm>

#### **Undoing space-time linearity (Image 2)**

Bodies moving slowly, along lines, limits and borders, at one cm. per second, disrupt the directional fabric of coreographed city-space-time... slow motion dirupts with amazing power the directionalities of city-space.

Case study: The image shows a spontaneous action I performed during Generating the Impossible Event in Montreal in July 2011, walking very slowly along a yellow line, while the rest of the group was eating icecream nearby. Later a member of the group brought me a yellow icecream and we gave each other the icecream to lick, opening up unprecedented, unforeclosed lines of flight of desire.

#### **Diffusing relationality - Illegible affects (Image 3)**

Bodies coupling in public space in unintelligible manners, moving slowly, along borders of the legible. Bodies intervening in the programmed choreographies of given spaces, opening up the given lines of foreclosed movement, hacking the programme of space, into unintelligible, or nearly-legible frontiers. What are these bodies doing? But most

importantly, *what are the bodies experiencing* when they move on the limits of the intelligible?

Case Study: the image shows an improvisation exercise done in the streets with dance students of the University of Chile in the Laboratory organised by Macarena Campbell in april 2012.

#### **Improbable conversations** (Image 4)

A body walks around the streets with a sound projection device from which body sounds and words are heard that set up the stage for improbable conversations or uncertain, delocalised desires. Orgasm sounds mixed with political claims in defense of sex work, or questions like "which was the last time you prostituted yourself?", "was it a pleasurable experience?"...

Case Study: Project by Helen Torres in the Devisualise workshop in Medialab Prado, Madrid, July 2011. [http://medialab-prado.es/article/desvisualizar\\_proyectos\\_seleccionados](http://medialab-prado.es/article/desvisualizar_proyectos_seleccionados)

#### **Devisualizing space** (image 5)

Take you mobile phone, Iphone, or any device with cam and start recording what you see, but instead of framing it as one usually does, do a radical choreography of perception, distort framing, go near and then far, run across space, then stop for a long time, blur the vision, overexpose, move the focus in every direction, upside down, along lines, focus on objects, other bodies, body parts, trees, textures, sensations...

Case Study: part of the actions done in the Devisualize workshop in Medialab Prado, Madrid in july 2011. [http://medialab-prado.es/article/desvisualizar\\_proyectos\\_seleccionados](http://medialab-prado.es/article/desvisualizar_proyectos_seleccionados)