

Encountering Urban Space *Live* at The Floating Cinema

Live Cinema has been defined as cinema that ‘escapes beyond the boundaries of the auditorium’ (Atkinson & Kennedy, 2016) to occupy ‘real’ space. In Live Cinema screenings elements of ‘performance or interactivity inspired by the content of the film’ (Live Cinema, 2016), such as in-fiction sets or live music, serve as a ‘real’ accompaniment to the ‘reel’ cinematic spectacle. If Live Cinema is usually understood in terms of the expansion of cinematic spectacle into real space, by adding live elements of performance, then in this chapter I argue that when thinking about what ‘escapes beyond the boundaries of the auditorium’ (Live Cinema, 2016) in live cinema it is also crucial to consider the transference of *cinematic ways of seeing* into the off screen world. If Live Cinema brings the cinematic into real (usually urban) space then in doing so it transfers cinema’s modes of attention beyond the screen too.

In particular, I argue two key things. Firstly, that if cinema is a ‘spectatorial means of transportation’ (Bruno, 2002, p. 20), engaging a sense of voyage and discovery, then The Floating Cinema transfer this exploratory mode of encounter beyond the film auditorium. And secondly, that if cinema presents space-time as open and generative, as famously argued by Deleuze (Deleuze, 2013), then Live Cinema expands this cinematic way of seeing into real city spaces; casting urban space-time too as dynamic. Embedded in this argument are two key propositions about what the ‘live’ in live cinema could encompass. Firstly; there is the suggestion that ‘live’ could correspond to a ‘bringing to life’ of cinematic ways of seeing; a transference of particular kinds of cinematic viewing practices onto the everyday, urban world. Secondly, there is the related proposition that, through this ‘bringing to life’ of cinematic ways of seeing, urban space is revealed to be in itself *lively* and therefore open to being transformed. In this chapter I will explore live cinematic ways of seeing through a detailed exploration of The Floating Cinema, a London based mobile cinema who operate out of a purpose built canal boat. I consider a collection of events that The Floating Cinema held in the London suburb of Brentford to mark the beginning and end of a tour they undertook of the waterways between London and Bristol in the summer of 2015.

The Floating Cinema are an unusual example of Live Cinema exhibition because they programme workshops and events which, while inspired by their film screenings, are not necessarily simultaneous with them, often occurring on different days all together. They call this model 'expanded cinema', and work on the premise that, as articulated by their Education and Participation Curator, Anna Ramsay, 'you can experience things cinematically without necessarily sitting and watching a film'¹. My discussion of The Floating Cinema takes up this assertion and investigates how, and with what consequences, The Floating Cinema extend cinematic ways of seeing beyond the event of film spectatorship; bringing cinematic viewing practices to bear on the urban.

The chapter begins with an introduction to The Floating Cinema and their events in Brentford. It then moves on to an exploration of what it means to 'see cinematically'; laying the ground work for the chapter's consideration of how this way of seeing is transferred beyond the site of spectatorship by The Floating Cinema. In this section I survey prominent theorisations of cinematic perception to identify two interrelated elements of what it means to 'see cinematically', both of which can be defined as types of sensitivity to motion. First, I consider how cinema engages ways of seeing routed in travel and urban mobility (Bruno, 2002; Friedberg, 1993). Secondly, I explore arguments that cinema illuminates the more radical form of motion that Deleuze terms 'the virtual'; the capacity of all things for generative transformation (Clarke & Doel, 2005; Benjamin, 2008). After this, my arguments progress through four main empirical sections across which I demonstrate how The Floating Cinema engage this cinematic way of seeing in real, urban space. In the first, I consider The Floating Cinema's material site of exhibition; the boat out of which they operate. I examine the role that the boat, as an object, plays in inviting viewers to take on the spirit of an imaginative journey. In the second empirical section I discuss the films The Floating Cinema screened in Brentford *Life in a Day* (Macdoland, 2011) and *Barging Through London (Again)* (Pope and Guthrie, 2011) and consider how they introduced themes of motion and transformation taken up by the 'live' events programmed alongside them. In the third section I explore the way in which The Floating Cinema use artistic programming to draw out particular invitations of the films they showed and encourage participants to see urban space-time cinematically. In the fourth section I consider the instrumentalities this mode of cinematic encounter might have by thinking through the enabling context of The Floating Cinema's screening and the changes currently facing Brentford. I suggest that if Live Cinema reveals urban space-time as *lively*; always in process and open to change

¹ All quotations from Anna relate to an interview conducted in December 2015.

(Massey, 2005); then that liveliness can lead to contestation; as a malleable space-time can be wrought in multiple and conflicted ways. In concluding, I suggest that live cinema can be understood as a way of seeing urban space that, while formulated in sites of film exhibition, can be taken up by other urban actors. I argue that addressing Live Cinema's viewing practices is therefore crucial to understanding contemporary processes of urban change.

The Floating Cinema

The Floating Cinema is run by the London based company 'Up Projects' who are an organisation that 'curates, commissions and produces contemporary art that explores heritage, identity and place, engaging citizens of London, the UK and across the globe.' Up Projects aims to 'empower communities and enrich the public sphere' by working with artists (UpProjects, 2016). The proposals for The Floating Cinema were developed by Up Projects in response to the 2012 Olympic Games held in London. As Anna explained, the LLDC (London Legacy Development Corporation), who managed the Olympic park, wanted cultural activities to 'connect people living around the park with what was happening inside of it and make it feel like it was sort of a space for them.' As the Olympic park, situated in the Lea Valley area of East London, is strewn with canals, Up Projects came up with the idea to produce a floating cinema that could reach those who do not normally attend cultural events by *literally* going to them, pitching the boat up at various points along East London's waterways.

After beginning in this context The Floating Cinema soon expanded into a London wide project. Each season The Floating Cinema develop a programme of events that use film and activities to respond to urban, environmental and heritage issues along the waterways. For example, their event 'Come Fishing' (June 2014) included a screening of *Kiss the Water*, a 'homage to fly fishing' (The Floating Cinema, 2016), followed by a trip to a fishery to engage with issues of water pollution in London's waterways. Or, their event 'Vertical Living' (June 2014) explored 'the impact of urban renewal' and took place by the Balfour Tower; a housing block in East London that, having formerly been social housing, is set for regeneration.

My focus here is the series of events which Floating Cinema held in the London suburb of Brentford in the summer of 2015 as part of their tour from London to Bristol. Brentford lies to the West of London and was incorporated into Greater London in 1965 having previously been a separate town.

It has one of the highest deprivation levels in the borough of Hounslow (Hounslow.gov.uk, 2015). Regeneration schemes are currently underway, much of which centre around the redevelopment of the canal front areas at Brentford Lock and the creation of new housing. The Floating Cinema held two weekends worth of events in Brentford at the start and end of the tour, securing a mooring and event-space for their boat through a collaboration with Brentford Lock West, one of the housing developers working along the lock. Brentford was picked as the start and end point for the tour because it is the furthest place you can go along the canal before leaving London. The Floating Cinema commissioned a sound artist, Yan Seznec, to accompany the boat for the tour's duration. Yan worked with interested people at various points along the waterway to explore and record the sounds of their area. He spent a week in Bristol in the middle of the tour compiling these collected sounds into a full piece². The events in Brentford included three events at the start of the tour. Firstly, there was a sound recording workshop with Yan. Secondly, there was an open air screening of the feature film *Life in a Day* (Macdonald, 2011) along with the short film, *Barging through London (Again)* (2011), a shot by shot remake of a 1924 original *Barging Through London* (Parkinson) made by artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie. Thirdly, there was an afternoon of on-board screenings of archive footage of Brentford held on the boat which visitors could drop in and out of. Two events also occurred to mark the boat's return to Brentford. There was a day time event where Yan exhibited his finished sound piece and an evening event where two films were screened; another film by Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie, *Repeat to Flourish* (2015), along with Penny Woolcock's *From the Sea to the Land Beyond* (2012). As a whole, the tour aimed to encourage 'a playful discovery of local landscapes and heritage' (The Floating Cinema, 2016). At each stop along the way from Brentford to Bristol The Floating Cinema programmed events, including sound workshops, walks, artist talks and, of course, film screenings that were tailored to the specific locations they moored the boat.

Cinematic Ways of Seeing

As stated in the introduction, this chapter argues that The Floating Cinema's 'expanded' model of film spectatorship produces a 'live' mode of cinematic seeing; transferring the ways of seeing engaged by cinema beyond the event of film exhibition. But what does it mean to 'see cinematically'?

²Available online at: <https://soundcloud.com/yannseznec/neither-here-nor-there-stereo-mix/s-ve4VB>

Before exploring the Floating Cinema's live mode of cinematic seeing, this section considers some of the ways in which cinema is argued to have reformulated vision. I explore arguments that cinema fosters enhanced attention to motion, firstly, to travel and urban mobility and, secondly, to the potential for motion inherent in all things; what Deleuze terms 'the virtual'.

It has long been argued that cinema responds to ways of seeing generated by mobility. Cinema has been described as 'A means of travel-dwelling' (Bruno, 1997) where, despite the spectator's physical immobility, imaginative journeys take place. Cinema's tracking shots, pans and tilts 'aspire to motion' (Bruno, 2002), creating a sense of mobility and discovery which pertains to that of physical, geographical explorations. The sense of motion within the cinematic gaze is also routed in specific forms of urban mobility. Scholars such as Giuliana Bruno and Anne Friedberg have suggested that because cinematic technologies evolved at a time of rapid urbanisation, coming of age with the modern city, they developed a 'mobile gaze', one which responds to the forms of viewing-on-the-move that typified modern cities; for example train travel, window shopping and urban wandering (Bruno, 2002; Friedberg, 1993). For Bruno, 'the language of cinema was born out of' these 'urban motions' emerging as part of 'a changing relation between spatial perception and bodily movement' (Bruno, 1997). The 'moving image' provided an imaginative counterpart to the modes of transit and wandering that were distinctive of urban life at the time. It solidified these modes of mobile viewing into a new way of seeing, and, as Fredric Jameson has argued, recalibrated perception in response to that changing relation between the body and the city (Jameson, 1991).

This recalibration to new urban environments, as Jameson suggests, functions specifically by adjusting sensitivity to space and time. Indeed, as well as engaging the 'mobile gaze' afforded by travel and urban mobility, cinema is also argued to produce a refined perceptive sensitivity to spatiotemporality, creating ways of seeing that anticipate the motion, fragmentation, simultaneity and dislocation experienced in modern cities. Furthermore, as David Clarke and Marcus Doel have explored, cinema develops attentiveness not just to existing spatiotemporal distributions but also to the as yet un-activated capacities of urban environments to change. They argue that film draws attention to the fact that 'everything is suspended in movement' (603-4); that all things are in the process of undergoing continuous, unfinished changes.

Clarke and Doel's argument that cinema draws attention to the *capacities* of cities to change mobilizes Deleuze's influential writing on cinema and, specifically, on the ability of the film image to express time and space as open and generative. For Deleuze, post-war cinema in particular marked a shift in the signification of temporality (Deleuze, 2013). Early cinema, he argues, produced a mechanistic version of temporality (the movement-image), in which movement corresponded to the unfolding of parts making up an already defined, and therefore closed, set. Post-war cinema, however, thinks time as *open*. Rather than movements being produced mechanically through the linking of parts it generates 'time-images', images which evoke their own virtual capacities to be otherwise and thus produce qualitative and nonlinear changes in the 'whole' that is the film. As well as asserting that film expresses *time* as open, Deleuze also argues that post-war cinema produces sensitivity to the openness of *space*. He argues that post-war films are remarkable for what he calls the 'any-space-whatever'. In the aftermath of the war's momentous destruction, European cities were full of ruined buildings and deserted sites (Pratt & San Juan, 2014, p. 36) and these were reflected in filmic spaces. Deleuze argues that such sites are ones that, having had their usual functions disturbed, have lost their determination (Deleuze 2005: 113) revealing their openness to being un-made and reproduced differently. They therefore create a way of seeing space that is attentive to its contingent distribution and its ability to be continuously reformulated.

What the time-image and the any-space-whatever both achieve, for Deleuze, and therefore what makes cinema so compelling, is the illumination of the 'virtual' capacities of assemblages; their ability to undergo transformations. The 'virtual' is defined in opposition to the 'actual', where the actual corresponds to the assemblage's currently manifested qualities and the virtual corresponds to its capacities to be otherwise. Crucially though, the virtual does not become actual in entirely predictable ways; the process of actualization is a generative act which involves qualitative, novel changes. This transformative relationship between the virtual and the actual means that 'everything is suspended in movement' (Clarke & Doel, 2007, pp. 603-604) as all forms, because of their virtual capacities, are open to constant and unpredictable changes.

To 'see cinematically' can therefore be understood as taking on a mode of perception that 'aspires to motion' (Bruno, 2002, p. 19) which includes a sense of transit and voyage through the urban environment as well as an attentiveness to the virtual capacities of urban space. In this chapter I argue that The Floating Cinema's live events make these ways of seeing 'live', extending them beyond the

immediate act of film spectatorship to bring ongoing and latent changes in the urban fabric of Brentford into focus.

The Boat

FIG. 1 HERE

The Floating Cinema's boat is as much a transport vessel as a space of cinema screening. It was designed to enable The Floating Cinema to navigate the waterways of London and reach communities living along them. This practical functionality of the boat as a mode of transport is foundational to the expanded cinematic way of seeing that The Floating Cinema engage. More than just serving as a site of exhibition, the boat is an affective object that, by signifying the journey it has undertaken, invites participants to take up a way of seeing routed in journey and discovery. In this section I explore how the boat signals an invitation into The Floating Cinema's live cinematic way of seeing by encouraging the sense of imaginative voyage and discovery engaged by cinema.

As a mobile site of spectatorship, The Floating Cinema's boat is reminiscent of historical itinerant sites of pre-cinematic and cinematic exhibition (Clarke & Doel, 2005; Crary, 2002; Griffiths, 2013; Della Dora, 2009). It recalls, for example, the peep show boxes which itinerant showmen in the seventeenth century and onwards would carry to towns and villages, bringing images of distant lands to relatively immobile populations (Della Dora, 2007). Equally, the boat echoes the function of the panoramas popular in the 19th century which Griffiths has argued served as 'moving geography lessons' (Griffiths, 2013, p. 72), providing communities with images of exotic travel destinations or detailed renditions of important events. However, while these devices brought viewers experiences of being *elsewhere*, The Floating Cinema, rather than bringing exotic images of faraway places to its spectators, uses its 'mobile gaze' to make the locations it visits exotic in themselves; programming events that are designed to draw out what is interesting or unique about the location they arrive in. Despite being a mode of transport, the journey the boat enables is primarily imaginative and it is in this sense that it evokes a *cinematic* way of seeing; one in which the spectator takes on an attitude of discovery while remaining in situ. Yet The Floating Cinema's cinematic way of seeing is distinctive in that it offers a journey into new ways of perceiving familiar spaces along the waterways, rather than into encounters

with the unknown. Through this reversal The Floating Cinema evokes a way of seeing one's own place as *if* travelling to it from afar.

The aesthetics of the boat assist in the production of this exploratory mode of encounter. For Della Dora, the materiality of the peep show box was key to the aura of discovery it created. She discusses how 'much of the charm derived from the very physical structure of the peepshow: from it being a hidden space' (Della Dora, 2007 p. 290). This comment is strikingly similar to a comment Anna made during our interview, where she suggested that The Floating Cinema's boat has a 'charm' that generates a 'sense of wonder.' This charm, as with the peepshow box, derives from the enticing physicality of the boat. Anna described that whenever they travel the waterways people will hang out of windows, looking at the curious boat and wondering 'what is this!?' Della Dora suggests that, for the peep show, it is precisely the physical act of looking through the eyepiece which lent mystique to the worlds pictured within. Likewise, the materiality of The Floating Cinema's boat is crucial to its immersive view. Throughout my interview with Anna she used the phrase 'get on board' in two senses; a literal sense – meaning to get on board the boat – and a metaphorical sense – meaning to get on board with the spirit of the project. This dual usage of the term is telling; for Floating Cinema, the boat acts as a kind of portal through which spectators can enter into a cinematic way of seeing; to get on board; to engage with the boat as an object, is to take on that orientation to the world.

As well as encouraging a *sense* of discovery the boat also provides tools with which to investigate the urban world. As mentioned in the introduction, the boat was purpose-designed by architects. In a promotional video about the boat's making the architects, Duggan Morris, describe the impetus for its design. Having researched the history of the Lea Valley area they discovered that it was, historically, a hub of invention where British aviation technologies were pioneered and where petrol was developed and named. Responding to this, they wanted to make a boat that would evoke that history. The tag line for the design project became 'a cargo of extraordinary objects', a phrase that was meant to evoke the fascination that would have been felt when watching industrial hoppers carry new inventions along London's waterways. The original plan was to use a refurbished industrial hopper boat, so that the vessel would grow, quite literally, out of the area's history of invention. However, the repairs and adjustments needed proved too extensive so a boat was designed and built from scratch. To keep the idea of invention alive without the ex-industrial boat, Duggan Morris worked on a new design that would make the boat look 'magical', evoking the fascination of inventions being transported along the

canals. In manifesting this, they also drew aesthetically on cinema's own magic. They designed a boat with a shell made from translucent materials so that it would light up at night like a classic cinema light box. This 'cargo of extraordinary objects' therefore came to conflate two kinds of technological invention; on the one hand it evoked East London's history of industrial invention, and on the other it evoked cinema as another kind of magical technology.

The mixing of these two kinds of fascination, fascination with invention and fascination with cinema, recalls the way in which film, in its early years, was itself seen as a kind of scientific innovation (Gunning, 1997). At travelling fairs in the Victorian era moving images were often shown alongside other technologies of vision, including x-ray, and presented as another example of inventions to enhance human perception. The Floating Cinema's boat – designed to evoke both the magic of cinema and the magic of invention – recalls this former understanding of film as an invention and, in particular, one that would offer, like x-ray, new ways of seeing and understanding the human condition. Indeed, Anna talks about The Floating Cinema as a set of tools for discovery. She explains how lots of different equipment is contained on the boat, hidden away in its tardis like structure, so that it 'unpacks into many different versions of itself'. Specifically, the boat contains tools for three methods modes of discovery. Firstly, an internal screen, sound equipment and moveable seating allows films to be screened *inside* the boat so that small groups can watch and discuss films in an intimate setting. Secondly, the boat also serves as a site from which to project films onto a much larger pull down screen that can be placed on land to create an open air screening space, complete with cushions and deck chairs to sit on. In this mode The Floating Cinema are able to turn any urban space into a site of exhibition. Thirdly, the boat can also be used as a base for workshops. Tables and chairs as well as basic tools like pens, paper and notice boards and stored in its backrooms and can be used to turn the boat into a site for contemplation and creativity. The boat can thus transform to offer various tools through which to explore the city and, as the next sections will discuss, uncover its complexities and concealed capacities.

Live Cinematic Seeing: Film as the point of departure

Although my main argument in this chapter is that The Floating Cinema's live practices of exhibition move cinematic seeing beyond the immediate act of film spectatorship, it is still, of course, important to explore the role that the film screenings themselves play in this process. In this section, I start with a discussion of the film that The Floating Cinema's tour opened with; a screening of Kevin

Macdonald's *Life in a Day* (2011) to consider how this screening fed into The Floating Cinema's live events.

At Floating Cinema's event, *Life in a Day* was projected from the boat onto a large screen set up at Brentford Lock. The event was free to attend, and priority for tickets was given to local residents. *Life in a Day* is a crowdsourced documentary made from 80,000 YouTube clips, recorded by 'ordinary' people on one particular day: 24th July, 2010. The film spans 24 hours, showing self-recorded clips of people's lives from around the world. The clips foreground the common, emotional dimensions of human experience, but also the multiplicity of human life on earth; the manifold disparate ways in which humans inhabit the plan we share. The neat unit of time that *Life in a Day* traverses is expanded open to show how this finite period contains innumerable differentiated experiences of life. If it is a film about commonality across cultures it is also a film about differentiation; about the various trajectories which can unfold from a common space-time.

This theme was reinforced by the short film programmed alongside *Life in a Day*; *Barging Through London (Again)* made by artists Nina Pope and Karen Guthrie who have been working with Up Projects for several years. Nina and Karen re-shot the 1924 travelogue *Barging Through London*, a film which documented the diversity of urban life along the waterways of London. In their remake they used dual projection to show their contemporary version side by side with the original footage. If *Life in a Day* demonstrated the different trajectories that lives can take even as they inhabit the same 24 hour period, then *Barging Through London (Again)* suggested the transformations a place can undergo over time. The dual projection technique presented the archival and the contemporary footage as two manifestations of the same places' multiple potentials or, in Deleuze's terms, two actualizations of the waterways virtual capacities.

In addition, the two films screened together foregrounded the agency that we have over the transformations that lives and places take. Nina and Carol gave a short talk in which they urged spectators to approach *Life in a Day* in the context of the film just shown and, in doing so, to reflect on the idea that 'archive footage is something we are all making all the time.' Whereas *Barging Through London* is a film maker's representation of London's waterways, *Life in a Day* is made up of self-shot footage. In this context, Nina and Carol encouraged the spectators to consider that whereas archive footage may seem to capture an 'objective' image of place as defined by experts, they are in fact the ones who – by taking pictures on mobile phones or by recording videos of friends and families - are

making the images of life in Brentford that will come to define how it is imagined in future years. This was an assertion that, rather than image making being the preserve of professional film makers, 'ordinary' people also have agency over the way we imagine the spaces we inhabit. The significance of this, for The Floating Cinema, was that if 'ordinary' people have agency over how spaces are imagined, they thereby have agency over how spaces transform. As Anna elucidated, their Brentford events were concerned with how residents can not only make sense of changes happening in their area but also 'make change' themselves, so that 'this is not just something happening to them' but a process they have agency within. The screenings of these two films therefore encouraged spectators to imagine space-time as something open to be shaped through their actions.

Live Cinematic Seeing: Serious Play at the Sound Workshop

The Floating Cinema's 'expanded' model of film spectatorship includes events and workshops that respond to, but are not simultaneous with their film screenings. Recalling the expanded cinema movement of the 1970s, which used multi-screen projections, multimedia and audience participation to rethink film as an immersive experience in real space, The Floating Cinema's version of expanded cinema also involves the creation of an off-screen cinematic environment. In this section, I examine how the cinematic ways of seeing space-time as *open* engaged by the films screened are transferred beyond the screen by The Floating Cinema's live programming. I characterize this way of seeing as 'serious play', a term which Geraldine Pratt and Marie San Juan have used to explore the ludic, investigative orientation to urban space engaged by pop-up cinemas (Pratt & San Juan, 2014, p. 171). For me, serious play is a mode of encounter which is playful, because it reveals space-time to be *lively* and therefore something that can be creatively interacted with and altered. Yet it is also a 'serious' mode of encounter because, as the final section will explore in more depth, these ludic experiments have significant consequences for the trajectories of the city.

The ideas set up by the screening of *Life in a Day* were present across the events that The Floating Cinema undertook for the rest of the tour. The day after the screening of *Life in a Day*, The Floating Cinema held on board screenings of archive footage of Brentford, borrowed from the Hounslow local archives. The footage was played on a loop and anybody could drop by and come on board to watch. The archive footage demonstrated many things that Brentford once was (and still is) – a

destination for fishing, holiday making, and a boating community. It also pointed towards past visions of the future of Brentford. The footage showed how Brentford, when it first became part of Greater London, was a site in which new visions of the urban were played out as rows of terraced housing were knocked down to make way for the now hated high rise blocks that were at the time seen as groundbreaking architectural design. The archive footage included disparate materials, from public safety adverts broadcast in the 1950s to footage of local fairs. Much like the way in which *Life in a Day* showed multiple experiences of the world, the archive footage showed the many ways in which Brentford has, over the years, been experienced and imagined.

On the day leading up to the *Life in a Day* screening, Yan, the artist in residence, held his first sound workshop. Yan's workshops were integral to his artist in residence project, which aimed to create 'a digital sound library, including 'forgotten sounds' from the canal's industrial past'. Yan worked with time-lapse and underwater recording to engage with the fabric of the waterways and the themes of change and continuity; focusing on 'embedded memories, histories, and identities inherent in the canal' to explore 'its character in both past and present functions (The Floating Cinema, 2015). At the workshops, he enlisted participants to take part in 'sound gathering walks'. The invitation to gather sounds anticipated the proposition introduced at the screening of *Life in a Day*, that we are all making archive footage, giving participants the ability to co-produce an account of the canals. There was no film screening accompanying Yan's event. Rather than inviting participants to a film screening and using that to inspire an exploratory orientation to urban space, it was the boat, outside which Yan set up his workshop, that enticed passers-by to 'get on board' with Yan's workshop and adopt a cinematic way of seeing. As the previous section explored, the boat functions as an affective object which engages spectators in cinema's sense of imaginative, rather than physical exploration. Meanwhile, the workshops held on board orientate that investigate way of seeing towards the place in which the boat is pitched; drawing out undiscovered aspects of familiar places. Here, Yan's workshop, set up outside the boat, encouraged spectators to take an imaginative journey into Brentford, not by watching a film, but by 'getting on board' with a cinematic mode of encounter.

Yan enlisted visitors and passers-by to use his sound equipment to explore the noises of Brentford. As the workshop began I watched as Yan laid out his recording tools across the table. He tested them out, fiddling with them, dipping them in the water and noting the sounds coming through the large headphones he had connected up to them. He did seem much like an inventor, bringing a

'cargo of extraordinary objects' to offer to passers-by. As people dropped into the workshop, Yan showed them how to use the sound recorders and they came back with recordings of various sounds including water fountains, factories, dogs or the hum of the M4 motorway.

(FIG 2 HERE)

The equipment Yan supplied to participants, on a very literal level, enabled a deepening of sensory perception comparable to the kind of intensification of visual and acoustic perception that Walter Benjamin famously ascribed to film (Benjamin, 2008, p. 28). I followed Yan and one participant as they walked down the canal, aiming to record the sounds of a nearby pharmaceuticals factory (GlaxoSmithKline). On the way, Yan stopped to record the sounds of a metal fence. We watched as Yan shook the fence, nodding at the noises it was making. The headphones seemed to communicate something to him that we, without them, could not hear. Yan turned enthusiastically to his participant; 'Wanna hear it?' he said? The participant put the headphones on and nodded appreciatively at the noise's new qualities, transmitted through the headphones. He handed the headphones back to Yan. 'It's kind of amazing' Yan said. The dislocation between what could be heard through the headphones and what could be heard by others, created the sense that Yan's sound equipment gives access to a usually hidden layer of reality; to elements of the soundscape that usually go unnoticed.

(FIG 3 HERE)

For Walter Benjamin, film's enhanced perceptual capacities, including acoustic perception had radical implications for experiences of the urban. Film's new way of seeing 'exploded' 'imprisoning' imaginaries of the city, allowing urban space-time to be rethought (Benjamin, 2008, p. 28). Yan's enhanced acoustic perception worked, similarly, to foreground the open possibilities for imagining and producing space-time, as I will explore, by bringing different sensory experiences into co-presence.

As we can see from the list of sounds Yan and his participants aimed to record (image below) the sound equipment was used to focus attention on fading, enduring and emergent elements of Brentford. Participants were interested in recording remaining evidence of Brentford's history as a destination for boating and wildlife. They also wanted to record more recent elements of Brentford's soundscapes, such as the variety of accents that people in Brentford have, the trains and planes that run regularly over the canal and the industries now located there such as the huge GlaxoSmithKline factory. In addition, participants were keen to record features of Brentford that relate specifically to the

post-recession climate, including 'austerity' and 'apathy', and in using sound to trace the processes of gentrification beginning to take hold in Brentford.

(FIG 4 HERE)

The soundscape pointed towards the ongoing becoming of Brentford as a place that, like all places, is in transition (Massey, 2005); a place made up of processes originating from and moving in contrasting, sometimes conflicting directions. In lived experience some of these qualities of place are more dominant in others; for example, apathy is far less notable in the sensory landscape than fountains. They also belong to different temporal registers; some evoke fading versions of Brentford, for example its amount of wildlife has waned significantly since the building of the M4 in the area, while others, such as gentrification, point to new processes beginning to take hold. Yan's practice brought these sounds belonging to different characterisations and eras of Brentford together in co-existence encouraging participants to distribute their attention across these disparate articles evenly and therefore to explode, as Benjamin describes, rigid imaginaries of the area. The final piece that Yan produced, which included sounds not just from Brentford but from the whole tour, blended geographical and temporally disparate recordings to create a soundscape of the waterways that undermined their linearity and instead asserted the co-presence of these various elements of the waterways as capacities in the present.

This co-presence of capacities can be understood through a closer look at Deleuze's theorisation of time as open. Deleuze follows Bergson in characterising time as nonlinear. What this means is that the past is not a finished event, but continues to structure and interact with the present. This occurs because past events create the *virtual* capacities of a system that can then be activated in unpredictable ways by future processes (Deleuze, 1988). The past is therefore not left behind but contracted into the present moment where it continues to play an active role in the system's trajectories. Similarly, the sounds Yan and his participants recorded drew attention to the virtual capacities that continue to exist in and structure the possibilities of Brentford as well as to the trajectories it is currently following and embarking on. They brought boating and nature back to the forefront of imaginations of Brentford, focusing attention on its changing demographics and industries, and tried to capture nebulous changes in its contemporary atmosphere by finding auditory traces of apathy and austerity. In assembling these different sounds Yan made co-present the various capacities structuring what Brentford has been and could be. If we read this process through Pratt and San Juan's discussion of

'serious play' we can see that it engaged a critical attuning to urban space through which nascent processes such as gentrification and austerity could be brought into focus, and overlooked characteristics of Brentford could resurface and influence its future developments. This can be seen as a cinematic way of seeing because it asserts the *openness* of space-time; the multiple transformations which its virtual capacities afford. Brentford is revealed as a place which has taken many forms for many people, and can be assembled into multiple more. Moreover, participants are encouraged to position themselves as active agents within this process; able to imagine and produce their own versions of the area.

Navigating Tensions

Through this live cinematic way of seeing, urban space-time is itself shown to be *lively*. Space has been characterized as *lively* (Massey, 2005, 14) within contemporary Geography, where liveliness indicates the metastability of space-time, as something that is 'always in the process of being made' (Massey, 2005, 14). For Geographer Doreen Massey, space should be understood as a 'simultaneity of stories so far'; as a fabric produced through interactions and therefore open to reformulations. However, this liveliness of space-time also means that its trajectories can be pulled in multiple ways by different actors. Indeed, if Yan's cinematic way of seeing enabled critical attention to urban space for his participants, they also navigated the desires of others to act in and alter it.

On the one hand, the Brentford events aimed to strengthen imaginaries of Brentford's past, present and future and, in particular, help the local community connect more deeply with Brentford as a place to live. However, when interviewing Anna it was apparent that the processes by which local residents were able to become more connected to the places they inhabited were also those mobilized by developers with potentially conflicting intents. As Anna describes, Floating Cinema; 'try and spread the programme out across London' to 'places where harder to reach audiences would feel comfortable coming to as well, and we quite often work with the housing development agencies around there to make sure that those communities feel like this is something for them, that they are involved and they are invited.'

This was very much the intention in Brentford where, as previously stated, tickets were put aside for local residents. Yet, as well as targeting the existing community of Brentford, the events were

also aimed at the new residents of the flats being put up by Brentford Lock West. As mentioned, Brentford Lock West gave The Floating Cinema access to the mooring site and partly funded the event. Anna explains that they were 'really keen that this was something for their residents too', so tickets were offered to residents of Brentford Lock West's housing as well as to other local residents. Yet, as is clear in the clips about Floating Cinema, the new developments happening around the canal as part of the Brentford Lock development are not necessarily properties designed for those you might consider as 'harder to reach' audiences of cultural events. They are high spec flats much more likely to attract wealthier new comers to Brentford. So, if The Floating Cinema's Brentford events worked with 'harder to reach audiences' to deepen imaginaries of the local area, they simultaneously played into the desires of developers to brand Brentford as an exciting destination for new residents and potential buyers.

Describing the difficulties of working in Brentford Anna explained that;

'Brentford wouldn't really be considered a cultural destination, but we like that kind of challenge, we're inviting an audience from all over London; 'come to Brentford', cause nobody else is going to ask you to do that, but we can make it look amazing, and it is a great space around the lock. And to think about celebrating everything that is Brentford, we did a thing about the M4, so really thinking about how to make the ordinary into something exciting.'

Here the suggestion that The Floating Cinema can 'make the ordinary into something exciting' has particular implications given their collaboration with Brentford Lock West. The intention to 'change how people think about Brentford, who comes here, would they again' is potentially at odds, given the pressures on housing in the capital, with the intention to make Brentford a more exciting and meaningful place to live for its existing residents; because the increased popularity of the area furthers the seemingly inevitable process of displacement and gentrification.

These were issues that were very apparent in Yan's sound work explorations of Brentford. As we have seen, Yan's list of sounds to record, made in collaboration with participants, included 'austerity', 'apathy', 'gentrification' and 'capitalism'. As he made this list, Yan sat at the workspace he had set up, just in front of billboards advertising Brentford Lock West's new development, behind which building work was taking place. While I was present one participant went to record the sounds of the construction, and then returned to tick off 'gentrification' from the list. Interestingly, here, the participant's critical exploration of urban space involved critiquing the very same development that were sponsoring The Floating Cinema.

The incongruity between The Floating Cinema's critical function and the negotiations and collaborations necessary for them to function is also an issue beyond the Brentford screenings. All their events, Anna says, take the canals as a starting point to think about 'London as a transient city.' The canals are a good way in to thinking about industrial decline and reuse and 'to try and capture some of that and think about what it means for the people who live there now.' Yet, as Anna notes, the canals are also rapidly changing as sections of them are redeveloped and the waterways are getting busier, especially as London's housing crisis pushes more people to think about living on the water. The canals, for The Floating Cinema, are then at the centre of a tension between London's industrial history and its imagined futures.

Although Anna suggests that the cultural events going on around the canals, including their own, have positively changed perceptions of them, making them 'a lovely place to go' she also describes the difficulty of navigating the desires of developers to capitalize financially on that re-imagining. She says 'it's something we're really aware of...not using art as a tool for regeneration but as a place to talk about regeneration, a place to think about how communities remain resilient within a time of change'. She adds 'we have to find our own ethics in how we work with developers' and try and make it a learning process for them too. The difficulty Anna points to suggests that the live application of a cinematic way of seeing to urban space has potentially contradictory impacts because, in asserting the openness of space to being re-produced, it paves the way for both local groups and commercial developers to enact their own re-imaginings.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have argued that The Floating Cinema's expanded model of film spectatorship brings cinematic ways of seeing into urban space. I suggested that, in this context, the 'live' in Live Cinema could indicate a *bringing to life* of cinematic viewing practices, through which an attitude of discovery is adopted and the same encounter with space-time as open that film produces is enacted in urban space. Exploring this assertion at The Floating Cinema, I have detailed how this cinematic way of seeing urban space generates a critical engagement with what places are and could be; an orientation of *serious play*. However, I have also considered the ways in which these viewing practices can play into the hands of developers keen to capitalize financially on the re-imagining of place.

Given the burgeoning interest in Live Cinema, and other immersive and site specific modes of spectatorship, understanding the ways in which their viewing practices seep out into the city is of upmost importance. Building on the longstanding tradition of scholarship on cinema and the city (Clarke, 1997), Live Cinema poses an invitation to think about film and the urban afresh. Events like those held by The Floating Cinema extend the spectacular elements of film exhibition beyond the screen and in doing so bring cinema's ways of seeing to bear on urban space. Furthermore, as I have explored, these ways of seeing, while formulated in sites of film exhibition, can be mobilized by other urban actors. Exploring these viewing practices is therefore crucial not just for studies of contemporary film spectatorship, but for understanding contemporary urban change. In this chapter I have embarked on explorations of this sort. In identifying cinematic encounter as a means of critical exploration but also a force that can be mobilized by developers, I have demonstrated the importance of detailed and specific explorations of how Live Cinema is developed and deployed as a way of seeing the city.

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