

Radical Mediation, Psychogeography and the Hodologies of Urban Forestness

Ola Ståhl, Department of Design, Linnaeus University, Sweden

Abstract

This paper is an exploration of the notion of forestness – the quality of being forest – in the extended sense that it can be applied to forestness in an urban environment. Conceiving of the forest as a complex set of interacting ecologies, or perhaps networks, traversing different media and forms of mediation, it seeks to make connections between Richard Grusin’s concept of radical mediation and Gilles Deleuze’s very brief theorization of hodology deriving from his take on minimalist art – quite literally that the meaning of individual sculptures are the patterns of movement they require to be experienced. The paper poses the question of what hodologies of forestness exist in an urban environment. This includes human-centred path systems as well as the paths created by multiple other species and the different forms of interconnected hodologies that form the ecosystems of particular senses of forestness across media. Taking its inspiration from psychogeographical approaches, the paper will also consider ways in which we can artistically engage with these hodologies, simultaneously mapping out and rendering existing relations and hodologies intelligible and perceptible across registers and media, and creatively and critically envisioning – and designing – new ones.

Keywords

Mediation, Hodology, Urban Forests, Richard Grusin, Gilles Deleuze

Bio

Ola Ståhl is Professor of Design at Linnaeus University. He holds a PhD from the Department of Fine Art, Art History and Cultural Studies and an MA in The Social History of Art, both from the University of Leeds. Working across the divide between artistic and critical theoretical research, he has exhibited and performed internationally since the late 1990s and published several pieces of creative critical writing alongside theoretical articles in journals such as, amongst others, *Theory Culture Society*, *Angelaki*, *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* and *Parallax*, the latter of which he also edited for several years. His current engagements include a forthcoming book with Onomatopée and a collaborative writing project with art theorist, writer and artist Simon O’Sullivan. He also is also one of the coordinators of the research group IMS:

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Green and one of the main instigators behind research and educations in Climate Emergency Studies at Linnaeus University.

ORCID-ID/Websites

Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7995-6797>

Web site: <https://lnu.se/en/staff/ola.stahl/>