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oggetti e pratiche artistico/culturali
Vol. XIII, n. 1 (2025)

Lo screenshot

Stilemi e pratiche nelle arti visive e performative

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a cura di Elisabetta Modena e Federica Villa

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Lo screenshot.
Stilemi e pratiche nelle arti visive e performative

In copertina: Irene Fenara, *Supervision*, 2026.

Paolo Berti

Reappearing places: Geoguessing beyond the digital frame of Google Street View

Abstract

Il saggio esamina l'impatto di *GeoGuessr*, un gioco online basato sull'esplorazione di Google Street View, capace di trasformare immagini operative in luoghi carichi di valore ludico e cognitivo. Attraverso una genealogia che intreccia paesaggi ottocenteschi, media locativi e pratiche Post-Internet, mette in luce come la localizzazione assuma la forma di un'inferenza affettiva, fondata su indizi prodotti dalla stessa logica tecnico-industriale dei sistemi di visione computazionale. Le performance dei giocatori più esperti rivelano inoltre un modo distintivo di leggere i dati geografici, in cui lo screenshot funziona contemporaneamente da prova e da dispositivo per la riattivazione mnemonica dei luoghi rappresentati.

The essay examines the impact of *GeoGuessr*, an online game based on exploring Google Street View, which can reconfigure operational images into places imbued with ludic and cognitive value. Through a genealogy that intertwines nineteenth-century landscapes, locative media, and Post-Internet practices, it highlights how localization takes the form of an affective inference, grounded in cues produced by the very techno-industrial logic of computational vision systems. The performances of the most experienced players also reveal a distinctive mode of reading geographic data, in which the screenshot functions simultaneously as evidence and as a device for the mnemonic reactivation of the represented places.

Introduction. Constructing perspective in Google Street View

Geographical competence – or geoliteracy, defined by *National Geographic* (Edelson 2014) as the ability to orient oneself and consciously employ spatial tools and knowledge – has been profoundly reshaped by the advent of digital mapping technologies. While traditional cartography offered an abstract, top-down representation of territory, the introduction of immersive platforms such as Google Street View (hereafter GSV) inaugurated a new mode of spatial perception, characterized by the coalescence of multiple layers of interaction within a single scopic continuum. In the 2010s, this mode of perception became entangled with

browser-based games that merged entertainment with geographic literacy. Early rudimentary titles like *Traveler IQ Challenge* (2006), which required players to place a marker on a map as close as possible to the actual location of a city, anticipated some of the dynamics later developed in *GeoGuessr*, a game created in 2013 by Swedish programmer Anton Wallén. Originally conceived as a simple tech demo to experiment with the Google Maps API, *GeoGuessr* is founded on a principle at once simple and remarkably effective: placing the user at a random point in GSV and prompting them to deduce its position on the globe by approximating it as closely as possible using clues scattered across the landscape – anything the panoramas offer: natural features, architectural styles, road signage, even the position of the sun. Wallén's idea is both innovative and derivative. On one hand, it introduces a novel interaction with digital space grounded in inference (an infrastructural reading of the capture apparatus's technical residues); on the other, it appropriates GSV's immense visual archive and repurposes it through a mechanism based on both the recognizability of places and the discovery of secondary – if not truly liminal – spaces that users would be unlikely to encounter otherwise, including dirt roads at the edge of forests, abandoned parking lots, anonymous suburbs, and desert areas.

From a genealogical perspective, we must note that the history of GSV is inseparable from the evolution of Google's public GIS platforms (Earth and Maps), tools that reshaped the representation of geographical space in digital media (Gordon & de Souza e Silva 2011; Farman 2012). They also embodied and tested the limits of the broad late-twentieth-century theoretical frameworks on the sociotechnical production of space: from Foucault's heterotopias (1984) to Edward Soja's "trialectics" (1996), themselves indebted to the work of Henri Lefebvre (1974). Applying Soja's perspective, GSV functions as an environment where firstspace (perceived), secondspace (conceived), and thirdspace (lived) overlap, merging into a vast project of global representation. GSV thus takes shape as a model conceived *a priori*: an ideological construction that translates Google's imperative to "organize information" into a standardized vision of geographical reality (Zook & Graham 2007; Zuboff 2019). The result is a distinct datascape that, though realistic in appearance, embodies an algorithmically mediated experience (Peraica 2019, pp. 100-101). Officially launched in 2007 as an extension of Maps, its debut also reflected a broader cultural shift: from the early 2000s, the civilian adoption of GPS was beginning to challenge traditional notions of space. GSV thus found itself at the center of a vibrant theoretical debate, one that sought to redefine concepts for the emerging ecologies of digital space, yet was still expressed in a varied vocabulary aimed at capturing the blend of physical and digital realms. This conversation

included ideas like hybrid space (de Souza e Silva 2006), code/space (Kitchin & Dodge 2011), augmented space (Manovich 2006), and geomedia (McQuire 2016).

These reflections influenced a generation of digital artists working within the paradigm of locative media – technologies linking interaction to specific places. In an environment of wide experimentation, these artists gradually shifted toward expressive modes shaped by social media and the broader online sphere. In this transition, often grouped under the label Post Internet (McHugh 2011), GSV became simultaneously a tool and an object of aesthetic inquiry, primarily via the act of screen capture, as exemplified by the works of Jon Rafman, Clement Valla, Doug Rickard, Mishka Henner, and Paolo Cirio[1]. In parallel, games contributed to exploring certain potentials: from the early experiments of geocaching, which used GPS for collective treasure hunts, the field evolved toward more accessible and continuous forms of interaction typical of broadband culture (Hjorth & Richardson 2014). Today, at the peak of this trajectory, *GeoGuessr* is run by an independent company (GeoGuessr AB) that continually develops new game modes, organizes official competitions, and coordinates a vast community of players and streamers. The game's popularity – and thus its capacity to foster forms of large-scale collective participation, with more than sixty million registered users – reveals a distinctive dimension of geographic observation, but also the return of a tension familiar to art history, namely the desire for an "infinite view", with precedents in murals, *trompe-l'œil*, and especially in the panoramas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a medium-specific experience, panoramas sought to create a continuity between images of landscape (Hoelzl & Marie 2014) and the physiological illusion of seeing without being seen. They emerged when landscape painting was losing centrality and seemed to attempt to preserve – through technological and design means – what the pictorial tradition could no longer guarantee. As Peraica observes (2019, pp. 92-93), this pursuit of immersion acts as a prelude to virtual reality; in other words, panoramas acted as environments designed to suspend perceptual judgment, rooted in what Oliver Grau (2003) has described as a genealogy of immersion that leads toward digital art. Crucial to this dynamic was the spectator's posture, as the search for detail, the recognition of familiar places, and the encounter with an imposed viewpoint produced a subtle interplay of control and discovery that today – albeit with significant distinctions – reappears in the virtual exploration of GSV. Discussing the

[1] In that historical juncture, overlaps between artistic work and play were far from uncommon. Emblematic in this regard are the projects of the collective Blast Theory and the curatorial work of various festivals dedicated to locative media, which were grounded in a renewed, Situationist-inspired psychogeography and helped catalyze a particularly vibrant phase of experimentation (Von Borries et al. 2007; Flanagan 2009). These experiences relied on electronic tools oriented toward a libertarian reconfiguration of space, where the boundaries between resistance to Cartesian taxonomies, playful exploration, and cultural creation were intentionally designed to dissolve.

panorama, Erkki Huhtamo (2013) synthesizes this constellation of practices, suggesting a technological reactivation of ancient, situated illusionistic impulses – a primordial manifestation of the desire for total immersion that runs throughout media and art history, from Baroque illusionistic painting to virtual or augmented reality.

In this context, the notion of camera position acquires significant theoretical weight. Determining the exact point from which an image was captured means situating it within a system of relations rooted in Renaissance treatises on perspective, where the painter's eye was established as the origin of the represented space. This principle gained further concreteness during the era of the *vedutisti* (view painters), particularly with the use of the camera obscura, which made it possible to reconstruct perspective projection and infer the observer's position, thus providing new interpretive frameworks for these views. The advent of photography further intensified this focus, introducing quantifiable parameters such as orientation, focal length, and the height of the capturing device. It is worth noting that many photographers meticulously recorded the coordinates of their shots, effectively creating proto-archives of spatial data suitable for diachronic comparison. In the transition to the digital age, this logic does not disappear. While GSV represents its most monumental outcome, an entire ecosystem of protocols has emerged surrounding it, focused on image localization and the reverse engineering of the "point of view." Automated pipelines, for instance, have long facilitated the estimation of camera pose by integrating content-based image retrieval systems – which have indexed images based on visual content since the 1990s – with advanced photogrammetric techniques. Here, the widely used convention of the screenshot, as the final moment of interpretation, is also present at every level. This operational field continues to weave together processes that, although no longer tied to the materiality of historical panoramas, still retain at their core the same drive toward orientation, reconstruction, and immersion.

Geovisual performances

The skill of elite *GeoGuessr* players represents a cognitive shift that challenges traditional geographic categorization. Between 2022 and 2024, major media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and *The Washington Post* devoted increasing attention to the phenomenon, focusing on influencers who – working within the accelerated rhythms of social media – displayed an almost inhuman ability to geolocate GSV images in a matter of seconds (Amenabar 2022; Browning 2022; Jones 2023; Weber 2024). This format, perfectly calibrated for virality, ranges from identifying remote locations to tackling community challenges such as recognizing places from pixelated or inverted images, isolated details, or even simple textual

descriptions. These outlets concentrated in particular on one player: Trevor Rainbolt, a young Texan who rapidly became the most recognizable figure in the *GeoGuessr* ecosystem. *The Washington Post* playfully emphasized his moniker, "the professional Google Maps player", giving a human face to a system that is, by its very nature, designed to appear abstract and impersonal (Amenabar 2022).

The world explored by these players departs from the Cartesian tradition of knowledge and from the Korzybskian distinction between map and territory, developing localization abilities that no longer rely on conventional atlases. Their performance often emerges from a lightning-fast decoding of minimal infrastructural signals, whether the geometry of a telephone pole, the chromatic signature of the ground, or a faint tint on the Street View car's roof rack captured at the image's nadir. Rainbolt describes this disposition as a kind of "sixth sense", an affective intuition that surpasses pure rationality and is embedded within the unstable zones of optical impulse (Amenabar 2022). His words make a clear point, and they are emblematic in this regard: «I'm an expert not in geography, but in Google Street View» (Trzcinski-Clément 2023). In many ways, these users behave like machines trained in pattern recognition or geovisual data analysis. And while automated systems are increasingly instructed for geolocation by Large Vision-Language Models (Liu et al. 2024), we often witness scenarios in which humans still challenge machines for supremacy. In this field, the competition between human recognition skills and deep-learning systems is undergoing a profound redefinition, as shown by the release of version 3 of Google Gemini in November 2025. The update was advertised as the first consumer-facing Large Language Model (LLM) able to outperform professional *GeoGuessr* players, at least according to GeoBench, a platform that has effectively turned the game into a benchmark for testing artificial intelligence on geovisual paradigms, far beyond its original playful purpose[2]. An evaluation protocol comparing model-human and model-model performance across diverse maps reveals interesting distinctions at the engineering level regarding generalization. Specialized vision models excel at pure pattern matching, functioning as computational engines with an almost chess-like logic, yet they reveal structural weaknesses in tasks requiring complex inference, such as Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) or textual analysis. Multimodal LLMs, despite their imperfections, exhibit a more flexible deductive capacity that aligns more closely with real-world problem solving.

[2] «GeoBench is a benchmark for evaluating how well large language models can geolocate images, through the context of *GeoGuessr.* This project tests whether models can generalize beyond their primary training modalities to perform spatial reasoning tasks» (https://github.com/ccmdi/geobench).

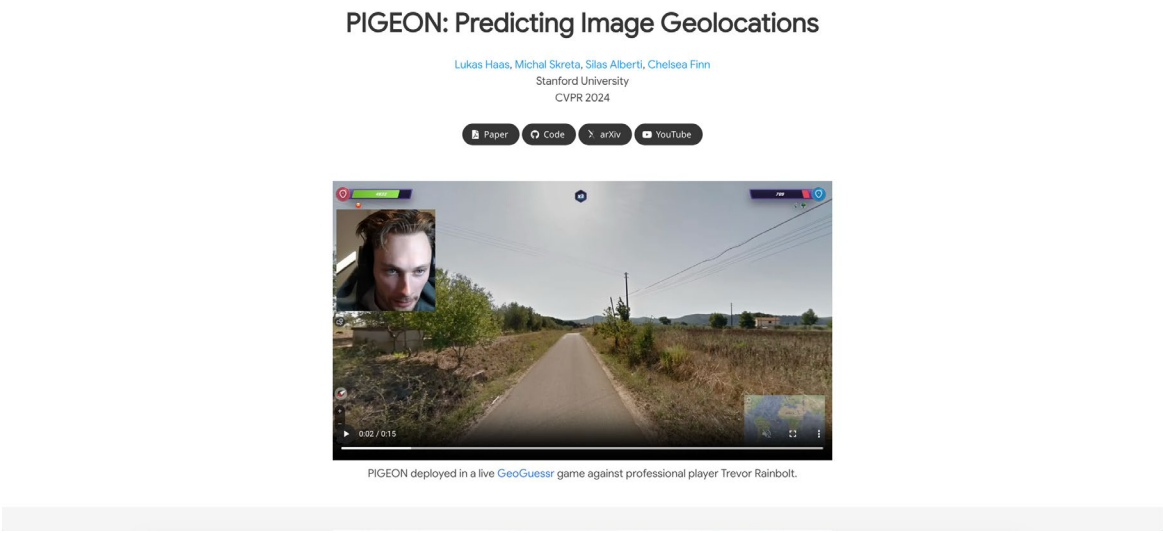

Fig. 1: Screenshot of a detail from the GitHub PIGEON project landing page, featuring a clip of a GeoGuessr match against Trevor Rainbolt.
Available at: https://lukashaas.github.io/PIGEON-CVPR24/.
Website content and PIGEON model © 2024 L. Haas et al.; GeoGuessr UI © GeoGuessr AB

The tangible relevance of these scenarios becomes even clearer if we consider that Stanford University's PIGEON project (Predicting Image Geolocations) (Haas et al. 2024) chose Rainbolt as both "ambassador" and benchmark. On the project's landing page[3], the model trained on GSV is placed in direct competition with the champion in a public YouTube challenge followed by millions of viewers [fig. 1]. The entire setup adopts a distinctly competitive logic, drawing an explicit parallel with the famous human-machine duels of the late twentieth century, recalling in particular the tension surrounding the matches played between 1996 and 1997 by Garry Kasparov against IBM's Deep Blue supercomputer. In essence, the human engagement with *GeoGuessr* takes shape as an investigation within the vast archive produced by the technical infrastructure of GSV. The photographs captured by Street View cars through high-precision sensors (GPS, IMU, LiDAR) are processed and stitched together by algorithms specialized in 360-degree spherical panoramas (Anguelov et al. 2010). Players like Rainbolt engage in an almost diagnostic mode of visual data reading, at the threshold of what Farocki (2004) and later Parikka (2023) describe as "operational images", visual representations conceived not for the human eye but to be processed by other machines. Hoelzl and Marie (2014) reinforce this connection by describing GSV as a paradigmatic example of imaging software inscribed within a continuous operational and iconic space. Yet another aspect emerges, suggesting a different experience of place. A well-established tendency among these players, especially those who maintain a dialogue with their audience, is the application of their heuristic abilities to geolocate personal photographs that often carry

[3] https://lukashaas.github.io/PIGEON-CVPR24/

biographical relevance. These images are submitted by users and frequently tied to complex family stories, such as the last known location of a missing parent, a forgotten childhood home, or, at times, more humorous scenarios. The phenomenon aligns GSV with a spectacular form of OSINT techniques and with the analysis of visual clues drawn from open sources. Tracing these hints may take days or even weeks[4], yet the most significant aspect of the phenomenon lies in the resonance triggered by memory. At this point, a portion of a spherical image, often in low resolution, transcends its nature as spatial data and becomes a "place" of personal significance (Tuan 1977). The idea of a digital geographic memorial has appeared frequently in new media art, beginning with early experiments in the 2000s using the first public geolocation technologies (Berti 2025). Cartographic pinpoints were conceived as reference markers to which personal information could be attached and from which paths through the physical world could unfold. In Valentina Nisi's *Media Portrait of the Liberties* (2004), for instance, a walking itinerary across Dublin's oldest neighborhood connected local oral tradition to geographical positions accessed via GPS-enabled PDAs (Nisi et al. 2011). A similar approach appears in *Riverains* by Martin Rieser (2011), a playful locative narrative designed for Manchester's B.tween festival and later presented at London's Illumini Festival. The public was invited to explore an invisible world of "water spirits" flowing beneath the city, in its lost rivers, tunnels, and subterranean strata. Using mobile devices, GPS, QR codes, and augmented reality, participants evoked digital presences anchored to physical sites, reactivating narratives connected to past events (Rieser 2014).

In media terms, community contributions for geolocation – much like the outputs of GSV searches – are almost always presented as screenshots. In an era of polished social media curation, the screenshot has assumed an almost paradoxical significance on platforms like Instagram, which were originally designed for the sharing of high-quality photography. With its raw, anti-curatorial aesthetic, the screenshot stands in sharp contrast to the smoothness that dominated Web 2.0, embedding itself within a new ecosystem defined by increasingly fragmented attention. Far from being a mere technical device, the screenshot functions as a witness to creative acts (Chen 2025) and emerges as the «unglamorous drudge of digital culture» (Frosh 2018, pp. 62-63, cited in Švelch 2021). It arrests the ephemeral flow of information, crystallizing it as documentary evidence and transforming it into a trophy, an object of exegesis, and material for communal circulation (Olson 2015). In this sense, it moves in and out of the image-making process. As Valentina Tanni (2023, p. 38) observes in a broader discussion, priority

[4] In geographic terms, this dynamic aligns with an evolved form of Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI), that is, the collaborative processes (theorized in the early 2000s) in which non-experts contribute to the production of cartographic knowledge (Goodchild 2007).

is given to concepts such as “mood” and “vibe”, terms that recur in the lexicon of digital-native generations accustomed to manipulating content to preserve memories and emotional states. Rainbolt’s interactions with his audience illustrate this process vividly. Consider the case of a user, Erin, who requested assistance in locating the exact place depicted in a photograph that was otherwise impossible to situate, save for a vague desert atmosphere discerned from a small cluster of decades-old images. The request was tied to a complex family narrative: Erin’s grandfather, who passed away in 1983, had received a unique gift from his friends – his favorite bowling ball, cemented into a rock on a desert hill. His widow, Betty, deeply attached to her husband, wished to scatter his ashes at that precise location, but the collective memory of the site had long been lost. By interpolating GSV signals, cross-referencing online sources, and synthesizing minimal visual cues, Rainbolt identified the location and allowed the family to return to the memorial [fig. 2]. Beyond their emotional impact, cases like this – frequent on Rainbolt’s social media – highlight two broader aspects. On the one hand, they illustrate the reclamation of the “poor image,” defined by Steyerl (2009) as a low-quality copy whose primary function is to traverse ever-new distribution channels, as a form of valid documentary evidence – a function perfectly embodied by the screenshot. On the other hand, they demonstrate the memorial agency of geolocation, a process capable of transforming an anonymous image into a site of historical density.

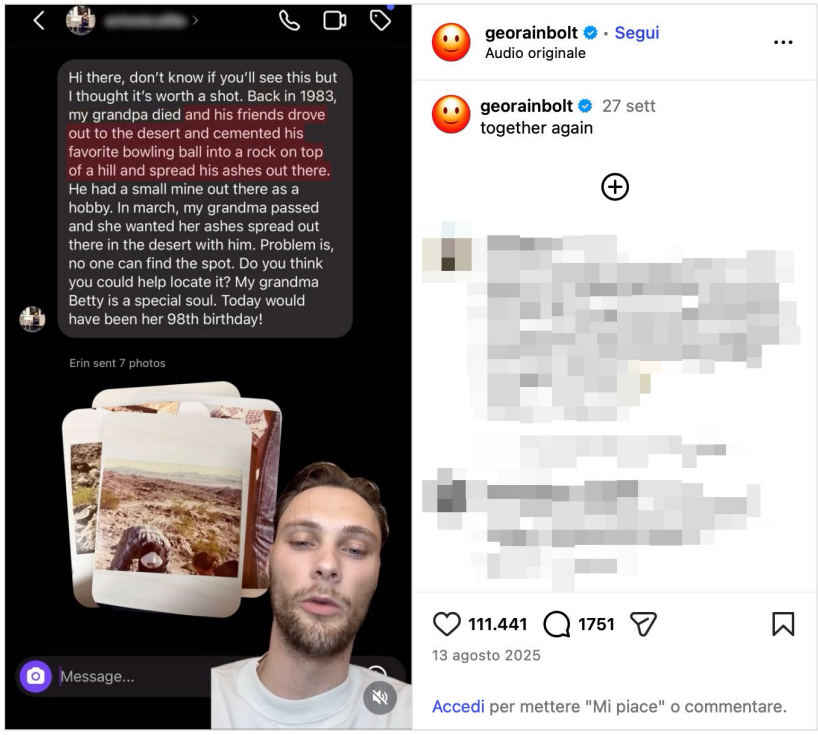

Fig. 2: Screenshot of the Instagram post “together again” by Trevor Rainbolt (@georainbolt), published 13 August 2025. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DNTVHBzy9iJ/. Post content © 2025 Trevor Rainbolt; Instagram UI © Meta.

Place as technical image

In the 1960s, the practice of photographing screens (a precursor to the screenshot) gradually emerged as a technology capable of shaping the nascent perception of human-computer interaction. It rendered an experience that was once technically conceivable but formless into images. Interactive computers were rare, expensive, and difficult to access; their operational exchanges were more easily described in written language, as in J.C.R. Licklider's pioneering *Man-Computer Symbiosis* (1960). At a time still dominated by electromechanical data processing, when workflows were mediated by punched cards and numerical printouts, the first photographs of screens made the possibility of direct dialogue with the machine tangible. Early screen images served primarily a documentary purpose, validating that interactivity was becoming a concrete condition (Allen 2016). Among the surviving images, one shot in 1959 has become emblematic. It portrays the vector silhouette of a pin-up displayed on the AN/FSQ-7, the large computer used in the SAGE (Semi-Automatic Ground Environment) system created by the U.S. Department of Defense in collaboration with IBM. The program, originally conceived as an internal diagnostic tool, likely produced the first human figure ever visualized on a computer screen and is now regarded, albeit retrospectively, as an early iteration of what would later be called computer art, anticipating the more well-known experiments of the mid-1960s (Edwards 2013, cited in Allen 2016). These early captures introduced a new image-based language that proved essential for representing revolutionary systems such as Sketchpad (1963), establishing conventions including dark backgrounds and procedural sequencing. With the expansion of videogame culture in the 1980s, some of these forms became even more prominent, supporting the spread of screenshots as proof and memory of high scores (Gaboury 2025).

In media theory, it is no surprise that analyses of screenshots have been shaped by the remediation paradigm (Bolter & Grusin 2000; Frosh 2018), which interprets them as a reconfiguration of photography in the online environment or, in virtual worlds, as a form of tourist photography (Book 2003), fulfilling commemorative and documentary functions (Švelch 2021) that are also key to understanding the semiotic scene of GSV. Against this backdrop, expressive forms proliferate, ranging from Net Art (Rossenova 2022) to "no-context" screenshots – decontextualized web fragments capable of producing shifts in meaning and aligning with early-2010s trends such as the New Aesthetic (Bridle 2013) or the aforementioned Post-Internet, renewing the dialogue between art and digital life. As Tyżlik-Carver (2022) notes, in networked economies capture machines function as open devices, capable of extending creative processes beyond the moment of image acquisition. A recent

example of this recursion is the fake screenshot created via GPT-4 and shared by Riley Goodside of Google DeepMind, in which a Wikipedia page devoted to “screenshot” contains the screenshot itself [fig. 3].

Fig. 3: AI-generated image mimicking the Wikipedia interface layout, conceptualized and published by Riley Goodside on his public X profile on 26 March 2025.
Available at: https://x.com/goodside/status/1904743355147235834?s=20.
Generated using GPT-4 © OpenAI; Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.

It is a conceptual interplay that inevitably recalls Joseph Kosuth’s *One and Three Chairs* (1965), with its tension between object, image, and definition, while introducing a crucial difference: the physical component disappears, leaving room only for the circulation of simulations. The GSV screenshots used by *GeoGuessr* players to document their location guesses emerge from a comparable, yet differently inflected, tradition. Rather than aligning with the trajectory of pure simulacra (Baudrillard 1981), they evoke the golden age of the 1980s screenshot, when it served to certify a videogame score, or they point toward digital-forensics procedures, whose legal validity remains contested. In the *GeoGuessr* context, the relation to the original source (a physical place) is filtered through a complex chain of mediations that includes the file, its storage in the GSV database, and finally the screenshot as the concluding act of recording, necessary to close the investigative loop and certify the result. This exclusivity forces the player to decipher the geographic scene and, in parallel, its technical echo: operational signs such as the

camera position of a Street View car, which may leave traces like the silhouette of a snorkel, the shape of a roof rack, the shadow of an optical mount, or the "camera signature" across its generations – from the hazy "Gen 1" to the more detailed "Gen 4" – acting as indicators of time and political geography. Another example is the so-called "sky rifts," imperfect algorithmic seams or glitches that end up becoming cardinal markers in players' perceptual literacy [fig. 4]. In essence, what Susan Leigh Star (1999) calls the "boring things" of infrastructure (p. 377) acquire a newfound centrality here, involving a host of underlying elements – or visible ones that are nonetheless considered negligible by the average user – which transcend the role of mere background noise to form a refined semiotic lexicon. As Rainbolt's methods demonstrate, geography in *GeoGuessr* is learned by subtraction, not by observing reality in its phenomenal essence, but as it appears after being processed by an industrial imaging apparatus.

Fig. 4: Screenshot captured by the author of a Google Street View displaying a "sky rift" in the Gjirokastër district, Albania. Available at: https://maps.app.goo.gl/ucADMrsE1LX9spn46. Map data, Street View imagery, and interface elements © 2023 Google LLC.

Conclusion. An affective persistence

The "forensic scrutiny" of geoguessing appears to align with Jonathan Crary's (1990) analyses of the abstraction of vision and the progressive detachment of the image from the human observer. According to the art historian, certain forms of representation culminate a long historical trajectory of distancing from the subject, eventually becoming a stream generated by an autonomous apparatus – a tendency that the algorithmic vertigo of GSV seems to confirm. Yet even while fitting into this genealogy, it is hard not to notice how the search for clues, the pleasure of

exploration, and the communal dimension of the challenges reactivate a palpable "sense of place" (Meyrowitz 1985). Inverting this dynamic, the player reintroduces an affective and instinctive investment into an image archive designed to exclude it. This outcome also depends on the medium, as Moore (2014) notes while drawing on Wilson's (2007) aesthetic reading of Kant:

> Following Derrida's critique of Kant's aesthetics, Wilson (2007) argues that the imposition of a logical framework on a subjective or affective response, such as a representational analysis of a game screenshot, risks completely effacing the role of the raw affect in communication that is not always logical. Wilson claims affect as an inalienable feature of aesthetic response, one that may not be completely observed on the surface, but in the ripples of its wake as it passes. As game screenshots move easily across the Web and social networks, their roles as visual records of embodied experience create connections and traces of affective resonances that may be possible to visualize graphically (Moore 2014, p. 150).

In our context, we can observe a form of re-subjectification that arises in the unveiling of GSV's cold mechanisms and becomes visible in episodes of shared, communal "intensity". It also involves the intuitive (or pre-cognitive) sensations mentioned by Rainbolt. High-level players often speak of an intuitive sense that allows them to identify, for example, a Romanian or Argentine landscape even in the absence of unequivocal markers. This falls within the domain of affect, which Brian Massumi (1995) describes as an autonomous and pre-personal intensity that precedes cognitive categorization. This shift can be understood as a counter-tendency to the transcoding processes described by Manovich (2001), which translate the world into a language serving computational pragmatics. While our gaze is progressively shaped by algorithms, the same context also activates processes of reconceptualization. As Gaboury (2021) notes, citing James Bridle, our perception of lived space is now shaped by machines and by mathematical equations that are not modeled on the human eye (Kittler 2010). Nevertheless, they still become living material for affective experience.

> Because a line has been crossed, technology/software/code is in and of the world and there's no getting out of it. Some architects can look at a building and tell you which version of Autodesk was used to create it. The world is defined by our visualizations of it (cited in Gaboury 2021, p. 191).

Gaboury continues by noting (2021, pp. 193-195) that these descriptive procedures are now rooted everywhere, colonizing what would once have been described simply as “physical space” in opposition to the virtual. Today, he writes, more than 75 percent of the images in the IKEA catalogue are computer-generated, and the idealized domestic scenes it contains are populated by objects that begin their life as CAD files in SolidWorks before becoming flat-pack furniture or rendered products created in 3DS Max. With a touch of irony, he points out that the IKEA catalogue realizes Sutherland’s “Ultimate Display”: a room in which a computer controls the existence of matter through a production cycle in which the digital and the physical are coextensive. This blurring of boundaries resonates with what William Uricchio (2011) calls the “algorithmic turn”, here transposed into the realm of location-aware technologies. The algorithmic image is now a field of relations (spatial ones included) in which the human and the non-human do not always occupy the subject position one might expect. It is therefore unsurprising that GSV, as a spatial mirroring machine, has gradually become the site of a process in which subjectivities resonate with one another, including the affective re-emergence of place within a language structured by procedural logics. These acts may also echo Siegfried Zielinski’s reflections on Flusser’s (1985) concept of “technical images”. In his essay *Art and Apparatus – A Flusserian Theme*, Zielinski calls for a “dramatization of the interface” capable of revealing the hidden complexities of technological devices, in contrast with their smooth and easily navigable surfaces. Zielinski’s antidote to such determinism consists precisely in this “dramatization”, a term that carries an affective charge intended to foster “less a purification through catharsis and more a provocation by epic means, which reminds us that the world of communication is a world of sensations and that, without them, no one would bother to enter into a relation with the Other” (Zielinski 2018).

The author

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