

ENTERING THE VOID

DIALOGUES ON ART AND URBANITY

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1. Introduction

Although many say that life is an adventure, our daily existence seems riddled with things that are unadventurous. These less adventurous moments range from waiting for an elevator, being stuck in a traffic jam, or simply being in a state of mind which is the result of wishes not yet fulfilled. To better describe these wearisome hum drum moments in life, the subject of waiting is looked at in this chapter by examining the places where these moments manifest and the state of mind that accompanies them. Novel solutions for cutting down periods of waiting or to distract a person from that fact that they are waiting are looked at with the goal of discovering how such “voids” are born and how they might be used to more positive ends. The chapter therefore poses the question as to what a void is and subsequently sets off an enquiry as to whether a void is something given and that we can find, or it is something that we mentally generate ourselves. Given that most of us find ourselves in voids, generated internally or externally, this chapter explores both and examines how these moments of apparent emptiness can be used to create experiences that somehow fill a void to the point that it simply ceases to exist.

Using a set of examples from historic tours, the motivations behind such tours, as well as the effects of traveling on the traveler are examined in order to reveal those moments in which there are poten-

tials for voids to form. A comparison between the parameters of each of the tours – in terms of what is common and not common between them – is made to uncover the most important parameters of the voids encountered and how these parameters compare when cost and method of travel changes. Once a practical language to address the void has been established through examining the example set, recent practices of making use of voids by artists focusing on the creation of public artworks will be looked at in order to discover how known voids such as waiting for public transport to arrive, the distance between two places of interest, or simply a period of time during which one is forced into doing nothing can be exploited.

In order for us to come to a better understanding on how today's communication technology is enabling such artistic practices and how these can be linked to an emerging field of virtual tourism as part of the offerings in the repertoire of city marketing, the work of *Virtuale Switzerland*, a festival for invisible arts, is looked at in depth. This will show how curators of art events in public space are now able to make use of and even create such voids, which provide the ideal platform to experience the city on the one hand and the artwork on the other. In end effect, the combination of virtual arts and tourism for a collaborative bond with the mutual goal to increase the aesthetic wealth of the city at the same time reduce the number of uneventful moments with new and fulfilling adventurous ones.

Figure 1. Signs with QR codes and instructions offer easy access to art works at places of installation where potential viewers can expect a period of waiting. This type of access makes use of a given “void” where people naturally seek something to entertain themselves with while they wait for the ferry to arrive and bring them to another port on Lake Lugano.



2. The Voids of Existence

2.1 What is a Void?

To begin, it would be good to simply pose the question as to what a void actually is. For an answer, at least a temporary one, we might respond that a void is a space that we find ourselves in by circumstance that is best characterized as a state of being trapped in a situation that appears useless and which demands that one simply wait. However, it is important to note that there are many kinds of voids, but not all of them can be discussed within the scope of this chapter. Such voids as those created by the inducement of opiates, by daydreaming during a conversation and having missed out on a discussion, or the void that we enter when we sleep and completely disconnect from the world are not really the voids in which we feel a sense of emptiness and which produce a range of negative emotions. Belonging to the same group are also spaces that are physically void because they contain nothing,

are not occupied, have been deserted, or are just spaces where idle avails.

The above-mentioned voids differ from the mental voids that we create and which we suffer from, through the negative emotions that the situation generates and which we allow to overtake us. However, there are of course ways – either through mental mastery, creative spatial design, or intelligent use of the arts – which could make the situation tolerable or help us gain control over it and manage it in such a way that we no longer experience the situation as a void. For example, a person in a stupor of waiting caused by an all too early arrival at a bus stop or train station in contrast to a person in the same void who happens to be able to focus on something that has a certain sense of wonderment such as glancing at a young woman waiting for the bus for her date to arrive. The former is a void and possesses little magic, while the latter is one that seems to be filled with wonderment which the imagination gives birth to.

It is difficult to answer the question as to what a void is. However the first hint at what dissolves a void was brought with the example of the girl waiting for her date to arrive, because it points to a moment in which our imaginations become active and we take on the role of observer.

2.2 The Psychology of the Wait

One of the key elements that make void a void – meaning a period of time that is perceived as vacuous and in which nothing significant is going to happen – is the fact that voids seem to always involve a period of waiting. Of course, waiting is a common thing that most people do on a day-to-day basis, which can mean a wait from a few minutes at a bank machine, or one lasting a period of several hours at a voting booth. Rather than the mere fact that we are waiting, it is what we experience during that waiting that defines a void as an experience rather than a moment in which nothing is being experienced. The experience of being in a void can cover an array of emotions. It is the

emotional experience that is in focus here, because it is a direct way to refer to the topic of the void as the “psychology of the wait”, which is appropriate due to the fact that the number of emotions while waiting are many as they are varied.

Figure 2. The image depicts a “fake” Metro Station that was set up in Grand Central Station in New York for the purpose of offering the public virtual travel to Zurich. The station not only acts as a prop for making selfies, but serves as an entry point to a collection of AR works. People in the station are drawn to the Metro Station out of curiosity and this in turns dissolves the void they are in and offers them “a way out” of it through their curiosity.



Out of all of the negative emotions that a human is capable of experiencing, it can be said that none have been left out from a situation in which one is forced to wait. During any period of waiting, it is not only the fact that we experience emotions, but also that the emotions we are experiencing will come and go, alone or in combinations, and do so at intervals that seem to cover the gamut from long and static to short and chaotic intervals. For a better understanding of this, imagine the following situations which are heavily characterized with strong emotions: a person having anxieties about his or her relationship while their partner is away, or any situation that appears to be unfair such as when someone cuts into the waiting line. These experiences are not necessarily bad *per se*, but they are judged as being negative, because

they possess unknown factors, which are always a key source of impatience and are therefore negative.

2.3 Coloring and Shaping the Void

In computing languages there is a ‘wait’ command that is used to put a process on hold until the execution of another process operating in the background has ended. Applied to the situation of waiting for a human, the longer a person has to wait before moving forward with their plans, the opportunity to make use of the wait with another activity grows. Of course, this is provided that what a person is doing in “the background” while waiting is something of value – which, when we measure the frustration associated with waiting, this is often not the case. So if we continue to keep the wait command in mind and apply it on the level of human activity, we discover that most of us are constantly trying to fill the meaningless void of existence with something meaningful. However, our inability to transcend the void keeps us on hold from doing something which we might wish to do and which we find meaningful.

Figure 3. A screenshot of the AR Artwork “We AR Butterflies” produced by Virtuale Switzerland with the artist Arthur Clay for the Science Museum Seoul, South Korea. The work is an example of how Selfies can be used in a way in which visitors can interact and join in the creation of a work



2.4 Forging a Connection

It was inferred above that an intelligent use of the arts could be adopted as a method for eradicating voids. It is also true that artists are masters at describing and depicting the voids as humans experience them. For example, the film “Enter the Void” (2009) written and directed by Gaspar Noé defines what a sense of emptiness is by depicting human existence as a meaningless void that is filled with more meaninglessness through the choices people make on how to spend their time. The film, staged under the neon glow of Tokyo nightclub signs, uses a wide range of cinematography effects and well-chosen music tracks to transform the banality in the lives of the characters into a poetic expression that turns emptiness into wonderment. The director describes the film’s subject as “the sentimentality of mammals and the shimmering vacuity of the human experience”. Noé’s ironic use of words, such as describing vacuity as shimmering, tells us of the transforming powers of the creative imagination in coloring and shaping the voids of human existence.

In the same vein as “Enter the Void”, is Timothy Leary’s “The Psychedelic Experience” published in the 1960s. Taking the same approach as in the film “Enter the Void”, the book mimics the contents of the “Tibetan Book of the Dead” with good intent, hoping to provide a simulation of death and rebirth with the idea to ‘liberate’ human beings from the problems in life caused by the chain of mistakes made, and complicated by the futile attempts to solve them. The potentials of the void are not only revealed at the levels of arts and literature, but also at mundane levels of the everyday. Both the film and the book – if not most artworks in general – suggest that a deeper sense of being must be discovered. As proposed by the content of the above examples, it seems that such a result can only be achieved through reality-bending substances that lead to greater sense of harmony, suggesting a parallel between the arts and drug state can be drawn because both nurture the bending of reality through a change of perspective, offering us the way out of a void through the use of the imagination.

2.5 Occupied Time and Non-Occupied Time

To begin to understand how the arts can add meaning to the voids and eliminate them, two examples, drawn from the history of architectural design, will suffice. In contrast to the psychotropic cinematography of an art film mimicking drug-induced states or of a book describing outer body experience, a simple example of how a void caused by waiting can be eradicated is the well-known and widespread use of a mirror placed adjacent to an elevator will do. A well-placed mirror allows us to wander with our eyes, to look at ourselves, to look at others, tidy ourselves up, and even spy on those behind us. Another example of this is the well-known wait at a bus stop, which has been 'shortened' by simply providing information monitors that offer a time schedule. Even if these systems are not technically perfect and don't offer precise arrival times, they do serve their purpose as mechanism that psychologically shorten the waiting time. Having a general idea of when a bus will arrive – whether accurate or not – is comforting to those waiting. In end effect, people are also more positively inclined to make use of the service in the future.

Everyone knows that time passes faster when you are doing something while waiting. So we can conclude that it is not the waiting that needs management, but the situation in which it takes place. Simply put: every waiting queue is a problem, but every waiting queue is also an opportunity. So, the answer to our question as to what void is and how it can be eliminated lies in the opportunity offered by the void, which entails not insisting on a shorter period of waiting, but in providing more engagement while one is waiting.

Keeping the situations described above in mind and how the voids were eliminated, one realizes that the opportunities presented by voids can be seized to eliminate the negative experience associated with waiting and taken to express something that is creative and meaningful and actually reverse the situation into a positive experience. Being made aware of solutions such as the placement of a mirror, encourages us to use our imaginations and to search for and find ways to dissolve

voids, which are capable to provide meaning while we are engulfed in vacuity. Certainly, if we are successful in finding solutions to voids and we are able to provide meaningful alternative to waiting, we can take advantage of the opportunities that are provided by voids when we travel, when we meet others, and during those moments when we find ourselves waiting for something else to happen.

Figure 4. The three of the most celebrated travel routes in European history: The Grand Tour (left), the Kangaroo Route Tour (middle), and the “Hippie Tour” (right)



3. Tourism: Roots and Reasons

3.1 Pleasure and Business

From one perspective, tourism is basically traveling for pleasure and from another it represents the business of Cities and Countries, which will always involve strategies for attracting and succinctly accommodating and entertaining tourists. Although tourists can be defined in general as people who are traveling to reside in places outside their usual environments for short periods of time, however the purposes for them doing so varies. Pleasure is of course a central motivation, but traveling can also be motivated by reasons of health, leisure, and even business. Interesting enough, tourism has a long history, which includes travels at the domestic or at the international level and therefore a major source of income for both Cities and Countries alike. Tourism not only determines the branding image of a place, but it ultimately determines to a large extent the living standard of a City. In turn,

tourism contributes to creating the image of City or Country, it also determines the character and atmosphere, of a place, which in turn attracts tourists as well as future residents and, more importantly, it contributes to the sales of domestic products.

Table 1. The table shows similarities and differences between the three most famous tours from pre mass-tourism. All of the tours covered distances of great lengths and all of them where undertaken with the goal of experiencing people and places that lay outside of the normal habitat of the traveler. Interesting to note is that in terms of itineraries, only the Hippie Tour was left open to chance and not dominated by either a clear itinerary nor limited to closed group of select people,. The Grand Tour and the Kangaroo Route were organized professionally with hired staff, but the Hippie Tour was organized solely by those traveling and in contrast to the immense amount of planning common to the other two tours, spontaneity was the key factor that determined the scope of the tour.

TOUR	TOURIST ROLE	TUTOR ROLE	AGENT ROLE
Grand Tour	Tourist	External (Private Person)	External (Private Person)
Hippie Tour	Tourist	External (Chance Encounters)	Internal (Within the Group)
Kangaroo Tour	Tourist	Internal (Personal)	External (Private Company)

Although the Grand Tour was a trip undertaken by mainly young upper-class European men whose main destinations were those centers where the cultural legacy of classical antiquity could be found and studied, it is interesting to note – and this will become an important subject in this chapter – that modern tourism can actually be traced back to the Grand Tour. Of course the Grand Tour included a diverse range of activities which, along with traveling to distant points, also included viewing works of art, learning new languages, experiencing diverse cultures, tasting different cuisines, and mingling with others. All of the above were integral aspects of the Grand Tour and each aspect branched out over time into what we refer to as niche tourism today.

Although mass tourism of today appears contradictory to the undertakings of the Grand Tour, it does stem from it. Mass-tourism came about with the advances in technology, making it possible to transport large numbers of people in a relative short time span to distant parts of the planet. This development was a key factor in enabling those with limited means to enjoy the benefits of leisure time outside of their normal domesticity. However, with the diversification of clients and offerings, mass tourism continued to grow but began to split and separate into smaller and more intimate categories of travel, having particular goals in mind. As mentioned above, such forms of tourism are termed niche tourism today and refer to any form of travel whose focus is narrowed to a specific activity.

3.2 Filling gaps with voids

Turning back to aspects of the Grand Tour, it is important to note that the primary focus of it was the pursuit of cultural experience. If a comparison can be drawn with the Grand Tour at the level of mass tourism, the categories of tourism that have retained some aspect of the cultural endeavors of the Grand Tour would be Heritage Tourism and Cultural Tourism, both of which are forms of niche tourism that specifically focus on culture.

Heritage tourism is a branch of tourism oriented towards exposing cultural heritage at the location where tourism occurs and this includes experiencing the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the history of the location and the culture of its inhabitants; cultural tourism, with its roots in the Grand Tour, is arguably the original form of tourism. It is concerned mainly with regional culture, specific to the lifestyle of people in those geographical areas one is visiting and can include tourism in historic city centers and areas and cultural facilities such as museums and theatres.

It is important to note that cultural consumption habits of Europeans include visiting museums and concert halls abroad almost as frequently as they do at home, and because of this both heritage and

cultural tourism are the forms of tourism that many policy makers are interested in as a form of tourism for the future. This is also due to the fact that both forms of tourism allow the city to portray itself and do so with branding that reflects the city with integrity. The movement towards these forms of tourism underlines the growing importance of cultural tourism as a source of cultural consumption and also gives reason to why institutions mandated for tourism are now consistently viewing such as an important potential source of tourism growth.

It is clear that cultural tourism is 'good' tourism. It attracts high spending visitors and does little damage to the environment or local culture while contributing a great deal to the economy. In contrast, there is also concern that cultural tourism might do more harm than good, because it allows too many tourists to penetrate sensitive cultural environments, adding to the complexity of their upkeep and perhaps even influencing their life span. The situation however opens up space for change and innovation. For example, the use of virtual technologies has brought in an array of possibilities, which allow visitors to experience sensitive cultural environments through AR and VR setups. The approach not only cuts down on time spent at sites of cultural heritage, but it also allows for more visitors to experience those sites as well as providing promoters with better ways to inform and educate tourists about what they are viewing.

The end results of these endeavors is to be akin to the goals of the Grand Tour, where the traveler seeks enrichment through the exposure to culture. Interestingly enough, the technology involved here is so breathtaking in its use of imagery and media that it brings us back to the phantasmagoric approaches in *Enter the Void* and *The Psychedelic Experience*. Equipped with the electronic enhancements used in tourism today, tourists find themselves immersed in virtual worlds, traveling less through physical space and more through the use of our imaginations.

Table 2. Route comparisons between real three real tours and a virtual tour. The chart introduces and compares methods of travel, numbers who traveled per year, the duration of the travel, and the distance covered. Comparing the historical tours, it can be discovered that over time longer distances were traveled with shorter periods of time and that the between time taken and distances traveled is ironically restored to the ratio of the Grand Tour with the Virtuale Tour. This suggest that with the advent of new technologies a new era of tourism in which more can be seen than meets the eye and which the “traveler” despite the short distance travels to discover and experience things outside of his or her normal everyday habitat.

NAME	GROUP	CLASS	BEGIN	END	GOAL	METHOD	YEARLY	TIME	DISTANCE
GRAND TOUR	Alone	Upper	London	Rome	Educational	Horse Carriage	Hundreds	Years	1435 km
HIPPIE TOUR	Small Group	Middle	London	Bangkok	Spiritual	VW Bus	Thousands	Weeks	9525 km
KANGAROO TOUR	Diverse	Middle	London	Sydney	Leisure	Jet Plane	Millions	Days	17000 km
VIRTUALE	Diverse	Diverse	Basel	Basel	Diverse	Diverse	Thousands	Hours	10 km

3.3 Digital tourism: more than reality in your hands

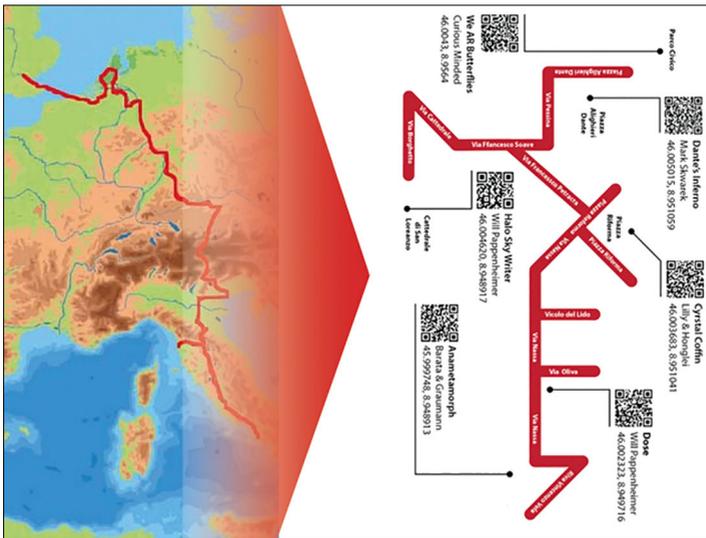
Augmented reality, or AR as it is commonly abbreviated, is a technology that allows us to augment a real-world environment with computer-generated media, fitting in well with the more general concept of “mediated reality”, in which any aspect of reality is modified by the intervening powers of a computer. In contrast to virtual reality, AR does not attempt to replace the real world with a simulated one, but functions by enhancing one’s current perception of reality. Augmentation is conventionally applied in real-time and in a semantic context together with what it proposes to augment. Uses are extensive and range from enhancing sport shows with vital information and expres-

sive graphics to artworks that immerse the viewer into phantasmagoric worlds that are brought to life through the creative expression of an artist. Advances in AR technology are increasing and the ability to add the use of computer vision and object recognition to place augments is leading to highly interactive and digitally manipulable environments.

With tourism having to focus more and more on cultural themes and sustainable models, the advances in AR technologies brings about new forms of niche tourism that embrace mediated realities. It is hardly a surprise, that as new technologies develop and are linked to today's network communication systems, that both sides of tourism are offered an immense array of new possibilities. Clearly, a new era of experiencing reality through the lenses of technology is born, allowing tourism to not just be part of the real world but to successfully link to the virtual worlds, which explore heritage in new and innovative ways that are able to cope with demands of mass tourism.

This is accomplished using mostly mobile phones and tablets and although the displays of these seem small because they are designed to fit easily into a user's hand, the effects of immersion common to AR transform the small screen into a looking glass of grand proportions. So, in many ways, our handheld phones and tablets have become our travel ticket to much grander worlds. With the creation of public artworks that make use of the places where they can be seen, visitors are allowed to go beyond what can be seen with the naked eye and fill the voids of existence through expressing the products of the imagination which mankind has celebrated over centuries with the use of creativity. The constraint of having to hold a device out in front of you at all times may be the price we pay for traveling, but then again that is not much to ask if a completely new world is opened up to us.

Figure 5. A comparison of the route of the Grand Tour and the route of the Virtuale Route through the city of Lugano. The Grand Tour route (right side of image) often began in London and ended in Naples after traversing through Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. The comparison between the Grand Tour with the Virtuale Lugano Route shows thatn both routes are designed as routes with multiple stops of interest which when combined offer a particularly diverse and cultured experience.

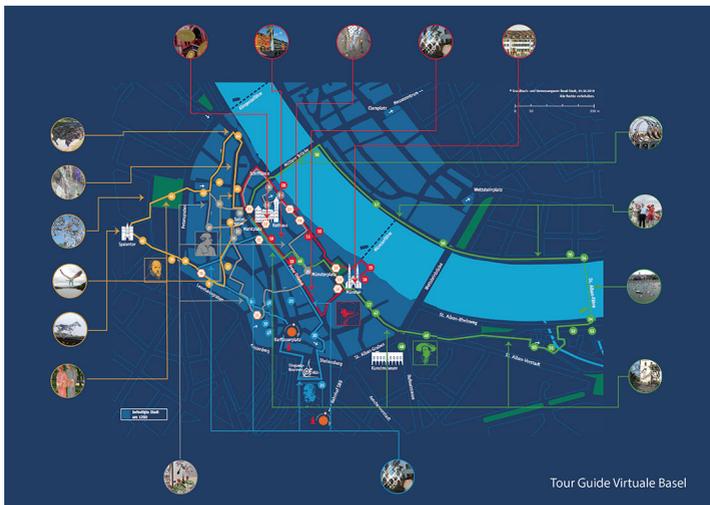


3.4 The Grand Tour and other legacies

With the information provided above it is now easy to see that the effects of the concept of the Grand Tour have spread over time and are now taken up by tourism industry. So contrary to what one might think, the legacy of the Grand Tour actually lives on into modern times. It is of course no longer reserved for those of privilege, but still plays its role as a form of rite of passage and remains a source of inspiration for all artists and art lovers alike. Whether by plane, train, boat, car, bike,

or on foot, the richness of travel becomes self-evident – if not through personal experience during trips then in those works of art and literature that depict it. For example, think of what we can experience in works like “On the Road” by Jack Kerouac (1957) or “Into the Wild” by Jon Krakauer (1996). In these and other works of the same genre, the contact between the elements of our world and ourselves come together in meaningful experiences ranging from the adventurous – the free-spirited blissfulness of traveling in an open ended truck through America against a backdrop of jazz, poetry, and drug use, to the tragic – Thoreau-like journey to the Alaskan wilderness of super trumper, Christopher McCandless that ended in his demise in an abandoned bus at a point on the Stampede Trail.

Figure 6. A tour map showing the five routes in Basel named after famous individuals from Swiss history. The map shows that many stops along the routes include important monuments and buildings that characterize the city. The circular images indicate where along the routes the works could be found.



3.5 The Hippie Tour

Obviously, the idea of travelling for the sake of curiosity and learning is an idea that was developed in the Seventeenth Century, and the endeavours inherent in the Grand Tour reappear to us in the novels of Kerouac and Krakauer, where the goal of the traveler is to open oneself up to experiencing a sense of life through the act of traveling. As time moved forward and the idea or concept of the Grand Tour made its way through the lenses of time, permutations of it evolved and were adapted by those interested in traveling as a form of cultural enrichment and as a sort of rite of passage. Although it cannot be said that the offshoots that follow mimic the Grand Tour, but starting in the 1950s many Westerners began to travel a route between Europe and South Asia, which in time became to be known as the ‘Hippie Trail’. It was named after the counterculture of the times whose embracement of alternative lifestyles, cultural diversity, and social experiments that are now assimilated factors in the mainstream society of today.

The Hippie Trail typically started from cities in western Europe, often London, Copenhagen, West Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, or Milan and then ran down mainly through Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India (including Jammu and Kashmir) and Nepal. In contrast to the costs associated with the Grand Tour, the Hippie Trail was a form of alternative tourism, and a key element of it was travelling as cheaply as possible in order to extend the length of time away. In terms of the tour acting as a rite of passage, those taking it focused on finding opportunities for interacting with the local population and not on “wasting time” on visiting tourist attractions. This new trend combined well with the methods of traveling which included hitch-hiking, cheap public and private forms of transport that traveled the route. This resulted in the sharing of ideas and experiences which nurtured counterculture and was in part responsible the social revolutions of the 1960s, inspiring the creation of such works as “Enter the Void” and the “The Psychedelic Experience”.

3.6 The Kangaroo Tour comparison

The Kangaroo Route is yet another established travel route that gained a similar status as the Hippie Trail. Traditionally, it refers to air routes flown by Qantas Airlines between the United Kingdom and Australia via the Eastern Hemisphere. Like the Grand Tour, it was an undertaking for the wealthy due to the cost of flying small charters to rare places. With very few exceptions, the route involved travelling by small aircraft seating fewer than twenty passengers, used many intermediate flights of local airlines and making use of strange and out-of-the-way airfields. Unlike the large vessels of today's mass tourism, the experiences offered by traveling with small aircraft was one of flying low and slow, which was received enthusiastically by those undertaking the trip, simply because it offered the opportunity for sightseeing from above and frequent rests at unusual stops. Although it was consuming and expensive undertaking, for the traveler it was filled with far-away and hardly known places and therefore attractive to those seeking personal fulfillment through travel.

4. The birth of the virtual

4.1 The Communion of Communication Technology

The success of any city marketing (or institution representing that city and which therefore is part of that city's offerings) will depend solely on their abilities to communicate their real as well as their virtual offerings properly to the public. Today's tourists are now to a large percent digital natives, born and bred in virtual worlds, who come with expectations and are no longer that acceptable or as easily excited with being presented with solely real things. Important cultural attractions, for example museums, are now using digital tools to market content to visitors, and city marketing offices in the area of tourism are following suit with new ways to make sightseeing experiential by adapting para-

digms already known and practiced in electronic urban arts. For those who have already familiarized themselves with the potentials in recent changes in technologies, it is no longer the real object itself that holds the public's interest, but what it is virtually linked to.

This tendency can be seen in how the blending of the virtual and real is able to create a unique and contemporary experience for visitors. This not only includes changing commonly accepted logic with which cities are marketed, but also entails adding new layers of interest to that what is already present through the use of virtual arts, digital heritage, and even urban gaming.

The genres mentioned above are all hybrids between real and virtual, which let visitors actively experience what a city can be today, what it was yesterday, and perhaps what it is becoming in a not all too distant future. The adoption of the approach of mixing the real with the virtual using today's communication technology allows a city to go beyond what is apparent and brings marketing strategies to not only entertain and educate their guests, but also to show how tourism can be made to adapt to the demands of the time. Soon, tourism will be able more than actually is physically present and will be able to adapt more quickly to needs by using real time data which are generated through participation. This means that it will be possible to nurture a tourism that contains the cultural breadth of a Grand Tour by adapting new public arts, the intimacy of a Hippie tour through a personal and experiential approach, and the potpourri of a Kangaroo route through the diversity offered by the flickering between real and virtual worlds. Such "hybridating" could clearly lead toward a tourism that is less prone to consumerism and more supportive of sustainable city marketing.

4.2 The Virtual in Action

Clearly, the arts spawned by the electronic revolution in communications technologies at the end of the Twenty-first Century with the advent of the smartphones have allowed artists to harness the virtual to create artworks that overstep the boundaries of exhibition space

(galleries, museums, etc.) and which have expanded into the domains of unbound urbanity, where they flourish in the heart of the city and fulfill the interests of a tech-smart Twenty-first Century audience, who yearn for the new and unique that is found in the virtual arts and who are at the same time interested in sensitizing themselves to the cultural heritage of the city.

Unlike the arts of previous centuries, the virtual arts of today are able to be forthright present and all pervading, because of the use of mediated technologies that allow for a dialogue between what is present in reality and what is overlaid virtually. For example, artists using Augmented Reality techniques have been able to present a variety of contemporary themes directly to the public through immersive experiences, which join knowledge sharing with aesthetic experience in uniquely effective ways by simply designing the works to be experiential and site specific.

Table 3. Table of AR Artworks plotted to categories of Niche Tourism, connecting them to aspects of the tradition to the Grant Tour.

WORK	ART	MUSIC	FOOD	HERITAGE	GARDEN	WATER	FILM	LIT	ARCHI	POLITIC	ME
Money Can Buy You love				X			X				
My Mirror City				X					X		X
Things We Have Lost							X				X
WiMet Spinners	X										
Dante's Inferno	X			X							
AR Butterflies											X
Mushrooms on Tour	X					X					
The 4th Dimension	X							X			
Sense of Place Breslau				X							
Butterfly Lovers	X			X	X						
TotenTanz		X		X				X			
Diamonds Are Forever	X		X						X		
Biomers Skelters					X					X	X
Radio Heads				X				X		X	

Virtual arts in public space appear at a time in which many cities are joining campaigns on sustainability. In order to join in on reducing the carbon print and regulate and reduce waste while dealing with an ever-growing populace of inhabitants cities have to be marketed as culturally enriching both historically and as contemporary points of culture. Technologies today have helped for the better and are moving the agenda on sustainability forward and toward a more positive outcome while they communicate and market their offerings.

Figure 7. The artwork “Money Can Buy You Love was created by the arts group the Curiously Minded to celebrate the traditions of money trading and minting in the city of Basel. The coin was digitally minted to mark the 500th anniversary of Basel and new forms of currency such as the Bit coin. Touching any one of the coins opens up stop motion film created in a workshop for youth where goal was to use the coin to create social warmth with it.



The fusion of art and science is well known and has been practiced as a curatorial approach for over a decade with great success in museums. With the same level of intensity and appeal, virtual arts have been able to fuse with tourism to create new and unique ways of presenting arts and portraying cities. This has led to unique collaborations between city managements and artists which have resulted in the flourishing of a form of urban arts that embrace past histories at the spaces that they are presented in. This has brought changes to the general schema of event management and its logistics. For the Virtuale Switzerland – a festival dedicated to the virtual arts which presents projects in Digital Heritage, Urban Gaming, and especially artwork using Augmented Reality – this move forward has meant gaining the ability to install works anywhere and without the need for transport, insurance, or physical install at a location, reducing the carbon print as well as the circumvents restrictive laws when working in historical districts.

To prove the practicality and the potentials of the use of electronic arts as part of the tourism package, several cases studies will be

presented taken from festivals held in Basel, Lugano, and Lausanne, which were produced, curated and executed by Virtuale Switzerland. These examples depict a diverse range of approaches in terms of how the Virtuale set up art tours that highlight the offerings of a city, which are conceived and implemented to flow through a city, in order to provide the proper setting for the artworks and make the act of visiting a city multifaceted and truly unique.

Individual artworks will also be brought as examples to show how AR artworks can link to heritage and culture while retaining their integrity as artworks. Such works range from static sculptures and monuments to immersive and interactive experiences, allowing the public to become part of creative act through personal involvement in shaping the artwork itself. If both the static and the interactive forms of such works are planned properly, the routes along which they can be seen enhance the offerings of a city and provide an interesting way for visitors to experience the city as timeless, meaning they can experience its history, its present state, and what might be planning for the future. This is made possible through the types of information that the artwork is able to present and how the visitors can then interact with it on a tactile level by navigating the provided channels.

It will also be shown how such an embrace of arts and tourism is akin to many forms of niche tourism, by fitting into new forms of tourism and evolving with them. Clearly, the traversing the routes formed by the placement of artworks reveal that connecting this form of arts and tourism truly fit into new and evolving standards of tourism, and offer new potentials in supporting a mass tourism that is sustainable. Further, the intensity of how visitors interact with an artwork can prove valuable to marketing institutions and help them come to a better understanding of how people are navigating the city, what offerings are appreciated, and how they can be better marketed (and therefore experienced) through digital possibilities inherent in the use of AR, VR, and MR systems.

Figure 8. A screenshot of the artwork “Biomer Skelters” by Will Pappenheimer and Tamiko Thiel taken in front of the Basel Rathaus which was installed along the “Paracelsus” route in Basel during the Virtuale Switzerland Festival in Basel.



5. Arts and the City: Dialogues of Urbanity

5.1 Virtual Basel: routes and works

The Basel edition of the Virtuale Switzerland digitally enhanced the “Five Scenic Routes” which connect the two parts of the city known as “Grossbasel and Kleinbasel”. The mapping of the five routes and how the artworks were placed along them, opened up visitors to those parts of the city which they might not have found on their own, or may have never thought of even going to them. One of the major factors in planning the placements was that each of the routes is named after an important person from Basel’s history. The choice of whom a route was named after was well chosen by those who planned the routes at city marketing.

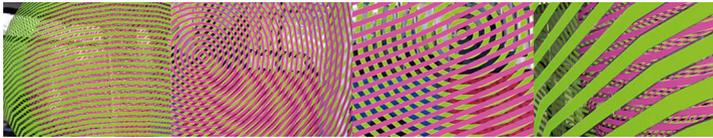
The “Erasmus”, the “Hans Holbein”, and the “Paracelsus” routes for example lead tourists through those older parts of Basel, where Erasmus von Rotterdam, Hans Holbein, and Paracelsus lived and worked. Following in the footsteps where they had walked themselves in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth centuries, visitors to the city are lead to both

parts of Basel. The Hans Holbein route and the Jakob Burkhardt cross from Grossbasel over to Kleinbasel. In contrast to the Hans Holbein route, the Burkhardt route brings visitors to places that were built at later points in time and lay outside of the old city walls. These particular routes offered the festival the opportunity to make use of the ferries that cross the Rhine river and to place artworks on the water so that when viewers crossed over they found themselves immersed in the middle of artworks.

Each of the routes offered the public a different collection of artworks and all of the routes focused thematically on the person the route was named after. For example, Paracelsus. He believed that everything in the universe was interrelated, and therefore dedicated much of his life to finding beneficial medical substances that could be found in herbs, minerals, and various chemical combinations thereof. For a route dedicated to Paracelsus, it seemed appropriate to choose an artwork that actually put the viewer into a “mood” of healing, which was visually akin to the thoughts that Paracelsus was most likely having on the healing of human illnesses while he walked that very same route.

The work, titled “Biomer Skelters”, was created by Will Pappenheimer and Tamiko Thiel as a participatory public artwork, which in the words of the artists “connected body rhythms to potential ecosystems”. As festival participants walked the Paracelsus Route, a simple wearable bio-sensing system employed their heart rate to plant and populate their path with fantastic AR vegetation. The process described by the artists is one where “the interior energy of the body is the generator of a wake of wild growth that is left behind them as they make their way through the city”. Although the work is in the form of an ecological “game”, which was designed to focus on contested notions related to conservation versus possible climate transition, it is appropriate to the route. When we read how contested the views of Paracelsus were at the time, we feel while participating in the viewing of that work that we are being brought closer to emotional life of a great thinker and are giving our attention to ecosystem we live in.

Figure 9. The image depicts phases of Will Pappenheimer's work WiMet Spinners seen while traveling through it on the Metro between Flon and EPFL stations tops. Based on the interference patterns, the work is perpetually changing and those interested can explore the work time and again regardless of the direction the Metro is traveling. The public could QR into the work from a hanging advertisement poster. Although the void was not designed but a given, how the void interacts with the artwork over time is carefully calculated.



Another work that explored cultural heritage as a subject matter and which offered the visitors proactive involvement was the artwork “Money Could Buy You Love”. It was created by Virtuale Switzerland as a contribution to the 500 years anniversary of the Rathaus. The work was placed in the Basler Rathaus, which is part of the Erasmus Route. To explore the meaning of the Erasmus Route and the person whom it was named after, efforts were placed on finding a concept for an artwork that embraced the ideas of Humanism and the production and exchange of currency. The theme of Humanism is relevant, because Erasmus was known under the sobriquet of “Prince of the Humanists”. He asserted that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny and believed that doctrines of theology should be derived from human needs and interests rather than from theological or ideological abstractions.

The production and exchange of currency was chosen as a second theme, because it celebrates the traditions of money minting and trading in the city of Basel. In order to match this theme with that of Humanism, a new coin was digitally minted to mark the 500th anniversary of Basel and to celebrate the birth of new forms of currency such as the Bitcoin. The digital coins, which were the central part of the work, were animated to appear as if they were falling from the sky. In

this work, the engagement with the viewers takes place by prompting them to touch the coins as a gesture of “exchange”. By doing so, nothing was purchased per se, but the person touching the coin in an act of exchange is greeted with one of a collection of stop motion films that was created in a workshop for the youth, whose goal was to use the coin to “mint” social warmth. Viewers watching the films were inspired by their inventiveness and were convinced that exchanges of ‘value’ could be motivated by other things than the need to purchase.

Figure 10. The image is a screenshot of one of many the AR works that was accessible through the QR code on the signage on the sides of the Metro Station. Once viewers scanned the QR code with their mobile devices, they had access to the MetroNext+ app, which allowed them to choose which artwork to view. The app included works by Arthur Clay, John Craig Freeman, Will Pappenheimer, and Lalie Pascal (Depicted).



5.2 Lugano & Lausanne

The other routes in Basel that have not yet been mentioned adopted a similar approach. However, festivals held in Lugano and Lausanne did differ: the tendency towards creating new ways to transverse the city by matching artworks with points of interest and by offering the public a new way to interact with their surroundings that were proactive greatly increased. The difference between the Basel, Lugano, and Lausanne festivals is important to mention so that the reader can better

understand that the possibilities of linking artwork to city spaces can be done with much fantasy and can be done in a relevant way to the city's characteristics.

Unlike Basel, Lugano is a lake-side city. This characteristic of the city was taken up by offering tours for both the city as well as for the lake. For the tour that went through the city, the itinerary included important sights at diverse locations through out the city. Starting from the new Cultural Centre LAC, the tour continued down the long narrow of Via Nassa where most designer shops can be found, through the center of Lugano where visitors were able to discover the traditional and cultural aspects of the city. All along the way, visitors enjoyed viewing a fantastic array of new virtual artworks that matched the sights, or filled the voids between them as they walked from one to the next sight. Navigating upwards through narrow streets to the Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, visitors were confronted with something completely new: they could write wishes and wants in the sky using Will Pappenheimer's "Halo Skywriter" and have others see it by sharing it through their mobile devices or via social media. The route ended with an optional visit to the city's greenest area, Parco Civico, where visitors could make selfies and turn into butterflies in the work "We AR Butterflies" by Arthur Clay. The butterflies could then be seen by all with a mobile device as they flocked and fluttered through the park's gardens.

The tour for the lake was termed "Waters and Ports" and consisted of a route that brought visitors to all of the popular and charming ports along the lake including Museo Helvetia, Grotto Elvetia, Gandria, Museo Doganale, Caprino, and Saint Rocco. This was accomplished by working closely with the boat excursion routes from Società Navigazione del Lago di Lugano and the Unseen Art Festival of Australia. With these partnerships, the Virtuale was able to make use of the Lake area and exploit it in new ways with a collection of selected new artworks. Each of the works for the lake tour was placed at a port along the lake; as the boats neared the ports, visitors were able to see the artworks floating above the port while the boat was docking. While the boat

passed through the middle of the lake, visitors found themselves immersed in a virtual field of colorful water lilies and under a star flickering sky in works by Tamiko Thiel and Warren Armstrong respectively. Although visitors had enough to take in as they crossed the lake and even while they were docking at the ports, the void resulting from having to wait for a boat to arrive, gave ample time for visitors to discover the artworks at the port while they were waiting.

Figure 11. “The Coming of a New Dimension” by Arthur Clay installed at Lugano Art Center during the Virtuale Switzerland Festival for Lugano, Switzerland



The Virtuale in Basel explored routes through the city and made use of the many bridges that connect Gross and Klein Basel; the Virtuale in Lugano contrasted the city and the lake with two different tours with contrasting sets of artworks. For Lausanne, a concept was developed to include the diverse parts of the city as was done in Basel and Lugano, but the opportunity was also taken to make use of Lausanne’s new metro line. This approach worked well for city marketing, because Lausanne is now coined as the “the smallest city in the world with a metro”.

Similar to the approach taken for the lake tour in Lugano, the Virtuale Switzerland developed a dedicated work for the both lines of the Lausanne Metro with the artists Will Pappenheimer. The artwork was titled “WiMet Spinners” and consisted of a suite of smaller works that

could be in eleven Lausanne Metro stations. Together, they connected the center of the city to all possible places of interest in Lausanne including the Rolex Center at EPFL, where a separate group exhibition was installed.

The artist described “WiMet Spinners” as a collection of leaking network apparitions that can be characterized by groups of rotating colorful objects and patterns that formed clouds of ephemera. Particular to this work and something which was first explored in Lausanne, was to position one of the works in the suite in such a way that the viewers could travel right through it as if they were the lens of a projector and the artwork was the film that was running over it. Although the objects in the work were stationary, they appeared to be in perpetual movement and because the work was based on interference patterns it changed in imaginative ways from the beginning to the end as the metro moved closer to and then finally through the work.

From the above depictions of the tours, the Virtuale Switzerland was able to conceive and design routes that lead visitors through extended tours and bring them to celebrated points throughout a city without being confronted with voids of ennui caused by waiting or from walking unentertained. During all of the tours, visitors were not only able to take in what was there in reality but were also able to experience a dialogue between the artworks viewed and the place where they were being viewed. Proving that a city can be experienced on both the real and the virtual plane and the combination between them, brings a new dimension city marketing and to tourism in general.

5.3 AR Travel Gateways

The design of a route and the choice of the proper artworks to present along it are two of the three important elements of creating a virtual art path through the city. The third important element and the most important and challenging is conceiving how visitors will be able to access the artworks using their devices. Once a visitor has arrived at a point of interest, there must be a clear and easy way for them to access

an artwork. Although this can entail simply giving them a URL link, a keyword to Google, or a QR code to scan in, the Virtuale has always gone to great lengths to make the process of “keying” into a work an interesting if not a fantastic event in itself.

At the beginning of this chapter it was shown how a QR code that is integrated into a visually appealing graphic and which is placed at a void can prove very effective in providing a gateway to an artwork. There are however other approaches to creating a gateway that actually contribute to the area where the artwork can be seen and which increases the impact of the artwork at the same time.

The eloquent example of a gateway that provides an interesting way to key into a work, was the “MetroNext+” project that was part of the “2016 Zurich Meets New York Festival”. The MetroNext+ project was a joint collaboration between Virtuale Switzerland and ETH Zurich and was inspired by the Metro-Net projects of the German artist, Martin Kippenberger, the “MetroNext+” project undertaken by the Architect Christopher Clay and based on research done at the New York Public Library. The Augmented Reality experience that was created to accompany the “Metro-NeXt+” station consisted of two contrasting projects. The former was a set of floating Platonic and Archimedean Solids that were textured on the outside with subjects common to Swiss culture and opened up upon clicking into floating art galleries with works by renowned artists such as the Curiously Minded, HR Geiger and Lorenz Meier. The latter was created by using photogrammetry software from the ETH Zurich. Using the software it was possible to generate 3D model of the Swiss street scene from a very large number of photographs taken in historic part of the city along the “Augustinerasse”.

To raise curiosity amongst members of the public, the curators at the Virtuale took up their interest in exploring the culture around the making of selfies. People passing through Grand Central Terminal were drawn to the MetroNext+ Station out of curiosity and then felt compelled to come closer and make a Selfie with themselves in front of it. Looking at the Selfies taken, the image gave the impression that the person in the photo were off to Zurich. Since, the QR code and the

instructions on how to enter the exhibit were integrated onto the sides of the station, it was very easy to get visitors to the the MetroNext+ station to scan the QR code in and get them to view the works.

The MetroNext+ Station not only served as an entry point to a collection of AR works that could be seen in and around Grand Central, it was also a way for visitors to virtually visit Zurich where they could experience a selection of architecture, arts, science, as well as the life-style of Switzerland's largest city. The quote presented to the public clearly underlines the intentions of the project: "Hurry, get on board, it's comin'! Listen to those rails a-thrumming. Get on the NeXt train and find yourself where Zurich Meets New York!"

6. Conclusions, and beyond Conclusions

In order to bring this chapter to an end, it is necessary to return back to the concept of the void and the motivation to use it as a mechanism for fulfillment. This will aid the reader to make connections between the diversity of what was discussed and let them draw their own conclusions about the possibilities brought about by combining new electronic arts with the needs of tourism today. Clearly, we all experience voids and most notably when choices are limited by standards hindrances such as schedules and costs, but also from the outside world due to regulations or just circumstance. Perhaps, meaningfulness is found in our lives only when we actually undertake and realize the things that we imagine experiencing. However, we can in some way reach or obtain the things we desire through fantasy being powered by active imagination.

The artwork "The Coming of a New Dimension" depicts the descent of the Tralfamadorians, Vonnegut's fictional alien race from his book "Slaughter House Five" who had the ability to free themselves from the restraints of time and visit all moments in the past, present, and future as they desired, in order to rectify something that has happened by explaining it from a perspective that it simply does not matter. The

work was created by Virtuale Switzerland with the authors of this article sums up not only the experience of the void as a psycho-dramatic moment that transcends reality by producing an intense feeling of immersion when viewing the work, but also inspires as Science Fiction does, to consider looking for solutions that are not imaginable or even possible today.

Even if nothing matters – as the Tralfamadorian Philosophy dictates – then perhaps even those moments of apparent emptiness that make our lives seem meaningless are then insignificant, because perhaps it is true that the determinism that is present in our lives through the stature we are born into can be circumvented by the use of the imagination. This is something that the artists in our society excel at, who exercise free will and use it to create experiences that somehow fill the voids to the point that they cease to exist, even if just for a moment that was imagined, dreamed, or part of another place that is virtual.

Certainly, whether our trips take place completely through our imagination, or through one of the many established travel routes of our times, we as travelers need to distinguish figure and foundation and seek out those places, real or virtual. Gilbert Simondon points the way to understanding this in his “The Essence Of Technicity”, in which he states that the magical universe can be experienced, where the segregation of man and nature dissolves and through the reticulation of space and time we become privileged to a primitive mode and sense of unity. To paraphrase Simondon and make use of his concepts of unity to bring things to a close, we can state that the moments in which we experience the magical universe in ourselves, is when it becomes possible for us to discover where all of man’s power of acting can be found and all of the capacity to influence the world is concentrated. Therefore, tourism as discussed within the framework above, inspires us while traveling not only to look outward at the wonders that society has brought, but also inward using our imaginations to enter the void as a form of rite of passage only possible with a synergy between real and virtual.

