

## 9 Curating the city

### Urban interfaces and locative media as experimental platforms for cultural data

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#### Introduction

When defining our identity and the identity of others, our sensory abilities are increasingly replaced by networked surveillance and identification technologies. How do we experience the way our body and identity are being ‘measured’ as functional and controllable products? Can touch based perception play again a role in experiencing the other’s identity? [...] Together you compose new, temporary, non-traceable, and non-controllable networked identities.

(Verhoeff and Cooley, 2014)

The local set-up of *Saving Face* by artists Karen Lancel and Herman Maat (2012) comprises a large, public, urban screen and an application with facial recognition software for a smaller screen, housed in a kiosk. The work invites participants to touch and trace their faces and thereby ‘paint’ themselves on the smaller screen in front of them, thus contributing their image to the database (see Figure 9.1). Meanwhile, the individual’s face on the large screen transforms into a composite image of the larger community of participants, past and present, who have traced their faces. Between these various mechanisms, screen-to-screen communication across spaces, databases of tracings and interactive touchscreen technology, software and code work to bring together the urban interface of the artwork, structuring its relations and performativity as they arise. Yet, this interface structure is not accidental – such urban interfaces are coded and designed to experiment with their affordances, bringing to the fore discussions about contemporary public space, networked urban culture and the relationship between code and space. Furthermore, in the intersection between the datafication and the proliferation of digital interfaces for ‘culture’, artworks like *Saving Face* can help establish theoretical and analytical tools for the critical evaluation of these interfaces of cultural curation.

This article establishes three main arguments centred on these themes. First, we propose that the analysis of media artworks, installations and other locative-based media projects brings different conceptual and theoretical tools to



Figure 9.1 *Saving Face* installation

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the already growing fields of software studies (Manovich 2013) and the relationship of code and algorithms to cities and the built environment (Kitchin and Dodge 2011). As multiscreen, site-specific, social and participatory ecosystems, which work according to the dual principles of physical touch and, what Verhoeff and Cooley (2014) have called elsewhere, haptic, gestural ‘looking’, *Saving Face*, specifically, and other artworks, more generally, offer a context for reflecting on the movements of people and the circulation of data and images across platforms, the urban context as living and layered archive, and the activity and gestures that are elicited by a variety of screen-based, cultural interfaces. Because it allows the mobile subject in a public space to engage in the process of creation and dissemination of images, the artwork enables us to consider the specificities of current uses of mobile, interactive and networked media. It presents these as a process, an operation, working with technology, on the one hand, and as a communal, collaborative, public engagement on the other. As such, the work *is* what it *does*, or, if you prefer, it does what it is.

Second, the concerns of software studies and the programmable city are reflected into media artworks themselves, as they offer the potential to test the limitations of affordances, play with possibilities and engage embodiment and performativity at a stage of temporary reflexive impasse – wherein the artwork occupies a theoretical as well as material space. In this way, as a *theoretical object* – or object to ‘think with’, *Saving Face* can be used to interrogate how urban projects can be understood as (curatorial) laboratories for embodied criticality. It is an allegorical example of design, and an example of theoretical analysis. Indeed, the work is *reflexive*. It proposes itself as embodied thought, not only on interactive screen media, but also on a cultural understanding of

the physical or material, as well as networked *connectivity*. It experiments with its technological affordances (Gibson 1979). It conducts such an experiment in that it works to critically expose how these affordances operate in the act of working with them. At the same time, *Saving Face* experiments with ways of addressing the social questions about subjectivity and visibility within a connected and participatory framework raised by the potential of its individual affordances. Thus, *Saving Face* can also be considered as performative and experimental, in the sense that it makes that which it analyses. This performative potential is the ‘message’, one could say, in McLuhan’s terms (1964) – or, arguably: the medium is the method (Verhoeff 2013).<sup>1</sup>

The value of media analysis becomes evident when the relative transparency of these artworks is counterposed by the blackboxing of more pervasive, although no less curated, digital networked systems. As Kitchin and Dodge (2011) have argued, the countervailing nature of code/space is directly linked to urban systems, embedded within the built environment, regulating the flows and rhythms of the city. Furthermore, the proprietary status of many of these algorithms, and the way in which they are shrouded with a peculiar curtain of governmentality (Rouvroy and Stiegler 2015) means that they are often treated with (perhaps, rightful) suspicion because they are impossible to unpack without prior access to behind-the-scenes information. This limits the way in which we can understand these spaces. For example, this blackboxing means that, for the most part, the algorithms and geotracking software that govern space are both protected (copyrighted) and hidden away from scrutiny and criticism. However, rather than attempting to untangle what may well be an impossibly complicated web, it may be possible for artists and critics to grapple with the realities of code/space by using (small-scale) media projects that reconstruct such urban dispositifs and take them as examples to think *with*.

Departing from the specificities of the work *Saving Face*, such media or performance installations allow us as scholars (in the words of the artists) to understand and theorise particular sets of relations, including those of programmability, urban environments and algorithmic cultures. In fact, it is precisely because of their diversity – a diversity common in artistic and innovative design – that such tactical media projects (though in some cases they may be framed as educational projects), which want to positively and creatively embrace those technologies, can be used to help us think through their counterpart contemporary concerns: geolocative tracking and algorithmic power in code found in the digital cartography and database-logic that provides the grid for our urban mobility. While often unclear as to how or to what end these mobile technologies seem to inspire social and critical ambitions to not only call up location-specific data (whether trivia, commercial messages, entertaining or ‘educational’ content) but also allow for performative and ‘awareness’ enhancing, participatory forms of civic engagement or agency.

This leads to our third objective. This chapter addresses some theoretical underpinnings of an analytical approach to understanding how location-based

media, or urban interfaces, layer urban spaces. It sketches some thoughts about a potentially critical–analytical approach to the ‘cultural interfaces’ (Manovich 2001) of current urban projects that use location-based media, and it offers an approach to understanding these projects as curatorial machines for cultural data. To do this, we zoom in on efforts such as *Saving Face* to provide access to data and their collections – whether or not instigated by museal and archival institutions or whether more bottom-up civic collaborative projects. These works, as theoretical objects, allow us to investigate layering as a design principle for urban interfaces as navigational laboratories.

These three issues foreground a long-standing interest in the way in which mobility shapes our visual practices: in the way we act, experience and think *with* mobility. This thinking-with is what underlies creativity and experimentation. To be precise: in design we find this thinking-with at the intersection of technology and practice. As such, navigation and mobility entail more than the portability of devices, the principles of ubiquitous computing or the temporality embedded in what we can call performative digital cartography. Mobility and navigation are cultural in the sense that they not only bring forward process as a cultural form, and emphasise not only the experiential and performative but also the philosophical nature of being-in-the-world, but they also shape our thinking in and as a process. This emphasis on thinking-with accompanies an ongoing dialogue with figures that function as tropes: figures or spatiotemporal visualisations which bring together a metaphoric and systemic logic of using and thinking about media – for instance, the navigational as trope of mobility in the visual culture of the moving image. A powerful, pervasive, yet sometimes uncritically used metaphor of layering can be useful to describe the experience of using mobile and location-based screen technologies, but it needs to be specified in analytical terms, in our opinion, in order to become a true concept.

Here, we focus on the logic of layers and layering that we can recognise in our use of and thinking about media technologies as cultural interfaces – interfaces that bring us tools to reflect on culture. In this sense, it means moving beyond systems and relations to explore the performativity of interface technologies, which occurs in the reciprocity of creativity and reflexivity. How does design work with what we can do with technologies and how does this become a thematic in itself: how does design work with, and, by this, also reflect on these affordances? It is the critical implication of questioning by doing in design that we wish to address in the context of the role of code in urban experience: in what way can we embrace code as a critical means to interrogate urban culture?

### **The curatorial in dispositifs**

In the face of fast-paced innovation and transition, it is necessary to develop concepts that may help us to approach the diversity and fugitivity of projects as urban interfaces; to frame them in a coherent conceptual universe in order

to better grasp the details, their comparative specificity and to assess their historicity.<sup>2</sup> The dispositif – the arrangement that encapsulates technology, subject and image – is particularly useful as a heuristic device that is scalable for the comparative analysis of any systemic or composite object (van den Boomen 2014). It allows us to historicise and situate, synchronically or diachronically, differences and similarities between media forms.

The concept of dispositif is wide-ranging and far-reaching. Michel de Certeau (1980) offered a critique of Foucault's famous 'panoptic' conception of the dispositif as a formation for surveillance and control, and has inspired an approach to dispositif as that which opens up 'possibilities of contact, participation, play, as well as bodily and sensual experiences' (Kessler 2007)<sup>3</sup> This reconsideration of dispositif as a networked arrangement that allows for various forms of agency and performativity is useful for a pragmatic, analytical approach to interactive and locative interfaces.<sup>4</sup> Media dispositifs can thus be understood as the arrangements that establish relations and processes between, and organise spatial and temporal settings of, technologies and practices that produce subjects and shared meanings. We take the location-based projects under discussion, with *Saving Face* as the primary example, as installation-dispositifs that comprise a layered interface – layeredness here understood as the spatiotemporal relations designed in, and organised by, the interface. The notion of layering is designed to be productive for the analysis of hybrid compositions of interfaces, of images and of spatial constructions of navigation, which are produced in the act of interfacing.

Moreover, the concept of the curatorial puts a specific spin on that concept of dispositif; one that begs for an analysis of this layering, and enables us to analytically tease out the relationship established by the installation and the larger urban dispositif that encapsulates the work. Dispositifs, or any kind of spatiotemporal spectatorial and participatory arrangement, entail a form of curatorial design. The curatorial is here understood as a broader conceptual framework for the design of, and programming within, cultural spaces – whether virtual, social, geographical or conceptual – than the more narrow sense of curation as the professional practice of designing museum exhibitions. It constructs a reflexive positioning of elements, it is constituted in its operation (in the vein of curatorial machines) and is embodied in the experience of the possibilities of contact, and of playful and participatory engagement invoked by this design. It is this coming together of thought and experience that is at stake in curatorial design: an embedded and embodied criticality below the surface.

For our understanding of the curatorial, as derived from the word curation used for museum and other exhibition practices, we may bring together the English 'to expose', which includes the meaning of 'laying bare' and the French verb 'exposer' – to display, as well as to argue (Bal 1996: 8). It is this specific combination of analysis and argument, or the analytical and the rhetorical, that we can recognise as main principles of 'the curatorial' across disciplines and in different cultural contexts. Indeed, within our mediatised

culture, we speak more and more of curatorial practices outside of institutional walls. The city has been conceptualised as urban, curatorial space, for example. The authors of *Digital\_Humanities* define curation in analytical and rhetorical terms in the context of digital, networked culture, as: ‘the selection and organisation of materials in an interpretive framework, argument, or exhibit’ (Burdick *et al.* 2012: 17).

Whatever the medium, platform or institutional context, curation can be seen as *care* for the constellation of elements – their selection and organisation – and their interpretative framework. Indeed, as Burdick *et al.* (2012: 18) continue: ‘Rather than being viewed as autonomous or self-evident, artefacts can be seen being shaped by and shaping complex networks of influence, production, dissemination, and reception, animated by multilayered debates and historical forces.’ To curate, then, is: ‘to filter, organise, craft, and, ultimately, care for a story composed out of – even rescued from – the infinite array of potential tales, relics, and voices’ (Burdick *et al.* 2012: 34). Or, in the concise summary by Marc James Leger, curation is ‘a practice that creates a space for discourse and critique’ (Leger 2013: 12) – a space-making, discursive, and critical endeavour. When we speak of interactive and networked installations or systems, this discursive and framing aspect of curation is part of the design of creative engagement between artefact and public in interaction. This performative potential of media-based dispositifs involves curatorial design.

Interestingly, a similarity with media has inspired work on museums and exhibition practices as well. For example, Kossmann *et al.* (2012) have a symmetrically opposite perspective and argue for an understanding of museum exhibitions as media in a McLuhanian sense, including their essential ‘transforming potential’. The authors point out how the ‘open, associative nature of the format’ fits the cultural moment (Kossmann *et al.* 2012: 33). They consider the exhibition as an ‘interface with a critical function, directing the view and transforming the message into a manifest interpretation’. For an interest in interactive mobile or location-based media, the analogy with exhibitions as spatial media through a concept of interface is inspiring for the development of a critical approach to these practices. In this comparison, we would include tours (audio tours, mapped tours, GPS-based, augmented-reality applications, etc.) as mobile forms of exhibition.<sup>5</sup> A necessary step in this comparison of curation of museum exhibitions and curation in media projects is to discern the distinction between curation by the project itself – the curatorial at work, so to speak – and the institutionally embedded practice of curation of these projects within, for example, a collection, a museum, or an archive.

Taking the curatorial as a heuristic concept, we can move from the technical principles of exhibition and programming practices in institutional contexts, and focus in our analysis of the underlying curatorial logic within dispositifs of public, urban installations or media projects in the broadest sense. This can contribute to a conceptualisation of a notion of cultural curation that brings together the multiple levels on which the curatorial logic is at work.

### **Dispositifs as curatorial machines**

Within a culture that so privileges innovation, urban interfaces are much like ‘laboratories for experimentation’, to borrow a term from science and technology studies. An experimental system, a laboratory can be conceived of as: ‘a heterogeneous constellation of theories, objects, instruments and practices redefining each other constantly and whereby this redefining is the result of a play with possibilities and, ultimately, a form of problematisation’ (Keilbach and Strauff 2012: 83). Indeed, these urban interfaces explore and question their own possibilities. While we creatively invest in these projects and herald them as new interfaces for civic engagement, playful learning and participatory culture, we need to develop tools for analysis, comparison and criticism.<sup>6</sup> However, traditional evaluative criticism struggles in understanding qualities that are also, precisely, inherent vulnerabilities of urban interfaces. When it comes to concerns about meaning and sustainability, our thinking about innovative and experimental interfaces must take into account the fact that such interfaces are inherently short-lived, that they enable but also require participatory engagement, and that they have a transformative potential that may or not be effectively deployed.

So, let us start with the specificity of urban, location-specific media ‘projects’. We consider these *as* dispositifs, in the sense of spatiotemporal situations or assemblages that bind together the image, the interface and the interfacing subject. We make a distinction, here, between the *interface* such as the device, installation, or screen as the site of input and output (when we speak of what we see and use) and the *apparatus* when we refer to the wider machinic assemblage of which it is part, which comprises, for example, also software, network protocols, GPS, online connectivity, etc. We speak of *dispositif* when we are concerned with the arrangement or relational system of interface and subject. This entails a perspective on the performativity of urban interfaces characterised by connectivity, participation and navigation, and brings to the fore the transformative, and thus, inherently critical potential of urban interfaces. This transformative potential is the locus of experience and meaning and, hence, cultural significance of design.

Central to this argument, and what we will consider here, is a concern with what we understand as critical and how curatorial ambitions of criticality and care can be analysed in the context of these urban projects. This concern is augmented by often uncritical interpretations of criticality – ones which assume a simple deconstructionist approach or are pseudo-political yet do not allow us to theorise and reconceptualise its foundations. Central, then, in this context, is the concept of *dispositif*, for it allows us to consider both the specificity of arrangements or assemblages – the design of elements and set-up that includes a participatory subject – and a critical perspective for how this subject is encapsulated and constructed by this design.

Many use the term ‘critical’ often but what do they mean by it? How does it work? What does it do? In the case of performative, interactive, participatory

urban media interventions, it is perhaps productive to approach this as an embedded and embodied criticality. Criticality, in Irit Rogoff's (2006) terminology, refers to a performative function of critique, which is experienced in encounter, which 'takes places' at the interface:

[...] in a reflective shift, from the analytical to the *performative* function of observation and of *participation*, we can agree that meaning is not excavated for, but rather, that it 'takes place' in the present. The latter exemplifies not just the dynamics of learning from, of looking at and of interacting with, works of art in exhibitions and in public spaces, but echoes also the modes by which we have inhabited the critical and the theoretical over the recent past. It seems to me that within the space of a relatively short period we have been able to move from *criticism* to *critique*, and to what I am calling at present *criticality*. That is that we have moved [...] to criticality which is operating from an uncertain ground of actual *embeddedness*.

(Rogoff 2006: 2; emphasis added)

It is there, outside the regime of representation and in the realm of performativity, that, according to Rogoff, active and critical participants are produced. Indeed, interactive media design often explicitly addresses the connection between thinking and doing. By bringing together the creative, experimental and critical, philosophical underpinnings of the social-political ambition of design, this reflection underscores the way in which design works with a layering of urban space – a layering that allows for a participatory and critical engagement with urban culture; a layering that is designed and curated. As such, it is possible to approach urban interfaces, or location-specific 'media projects', as curatorial machines; they are designed as techno-social assemblages that practise curation – the verb 'practise' understood here to indicate process, rather than product – as they filter, select, order, shape content and meaning, and position the public as spectator or participant.

### ***Saving Face* as a curatorial machine**

Let us now sketch two sets of aspects that we can develop in the analysis of curation: the earlier coupled analytical and rhetorical aspect of curatorial design (curatorial vision), and the overarching mission of care and critical potential (criticality) inherent in what we can call cultural curation: the care for and critical investment in the relationship between these three levels of curation. We do this by looking at the way *Saving Face*, in a reflexive gesture, demonstrates, questions, and, as such, critiques these aspects.

As a laboratory for experimentation, this work thematises the way in which its design establishes new connections, allows for forms of interaction



and encourages forms of haptic and participatory engagement. It asks for a critical–analytical perspective on its status: to make visible and to question the project as a form of design that, itself, makes statements about its own inherent critical potential, its criticality, that stems from the reciprocity of analysis and argument.

*Saving Face* explicitly addresses three aspects of the layered and location-based interface that are brought together within a dispositif of urban interfaces: the participatory agency of the individual in the act of interfacing, the installation as public event, and the questioning of traceability of the image in the composite, networked collection or database. There lies its performativity.<sup>7</sup> Significant about *Saving Face* is the centrality of the face in this layering – as the central image on the urban screen, in the intimacy of the participant’s gesture of stroking one’s own face in order to conjure up the screen image as a networked composition: a collage of the different faces of other, earlier participants. The title of the work with the double entendre of recording one’s face and not losing face in front of (or facing) a public, brings to the fore the question of individuality and public identity. The face as quintessential communicative element in interaction provokes us to probe the notion of ‘interface’ as central to curatorial design.

The interface of the installation works with the principle of touch and a haptic and material form of looking as a gesture of making, saving and tracing the image, and, as such, seems to comment on several issues at stake in our argument. As an artwork, it puts technology and connectivity between the hand, the screens, and the archive, database or network centre stage. It is an interface *par excellence* and literalised by visualising the way it functions as technological arrangement and the touch of the user that activates its operation. On the one hand, the artwork reminds its participants that they are being seen; that to be in urban, public space means to be visible. On the other hand, it endeavours to intervene in how visibility operates, how visibility – the public face – signifies. The gesture of touching one’s own face in order to visualise one’s self in relation to others points to the processual character of navigational gesture in the context of location-aware technologies. In this way, it harkens back to a long history in which photography (art) and policing (governance) are mutually informing. The artists themselves acknowledge this connection:

In a visual, poetic way *Saving Face* shows our emotional and social encounter with trust, visibility, privacy in our ‘smart’ cities. When defining our identity and the identity of others, our sensory abilities are increasingly replaced by networked surveillance and identification technologies. How do we experience the way our body and identity are being ‘measured’ as functional and controllable products? Can touch based perception play again a role in experiencing the other’s identity?

(Lancel and Maat, 2012)<sup>8</sup>

As the artists indicate, *Saving Face* counters the abstraction we frequently encounter in public places. It gives significance to an activity – navigation and its gesture – that is routine, everyday and, presumably, inconsequential. By returning the ‘face’ to ‘interface’, the project raises questions about presence, subjectivity, visibility and the anonymity often attributed to being in public. The work is highly personal, yet combines the private intimacy of auto-touch – a gestural selfie – with a highly public and collaborative, yet very temporary, visibility on screen.

The collage of different faces displayed on screen is a tracing – as well as a tracking – of multiple actions by multiple participants accumulating and metamorphosing across multiple moments. A composite image, it speaks symbolically to the multiplicity of subjectivity and to the temporal layering of various individual presences. The processuality of the navigational gesture does leave a trace – albeit an untraceable one. An iconic image of individual faces – fractured and reassembled into a new whole – it says: ‘we were here’ rather than who we are. The image testifies to past gestures, the image’s morphing evolution inviting further interaction and gesturing. At the same time, each live update of this visualisation keeps record of – or tracks – the to-be-future traces (uploaded in a Flickr stream). The installation bears witness to and renders visible the processual layering that is the semiotic process of the navigational gesture: a trace of the act of tracing.

The way in which the urban, public context is a layer in the design that requires curating, becomes clear when we consider the way this installation – like so many locative media or artworks – travels. Its location specificity is one that is, paradoxically, flexible. Elsewhere, Verhoeff (2012) has spoken about the ambulant locatedness of mobile media; here, migrating locatedness may be more appropriate. Indeed, each location-specific installation entails curatorial design, as not every public place is the same. While both are urban spaces, on a well-known square in Amsterdam, the work functions differently from, say, within the walls of a museum.

For example, a different version of *Saving Face*, named *Master Touch* (Lancel and Maat 2013), was set up in the then-newly opened Rijksmuseum for the special occasion of the Museum Night in 2013. There, the images of participants merged with faces of paintings. The similarity between the two installations allows us to consider what makes them different. If we depart from an analysis of dispositif, this comparison between both works hinges, we would say, very much on both the level of the location specificity of the spatial context and the level of its networked connectivity – in the second case, comprising a dataset of images from the museum collection rather than other participants from other locations or other moments.

The description the artists give highlights some interestingly different keywords: ‘*Master Touch* is an engaging and innovative way to open up data from the digital museum collection for the audience’ (Lancel and Maat 2013). This mission sounds different from the earlier cited descriptor of *Saving Face*: ‘In a visual, poetic way, *Saving Face* shows our emotional and social

encounter with trust, visibility, privacy in our ‘smart’ cities’. We do not have space to go further into the specificity of these differences in vision and mission – nor into the theoretical question about whether and how to consider these as either different installations or different instalments of the same installation – but the juxtaposition of their similarities and differences hopefully demonstrates our point about the levels of the curatorial design of layered interfaces of networked, locative dispositifs.

The design of the interface can be considered a form of curation-at-work, as it makes visible the layers of curation as process. It reflects on the layering of the cultural dispositif that comprises the *in-situ* installation, the local urban and public context and the spatiotemporal interlocal network it is embedded in. Curation on this level entails the design of the possible interaction with technology to generate images, to contribute them to a collection, to create compositions, to disseminate for an engaging, local public. It is curation of curation – so to speak – an embodied self-reflexivity. By *working* with these principles, the installation demonstrates its principles. This opens up to the critical potential inherent in the curatorial.

### **Conclusion: care and criticality**

But what of the curatorial ambition of care? Let us remind ourselves that curation comes from the verb ‘to care’. This may seem like a detour from the concept of the curatorial and of software, code and the built environment, but in fact, care is indispensable in all times and places to allow life to be sustained, including the life of social ensembles we call cultures. But care is necessary in many respects, not just in the sense of sustainability. The need to care for objects includes what is usually called conservation in the context of collections, but also the quality of their presentation. It includes the interrelations amongst objects and the enhanced meanings that may generate in their dialogue.

Moreover, care is needed for the objects’ dialogue with the public, including but not limited to physical interactivity. All this may seem to suggest that we must hold the objects’ hand, in an affective relationship. But rather than such a chaperone model, curation can also be thought of as the design of a laboratory. Then, it is not so much in relation to this more nostalgic notion of care in conservation, but rather as care for the arrangement of possibilities and experimentation.

Let us conclude with some thoughts about the implications of the model of curating as an analytical framing concept and frame the features, potential and consequences for a broader notion of cultural curating. Through the notion of curating, we can reflect on urban media with the question about what we may take as the consequences of performativity as central to dispositifs of networked, location-based, interactive technologies: the question of care and criticality in design. The curation of culture is the agency and creativity that connects the making with the dissemination of images.

The agency is, then, thought of in terms of affordances and responsibilities; the creativity as productive, personal and critical; making, contributing and assessing.<sup>9</sup>

This conclusion is also a proposal to think of design in terms of care. In what way can we embrace and make use of those technologies that potentially change (or have changed) the status of the image? Our key word, care, can be seen to be embodied, or practised, in the installation *Saving Face*. There, the central and intimate act of stroking one's face becomes a contribution to a shared collage, or composite image. This gesture is literally, as well as figuratively, care-ful: the visibility of the subject being on a public screen, adding to the community, underscores the personal and hence responsible nature of the act of participating. One becomes visually part of the image, adding one's face to the otherwise anonymous image.

Networked culture and technological innovation demand changing the principles and the philosophy of the design of public engagement. New platforms outside of the institutions provide new curatorial spaces, and technologies offer new tools for public interventions. Moreover, curation in and of urban space necessarily involves multiple levels of (spatiotemporal) design: of the dispositif of the location-based project, of the urban dispositif, as well as the more distributed and interlocal networked dispositif. The principles of current networked, urban culture and our fast-changing media technologies not only demand critical thinking about, or better, within design, but also offer the tools to change practices of engaging publics. Indeed, transformation and change require and enable a fundamentally critical stance: not a critique outside of it, but a criticality embedded or embodied within design. Changing technologies demands not only for critical reflection on design but, perhaps more urgently, a criticality within design – a design of the interaction with technology that allows for a closer experience of the processes of its framing as a poetic act. As interactive projects, or curatorial machines such as *Saving Face* exemplify, it is by being in touch with the work that we participate in its examination, by tracing its criticality below the surface.

## Notes

- 1 Elsewhere, Verhoeff (2013) has invoked McLuhan's (1964) famous dictum in the title of an essay on the performative nature of interactive technologies and the agency involved in using interfaces for navigation.
- 2 Lev Manovich's (2001) conception of cultural interfaces is a dialogue of software operation and human activity in their operation, in a working together of cultural, technological and 'human' registers.
- 3 See Kessler (2007). Kessler is specifically referring here to a special issue of *Hermès* (no 25, 1999).
- 4 Inspired by similar questions is a more 'science–technology–society' approach to networks that focuses on processes in which human and non-human actors operate. Similar is the network-based thinking, but in contrast with perspectives of 'science–technology–society' or 'actor–network theory', dispositif analysis is more concerned with questions of subjectivity, discourse and power.

- 5 But then, exhibitions are already inherently mobile, if we consider their performativity as I have unpacked it at the beginning of this chapter. The spectator, visitor or participant is, after all, mobile in the exhibition. The tour, then, is only a geographically wider net to capture what is at stake in exhibition.
- 6 Civic learning can be considered ‘a form of engagement that combines participation with the act of reflection’. See Gordon and Baldwin-Philippi (2014).
- 7 As argued elsewhere, the notion of ‘layering’ is meant to be productive for the analysis of hybrid compositions of interfaces, images and spatial constructions of navigation, as a product of interfacing (Verhoeff 2012).
- 8 For moving images of *Saving Face* see Lancel and Maat (2011).
- 9 Others have made a plea for the connection between critique and analysis, and the making of images. Laura Marks (2002), for example, has developed a notion of haptic visuality to conceptualise a more intimate form of critique, and Kember and Zylinska (2012: xvii) speak of media production and enactment and plead for a form of *doing* media studies – a creative mediation – that is critique ‘accompanied by the work of participation and invention’.

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