

# reviews

## Works

The Choreography of Everyday Movement  
Teri Rueb (2001)

Review by Patrick Lichty

There is an aesthetic quality to our travels as we continually reinscribe the landscape through our journeys across it, and it is this quality that Teri Rueb exposes through her work, *The Choreography of Everyday Movement*.

Participants, equipped with a GPS transponder, reveal the sociopolitical and poetic patterns resulting from the intersection of the human and urban (i.e. city) bodies. As the 'dancers' move across the urban landscape (this is, after all, about choreography), they are represented as a single dot on a blank canvas (or sometimes overlaid on a transportation grid), which creates the line of their daily travels. This abstraction decontextualizes their actions to that of pure line and movement in the real-time component. On the screen there are few cues to determine the (local) geopolitical milieu surrounding the traveler at any given instant. In this way, the daily movement of the body is aestheticized to its most basic elements, almost as if it were reduced to the stylus on a child's Etch-a-Sketch toy. Neither performer nor audience see one another on the browser stage, creating a unique sense of gaze that stands in contrast to traditional performative models.

The expressive character of the line reveals itself as the archived data is represented over time in the form of print-outs that are generated by the installation and sandwiched between layers of 1/2" glass. When the layering of the print-outs represents a z-axis of time, the abstracted line of the participant's movements -- when placed in reference to one another sans landmarks -- reveals the patterns of our daily 'dances.' These performances have their own beauty, but also reveal the habitual and the divergent in the day-to-day.

The question one might have concerns the totality of abstraction of the event. Is the performer uninfluenced by the introduction of the GPS system? Or is there a form of Hawthorne Effect caused by the unconscious desire to create aesthetically pleasing movement patterns? Or are these largely defined by the sociocultural milieu of the given city? Regardless, *The Choreography of Everyday Movement* is a well-articulated, early GPS-based new media work in which Rueb, with the help of Computer Science collaborator In Choi, poses interesting questions.



<http://research.umbc.edu/~rueb/trackings/index.html>