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NIKEPLATZ. THE URBAN SPACE AS A NEW MEDIUM

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Media and the city: a question of power

The relationships between media and urban spaces have been addressed from different points of view. For instance Couldry and McCarthy summarize the literature and highlight five objects of study: the media representations of urban spaces, the reconfiguration of urban spaces operated by media, the specific spaces of media consumption, the scale effects entangled by media and the specific spatial experiences provided by media devices¹.

In my speech, I have adopted a different perspective: I will analyze the relationships between media and the city from the point of view of the practices of appropriation of urban spaces and the management of power within them. I will argue, following an extensive bibliography of contemporary sociology and anthropology of the city, that urban spaces are subjected to processes and practices of appropriation and expropriation; that these processes should be framed within a broader reassessment of the forms of power in the partly globalized and virtualized society; that the media should be regarded as instruments of such practices and processes, and finally that some art interventions in urban spaces express these processes in sensible forms and then implement a process of *aesthetization* of social and political dynamics.

I will start with a particular case study: the intervention and performance *Nike Ground*, by Eva and Franco Mattes (Wien, 2003). In section 2 I illustrate the *Nike Ground* case history and speak about the two artists who are responsible for it. Section 3 presents some theories on the redefinition of the forms and mechanisms of power in a globalized and virtualized society; these theories provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the *Nike Ground* case, as I aim to show in Section 4. On the other hand, the *Nike Ground* case history can highlight some aspects that are usually underestimated in this theoretical framework: this is the argument in section 5. Section 6 is devoted to some general conclusions about the relationship between media and the city.

Nikeplatz: a play of appropriation

On the morning of October 3, 2003 the citizens of Vienna discover that in Karlsplatz, the central square in Vienna, a temporary display stand has appeared weighing 13 tons and measuring around 6 x 5 meters. Outside, there is the Nike logo and the announcement that “This square will soon be

¹ Nick Couldry, Anna McCarthy (eds.), *Mediaspace. Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age*, Routledge, London-New York 2004. For a complete theory of the media experience, see Ruggero Eugeni, *Semiotica dei media. Le forme dell'esperienza*, Carocci, Roma 2010.

Called Nikeplatz. Come to find out more inside". Within the post two stewards, perfectly professional, explain to visitors in English and German the sense of the operation: Nike has chosen a few key locations worldwide to launch its new campaign called *Nike Ground*; some squares and streets will be bought by Nike and renamed Nikeplatz, Nikestreet, etc. The visitor can admire two models of a huge monument of 36 meters long and 18 meters high which is to be positioned right in the centre of the square, reproducing the Nike *swoosh*. The monument is made of steel covered with a special resin made from the recycling of the soles of Nike sneakers. For the occasion Nike is going to launch a new model of sneakers, Turbulence III, also displayed on the stand. For further information the visitor is invited to visit the website www.Nike.Ground.com. This website, built with extreme professionalism and accuracy, is divided into sections "Vision" and "Vienna", "Monument", "Footwear" and "Contact us".

On October 10, the intervention is claimed by 0100101110101101.org in collaboration with the Viennese Netbase / t0. Institute for Culture and New Technologies. Hiding behind the initials 0100101110101101.org are two young artists from Brescia currently working in New York, who recently agreed to appear with the names of Eva and Franco Mattes.²

The two artists have actually manifested themselves under many different identities throughout their career. Eva and Franco Mattes began working during the Nineties in Bologna, within the network Luther Blisset (launched in 1994). Their first intervention is the *Darko Maver* project (1998-1999): Darko Maver is an artist from the former Yugoslavia, and his works are hyper-realistic sculptures of bodies dismembered or decapitated, aborted fetuses, etc. However, Maver doesn't exist, and his works are actually images downloaded from Internet. In late 1998 the Mattes buy the domain name Vaticano.org and create a perfect imitation of the real Vatican website; then, they begin to insert messages that differ significantly from the Magisterium of the Church. The site receives over 200,000 visitors a year but it is forced to close. Invited to attend the Venice Biennale in 2001, the Mattes present a new computer virus (*Biennale.py*) as a work of art; the virus begins to infect large numbers of computers causing a small phenomenon of paranoia (the site of Mattes, <http://www.0100101110101101.org> is still inaccessible by many Intranets, including that of my University). In 2003, when *Biennale.py* had been included in Norton Antivirus list, the Mattes exhibit a *Perpetual Dis/Infecting Machine* at several galleries in Pittsburgh and New York; the installation consists of a computer which every 10 seconds is infected by *Biennale.py*, disinfected by Norton Antivirus software and re-infected by the virus, ad infinitum.

One of the latest works exhibited by the Mattes is a project they have been working on since the beginning of their career: *Stolen Pieces*. The Mattes have stolen splinters and fragments from the most famous contemporary artists' works of art; they have collected and filed these fragments carefully, and obtained a small but extraordinary museum of contemporary art.

Let's go back to the *Nike Ground* project. The Karlsplatz post immediately raises the indignation of the Viennese citizens. Nike is forced to intervene: on October 6, the Austrian branch of the Company issues the following press statement:

² Indeed, this revelation is just another form of media construction: whether or not these are their real names (and in fact they are, even if the name Mattes is to Eva and not to his partner), the two confessed that «Eva and Franco Mattes are the last evolution of our long-standing identity game. The last identity you pick is always the most complex also because it contains all the previous ones». In Domenico Quaranta, *Traveling by Telephone*, in AA.VV., *Eva and Franco Mattes*, Charta, Milano–New York 2009, p. 44.

6 Oct 2003

Alleged Nike Vienna Karlsplatz action on a fake

Vienna (OTS) - Last friday we have been informed of an assumed Nike website, which claims that Nike plans to rename the Karlsplatz in "Nikeplatz." Moreover and wants to install a huge monuments in the form of our trademark. Were this part of an international campaign of Nike plans to rename streets and squares in big cities around the world. Furthermore an "information stall" displaying Nike's trademark set-up has been on Karlsplatz. There alleged Nike employees distribute flyers supposed that shall call attention to the action.

We hereby declare that the pretended Nike website as well as the activities described therein are in sheer fake. The same is true for the "information stall", the Nike employee and alleged flyers distributed on the Karlsplatz an absolute sham. We are convinced that the citizens of Vienna will react equally calm as we will. These actions gone beyond a joke. This is not just a prank, it's a breach of our therefore copyright and Nike will take legal action against the instigators of this phoney campaign. We assume that the public authorities, which are cited with incorrect statements will insist on their rights too.

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On October 14, Nike issues a 20-page injunction; they demand the immediate removal of the post and a penalty of 78,000 Euros for the damage to Nike image. The Mattes denounce the behaviour of Nike ("Many artists have dealt with commercial products in the past, even before Nike existed. Think of Andy Warhol's Campbell Soup, for example. Art has always used symbols of power from the society of its time as its subject. Nike invades our lives with products and ads but then forbid us to use them creatively") and decide not to remove the stall. Furthermore, these events draw the attention of the international press to *Nike Ground*: many prestigious magazines cover the event, and provide the Mattes operation with a global media visibility. In the meantime, the Vienna Commercial Court rejects the Nike injunction and recognizes the artistic nature of the project.

On October 28, as planned, the installation is removed, not before having given birth to a performance; the Mattes and their collaborators burst into the square in disguise, wearing strange masks, expose the sense of the projects, and finally jump in a car and disappear into the night.

The theoretical framework: city, territory, authority

In recent years the city has returned to being an important subject of interest for sociologists, anthropologists and geographers after a long period of relative silence. This recovery of interest is linked to new theories about the globalization and virtualization of space, time and social relations: today the city is seen as a globalized and virtualized site, and as a node of larger and more complex networks. Furthermore, a dominant theme of this field of research is the emergence of new dynamics of power and authority within the globalized / virtualized society: from this perspective, the city is viewed as a key site for analyzing these new dynamics of power and counter-power. In my opinion, this area of research is an essential background to frame the *Nike Ground* case history and

understand its scope and meaning. Therefore I will rapidly introduce some theories of this area, with a particular emphasis on works of Saskia Sassen and Manuel Castells.

Following these authors, contemporary dynamics of power are based on the end of the rigid connection between the physical demarcation of a territory and the exercise of an authority inside it - a connection that found its privileged form in the modern National State -. According to Sassen,³ there is a structural link of mutual dependence between territory, authority and rights: power and rights shall be exercised within a jurisdiction and therefore within an area defined by identifiable boundaries. During the history, the three terms have been entangled in different "assemblages" - that is concrete organizational systems involving both institutions and practices. In modern times, namely from the late Middle Ages, the dominant assemblage has been the National State, characterized by a strong physical demarcation of the territory. However, since the Eighties of the Twentieth century, there has been a disassembling of the national (a de-nationalization) and the emergence of a new type of assemblage on a global basis. Moreover, the new system is characterized not only by a re-scaling, but also by a shift from a physical dimension to a digital one: globalization has been made possible by digital networks of communication, and then by the advent of non-physical interactions between social actors⁴.

It is necessary to emphasize two critical aspects. First, territories as areas of exercise of authority and rights are not yet "given" a priori (like in the modern National State), but must be renegotiated from time to time: to use Sassen's terms, "geographic borders" are replaced by "bordering capabilities". This requirement implies a tension between old and new territories and between old and new forms of power and authority. Hence, contemporary society is thus manifested as an arena where people play games of constitution, *appropriation* and expropriation of territories and powers.

Manuel Castells stresses the crucial role played by building and managing networks in this context.⁵ Castells identifies, within the global networked society, four main forms of power: the "networking power" (the power exercised by those who hold the ability to use networks over people who have no such ability), the "network power" (the power to coordinate actors who use different networks), the "networked power" (the capacity to transfer traditional forms of institutional power into the new networks) and especially the "network-making power", the power to create networks, either out of nothing or reconnecting previously existing networks. The latter form is considered to be the most crucial. Castells' discourse implies a relevant consequence. If the formation of power refers to the constitution and appropriation of neo - territories; and if the network - making practice is crucial in

³ Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights. From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2006.

⁴ Sassen (2006): 340-348 strongly criticizes the technological determinism and stresses the embeddings of digital technology in social, economic and cultural dynamics. For a similar approach see Franco Farinelli, *La crisi della ragione cartografica*, Einaudi, Torino 2009. The author, a geographer, speaks of a historic transition from a culture of the map to a culture of the globe. According to Farinelli by the mid-sixteenth century the Western cultures had been invested by a radically new phenomenon, "the [...] transition from the direct relationship with reality to the systematic and pervasive image relationship with its image, the exchange of what exists for its representation, [...] the idea of an absolute equivalence between the world and its cartographic image". The logic of the *map* and the culture of *the board* deeply influenced the economic, political and philosophical developments of the Western world, until the late seventies of the twentieth century. From this point onwards, the new conceptual devices of the *network* and the *globe* have replaced those of the board and the *map*. The new logic recasts some of the cornerstones of the tabular thought: first the existence of *limits* and distinctions, secondly, the possibility to *measure* the distances and transcribe them in a staircase; thirdly the *stability* of the physical space transferred on the map, since the space itself is a dynamic entity in constant transformation.

⁵ Manuel Castells, *Communication Power*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009.

the establishment and ownership of territory and authority, it makes sense that *the sociability (that is the construction of social bounds) is now a commodity, providing people with very effective forms of authority.*⁶

The second critical aspect of the globalized / virtualized society is that the constitution and appropriation of new territories doesn't follow a linear path from local to global and from physical to virtual: according to Sassen, contemporary phenomena should be read as assemblages (or imbrications) of local and global, physical and virtual. In particular, Sassen identifies three main types of emergent territorialities: (a) the global network of financial centres, (b) the global networks of localized activists and, more generally, a global civil society, and (c) the non-national organizing logic of the legal frameworks for rights and guarantees (the phenomenon of the "new jurisdictional geographies").

In this context, the city and the urban spaces are of particular importance. If the new territoriality is the result of a reassembling of both local and global phenomena, there will be many subnational scales phenomena linked to supranational scales dynamics; in this sense, a perfect example is represented by global cities connected in supranational networks.⁷ This situation currently makes the city a strategic site for understanding the social and economic trends: the city is in fact the place where the global is localized and the virtual is embodied; the new city manifests a new geography of the centre and margins, wealth and poverty. At the same time this state of things makes the city a field of political action: the global city is the stage for clashes between multinational companies and international businessmen on one hand, grassroots movements and social activists on the other hand. The latter actors lack legality and legitimacy; nonetheless, they claim the right to be present and visible within the urban spaces, and thereby they affirm the possibility / necessity of a specific policy.⁸

From the theoretical framework to Nike Ground: network making and territory appropriation

As previously stated, my aim is to argue that theories on the constitution of power in a globalized / virtualized society, provide a theoretical framework to analyze the *Nike Ground* case history. In particular, I believe that both the critical points I explained in the preceding section should be applied to the case study to highlight some important features.

Firstly, the *Nike Ground* case consists of an appropriation of territories and in the affirmation of a counter power that get a victory over the established, institutional and economic powers. It's worth underlying the significance of the Swoosh monument designed by the Mattes: monument is intended both as a brand that marks the territory belonging to the Company, and as a new kind of landmark in

⁶ The term "sociability" is the current translation of the George Simmel's *Vergesellschaftung*, intended ad the process by which you establish and maintain relations of mutual action between the social elements. The concept marks the detachment of Simmel's theory from the "Organic" sociology of Comte and Spencer, and a prelude to the development of microsociology of the Seventies. This phenomenological approach is now at the centre of a clear recovery.

⁷ Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokio*, Princeton University Press, Princeton (N. J.) 2001; Ead., *A Sociology of Globalization*, Norton & Co., New York 2007; Ead. (ed.), *Global Networks, Linked Cities*, Routledge, London 2002.

⁸ André Drainville, *Contesting globalization: space and place in the world economy*, Routledge, London 2004; Sophie Body-Gendrot, *Sortir des banlieues: pour en finir avec la tyrannie des territoires*, Autrement, Paris 2007; Sophie Body-Gendrot, Jacques Carré, Romain Garbaye (eds.), *A city of one's own: blurring the boundaries between private and public*, Ashgate, Aldershot-Burlington 2008.

the experiential geography of the city.⁹ Moreover, the stall itself is a small monument, that is the sign of a presence; and the crowd involved in the event becomes a kind of monument as well.

It's important to note that the appropriation of urban territory and the affirmation of power carried by Mattes, draws its strength from a "network-making capability", according to the Castells' statement cited above. The Mattes never manifest themselves as "authors" during the event *Nike Ground*, but always refer to the collective 0100101110101101.org and its collaboration with the Viennese public school Public Netbase / t0. Institute for Culture and New Technologies. The event involves a large network of artists, engineers, financiers, managers, and simple supporters. This form of collective intelligence or creativity, in turn, tends to involve other networks: the citizens of Vienna, the international art community, the press, etc. Ultimately, Nike itself becomes a node in the network, as it responds formally to the Mattes' provocation. The meta-network resulting from such an operation is both the symbol and the instrument of a new kind of power. The tolerant attitude of the Austrian State on the one hand, the victorious confrontation with Nike on the other hand, clearly indicates the new power of networks in the globalized / virtualized society.

Secondly, the appropriation of urban territory of *Nike Ground* is a typical case of assemblage or imbrications of local and global, physical and virtual, according to Sassen's ideas cited in the preceding section. This case history thus reaffirms the key role of cities as nodes in larger networks within the new social dynamics. The *Nike Ground* event operates a double shifting: on one hand, it moves from the appropriation of a local space to the appropriation of global media spaces; on the other hand, it moves from the appropriation of physical spaces to the appropriation of virtual digital spaces.

From Nike Ground to the theoretical framework: the aesthetization of politics

The theoretical and analytical framework of the globalized / virtualized society has highlighted some important features and allowed a deeper understanding of the *Nike Ground* case history. However there are some other aspects of the case studies that are beyond this kind of analysis. Thus, we must start a heuristic movement opposite to that of the previous section, and ask how the case study forces us to rethink the theoretical and analytical framework exposed in section 3.

The central feature in this regard is the fact that *Nike Ground* operation doesn't *act* an appropriation of urban territories, but *enacts* such an appropriation on the city stage. In other words, the sense of the operation consists of an *aesthetization* of social and political practices of territory appropriation.

Consequently, Mattes' operation is rather complex and consists of three levels. Firstly, the Mattes appropriate an identity - that of Nike, the global sportswear company - and some rules of the discourse used by Nike (the style of the website, the company announcements, the sneakers specially created for the occasion, the monument to Woosh logo, etc.).¹⁰ Secondly, on behalf of Nike

⁹ Joseph Rykwert, *The Seduction of Place: the City in the Twenty-first Century*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 2000, pp. 132-159.

¹⁰ See Robert Goldman, Stephen Papson, *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*, Sage, London 1998 on Nike's advertising strategies; Anna Notaro, "Swoosh Time: Nike's Art of Speed ad campaign and the Blogosphere," in *Nebula. A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship*, no. 5.4., 2008, <http://www.nobleworld.biz/nebulaarchive/nebula24.html>, visit 15 September 2010, on Nike's attitude to flirting with the art world; Friederich von Borries, *Who's afraid of Niketown? Nike - Urbanism, Branding and the City of Tomorrow*, Episode Publishers, Rotterdam 2004 on Nike's "brand experiences" into urban spaces. The *Nike Ground* operation has been analyzed among others examples of "brand-hacking" by Anna Notaro "The Spectacle of Urban Consumption," in *CM: Communication Management Quarterly*, no. 14, Spring 2010, pp. 5-32. I wish to thank Anna Notaro for her useful suggestions about Nike's advertising strategy as a background for Mattes' intervention.

they take possession of urban space. Finally, the collective 0100101110101101.org and the Viennese Institute for Culture and New Technologies Public Netbase / T0 act a third level of appropriation of media spaces.¹¹

This aspect of staging also regulates the relationship with urban spaces: the operation *Nike Ground* is a great representation that uses urban space as a theatre for a *mise en scene*.¹² On this point, the situationist root of Mattes' work comes to light. They open, within the urban space, a space of a different order: an "other space" that modifies the ordinary spatial experience.¹³ Not by chance then, the motto of *Nike Ground* was "Rethinking spaces." Therefore, the basic quality of *Nike Ground* operation is not artistic, but primarily political, even though detached from institutional and traditional practices of politics. More precisely, *Nike Ground* is an example of *aesthetization of social and political practices of appropriation of the territories and exercise of power within them*.¹⁴

In my view, the aesthetization of politics is the feature that, although central in the *Nike Ground* project, is not grabbed by the theoretical and analytical framework of the globalized / virtualized society. As I have said, we must start an opposite heuristic movement and ask if and how the aesthetization processes can be integrated within the theoretical framework.

As we have seen in section 3, the social dynamics are described by reference to a twofold axis of tensions: between local and global, and between physical and virtual. I argue that this approach is limited because it does not take into account a third axis that I call *the axis of the aesthetical as opposed to the anaesthetical*. On the one hand, processes of social transformation are unnoticed, technological change are naturalized and, more radically, the work of the social on the sensibility tends to the levelling and standardization - mainly through the media -. On the other hand, a number of pressures allow the social actors to perceive, feel and experience the ongoing social changes, and specifically the processes of appropriation that are taking place. Following the model of Sassen,¹⁵ the contemporary phenomena can not be explained simply by using the idea of a linear shift from the

¹¹ We can observe that all the Mattes activity is being held under aesthetics of appropriation. This is primarily of appropriation of identity and rules of discourse: "They were just plain not there. They were identity hackers," (Bruce Sterling, *Nike Ground*, in AA.VV., *Eva and Franco Mattes*, cit., pp. 88- 92. This aesthetics of appropriation often assumes the appearance of *viral penetration* (Mattes work with the tactics of camouflage, screening, infiltration, simulation and spread progressive) or of *theft* (as the title of the project *Stolen Pieces* clearly reveals).

¹² "For this work we wanted to use the entire city as a stage for a huge urban performance sort of a theatre show for an unaware audience / cast. We wanted to produce a collective hallucination capable of altering people's perception of the city in this total, immersive way." (Eva Mattes cited by Domenico Quaranta, *Traveling by Telephone*, cit., p. 38. For the concept of "mise en scene" applied to the city see William J. Mitchell, *Placing Words: Symbols, Space and the City*, MIT Press, Cambridge (Mass.) 2005)

¹³ Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," ("Des espaces autres," in *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, no. 5, octobre 1984, pp. 46-49, now in Id., *Dits et écrits*, vol. IV, Gallimard, Paris 1994, pp. 752 – 762) in *Diacritics*, no. 16, Spring 1986, pp. 22-27.

¹⁴ The term and concept of "aesthetization of politics" refers to Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1936), <http://bid.berkeley.edu/bidclass/readings/benjamin.html>, last visit 15 September 2010. Benjamin uses the term in reference to the media politics of Fascism: "Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life". Hence, the term has an internal ambiguity that I would at least partly to keep. For a survey of the recent uses of the term see Huimin Jin, "Simulacrum. An Aesthetization or An-aesthetization", in *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 25, no. 6, 2008, pp. 141–149.

¹⁵ Actually, the problem of the aesthetical is implicit in some statements of Sassen. See for instance the following assertion: "A good part of globalization consists of an enormous variety of micro –processes that [...] denationalize what had been constructed as national but *do not necessarily make this evident*." (Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights*, cit., pp. 1-2).

aesthetical to the anaesthetical - as some scholars believe, arguing that the global and virtual society is also an anaesthetical one -. Rather, aesthetical and anaesthetical dynamics should be considered as fluid and imbricated in different forms and assemblages.¹⁶

Conclusions: the global city as a new medium

In this paper I have argued that media and artistic interventions in urban spaces should be considered and analyzed as practices of appropriation of territories and of establishment of new forms of power. I have also pointed out that such practices work simultaneously both on the physical and local side (urban space) and on the virtual and global one (the echo in the media, the extensions on the network, etc.). Finally, I insisted on the fact that a full understanding of such dynamics requires us to consider a third kind of tension, that between the aesthetization and the anaesthetization of political practices. From a methodological and heuristic point of view, media and artistic interventions in urban spaces can be usefully analyzed within the theoretical framework that approaches the city as a node of the globalized / virtualized society; at the same time, however, these case studies requires an improvement of this theoretical framework: in particular, they direct the attention toward the aesthetization (or the anesthetization) of the social processes within the globalized / virtualized society.

I intend to devote my final remarks to outlining two more general issues: the relationship between media and appropriation practices, and the relationship between media and the city.

Regarding the first question, it's fairly obvious that various forms of media are powerful tools of appropriation and that they are closely integrated with a practical management of power. It is less obvious, however, that media perform these tasks simultaneously in different ways. I argue that *media operate simultaneously but in different ways on each of the three axis identified above*. On the *physical vs. virtual* axis the media power is manifested as effective occupation of spaces: the spread and “relocation”¹⁷ of screens into urban spaces is one of the clearest examples of the phenomenon. Moreover, one important feature of media is to provide devices for shifting from the physical to the virtual dimension and vice versa: media act as a fundamental commutation tool. On the *local vs. global* axis, media function as tools of power insofar as they provide connection and network - making possibilities (see the various forms of net power described by Castells). Last but not least, on the *aesthetical vs. anaesthetical* axis, media are instruments of power as they enact the processes of appropriation while they are acting them. *Media build power through its representation*: the networks are made today not only “on site”, but also “on sight” (for example in the different types of web social networks, in TV reality shows, etc.); on the other hand, the “society of the spectacle”¹⁸ is careful to make the processes of appropriation unnoticed, through practices of social anaesthesia.

¹⁶ It follows from here a constitutive ambiguity of aesthetization practices, that can always be reabsorbed into the “anaesthetic” mechanisms of marketing. As Bruce Sterling points out “those times are gone. Nike, who are superbly hip, will surely never fall for such a provocation again. If some lesser artists than our invisible pair pulled off some similar effort today, Nike would leap all over it as ‘viral marketing’ and grass-roots ‘urban experience design’.” (*Nike Ground*, cit., p. 92).

¹⁷ *Cinéma et Cie. International Film Studies Journal, Relocation* (edited by Francesco Casetti) no. 11, Fall 2008. See also Scott McQuire, *The Media City: Media, Architecture and Urban Space*, Sage, Los Angeles 2008.

¹⁸ Guy Debord, *The Society of Spectacle (La Société du Spectacle*, Buchet–Chastel, Paris 1967), Soul Bay Press, Eastbourne 2009.

I can now turn my attention to the second question: the relationship between media and urban spaces. This relationship is normally described as a connection between media devices and an environment or a background (a "territory") which hosts their presence. However, I believe that contemporary dynamics require a modification of such an approach: currently media are not limited to spreading within a territory, but end up losing their specificity in this movement; conversely, territories are not merely occupied by media, but become media devices themselves. In other words, within the current "post-media condition,"¹⁹ *the medium is the territory*.

More specifically, with regard to cities and urban spaces, it is not difficult to see that the city is not just a territory occupied by media devices, but an instrument of appropriation and creation of new territories. On the physical vs. virtual axis, the city becomes a media device capable of producing "other spaces"; on the local vs. global axis, the city is a connecting device and a tool for network construction; finally, on the aesthetic vs. anaesthetical axis, the city is today the most suitable location to observe the processes of appropriation. In conclusion, the city appears today as the *new medium* of the global society.

¹⁹ Rosalinde Krauss, "Reinventing the medium," in *Critical Inquiry*, no. 25, Winter 1999, pp. 289-305; Ead. "A Voyage on the North Sea". *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, Thames & Hudson, London 1999.