

## Desiring to be Led Astray

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### Abstract

This essay proposes to explore the practice of following as a tactical legacy of surrealist *errance*, by examining a range of contemporary art practices in relation to their surrealist precursors. Using the critical connections between André Breton's text *Nadja*, and Sophie Calle's project *Suite Vénitienne* as a point of conceptual departure, the intention is to suggest that the act of following has the capacity to draw together a number of divergent concerns or theoretical positions in relation to the notions of doubling or mirroring; mimicry, simulation and camouflage; and as such can be understood as the location or conceptual site where a host of surrealist ideas are buried, and whose ghosts persist to haunt.

Not to find one's way in a city may well be uninteresting and banal ... but to lose oneself in a city – as one loses oneself in a forest – that calls for quite a different schooling.<sup>1</sup>

The desire to be led astray or to 'lose oneself in a city' emerges as a craving for the unknown, the unfamiliar, or the strange in both oneself and one's surroundings. It is an impulse evident in the gesture of following another, for this is an action that promises to transform the banal reality of everyday encounter with sexually charged or libidinal potency. Seeking to dissolve the boundary between self and other, as well as that which might differentiate the body from its environment, the performative act of following has the capacity to draw together a number of divergent concerns or theoretical positions in relation to notions of doubling or mirroring; as well as those of mimicry, simulation and camouflage. Such ideas can be evidenced at play in a range of contemporary artistic practices, but might also have their roots in, or can be traced back to, surrealism. Using the errant meander inherent in following another's steps as a central motif, my intention is to assert that the surrealist practice of *errance*, as much as the concepts of objective chance and the *informe*, can be seen as a critical strategy and influence behind the contemporary interest in and legacy of surrealism.<sup>2</sup> By making connections between key moments of surrealist *errance* and more recent interest in acts of wandering - in artistic practices from the late 1950s onwards and especially in connection to contemporary art - my focus will be to examine how a range of surrealist preoccupations are articulated within these different artistic strategies. Furthermore, by extending existing arguments, I intend to propose that the notion of following and the idea of being led can be viewed as a specific tactical legacy of surrealism's aimless wandering. The desire to be led astray evident in recent artistic practices can thus be understood as a pivotal concept through which to articulate an alternative lineage of surrealist influence whereby the ephemeral and performative gesture or trace of *errance* may be granted a more enduring afterlife.



In *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (2006), cultural historian Rebecca Solnit weaves a rich conceptual tapestry of literary and cultural references from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1845) to Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), in order to suggest that the desire to lose oneself is marked by the quest for 'voluptuous surrender,' of a giving over to or immersion in the present. She argues that 'to be lost is to be fully present, and to be fully present is to be capable of "being" in uncertainty and mystery.'<sup>3</sup> The desire for being lost or for losing oneself anticipates the discovery of the unexpected or unaccustomed at the heart of reality: it affects a transformative blow in which the everyday might be seen with fresh eyes. As Thoreau suggests:

Not till we are completely lost, or turned around - for a man needs only to be turned round once with his eyes shut in this world to be lost - do we appreciate the vastness and strangeness of nature. Not till we are lost, in other words, not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations.<sup>4</sup>

This sense of abandonment and the relinquishing of moral or rational cognition is a primary drive at play in the surrealist practice of psychic automatism, a central strategy employed within surrealism through which to express the functioning of the unconscious through automatically produced textual, visual and performative means. Employing techniques and procedures appropriated or borrowed from psychoanalysis, spiritualism and from children's games, the function of psychic automatism was to attempt to bypass the conscious self and thus disrupt the normative or perceived order of reality, revealing a psychical layer of existence or latency beneath the veneer of lived experience and visual appearances.<sup>5</sup> The process of psychic automatism was propelled from an imaginative universe into the public realm through the practice of *errance* or aimless wandering which became strategically adopted in 1924 when André Breton, Louis Aragon, Max Morise and Roger Vitrac set off on foot from Blois (a town chosen randomly) and wandered haphazardly for several days in order to 'encourage the eruption of unconscious images into consciously perceived space.'<sup>6</sup> The 'aim' of surrealist *errance* was to somehow dislodge the glaze of self-delusion; to puncture the surface of what was consciously 'seen' to allow dreamlike revelations to emerge in the cracks and fissures between the different layers of reality. Though essentially a transitory and performative gesture, the practice of *errance* is textually inscribed or documented in the way that it underpins the conceptual narrative structure of numerous surrealist texts. For example, André Breton's autobiographical novel, *Nadja* (1928) relays an account of his brief relationship with a woman who seemed to be the embodiment of the drifting spirit. The text follows the random interactions between Breton and Nadja, and the dissolution or disruption of the different psychological layers of existence occurring as a



consequence of their encounter. Nadja epitomised 'the wandering soul' for Breton, who was initially fascinated by her submission to chance and by the perpetual state of *errance* to which her existence claimed. She became emblematic of his desire to escape the rational: her physical and mental wanderings were seen to embody a kind of automatism, which Breton employed as though she were a *planchette* scoring the surface of the city with chance or psychic inscriptions.<sup>7</sup>

For Louis Aragon, *errance* was a means to release a 'sense of the marvellous' from within reality, which had been cloaked in a 'delirium of interpretation'; or buried beneath the constructs or illusions of the 'who advances into the world's habits with an increasing ease, who rides himself progressively of the taste and texture of the unwonted, the unthought-of.'<sup>8</sup> The gesture of aimless wandering, which underpins the structure of his novel *Le Paysan de Paris* (1924-26), served to reveal the hidden or latent reality; for according to Aragon, 'New myths spring up beneath each step we take ... a mythology ravel and unravels.'<sup>9</sup> The practice of *errance* might also be seen at play in the 'wanderings, strange sights and encounters'<sup>10</sup> of Philippe Soupault's novel *Last Nights in Paris* (1928) where the enigmatic character of Georgette provides the focus for a multitude of searches and acts of following or surveillance through which an alternative version of Paris could be experienced. The act of following another serves to distance the familiar and the known, such that a fresh and perhaps more critical vantage point may be developed through this psychologically displaced perspective. The sense of distance experienced by feeling disoriented, subjects the commonplace or unnoticed elements of one's habitual environment to scrutiny equivalent to that of the stranger's glance. For example, as the characters in Soupault's text, 'were pursuing or, more exactly, tracking Georgette, [they] saw Paris for the first time. It was surely not the same city. It lifted itself above the mists, rotating like the earth on its axis, more feminine than usual.'<sup>11</sup>

Whilst the immediate provenance for surrealist *errance* can be found in the process of automatic writing - such as that employed in the project *Magnetic Fields* (1920) by Breton and Soupault - reference to other literary and artistic examples is useful here in order to begin to differentiate between potential readings of this form of aimless wandering, and to identify the focus that will later become central to my argument. Certainly the idea of aimless wandering is by no means unique to surrealism and it can be seen to underpin a range of preceding and subsequent artistic, literary and cultural practices.<sup>12</sup> In one sense *errance* can be understood as part of a tradition of spatial navigation and urban geography; an act of wandering through the newly burgeoning city space that follows in the footsteps of Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur*; Edgar Allan Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* (1850), or is echoed in the writing of Walter Benjamin, whose reflections on the city have subsequently informed a critical interpretation of surrealist practice.<sup>13</sup> Such practices have been framed by a later discourse that asserts the critical value of the pedestrian experience of the city, as both a politically resistant and playfully disruptive gesture. For Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), walking is read as a tactic for



challenging the dominance of the map or grid. Analogous to the speech act, it carries the possibility of breathing life or enunciation into the dead text of the map, of introducing a temporal beat or narrative into the abstract spatial grid of the city space.<sup>14</sup>

Certeau's analysis of the connection between the practice of *textual* and *pedestrian* wandering has been adopted by some historians as a filter through which to return with alternative readings to moments of the past. For some, the haphazard spatial and temporal organisation of Man Ray's *Atget Album* (1926), for example, can be understood as having been arranged or selected through a form of *dérive* akin to what Certeau describes as the 'pedestrian enunciation' of a city space; and can thus be seen to operate according to the principles of *errance*.<sup>15</sup> Man Ray's album re-presented a selected number of photographs by Eugène Atget whose documentary images captured the process of an old Paris disappearing, as a new cityscape emerged.<sup>16</sup> Man Ray edited and re-framed a partial and seemingly arbitrary collection of Atget's images within the covers of *his* own album; where the curatorial selection or rejection of images is seen by some historians to echo the way in which a pedestrian itinerary articulates a partial and individualised 'reading' of the city. As Certeau asserts:

The walker transforms each spatial signifier into something else ... He thus makes a selection ... whether by making choices among the signifiers of the spatial 'language' or by displacing them through the use he makes of them. He condemns certain places to inertia or disappearance and composes with others spatial 'turns of phrase' that are 'rare,' 'accidental' or 'illegitimate'.<sup>17</sup>

Man Ray can thus be seen to have wandered through the Parisian streets as they were portrayed within Atget's oeuvre: in this two-dimensional rendering of the city he is presented as having lingered over certain 'scenes'; bypassed others. Performed as both a physical *and* curatorial or textual gesture, the act of wandering introduces a form of 'spacing' which functions to disrupt the logic of one order in favour of another.<sup>18</sup> Certeau describes this gesture of spacing and selection as the procedure of 'asyndeton'; 'a process of "opening gaps in the spatial continuum" and "retaining only selected parts of it".<sup>19</sup> These ideas can be traced through into subsequent practices which share the gesture of aimless wandering. The Situationists' illustration/diagram *The Naked City* (1957) also ruptures the continuity of the city represented as map by presenting only fragments and partial references that are separated by gaps and blank areas. Abandoning the spatial approximations and distances of the map, Guy Debord's illustration *The Naked City* focused on zones and pockets of interaction or 'hubs' of social activity, which were linked together by what Debord described as 'turntables' that facilitated a range of potential direction and possibility. It provided a visual diagram of the dynamic of the Situationists' primary tactic, the *dérive* (drift or drifting) that reflected the pedestrian's experience, that of the everyday



user of the city. The Situationists' *dérive* extended the practice of *errance* not least in relation to its subversive possibilities as a form of play or political disruption. It was used to demonstrate a 'critical attitude toward the hegemonic scopic regime of modernity,'<sup>20</sup> whereby the idea of blindness (in aimless or purposeless wandering) was advocated as a way to 'subvert the rationality of pure visuality.'<sup>21</sup>

The Situationists' navigation of the city space aimed to employ maps as sites of narrative and of individual itinerary rather than as tools of 'universal knowledge.'<sup>22</sup> Rather than offering the panoptic or the utopic overview of the landscape which is characteristic of the conventional geographer's interest in mapping, users of *The Naked City* were freed from a dictated sense of navigation and proximity, and could for themselves experience, 'the sudden change of atmosphere in a street, the sharp division of a city into one of distinct psychological climates.'<sup>23</sup> Returning once more to Certeau, the users of this map were encouraged to explore and contribute to the experiential or performed *space* of the *Naked City*, rather than passively travel through the city rendered as *place*, which was the static and immutable city defined within conventional cartography.<sup>24</sup> The gesture of both literally and metaphorically tearing up the map presented an act of both resistance and recuperation. The performed *dérive* in both the errant play of purposeless footfall or in the casual drift through the archives (as in Man Ray's album) operated as the rhythm or pulse which set about the stirrings of hidden or repressed realities; where, as Certeau asserts, 'A migrational, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city.'<sup>25</sup>

Alongside the notion of a resistant form of pedestrianism or spatial 'enunciation' these practices can also be interpreted as part of a tradition where geographical navigation echoes, encourages or is equated to specific psychological experiences or states of mind. A precedent for both the surrealists' and Situationists' use of and interest in alternative forms of mapping and topographical description is found in *La Carte du Tendre*, which made an appearance in the first volume of Madeleine de Scudéry's novel *Clélie* (1654), and used the metaphor of a journey to chart the possible trajectories of a love affair.<sup>26</sup> Representational of the emotional or psychological landscape of the author's sexual imagination, the map might be seen as anticipating certain surrealist preoccupations by suggesting the latent presence of a bubbling, libidinal set of drives and desires beneath the surface of what is ordinarily seen or perceived.<sup>27</sup> A connection between surrealism and *La Carte du Tendre* is made by Ian Walker, where he suggests that: 'The physical geography of Paris is replaced by an affective topography, superimposing a sort of *carte du tendre* over the actual city. Or, to project forward, *Nadja* can be seen as an exemplification of "psycho-geography".'<sup>28</sup>

Tactics for the alteration or defamiliarisation of the city through the gesture of wandering emerged within surrealism, where the wanderer was required to forfeit habitual forms of navigation in favour of a more psychological engagement with space and their surroundings.



Nocturnal wandering, or alternatively the following of another's footsteps can be seen as specific models of *errance*, through which to de-stabilise or blur the line between self and one's environment. The subversive or deviant possibilities of 'nightwalking,' long associated with the 'threat' of unrestrained drives and desires - debauchery, social disruption, criminality and prostitution - were recuperated within surrealism as a process of making the familiar strange.<sup>29</sup> The creative or imaginative potential of nightwalking emerges in the eighteenth century in novels such as Nicolas Restif de La Bretonne's *Les Nuits de Paris* (1788) and *Le Paysan Pervers* (1775), whose descriptions of nocturnal wandering and urban nightwalking might be seen as directly influencing Louis Aragon's *Paysan de Paris* and the manner in which nightwalking became adopting within surrealist *errance*.<sup>30</sup> For Rosalind Krauss, the image of the surrealist nightwalker, 'like the shadow that is cast, [is] of a different order: dissolved in darkness, approaching the condition of the fluid and impalpable.'<sup>31</sup> Here, it becomes possible to identify the potential of a third reading for *errance*, where certain forms of wandering seem intent on affecting a form of declassification or the blurring of distinct boundaries. In the act of nightwalking, for example, the individual dissolves into the city's shadows and becomes indistinguishable from darkness. Alternatively the gesture of following creates a blur of a more corporeal or existential kind.

The act of following another is a specific method or tactic that can be witnessed at play in the surrealist examples cited earlier, where in each text it is possible to trace a 'relationship,' however fragile, between a follower and a person followed.<sup>32</sup> By examining a range of contemporary art practices in relation to their surrealist precursors, my aim to suggest that the act of following itself has the capacity to draw together a number of divergent concerns or theoretical positions in relation to the notions of doubling or mirroring, mimicry, simulation and camouflage; and as such can be understood as the location or conceptual site where a host of surrealist ideas are buried, and whose ghosts persist to haunt. Whilst there is some argument that the lasting legacy of the performative and ephemeral experiences of *errance* have been 'collapse(d) or eclipsed by objective chance,'<sup>33</sup> a distinct trace of aimless drifting can still be seen to linger beneath the surface of more contemporary practices, not least in relation to its subversive possibilities as a form of play or disruption. Rather than trying to present an exhaustive overview of the act of wandering *as practice*, I am proposing to focus on examples which relate to or result from the gesture of following another (or another's instruction), or which demonstrate the desire to be wilfully (mis)led. The intention here is to highlight specific moments when this form of *errance* appears to enjoy something of a resurgence, which might be explicitly witnessed in various conceptual or political practices of the late 1960s, or expressed more implicitly within the layering of imaginative, historical and real space in the work of many contemporary artists.





Fig 1: Vito Acconci, *Following Piece* 'Street Works IV,' Architectural League of New York; Oct 3-25, 1969; New York City, various locations. Activity; 23 days, varying times each day. Courtesy of the Acconci Studio.

Though arguably differing in political intent to their immediate Situationist precedents, a form of wandering *dérive* or drift and the concept of *depaysément* are echoed in various conceptual practices of the 1960s and 1970s, in both durational performances and propositions for alternative modes of cartography.<sup>34</sup> In Vito Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969), for example, the sense of following or being led was explicitly employed as a specific tactic of wandering: the artist selected a random passer-by in the street and then followed them until they disappeared into a private building [fig. 1]. As with earlier moments of *dérive*, the work served to disturb the usual boundaries and conventions of the city space - such as the division between public and private - in order to create a sense of a psychologically charged urban experience, which ruptured or suspended normative patterns of behaviour. The notion of following is played out in a different manner in Bas Jan Ader's planned trilogy of actions *In Search of the Miraculous*, where the artist proposed a series of seemingly irresolvable or abstract searches in different locations. The first part of this serial quest - *In Search of the Miraculous, (One Night in Los Angeles)* (1973) - took the form of a series of black and white photographic images documenting his nocturnal journey from the Hollywood hills down to the Pacific Ocean [fig. 2]. The images were accompanied by handwritten lyrics from the Coasters' 1957 song *Searchin'*; which evoke the relentless pursuit of a lost love. Phrases such as 'Gonna find her' used for the ninth and tenth images of the series strangely and playfully recalled the tone of surrealist wandering, motivated as it often was by the search for some elusive female figure. The anticipated third part of Ader's series would repeat the action in Amsterdam, following the significantly more ambitious second part of the series, in which he intended to cross the Atlantic in his one-man yacht, *Ocean Wave*, a journey he never completed. Here Ader traded an urban *dérive* in favour of a voyage that was performed closer to the paradigm of the 'wandering tragic hero on a quest for the sublime.'<sup>35</sup> Certain critics have asserted that Ader was in fact attempting to critically explore the rhetoric of the romantic quest,



through what could be described as a conceptual experiment that borrowed the 'quest narrative' as a set of found instructions or the rules of a game. The romantic model of wandering is then *followed* such that it might be interrogated, inhabited or appropriated; even rescued and 'restored as true experience.'<sup>36</sup> The act of following is adopted as a tactic for being led astray, or as a gesture of critical re-inscription through which to recoup the latent value of the original act.



Fig. 2: Bas Jan Ader, *In Search of the Miraculous - One night in Los Angeles*, 1973. Courtesy of Bas Jan Ader Collection, Patrick Painter Editions, Vancouver, Canada and the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Contemporary artist Tacita Dean extends this tradition, for her practice is also one of resuscitation and rescue, where forgotten or unfulfilled narratives from the past serve as the impetus for a quest in which she can be seen as a wanderer piecing together fragments of history that lurk beneath the surface of reality, re-tracing the footsteps of another in search perhaps of alternative endings or missing clues. It is the breaks and pauses in lived experience, or the moments of failure and abandonment that motivate her meandering 'journeys.' The story of Donald Crowhurst's doomed sailing endeavour during the 1968 *Golden Globe Race* serves as one such 'unfulfilled beginning'<sup>37</sup> that is claimed by Dean as a site to excavate. Crowhurst, an



unprepared and faltering sailor, was desperate to be the first to complete a solo non-stop voyage around the world. His attempts proved futile and his tale instead represents the subsequent collapse of the dream, in which he disappeared at sea leaving only a series of faked and incoherent log entries. Dean takes this as the conceptual starting point for a series of journeys and voyages of her own in which she initiates a filmic following in someone else's footsteps, a meticulous re-treading of Crowhurst's fated journey in works such as *Disappearance at Sea I and II* (1996 and 1997) and *Teignmouth Electron* (1999) [fig. 3].<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 3: Tacita Dean, *Teignmouth Electron*, 1999, film still. Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.

Hal Foster suggests that Dean is compelled to search for objects that 'serve as found arks of lost moments in which the here-and-now of the work functions as a possible portal between an unfinished past and a reopened present.'<sup>39</sup> Hers is a process of 'uncharted research' to uncover the specific histories that exist under the surface of a place: a form of archaeological dig through space and time. This sense of psychologically charged geography suggests the



potential for a slippery and fluid relationship between past, present and future where the different temporal layers are no longer held in place, but promise to erupt or subside forming new configurations and juxtapositions. The present is simultaneously saturated with traces of moments that have now passed by and with the nascent stirrings of what is still to come. This sense of latency also underpins Walter Benjamin's descriptions of the sense of the 'scene of a crime' within Eugène Atget's images; of the simultaneously historic and prophetic in his photographic oeuvre, which according to Annette Michelson is an articulation of the 'sense of imminence of occurrences past or still to come.'<sup>40</sup> Reverberating as an echo in Dean's practice, the notion of immanence alludes to a liminal or threshold condition where temporal or spatial anchors are lost and where 'time is suspended: we are between times.'<sup>41</sup>



Figs. 4 and 5: Effie Paleologou, from the series *Mean City*, 1993-1999, C-print, 160 x 110cm. Courtesy of the artist and Danielle Arnaud Gallery, London, and Rut Blees Luxemburg, *Nach Innen/In Deeper* 1999, C-print, 150 x 180cm. Courtesy of the artist and Union Gallery, London.

This sense of imminence might also be seen in the eerie nocturnal cityscapes of contemporary photographers such as Rut Blees Luxemburg and Effie Paleologou, whose photographs record a trace of their somnambulist wanderings or operate as witness to, and evidence of, other nightwalkers.<sup>42</sup> Effie Paleologou's *Mean City* series (1993-1999) is a collection of photographs that she produced during some of her insomniac wanderings in an unfamiliar city, which conjure forth the psychological dream-state of the sleepwalk. She often frames a single character in her images; isolated figures in the urban landscape that seem to offer an ambiguous sense of both reassurance and threat [fig. 4]. Her work presents a sense of psychological limbo in which the roles of victim and voyeur begin to bleed or blur. It is unclear whether the artist is following her framed protagonists or is being followed by them. An equivalent psychological disjuncture takes place in Rut Blees Luxemburg's *Liebeslied* series where disused carpark spaces or emptied out streets are presented as a vacant stage where possible encounters may yet, or have already, taken place. Her use of extreme long exposure forces the collapse of durational time where the strategic play of the resulting technical glitch - reciprocity failure - causes a crisis in the tonal register enabling forms to slip free from their usual associative colours



and take on unfamiliar hues. Images such as *Nach Innen/In Deeper* (1999) capture the absent trace of the human body: they resonate with the sense of recently felt presence. The barely visible footprints that linger in an inky stairwell seem caught at the moment that they are beginning to fade; as though the trembling pavements had palpably quivered in response to the nightwalker's hesitant tread [fig. 5]. Each artist seems drawn to places of encounter that are passed through on the way to somewhere else; spaces such as staircases or doors. Such zones might function in a similar way to the threshold motif of the road, which has been described as 'the place where the spatial and temporal paths of the most diverse people intersect; it is both a point of new departures and the locus where events find their denouements.'<sup>43</sup>

The threshold space has been marked with a particular significance within earlier episodes of wandering, as well as in other surrealist contexts. For his entry for 'Threshold' in Georges Bataille's *Critical Dictionary*, Marcel Griaule suggested that: 'The threshold is the node which separates two opposing worlds ... to cross a threshold is thus to traverse a zone of danger where invisible but real battles are fought out.'<sup>44</sup> Walter Benjamin's use of the term 'revolving door' as 'the field ... against which a meaningful action takes place – the act of passage from one space to another – without fixed and stable references,'<sup>45</sup> also encapsulates a sense of the threshold space. The 'revolving door' might share conceptual similarities with Guy Debord's 'turntables' or hubs in *The Naked City*, or may even seem analogous to the moment in *L'Amour fou* where Breton's flea market discovery of/by the slipper-spoon object functions as a double-headed arrow, pointing simultaneously back to an originary trigger or repressed thought awaiting recognition, and forward in the prophetic gesture of future interpretation still to gather form.<sup>46</sup> Spaces and objects that are transitional or threshold-like resonate both with the traces or footprints of those that have already passed through, as well as with an anticipatory sense of future interactions. As with skin that has been touched, space might be charged with both a sense of erotic memory and of the palpable desire for encounters still to be experienced. In these examples, the photographic record leads a double life, for it operates as both witness to and documentary evidence of the past, yet it also remains sufficiently open to allow imaginative gaps for the projection of individual narratives. Ian Walker returns to the idea of the photograph as a 'scene of the crime' in order to differentiate between Benjamin's emphasis that something *has* happened on this site, and Annette Michelson's suggestion that it might instead function as, 'the stage where something will or could happen. The photograph itself presents only a moment of time, from which the spectator can in imagination move forward or backward.'<sup>47</sup> For Walker the photograph mirrors the properties of the empty street that 'makes us feel that what has happened there, or will happen there, is unpredictable in its particularity, and thus unknowable.'<sup>48</sup>

Janet Cardiff maximizes the potential of both the photograph and the empty street in a series of audio pieces, which fuse sound, spoken narrative and documentary evidence with 'real' experiences of the city. Working with George Bures Miller, her work employs binaural audio



recording technology in order to create a disorienting soundtrack narrative, which sonically merges with ambient external sounds of the city. Listening to headphones whilst undertaking a narrated 'tour' of the public realm, an audience for Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller's work is invited to immerse themselves in visual and audio experiences that form complex layers or (con)fusions of imaginative and real space; overwriting the everyday with moments of chance encounters, strange happenings, and coincidental occurrences. In *The Missing Voice (Case Study B)* (1999) Cardiff constructs a loose narrative about a woman who wishes to 'become lost,' or to disappear from her own life. Beginning in the crime section of the Whitechapel library, the audience is then led on a disorienting journey through the literary and historical layers of East London's facts and fictions. Similarly in the work, *Her Long Black Hair* (2004), participants are equipped with an audio soundtrack that interweaves a stream of narrative with ambient binaurally recorded noise; and are provided with a number of photographs that operate as evidentiary anchors to the unfolding journey [fig. 6].<sup>49</sup> Creating a spatial and temporal equivalent to Benjamin's 'scene of the crime,' the audience is led wilfully to abandon responsibility for their own direction and instead occupy an uneasy position where identification oscillates between that of victim and perpetrator, between that of pursuer and the pursued. Wholly dependent upon the sound recording for instruction and orientation, Cardiff and Bures Miller's audience temporarily hand over the control for their own actions, and are drawn hypnotically into the swarming flux of the crowd and toward the multitude possibilities of the street. The work creates the conditions in which it is the audience members, rather than the artist, that 'lose themselves' in the footsteps of another and submit themselves to the abandon of being led.



Fig. 6: Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, *Her Long Black Hair*, 2004. Audio Walk with photographs, 46 minutes. Curated by Tom Eccles for the Public Art Fund (June-September), Central Park, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine Gallery. Courtesy of the Public Art Fund, New York. Image credit: Tom Powel Imaging.





Fig. 7: Sophie Calle, *Suite Vénitienne* © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2007. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris/Miami; Arndt & Partner, Berlin/Zurich; Koyanagi, Tokyo ;Gallery Paula Cooper, New York.

The act of following and being led is a central strategy for Sophie Calle, whose practice is thread through with moments of shadowing and mimicry, and of espionage and disguise in which her individual identity is perpetually cloaked in the thin veil of performance. For Yve-Alain Bois the strategy of 'proxy' or acting in another's place within Calle's practice:

...undermines the foundations of her 'person' to create a 'delirium of pretense,' all these Penelopean constructions of identity endlessly discarded as soon as they threaten to solidify, all this proliferation of ever more elaborate masks.<sup>50</sup>

Though Calle might be 'seen' as a mistress of disguise and of mimesis, her practice might instead reflect the desire not to be seen at all, to become invisible or to lose herself in 'voluptuous surrender': to create perhaps a delirium of the present as opposed to one of pretence. For example in the work *Where are the Angels?*, a request is issued to solicit a complicit stranger who might offer instructions or a clue to follow.<sup>51</sup> A repeated action at another's request creates a perpetual performative present, a Sisyphean eternity in which any reflection upon one's past or any projection forward into one's future becomes a redundant gesture. In later work she abandons the request and simply, repeatedly 'followed strangers on the street. For the pleasure of following them, not because they particularly interested [her].'<sup>52</sup> Whilst in other work Calle can be seen to abandon responsibility for her actions by submitting to another's instruction or will, it is in *Suite Vénitienne* that a *sustained* mimetic practice emerges from the action of following in another's footsteps. *Suite Vénitienne* began with a chance encounter when Calle was introduced to a man (Henri B.) whom she had previously followed. During the course of their conversation



Henri B. disclosed that he was planning to take a trip to Venice; a journey that Calle then decided to follow.<sup>53</sup> Calle proposed to track the initially unwitting Henri B., thereby declaring him the subject of her relentless gaze and camera lens [fig. 7]. She thus borrows or hijacks his itinerary as a means for pleasurable disorientation, for the 'pleasure of following,'<sup>54</sup> echoing the manner in which Breton inhabited Nadja's footsteps.

*Suite Vénitienne* is a pertinent inheritor of surrealist practice, for it shares significant formal and conceptual links with Breton's *Nadja*. In both Breton's text and Calle's practice, the 'act of following' can be seen as the conceptual site for drawing together or confronting a number of divergent surrealist and post-surrealist concerns. Strategies of following might be explored in relation to the nature of the reciprocal relationship between the 'follower' and 'followed,' which has both the capacity to be reversed and to then overturn the more accepted 'master' narratives of surrealist writers.<sup>55</sup> The act of doubling, mirroring, shadowing and of mimicry can also be argued to affect a process of (psychological) deliquescence in which the boundaries of the self become porous, and the differentiation between figure and ground, between the body and the environment appear disturbed. Undoubtedly a more difficult or inquisitive articulation of the various relationships and roles at play within *errance* are explored within Calle's artistic practice, and it will be through exploring *Suite Vénitienne* in relation to Breton's *Nadja*, that a wider legacy of surrealist *errance* will be discussed.<sup>56</sup>

Breton's *Nadja* and Calle's *Suite Vénitienne* share a fascinating range of properties and strategies. Whilst they offer a phenomenologically different experience for the respective reader or viewer, on a practical level *Nadja* and *Suite Vénitienne* share the same strategies of 'authentication.' Both accounts are evidenced through the use of photographs and other documentary devices such as central autobiographical references - the inclusion of the names of real people and locations which precisely situate the work in a real city - and the diary format which in both cases rejects any superfluous account in favour of a more clinical style of writing. In both *Nadja* and *Suite Vénitienne*, text and image interweave in order for the latter to authenticate the claims made or to act as witness: 'inevitably, as a narrative begins to flow, "the place" becomes "the place where".'<sup>57</sup> Jean Baudrillard suggests that in *Suite Vénitienne* the image comes to represent the idea that 'Here, at this time, at that place, in that light, there was someone.'<sup>58</sup> Personal preoccupations and emotive concerns determine the locations that are represented. Though *Nadja* and *Suite Vénitienne* take place in established European tourist locations (in Paris and Venice respectively), their narratives and meandering journeys seem to avoid the well-known landmarks of the guidebook, but instead 'constitute a sort of "anti-guide book",' where, according to Ian Walker:

Sites are not chosen because they are the sites 'one must see'; rather they are included because of what happened in these places ... A private city has been created within the public



space, occupying the same space, but differently, more intensely.<sup>59</sup>

However their alternative landmarks, now designated with personal significance, are returned to with touristic insistence. Both Breton and Calle return to 'wander back over the routes'<sup>60</sup> undertaken within preceding narratives, retracing their own pathways in those places where they had previously been tracing the footsteps of another. This gesture sets in place a form of infinite mirroring in which the repeatedly reflected original becomes remote and loses its meaning as the copies develop their own disembodied and abstract reality, serving only to construct a labyrinth of actions to be endlessly replayed.<sup>61</sup>

Calle in *Suite Vénitienne* takes photographs of the sites visited, whilst Breton in *Nadja* wanted 'to provide a photographic image of them taken at the special angle from which I myself had looked at them.'<sup>62</sup> Within each there is the sense of building obsession in the act of following, not only in relation to the person followed but also in relation to the rules of the game operating within the action itself. Breton's text arguably reflects a real romantic liaison whereas Calle's is a conceptual strategy without initial amorous motive. Both Breton and Calle appropriate or repeat the actions of chosen individuals who appear to function less as 'real people' than phantoms; ghostly beacons that are followed in search of more elusive fantasies. There is a resistance on the part of both Calle and Breton to fix the experience in the flesh, in the real physical world for, as Baudrillard suggests:

The encounter is always too true, too excessive, indiscreet ... Quite different is the secret (and following someone is equivalent to the secret in the space of a city, as allusion is equivalent to the secret in speech, or the déjà-vu, the déjà-vécu is equivalent to the secret in time), which is a blind passion.<sup>63</sup>

Indeed Breton omits details of his corporeal encounter with Nadja one night in an out-of-town hotel.<sup>64</sup> For him it marks the end of the game, where he asks, 'Can it be that this desperate pursuit comes to an end here?'<sup>65</sup> Here, his quest performs to a non-teleological, process-based or performative agenda, fuelled by the pleasure of pursuit and by the search itself rather than by its outcome. As Breton claims, it is a 'pursuit of what I do not know, but pursuit, in order to set working all the artifices of intellectual seduction.'<sup>66</sup> Calle shares this sentiment when she says of Henri B., 'Finding him may throw everything into confusion, may precipitate the end ... I'm afraid of meeting up with him: I'm afraid that the encounter might be commonplace.'<sup>67</sup> Both *Nadja* and *Suite Vénitienne* are thus marked by the properties of a game or pursuit, an artificial structure or framework in which certain encounters are desirable, others less so. They both exhibit the inherent (il)logic of rules written and codes that may not be broken, for as Baudrillard asserts:



This game, as any other game, has its basic rule: Nothing was to happen, not one event that might establish any contact or a relationship between them. This is the price of seduction. The secret must not be broken, at the risk of the story's falling into banality.<sup>68</sup>

According to some cultural theorists games are marked by particular properties, or a degree of autonomy that separates or isolates them from the everyday. For Johan Huizinga, play is 'accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and consciousness that it is different from ordinary life,'<sup>69</sup> whilst Roger Caillois asserts that it is performed according to the characteristics of 'liberty, convention, suspension of reality, and delimitation of space and time.'<sup>70</sup> Play should involve a free or voluntary pursuit where playing is not obligatory; it should remain uncertain, unproductive, 'an occasion of pure waste,'<sup>71</sup> and must be governed by rules or understood as make-believe. For Caillois:

...the game's domain is therefore a restricted, closed, protected universe: a pure space. The confused and intricate laws of ordinary life are replaced, in this fixed space and for this given time, by precise, arbitrary, unexceptionable rules that must be accepted as such and that govern the correct playing of the game.<sup>72</sup>

He suggests that the process of the game can be divided into the four specific categories of *agôn* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (simulation) and *ilinx* (vertigo), which may be performed according to the characteristics of either *paidia* (exuberance and turbulence) or *ludus* (control and discipline). Within the practice of *mimicry* he asserts that:

The rule of the game is unique: it consists in the actor fascinating the spectator, while avoiding an error that might lead the spectator to break the spell ... which for a given time he is asked to believe in as more real than reality itself.<sup>73</sup>

*Nadja* and *Suite Vénitienne* reflect the rules of the game inherent in the act of mimicry or simulation.<sup>74</sup> However the form of mimicry evident in the act of following centres upon the tension or gap between the pursuer and the person pursued, which must be maintained in order to resist collision or closure. The question of power and control initially seem more privileged towards the author, or the originator of the game/text. Calle tracks an unwitting Henri B., who becomes the subject/victim of her relentless gaze and camera lens, whilst Breton follows in Nadja's wake through back alleys and psychological landscapes, appropriating her journeys into liminal states. Baudrillard argues that the repetition or following of another is an act of both seduction and disappearance; where the individual's original objective is (willingly) distracted or erased at the



insistence of the double. To follow is thus to rob another of their itinerary; it presents a form of existential kidnap where the other's pathway is usurped or stolen as a guise through which to play out realities other than one's own. However the notion of the double offers a dual threat. The act of repetition harbours the mirrored possibility of reciprocal theft, where the process of following – that is the possession or inhabitation of another's imprint - has the capacity to be overturned or reversed. Baudrillard suggests, in fact, that the more violent moments within acts of following are:

...where the followed person, seized by a sudden inspiration, turns round, making an about-face like a cornered beast. The system reverses itself immediately, and the follower becomes the followed ... But, of course, shadowing implies this surprise, the possibility of reversal is necessary to it, one must follow in order to be followed.<sup>75</sup>



Fig. 8: Sophie Calle, *Suite Vénitienne* © ADAGP, Paris and DACS, London 2007. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris/Miami; Arndt & Partner, Berlin/Zurich; Koyanagi, Tokyo ;Gallery Paula Cooper, New York.

It is this threat of reciprocity that Calle acknowledges as a 'dread (that) is taking hold of me: he recognized me, he's following me, he knows.'<sup>76</sup> Later when she has been discovered by Henri B., she remarks on how 'he's hiding his surprise, his desire to be master of the situation, as if, in fact, I had been the unconscious victim of his game, his itineraries, his schedules' [fig. 8].<sup>77</sup>



Whilst it would seem that the power and control of the game rests with the follower and not with the person followed, as Baudrillard suggests there is an interesting tension or complexity within this model. McDonough also reflects on this 'libidinal tangle in which pursuer and pursued lose their clear polarities' when drawing connections between Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969) and Poe's *The Man of the Crowd*.<sup>78</sup> Poe's tale follows one man's irrational pursuit of a stranger, of an unknown man, 'whose physiognomy, glimpsed for a split second, has entranced him' and for whom 'curiosity has become a fatal, irresistible passion.'<sup>79</sup> McDonough suggests that in the act of mirroring, the two become indistinguishable, and citing Michel Butor asserts that they are, 'at bottom identical. The second places his steps in the footprints of the first who remains unaware of him, although the former is without knowing it the initiator, the guide of the second.'<sup>80</sup> The followed/follower relationship may be viewed as though a moebius strip, or even as a variant of Benjamin's 'revolving door,' in which the promise of reversal, overturn, or being caught is always present, as roles can be switched and joker cards played. The act of following or inhabiting another's footprint might then give way to the feeling of one's own space becoming inhabited by the gestures of the other; for in the end the act of possession is a reciprocal gesture where one might as easily become possessed. Mimicry of another is thus transformed into an eerie and involuntary ventriloquism.

Issues of motive and intention are put into question as 'acts of following' blur into 'acts of being led'; where the person followed is self-consciously leading the unwitting follower. The pathway or direction of another might be ripe for appropriating (as though it were a found object), however the question of decision and power is again overturned for, as Hal Foster suggests, 'the surrealist object selects the subject: he [sic] is always already marked by it.'<sup>81</sup> For Foster, the search is a form of Freudian compulsion-repetition, closely connected to the idea of the uncanny and the death drive. What Breton considers as the liberating processes of objective chance or sudden encounters are, within this reading, simply acts of repetition in which a traumatic experience is subconsciously replayed rather than recollected, or where the lost object is perpetually sought but never found. For Foster this signals an endless and relentless pursuit that is 'as impossible as it is compulsive: not only is each new object a substitute for the lost one, but the lost object is a fantasy, a simulacrum.'<sup>82</sup> Less a vessel to be filled by the parasitic intentions of the follower, it could be argued that the found object or person followed already asserts a psychological hold, or mesmeric hex that must be obeyed. However rather than suggesting that the acts of following present in both *Nadja* and *Suite Vénitienne* are somehow an articulation of Foster's psychoanalytical interpretation of objective chance - in which the search for the other person stands as a 'failed refinding of the lost object,'<sup>83</sup> or takes place at the insistent beckon of the repressed awaiting return - it is possible to assert an alternative reading which focuses instead upon the wilful fragmentation and disintegration of the self inherent in the gesture of following or being followed.



The blind wandering inherent in the act of following another's steps might be seen as an equivalent to the Minotaur's endless, disoriented search of the labyrinth; a creature that for Rosalind Krauss, 'having lost his reason - his head - is another avatar of the informe.'<sup>84</sup> Viewed according to this model, the follower/followed relationship becomes a site of precarious tension, where the city takes the form of a labyrinth providing equal scope for concealment and capture. Calle says, 'I see myself at the labyrinth's gate, ready to get lost in the city and in this story.'<sup>85</sup> In his account of Paris, Benjamin characterises the city as a labyrinth emerging at the intersection of reflective surfaces in which internal and external spaces are collapsed, and their boundaries blurred. For Krauss, infinite mirroring is experienced as the 'space of the abyss itself - of man [sic] captured in a hall of mirrors, in a constantly bifurcating field of representation.'<sup>86</sup> The city's repeated mirroring creates a kaleidoscopic environment of reflected and refracted realities, of infinite copies and of limitless hollow encounters. For Baudrillard, being followed offers the hollow 'feeling of being reflected without knowing it.'<sup>87</sup> He suggests that 'to follow' is to absent yourself in the mirror image of another. To copy or mirror another is a seductive yet vacuous act. In the act of borrowing another's intentions and in the retracing of their steps, all original meaning or intent is somehow lost or refuses to translate. Calle is seen to be 'lost ... in the other's traces,'<sup>88</sup> whilst Breton articulates the feeling of haunting when he asks:

Who am I? If this once I were to rely on a proverb, then perhaps everything would amount to knowing whom I 'haunt' ... Perhaps my life is nothing but an image of this kind; perhaps I am doomed to retrace my steps under the illusion that I am exploring, doomed to try and learn what I should simply recognize, learning a mere fraction of what I have forgotten.<sup>89</sup>

The tracing of another's tread could then appear fueled by the longing to absolve all responsibility for the self in the shape of the other. Following demands the abandonment of form in favour of a mode of invisibility or formlessness. The dissolving of the self or body evident in the chameleon gesture of mirroring another can also be played out in relation to the idea of becoming a shadow, which for Krauss is 'approaching the condition of the fluid and impalpable.'<sup>90</sup> The shadow (and the 'follower') typically only has meaning in relation to something else: they function through a wholly dependent existence that cannot be separated nor detached from its anchor. According to Denis Hollier the cast shadow is:

...the very exemplar of a non-displaceable sign: rigorously contemporary with the object it doubles, it is simultaneous, non-detachable, and because of this, without exchange-value. It is only *cast on the spot*, without the possibility of a proxy. With it, the relation of sign to the thing signified escapes the metaphor of the separation of body and soul: a cast shadow is a sign that doesn't survive.<sup>91</sup>



However, Hollier goes on to suggest that in certain kinds of visual representation this assertion is challenged, enabling a moment of both liberation and horror as the 'cast shadow gains iconic autonomy; it is separated and liberated from the object that causes it.'<sup>92</sup> He describes this phenomenon within surrealism as the transformation of the shadow from index into icon where it 'enters the realm of ambiguity and survives its cause, its referent ... Shifting from causality to resemblance, from metonymy to metaphor, these doubles, in addition to being the effect of their cause, merge with it in order to resemble a third thing.'<sup>93</sup> The detached shadow becomes a kind of autonomous 'ghosting' that is no longer existentially or indexically anchored to the original referent, merely held by some unwritten contractual bind.

So too, those who follow occupy the space of the 'third thing' or chimera, for in becoming the shadow they momentarily inhabit a hybrid zone that has the properties of both themselves and the subject followed. Operating in this liminal mode of existence, the boundaries between self and other, and those between the body and the environment become blurred or cancelled out. For Baudrillard:

To follow the other is to take charge of his itinerary ... It is to play the mythical role of the shadow ... it is to relieve him of that existential burden, the responsibility for his own life. Simultaneously, she who follows is herself relieved of responsibility for her own life as she follows blindly in the footsteps of the other. A wonderful reciprocity exists in the cancellation of each existence, in the cancellation of each subject's tenuous position as a subject.<sup>94</sup>

The desire to lose oneself can thus be read as the longing for the willed collapse of the boundaries that demarcate the limits of the body and of fixed notions of form. The follower must adopt a degree of camouflage or disguise to prevent him- or herself from being seen. All internal preoccupations must be abandoned in the pursuit of the other. In *Suite Vénitienne*, Calle not only follows but also imitates the actions of Henri B. She duplicates his actions as he photographs his surroundings. In this act of imitation the original intent has been replaced or overwritten by the motive of mimicry. Meaning is lost and the resulting images slip anchor. The process of mimicry or 'becoming another' thus effects a crisis of 'distinction' and differentiation; a categorical slur or disturbance at the boundaries of form and of classification. Camouflage is a desire to 'blend into the background': it is a form of existential osmosis.<sup>95</sup>

Roger Caillois' analysis of mimicry presents an interesting frame through which to explore the complex and contradictory motives that underpin it. In his analysis of animal mimicry in 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,' he reflects on how the motive for mimesis and camouflage might be understood, not as a desire for survival, but as model of involuntary delinquency or psychosis. He challenges the Darwinian account of mimicry as an adaptive



method of survival, and instead proposes that the act of repetition inherent in mimesis represents a catastrophic blow for the individual resulting in a form of 'convulsive possession'.<sup>96</sup> As such the persistence of mimesis might be understood according to what Krauss has described as a:

...peculiarly psychotic yielding to the call of 'space'... a failure to maintain to the boundaries between inside and outside, between, that is, figure and ground. A slackening of the contours of its own integrity, of its self-possession ... the body collapses, deliquesces, doubles the space around it in order to be possessed by its own surrounds. It is this possession that produces a double that is in effect an effacement of the figure. Ground on ground.<sup>97</sup>

Affecting a categorical slur, the process of mimicry or camouflage blurs the boundaries of form and fixed classification. The act of following another can similarly be viewed as a 'slackening of the contours of its (one's) integrity'; a gesture of mimicry resulting not from the desire for survival, but from being seduced by the 'call of space.' When Calle initiates a practice of mimicry, her pursuit is resolutely absent of purposeful motive. It is fueled by the pleasure of following for following's sake, by the desire of momentarily losing herself in the actions of another. In the act of following, the expression of the *informe* breaks free from the frame and assumes a performative presence. The gesture of following causes a kind of psychological *brûlage* or disintegration, where echoing Caillois' analysis of animal mimicry, the edges of self become blurred and fuse with those of the other. In the process of concealment the body is seen to dissolve into the surrounding space. This experience of mimesis for Caillois can be read as analogous to that of the schizophrenic:

To these dispossessed souls, space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look *at himself from any point whatever* in space. He feels himself becoming space, *dark space where things cannot be put*. He is similar, not similar to something, but just *similar*. And he invents spaces of which he is 'the convulsive possession'.<sup>98</sup>

This sense of 'convulsive possession' may also be read in relation to other theoretical arguments developed by Caillois, not least in connection to his previously cited analysis of games and play.<sup>99</sup> In his later writing in *Man, Play and Games* (1958), Caillois in fact refutes his earlier analysis of mimicry, redeeming or redefining it as a strategic method of *ludus*; as a category of play alongside *agôn*, *alea* and *ilinx*.<sup>100</sup> Whilst his descriptions of animal mimicry might seem to offer the closest analogy to his definition of the category of 'simulation'; other categories of play also demonstrate the desire for psychological deliquescence and loss of self; or alternatively



propose the disruption of a moral order or the yearning for disorder and destruction through drives which would normally be repressed.<sup>101</sup> Caillois refers to a variety of approaches or 'transports' which seek to establish 'a disorder that may take organic or psychological form' by using the term *ilinx*, which is the 'Greek term for whirlpool, from which is also derived the Greek work for vertigo (ilingos).<sup>102</sup> Akin, in some senses, to the earlier descriptions of the psychological convulsion resulting from mimicry, *ilinx* is:

...based on the pursuit of vertigo and which consists of an attempt to momentarily destroy the stability of perception and inflict a kind of voluptuous panic upon an otherwise lucid mind. In all cases, it is a question of surrendering to a kind of spasm, seizure, or shock which destroys reality with sovereign brusqueness.<sup>103</sup>

Here, through Caillois' analysis, it is possible to assert that the Bataillean notion of the *informe* is at play in both the practices of mimicry and *ilinx*, for both perform an operation of deliquescence or categorical slippage, respectively through the collapse of boundaries between self and other, body and ground; or else through the gesture of falling, gyration, or the sense of 'panic and hypnosis ... attained by paroxysm of frenetic, contagious, and shared rotation,'<sup>104</sup> which might be read as analogous to the category of 'horizontal' within the condition of the *informe*.<sup>105</sup>

Acts of following seem to hover between descriptions of *mimicry* and *ilinx*, for they embody the desire to lose oneself through 'convulsive possession,' or as Solnit describes, through the 'voluptuous surrender' to the present or to another's will.<sup>106</sup> The tracing of another's tread is fueled by the fatalistic pleasure in absolving all responsibility for the self in the echo of the other: it is the desire 'to escape from the outline of the self.' Baudrillard equates this ecstatic moment with the image of the swooning woman when he says, 'Nothing is more beautiful, since swooning is at once the experience of overwhelming pleasure and the escape from pleasure, a seduction and an escape from seduction.'<sup>107</sup> Once again, an image of perpetual oscillation is drawn in which categorical definitions are refuted and the notion of any fixed motive is put into question: the promise of pleasure is replaced by that of escape; the follower becomes the person followed; the mirror returns an eternal echo of itself.

Acts of following and being led can be articulated within a lineage of surrealist *errance*, as strategies of absolving individual purpose or concrete motive, and enabling a form of 'aimless wandering.' By the end of the 1920s it has been suggested that surrealist *errance* 'had been eclipsed by the theory of "objective chance," just as its psychoanalytical basis, in Pierre Janet's automatism, had been replaced by Freudian theory.'<sup>108</sup> This changing intellectual context might be argued to echo the wider cultural shift identified by Caillois in relation to play and games in which the primacy of the combination of *ilinx* and *mimicry* are inevitably repressed and sublimated during a process of civilization, and become substituted or replaced by the predominance of the *agôn-alea* pairing of competition and chance.<sup>109</sup> Indeed as surrealism evolved from early



experimental practices into a movement informed by a series of manifestos, the initial turbulence and transience of the surrealist gesture of *errance* was superseded by other strategies. However it is still possible to articulate a strong lineage of practices that resurrect and rework the vertiginous drift of aimless wandering.

The notion of following has the potential to evoke a complex range of other surrealist concerns and preoccupations and as such might perform a resuscitative function, enabling the practice of *errance* to be recontextualised as a critical surrealist tactic and re-evaluated through a wider interpretation and legacy. Rather than simply a practice or strategy within a broader vocabulary of automatism, *errance* can be seen as the location or conceptual site where diverse positions are tested out. Operating in the 'third space' between the Bretonian concept of 'objective chance' and the 'swooning' sense of convulsive beauty, and the Bataille *informe* as articulated in Caillois' analysis of mimicry as a mode of formal disintegration and temporal play, the practice of following another can be identified as the conceptual location where a host of surrealist ideas are buried and whose ghosts persist to haunt. By exploring the conceptual echoes between Breton's *Nadja* and Calle's *Suite Vénitienne*, the notion of following can be positioned within a paradigm of both criticality and compulsion; where it can be articulated as a mimetic form of both playful inhabitation and of involuntary and reciprocal possession.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'On some motifs in Baudelaire,' in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (Schocken Books, New York, 1978), 156, cited in Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Canongate, Edinburgh, 2006), 6, and also in Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A history of walking*, (Verso, London, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> The practice of surrealist *errance* has been returned to and discussed by many historians, notably by Rosalind Krauss in connection to photography's relationship to surrealism, for example in 'Nightwalkers,' *Art Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Spring 1981), 33-38; Ian Walker in *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris*, (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2002); and by Susan Laxton in *Paris as Gameboard, Man Ray's Atgets*, (Columbia University, New York, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (1845) cited in Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, 14-15.

<sup>5</sup> See Alastair Brotchie and Mel Gooding (eds), *A Book of Surrealist Games*, (Redstone, Boston and London, 1995), for a comprehensive account of a range of Surrealist games, strategies and procedures.

<sup>6</sup> Laxton, *Paris as Gameboard*, 11. This particular example may however have been preceded by *Le Voyage Magique* of 1923, in which the same four protagonists undertook a series of journeys to places picked at random, referenced in Brotchie and Gooding, *A Book of Surrealist Games*, 162.

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes referred to as an 'indicator' or 'pointer,' a *planchette* is a device used during a séance as a tool of inscription through which spirit voices communicate in a form of automatic writing. A contemporary parallel for this analogy might be found in Paul Auster's novel *New York Trilogy*, in the *City of Glass*, where the urban wandering of the character of Stillman traces out



cryptic textual inscriptions onto the city's pavements which are subsequently 'read' by Quinn, a detective who has been following and recording from a distance. See Paul Auster, *New York Trilogy* (Faber and Faber, London, 1987), especially 58-72.

<sup>8</sup> Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant* (1926), (Jonathan Cape, London, 1971), 9-11.

<sup>9</sup> Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Philippe Soupault, *Last Nights of Paris* (1928), trans. William Carlos Williams (Full Court Press, Cambridge, 1992), 70.

<sup>11</sup> Soupault, *Last Nights of Paris*, 74.

<sup>12</sup> Purposeless wandering also functions as part of the narrative structure of diverse examples within folklore and mythology, ranging from the Christian legend of the Wandering Jew through to wider references. The Chinese, for example, use the 'word *yeou* to designate idling and games in space, especially kite-flying, and also great flights of fancy, mystic journeys of shamans, and the wandering of ghosts and the damned,' Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games* (1958), trans. Meyer Barash (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2001), 185. A drifting or an episodic, open-ended narrative is at play in the genre of the picaresque and neo-picaresque novel which relies on a 'triad of interconnected elements: the ambiguous figure of the *picaro*, the temporal and spatial framework of the road and the capricious unpredictability of chance,' Ilana Shiloh, *Paul Auster and the Postmodern Quest* (Peter Lang Press, 2002), 2. A more popular and contemporary interpretation of aimless wandering might be seen as operational within the recent phenomenon of the Paris-originating practice of *parkour* (free running) where the architecture of the city becomes an assault course upon which the *traceur* (a participant of *parkour*) attempts to perform, guided in part by the notion of 'escape' and unrestricted by conventional modes of navigation.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (1927), trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999). For further accounts and historical accounts of *flânerie* see Keith Tester (ed.), *The Flâneur* (Routledge, London and New York, 1994); Chris Jenks, 'Watching your step: the history and practice of the *flâneur*,' in Chris Jenks (ed.), *Visual Culture* (Routledge, London, 1995), or Michael Sheringham, *Parisian Fields* (Reaktion, London, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> Certeau asserts that 'The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered. At its most elementary level, it has a triple "enunciative" function: it is a process of *appropriation* of the topographical system on the part of the pedestrian (just as the speaker appropriates or takes on language); it is a spatial acting-out of the place (just as the speech act is an acoustic acting out of language); and implies relations among differentiated positions,' *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (University of California Press, 1984), 98. Earlier writers and theorists have also made the connection between the city and a text, and the act of walking and reading. In the late nineteenth century the German *flâneur*, Ludwig Börne, suggested that 'Paris is to be called an unfolded book, wandering through its streets means reading,' in 'Schilderungen aus Berlin' in *Sämtliche Schriften* Vol. 2., eds Inge and Peter Rippman (Melzer, Dreieich, 1977), 34 cited in Anke Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999), 10.

<sup>15</sup> See Laxton *Paris as Gameboard*.

<sup>16</sup> Laxton notes how, 'Working to record a Paris disappearing before the inexorable press of gentrification, he [Atget] photographed the city in such a way that his archive, including the seven albums of images that he produced as book prototypes, reads effectively as a series of systematic, prosaic topographies of Paris,' *Paris as Gameboard*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 98-99.

<sup>18</sup> Extending the analogy between spatial play and the speech act, this sense of spacing might be viewed as form of syntax. Krauss, for example, discusses the syntax of the photographic image; the sense of temporal and spatial operations played out at the heart of the surrealist photography



and particularly within Man Ray's oeuvre, in 'The photographic conditions of Surrealism,' *October*, Vol. 19 (Winter, 1981), 21. Krauss's spacing might be understood as a result of cropping and framing which separates the fragment from the whole; as an internal form of spacing generated by 'solarization or the use of found frames to interrupt or displace segments of reality' ('The photographic conditions of Surrealism,' 31); or as a gesture of photomontage, a juxtaposition of image with image, or image with drawing, or image with text. She says 'Spacing is the indication of a break in the simultaneous experience of the real, a rupture that issues into sequence ... a rupture in the continuous fabric of reality' ('The photographic conditions of Surrealism,' 31).

<sup>19</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 101 cited in Thomas F. McDonough, 'Situationist Space,' *October*, Vol. 67 (Winter, 1994), 65.

<sup>20</sup> McDonough, 'Situationist Space,' 73.

<sup>21</sup> McDonough, 'Situationist Space,' 74.

<sup>22</sup> The Situationists' navigation of the city space perhaps reinstates the primacy of the 'tour' above the 'map.' Certeau discusses the historical trajectory through which the format of the map develops, charting its shift in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries from a form of 'tour' - less a 'geographical map' as a 'history book' which emphasised actions or acknowledged the journeys which have brought it into being - to a more autonomous totalizing 'map' which 'colonizes space; it eliminates little by little the pictorial figurations of the practices that produce it,' Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 121.

<sup>23</sup> Guy Debord, 'Introduction to a critique of modern geography,' in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. & trans. Ken Knabb (Bureau of Public Secrets, Berkeley, 1981), cited in McDonough, 'Situationist Space,' 58-77.

<sup>24</sup> Certeau differentiates between the notion of *place* and *space*, suggesting that the former is marked by the stability and fixity of the map, whilst the latter: '...is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities ... In short, *space is a practiced place*,' *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 117.

<sup>25</sup> Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 93.

<sup>26</sup> McDonough makes the connection between *La Carte du Tendre* and the Situationists' *The Naked City*, 'Situationist Space,' 60.

<sup>27</sup> Krauss makes this connection explicit as she explores the psychological unfolding of a particular journey across Paris in the central section of Breton's later text, *L'Amour fou*, where each stage of the journey is indicative of a shift or intensification of emotional resonance, 'Nightwalkers,' 34.

<sup>28</sup> Walker, 'Nadja - A Voluntary Banality?' in *City Gorged with Dreams*, 53.

<sup>29</sup> For example see Paul Griffiths, 'Meanings of nightwalking in early modern England,' *The Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Autumn 1998).

<sup>30</sup> This influence may be further evidenced in Aragon's title, *Le Paysan de Paris*, that appears to conflate elements of Restif de La Bretonne's *Les Nuits de Paris* and *Le Paysan Pervers*.

<sup>31</sup> Krauss, 'Nightwalkers,' 34. Krauss is specifically discussing an image of the poet and nightwalker Léon-Paul Fargue, produced by Brassai in 1933.

<sup>32</sup> McDonough notes how the term 'depaysément' is often found in early Situationist writings on the *dérive*, where he suggests it means 'taken out of one's element' or misled, 'Situationist Space,' 73.

<sup>33</sup> An argument shared by many historians and developed by Laxton in 'The guarantor of chance: Surrealism's ludic practices,' *Papers of Surrealism*, Issue 1 (Winter, 2003).



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<sup>34</sup> Peter Wollen discusses the shared interest in 'mapping' in relation to both Situationist and conceptual practices in 'Mappings: Situationists and/or Conceptualists,' in Michael Newman and Jon Bird (eds), *Rewriting Conceptual Art* (Reaktion, London, 1999). See also McDonough, 'The crimes of the flâneur,' *October*, Vol. 102 (Fall 2002), 101-122, who identifies surrealist practice within three pivotal incarnations of flânerie. My essay will however focus specifically on the legacy of *errance* rather than on the practice of flânerie more generally, looking towards contemporary strategies that reflect or share a particular surrealist agenda or surrealist preoccupations.

<sup>35</sup> Jan Verwoert, *In Search of the Miraculous* (Afterall Publishing, 2006), 3. See also Rein Wolfs (ed.), *Bas Jan Ader, Please Don't Leave Me* (exh. cat), (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Verwoert, *In Search of the Miraculous*, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Hal Foster, 'An archival impulse,' *October*, Vol. 110 (Fall 2004), 15.

<sup>38</sup> Dean's work *Disappearance at Sea I and II* (1996 and 1997) could also be viewed as 'following' on from Ader's *In Search of the Miraculous* (1975). Ader's attempted solo crossing of the Atlantic in a small sailing boat, ended in his own 'disappearance at sea,' like that of Crowhurst. Verwoert notes how a copy of the book *The Strange Last Voyage* of Donald Crowhurst by Nicholas Tomalin and Ron Hall, was reputed to have been found in Ader's locker, and also highlights a further connection to Arthur Craven, a figure celebrated within surrealist circles, who was last seen in 1920 heading for the Gulf of Mexico in a small vessel, *In Search of the Miraculous*.

<sup>39</sup> Foster, 'An archival impulse,' 15.

<sup>40</sup> Annette Michelson, 'Dr Crase and Mr Claire,' *October*, Vol. 11 (Winter 1979), 42 cited in Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 61.

<sup>41</sup> Michelson, 'Dr Crase and Mr Claire,' 42, cited in Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 61.

<sup>42</sup> A connection between the work of Rut Blees Luxemburg and Effie Paleologou was made in the exhibition *We are No Longer Ourselves* (The Gallery, Stratford-upon-Avon, Site Gallery, Sheffield, and Turnpike Gallery, Leigh, 2001), which drew reference from Virginia Woolf's text 'Street haunting: a London adventure,' in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (Readers Union/Hogarth Press, London, 1942) to suggest that their practices could be argued to echo the manner of the flâneuse. The fascination with the transformative possibilities of light, in particular within Rut Blees Luxemburg's practice, might recall the writing of Emma Von Niendorf, whose early accounts of female flânerie in *Aus dem heutigen Paris* (*Out of Recent Paris*, 1854) share this obsession with the phenomenon of illumination. This particular example of female flânerie is noted in Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> Shiloh, *Paul Auster and the Postmodern Quest*, 2. Shiloh goes on to discuss how Bakhtin, in *The Dialogic Imagination*, develops the term *chronotope*, which in Greek means 'time-space,' and dwells in particular on the chronotope of the open road, which according to Bakhtin is especially appropriate for portraying events governed by chance, *Paul Auster and the Postmodern Quest*, 92-98.

<sup>44</sup> Marcel Griaule, 'Threshold,' in Georges Bataille (ed.), 'Critical Dictionary' in *Encyclopedia Acephalica* (Atlas Press, London, 1995), 83-84.

<sup>45</sup> Krauss, 'Nightwalkers,' 34.

<sup>46</sup> Andre Breton, *L'Amour fou* (1937), trans. M. A. Caws (University of Nebraska Press, London and Nebraska, 1987), 25-38 for the semi-autobiographical account of Breton's visit in 1934 to the Saint-Ouen flea market with Alberto Giacometti. See Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1993), 36-46, for a critical account and analysis of this incident.

<sup>47</sup> Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 100. The oscillation between the urban stroller as detective and as criminal is explored by McDonough in 'The crimes of the flâneur,' who suggests the possibility of two contradictory interpretations of the flâneur in relation to Benjamin's assertion



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that: 'Not matter what trail the flâneur may follow, every one of them will lead him to a crime.' Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (Verso, London and New York, 1997), 41, cited in McDonough, 'The crimes of the flâneur,' 101.

<sup>48</sup> Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 55.

<sup>49</sup> There is an interesting correlation here between Janet Cardiff's use of images and André Breton's use of photographs by Jacques-André Boiffard in *Nadja*, which were similarly employed, it has been argued, to 'authenticate' his quasi-autobiographical narrative. Walter Benjamin argues that the photographs function as 'illustrations of a trashy novel' in 'Surrealism: the last snapshot of the European intelligentsia,' *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1978), 183. See also Walker, 'Nadja - a voluntary banality?' in *City Gorged with Dreams*, for further analysis of the relationship between the text and image in *Nadja*.

<sup>50</sup> Yve-Alain Bois, 'Paper tigress,' *October*, Vol. 116 (Spring 2006), 40 and 46.

<sup>51</sup> See Bois, 'Paper tigress,' 35, for a full account of a particular response to Calle's question 'Where are the angels?'

<sup>52</sup> Sophie Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, trans. Dany Barash and Danny Hatfield (Bay Press, Seattle, 1988), 78.

<sup>53</sup> *Suite Vénitienne* was initiated in 1980. It was originally exhibited in 1983 as a presentation text, 55 black and white photographs, 23 texts and 3 maps of variable dimensions; with a subsequent artist's book collaboration published in 1988, where Calle's texts and images were brought into dialogue with the text 'Please follow me' by Jean Baudrillard, which establishes a particular interpretative context through which to consider the work. This paper is based on the 1988 publication, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*.

<sup>54</sup> Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 2.

<sup>55</sup> The predominance of examples by contemporary women artists who are employing tactics of following within their work is significant, for it could be viewed as an attempt to reverse or resist the conventions of a practice which has historically been notable for its problematic relationship to women, who remain typically absent within accounts of *errance* or are often represented in the form of the prostitute. Alternatively, adopting this model might be regarded as a redemptive gesture that seeks to reclaim or recoup the practice or at least a more complex female role within it. For wider cultural accounts of a female presence within the practice of flânerie see Janet Wolff, 'The invisible flâneuse: women and the literature of modernity,' *Theory, Culture and Society*, II-III, 1985, 37-46; Alex Hughes, 'The City and the Female Autograph,' in Sheringham (ed.), *Parisian Fields*, 115-132; and Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk*, especially Part Four: 'Female flanerier,' 171-213.

<sup>56</sup> There is already a significant body of writing and research that exists in relation to Breton's text *Nadja*. See for example Margaret Cohen, 'Qui suis-je? Nadja's haunting subject,' in *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (University of California Press, 1993); Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*; Briony Fer, 'Surrealism, myth and psychoanalysis,' in David Batchelor (ed.), *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism: Art Between the Wars* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1993) and Walker, 'Nadja - A voluntary banality?' in *City Gorged with Dreams*. My intent is to explore *Nadja* through the filter of contemporary art, and especially in connection to Sophie Calle's practice as a way of perhaps recouping or resurrecting alternative interpretations and readings within the surrealist text.

<sup>57</sup> Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 55.

<sup>58</sup> Jean Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' in Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 78.

<sup>59</sup> Walker, *City Gorged with Dreams*, 53.

<sup>60</sup> Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 5.



<sup>61</sup> For Krauss the gesture of copying or doubling also performs a destructive blow, which 'produces the formal rhythm of spacing - the two-step that banishes the unitary condition of the moment, that creates within the moment an experience of fission ... The double is the simulacrum, the second, the representative of the original. It comes after the first, and in this following, it can only exist as a figure, or image. But in being seen in conjunction with the original, the double destroys the pure singularity of the first.' Krauss, 'The photographic conditions of Surrealism,' 25.

<sup>62</sup> Breton, *Nadja* (1928), trans. Richard Howard (Penguin Books, London, 1999), 151-52.

<sup>63</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 84.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Polizzotti describes the erasure or 'stylistic amendment' that took place in 1963 when Breton revisited the manuscript and removed the reference to the night he and Nadja spent together in Saint-Germaine (in his introduction to Breton, *Nadja*, xxii.)

<sup>65</sup> Breton, *Nadja*, 108.

<sup>66</sup> Breton, *Nadja*, 108.

<sup>67</sup> Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 78.

<sup>69</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (Roy Publishers, New York, 1950), 28.

<sup>70</sup> Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 23.

<sup>71</sup> Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 5-6. For a full list of the characteristics of play see 9-10.

<sup>72</sup> Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 6-7.

<sup>73</sup> Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 23.

<sup>74</sup> Simulation was also a modification of the practice of automatic writing found for example, in André Breton and Paul Eluard's *The Immaculate Conception* (1930), where 'instead of assuming a passive or "receptive" frame of mind, one can with practice assume an active mental state not one's own. Given this mental set - for instance, that of a delirious mental "illness" - one attempts to write from within it,' Brotchie and Gooding, *A Book of Surrealist Games*, 22.

<sup>75</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 81. This paragraph seems to find an echo in Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (1994), where he speaks of the inevitable reciprocity of possession: 'Is not to possess a spectre to be possessed by it, possessed period? To capture it, is that not to be captivated by it?', cited by Jan Verwoert in his paper 'Apropos Appropriation, why stealing images feels different today,' Tate Triennial 2006, <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/triennial/essay-apropos.shtm>.

<sup>76</sup> Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 9.

<sup>77</sup> Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 50.

<sup>78</sup> McDonough, 'The crimes of the flâneur,' 107.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Baudelaire, 'Le peintre de la vie moderne' (1863) in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Louis Conard, Paris, 1925), 61, cited in McDonough, 'The crimes of the flâneur,' 106.

<sup>80</sup> Michel Butor, *Histoire extraordinaire: essai sur un rêve de Baudelaire* (Gallimard, Paris, 1961) 33, cited in McDonough, 'The crimes of the flâneur,' 106. Craig Douglas Dworkin suggests that Acconci's following must still operate in relation to the role of desire for 'the two figures ... have meaning (follower and followed) only in relation to each other,' in Dworkin, 'Fugitive signs,' *October*, Vol. 95 (Winter 2001), 108, cited in McDonough, 'The crimes of the flâneur,' 110. This analysis would also seem to draw a connection to the earlier tale of *William Wilson* (1839), Edgar Allan Poe's short story where in this case the central character is plagued by the presence of a double.



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- <sup>81</sup> Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 236.
- <sup>82</sup> Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, 36. 'In the compulsion operative in objective chance, the subject repeats a traumatic experience, whether actual or fantasmatic, exogenous or endogenous, that he does not recall. He repeats it because he cannot recall it: repetition occurs due to repression, in lieu of recollection. This is why each repetition in objective chance seems fortuitous yet foreordained, determined by present circumstances yet governed by some "daemonic" force at work,' Foster, 1993, 30, citing Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), trans. James Strachey (New York, 1961), 29.
- <sup>83</sup> Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, xix.
- <sup>84</sup> Krauss, *L'Amour Fou: Photography and Surrealism* (Abbeville Press, New York, 1985), 64.
- <sup>85</sup> Calle, *Suite Vénitienne/Please Follow Me*, 6.
- <sup>86</sup> Krauss, 'Nightwalkers,' 38.
- <sup>87</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 77.
- <sup>88</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 78.
- <sup>89</sup> Breton, *Nadja*, 11-12.
- <sup>90</sup> Krauss, 'Nightwalkers,' 34.
- <sup>91</sup> Denis Hollier, 'Surrealist precipitates: shadows don't cast shadows,' *October*, Vol. 69 (Summer, 1994), 114.
- <sup>92</sup> Hollier, 'Surrealist precipitates,' 118.
- <sup>93</sup> Hollier, 'Surrealist precipitates,' 118.
- <sup>94</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 79.
- <sup>95</sup> For Georges Bataille, the collapse of self or deliquescence is indicative of the condition of *informe* or formlessness, an operation that functions to breakdown the boundaries of form and effect classificatory slippage. See George Bataille's entry for formlessness in 'Critical Dictionary,' trans. D. Faccini, *October*, Vol. 60 (1992), 25-31, or in *Encyclopedia Acephalica*, (Atlas Press, London, 1995), 51-52.
- <sup>96</sup> Caillois, 'Mimicry and legendary psychasthenia,' trans. John Shepley, *October*, Vol. 31 (Winter, 1984), 30 (originally published in *Minotaure*, Vol. 7, 1935). Caillois presents an account of various contemporary theoretical explanations for animal mimicry and a host of examples from the natural world, before presenting a case against the idea of mimesis as an adaptive method of survival.
- <sup>97</sup> Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1994), 155. An interesting though tangential extension of these ideas may be found in Theodor Adorno's writing, where he discusses the notion of aesthetic sublimation, the identification between a subject and an artwork whereby the subject becomes absorbed by the work. He argues that: 'Prior to total administration, the subject who viewed, heard or read a work was to lose himself, forget himself, extinguish himself in the artwork. The identification carried out by the subject was ideally not that of making the artwork like himself, but rather that of making himself like the artwork,' Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (The Athlone Press, London, 1997), 17.
- <sup>98</sup> Caillois, 'Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,' 30.
- <sup>99</sup> Here the notion of 'convulsive possession' also reconnects the practice of mimicry back to Breton and his concept of 'convulsive beauty,' which is introduced in the final pages of *Nadja*, and expanded upon in *L'Amour fou*, where simulation or mimicry might be read as being characteristic of the category of the 'veiled-erotic.' See Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, for a critical analysis of



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Breton's concept of convulsive beauty in terms of the categories of 'veiled-erotic,' 'fixed-explosive' and 'marvellous circumstantial.'

<sup>100</sup> In a footnote to *Man, Play and Games*, Caillois states that his earlier study 'treats the problem with a perspective that today seems fantastic to me. Indeed I no longer view mimetism as a disturbance of space perception and a tendency to return to the inanimate, but rather, as herein proposed, as the insect equivalent to games of simulation,' 177-8. However, it is interesting that the 'disturbance of space perception' persists in the form of games *within* other categories of play that demonstrate the desire for the sense of psychological deliquescence and loss of self or alternatively a disruption of a moral order. In all forms of play there is also the risk of 'corruption' that might threaten to blur the boundaries between the game and 'real life' and return play to its chaotic and primal origins.

<sup>101</sup> Caillois discusses the practice of simulation in relation to the role of the mask and masquerade within the festival or shamanistic ritual. In the ritual, says Caillois, 'All is acting. All is also vertigo, ecstasy, trance, convulsions, and, for the officiant, loss of consciousness and finally amnesia.' *Man, Play and Games*, 91.

<sup>102</sup> Methods of *ilinx* include screaming as loud as one can, the tightrope, falling or being projected into space, rapid rotation, sliding, speeding, acceleration of movement, separately or in combination with gyrating movement. *Man, Play and Games*, 23.

<sup>103</sup> Caillois suggests that: 'The disturbance that provokes vertigo is commonly sought for its own sake' providing examples such as when Dervishes seek ecstasy by whirling about to the increasing rhythm of music,' *Man, Play and Games*, 23.

<sup>104</sup> Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, 23.

<sup>105</sup> Horizontality, base materialism, entropy and pulse, are the four categories of *informe* suggested by Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois in *Formless: A Users' Guide* (Zone Books, 2000).

<sup>106</sup> Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, 6.

<sup>107</sup> Baudrillard, 'Please follow me,' 86.

<sup>108</sup> Laxton, 'The guarantor of chance,' np.

<sup>109</sup> Caillois argues that: 'each time that an advanced culture succeeds in emerging from the chaotic original, a palpable repression of the powers of vertigo and simulation is verified. They lose their traditional dominance, are pushed to the periphery of public life, reduced to roles that become more and more modern and intermittent, if not clandestine and guilty or are relegated to the limited and regulated domain of games and fiction where they afford men the same eternal satisfactions, but in sublimated form, serving as an escape from boredom or work and entailing neither madness nor delirium', *Man, Play and Games*, 97. This assertion is mirrored by Laxton in 'Paris as Gameboard,' where she suggests that the practice of automatism and *errance* has been absorbed into the wider practice of surrealist games.

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