Call for submissions

Urban Pilgrimage

*Sponsored by the UC Berkeley Global Urban Humanities Initiative and Room One Thousand.*

The connection between pilgrimage and the city is a historical one, but the need to resituate its historicity within contemporary global itineraries has never been more urgent. The search for transcendental space and the growth of secular urban forms have always been intertwined. From Rome to Mecca, Beijing to Sri Lanka, New York to Amsterdam, pilgrimage informs urban development and defines transitory communities that often cut across social and political boundaries.

While early forms of pilgrimage stressed movement related to pervasive religious cosmologies, contemporary neoliberal economies have increasingly fostered new capital and human flows towards secularized cities of iconicity that tourist and terrorists alike now target. With emerging media networks and novel forms of urbanism, pilgrimage today produces topographies that demand a relocation of journeys of sacredness within contemporary trans-medial environments. To map out new itineraries, mediations, and networks between spaces of transcendence and sites of everydayness, this proposal situates pilgrimage within an interdisciplinary call for works related to art, architecture, geography, literature, history, anthropology, urban planning, and landscape design on the theme of urban pilgrimage.

What are some of the ways in which new forms of movement towards or in cities is changing urban experience? How are communities formed around pilgrimage? How does urban mobility relate to new modes of perception? Are novel forms of movement and infrastructure changing the way we experience and understand cities? As contemporary experiential economies generate new networks of itineraries toward singular sites related to taste and emotions, can we re-conceptualize urban pilgrimage as a kind of affective labor that challenges the distinction between the production of everyday life and the craving for a sacred form of existence? As the circulation of knowledge, information, and affect around the urban centers of pilgrimage assemble new networks of infrastructures, can we re-imagine actual urban milieus in relation to their virtual aura, atmospheres, and different modes of mediations?

Pieces which take flight from the idea of urban pilgrimage, in its multiple arrays and
trajectories, are welcome. Are there new or alternative approaches to pilgrimage, its historical development and contemporary deviations? How do urban centers act as points of transition rather than places of residency? Is there a link between directed movement and concepts of the city? What draws people to cities, and what keeps them there? Contributions are particularly welcome which re-contextualize urban environments in relationship to the narratives and itineraries of travel.

Seeking to map out the diverse issues and imaginaries around the concept of urban pilgrimage, we welcome submissions in a variety of materials and formats, including academic, professional, and non-academic essays, photographic essays, videos, interviews, art work, illustrations and fiction. Special priority will be given to those pieces that actively incorporate innovative methods for interdisciplinary research in relationship to the theme.

The issue will comprise a special publication as part of the Global Urban Humanities Initiative at UC Berkeley, and publicized widely through this new network. It will be produced and published by Room One Thousand, the journal of the UC Berkeley Department of Architecture. Submitted pieces will be considered through a double blind peer review process, and made publicly available online at roomonethousand.com, as well as being archived and distributed through eScholarship and a special print edition.

There are two suggested lengths for essays: 500-1000 words for thought pieces and new lines of inquiry and 3,000-5,000 words for in-depth research papers. Images should be at least 3 inches x 5 inches and at 300 dpi. Submissions are due by September 1, 2014.

For inquires and submissions please email us at: roomonethousand@gmail.com

For more information on the Urban Pilgrimage special issue, please visit: http://globalurbanhumanities.berkeley.edu/urban-pilgrimage

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