

T/A/S

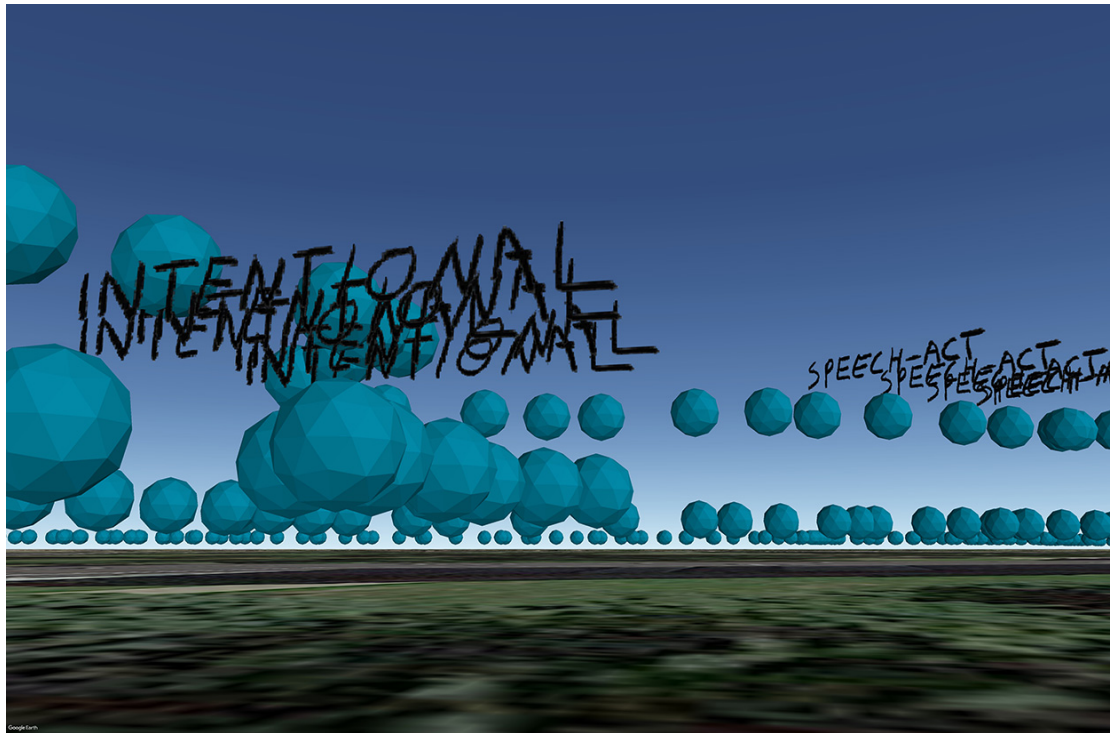
The City as Performative Object

An Essay in Footsteps

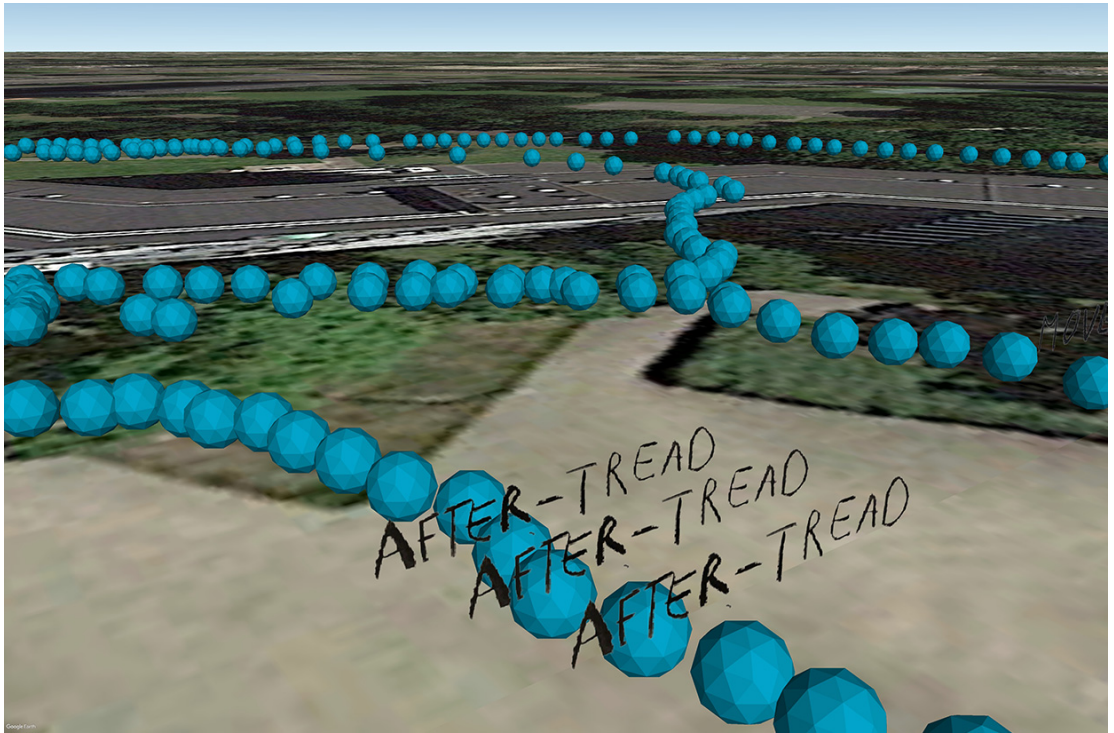
PolakVanBekkum

Artist contribution – June 27, 2017

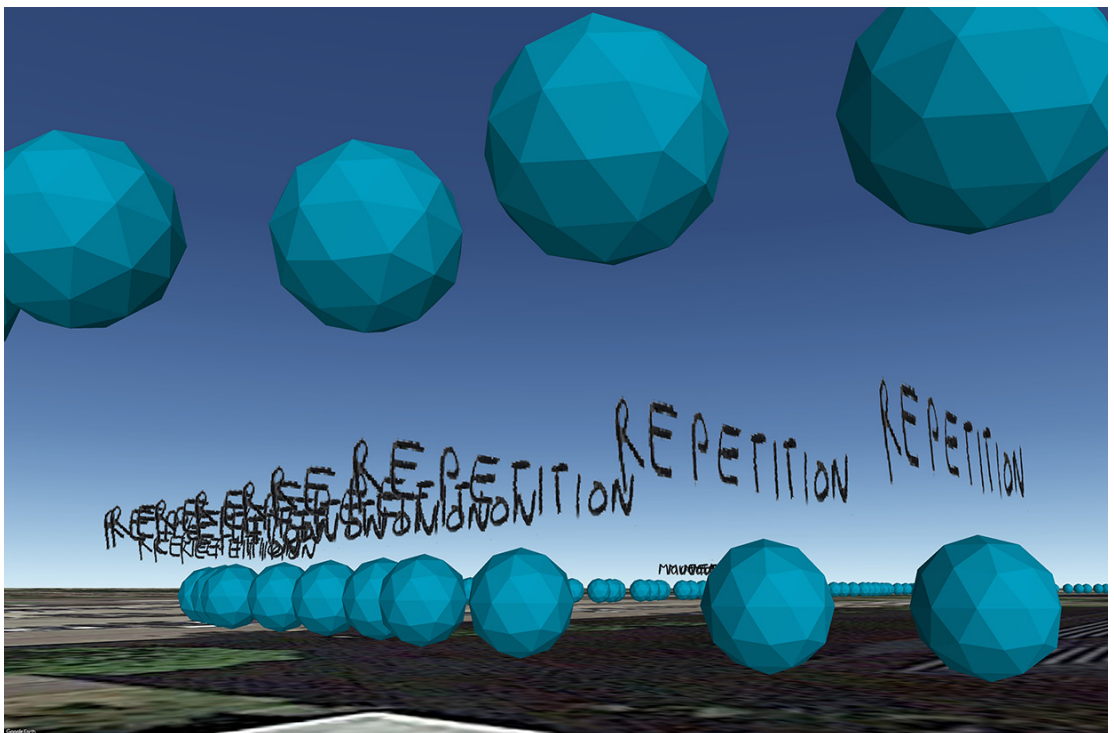
This contribution to *Technology / Affect / Space* [onlineopen.org/technology-affect-space] (T / A / S) consists of a ‘walking essay’ by Esther Polak. The world in which this essay takes place is Google Earth: an alienating landscape of almost seamlessly stitched-together satellite images. The stage of the walk, a utopian apartment building in the Amsterdam’s Bijlmer neighbourhood, seems warped and flattened and competes for attention with the black weirdness of its own shadows. During a repetitive walk around the building Polak uses Judith Butler’s ideas on the performativity of gender and applies them to the city space, exploring different possibilities of what she calls ‘move-categories’ and ‘move-drag’. *The City as Performative Object* is walked and spoken by Esther Polak. It was executed through conversation in and around the Hakford building in the Bijlmer.



To Walk a Word: Intentional



To Walk a Word: After-Tread



To Walk a Word: Repetition

Esther Polak and **Ivar van Bekkum** work together as an artist-couple under the name PolakVanBekkum. Their work focuses on landscape and mobility. Rooted in the history of Dutch realistic landscape depiction, they embrace new technologies to express personal experiences of contemporary city and countryside spaces. Their projects are often informed by collaborations with participants, be it with humans, objects or even the rays of the sun.

Crosslinks

Technology / Affect / Space: onlineopen.org/technology-affect-space

Tags

Affect, Public Space, Urban Space

This text was downloaded on June 30, 2026 from
Open! Platform for Art, Culture & the Public Domain
onlineopen.org/the-city-as-performative-object