

Sevilla Vulgar

A psychogeographic survey of Seville

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German Bight Cohort

Project proposal for PHO701 Positions & Practice

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2019

1. Introduction:

The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the Bags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls.

– Marco Polo to Kublai Khan, Calvino, (2002 p.11)

There are lessons to be learned about the space we inhabit, from the shadow cast by a lamppost on the side of a centuries-old brick wall, or of the monolithic structures that rise from the cityscape, barely hidden or contained behind the leaves of trees. For Barthes, a photograph contains the initial element that draws us in, the *studium*, and that which strikes us and lingers, the *punctum*.

The city, much like the photographs in Barthes' essays from *Camera Lucida*, is the same. The landscape that surrounds us, carefully planned, or not, managed by signs and regulations and social norms, or not, the *studium*, that which is studied. The bright line of sunlight filtering through the streets, illuminating the edge of a windowsill in such a way at such time as one happens to be passing by, the *punctum*.

In order to see the city well, it is best to look away or close your eyes, allow oneself to see the image through one's memory of it, much in the same way as Barthes when he claims that he "...may know better a photograph I remember than a photograph I am looking at..." (1981 p.53).

My photographs are a picture of the change in this world, in this city, in my space, and of my/our/one's relationship to that change.

I appropriate elements of the urban landscape, the *studium*, and through *détournement* seek to survey the underlying psychogeographic nature of the city of Seville.

The *punctum*, whether transmitted or not, the details are what attracts one to the scene. Then the *dérive* leads me as I drift, with purpose, the streets of the gateway to the *Américas*, in search of a greater underlying pattern, of the soul of the city and its *barrios*, despite the onslaught of touristification.



2. Setting the scene, or Seville: my environment

*¡Oh maravilla!
Sevilla sin sevillanos,
¡La gran sevilla!**

– Antonio Machado as Abel Infanzón (1972)

CON TU BANDERA
PRENDO
MI HOGUERA
A

**(Oh wonder!
Seville without Sevillians
That great Seville!)*

Seville, Spain, is currently the 4th largest city in Spain, the largest economy in Andalusia (the region), and the third most visited city in the country.

This spike in tourism over the last decade is due to a number of different factors: Low cost airlines; the proliferation of online apartment sharing platforms such as booking.com, and AirBnB; a depressed economy resulting from the Spanish financial crisis of 2008; an increase in terrorist incidents in previous low-cost destinations such as Tunisia and Egypt.



All of these factors have helped to convert the once neglected city on the banks of the Guadalquivir into one of the top destinations for international travellers with the number of tourists visiting the city in 2012 (1,866,052 travellers [1] having increased to just over 3 million in 2018 [2]).

In a city with over 7,500 tourist apartments for rent, of which only half are legal, the demographics of the city are in a state of constant flux. The concept of neighbourhood life, *la vida del barrio*, has changed and the city centre, as well as other neighbourhoods, has experienced an uptick in the phenomenon known as *Touristification* which is a process of quick, unplanned, large-scale tourism in a city leading to a transformation of the city into the commodity. The end result is, much like with gentrification, a change to the composition of the neighbourhood, increased rental costs. According to a paper on the phenomenon published by Luis Del Romero Renau at the University of Valencia, 'an owner can obtain between 200% and 500% higher potential revenue in AirBnB compared to rent in the conventional housing market' (2018 p.104).

[1] 2012. Annual Tourism Report. Seville, Spain. Link in bibliography.

[2] SI. ABC de Sevilla. 31 January 2019. Link in bibliography.

3. Work to date

The work to date includes a series of 16 images, which will illustrate the first chapter of the psychogeographic survey of the city and its neighbourhoods. These images have been made over the course of the Positions and Practice Module, in response to the feedback received from classmates and instructors.

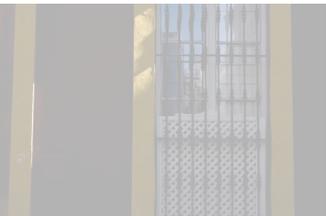
Through *détournement*, the city, or the *studium*, that is being represented through the images will lead will be enlightened by the *punctum*, the details that reveal the true nature of the city.

The images will be arranged by neighbourhood and will be illustrated with a map of the area surveyed during the *dérive*.

“The secrets of the city are, at a certain level, decipherable, but the personal meaning they have for us is incommunicable.”

– Simon Sadler, *the Situationist City*, (1998 p. 80)

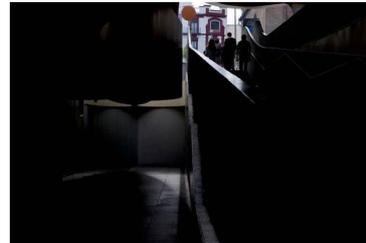
Selected images from Sevilla Vulgar Work in Progress. 2019



4. Approach

I will photograph the city in sections divided up into blocks of 1- and 3-hour *dérives* on weekday mornings.

Different sections of the city will be 'mapped' according to the psychogeographic tradition of the Situationist International, in an attempt to capture the mood of the different areas of the city through use of the psychogeographic concepts of the *détournement*, repurposing or hijacking, and the *dérive*, or structured, purposeful walking, with the goal of allowing myself to be drawn through the city streets, squares, and parks as I seek out the nature of the environment.



La Encarnación

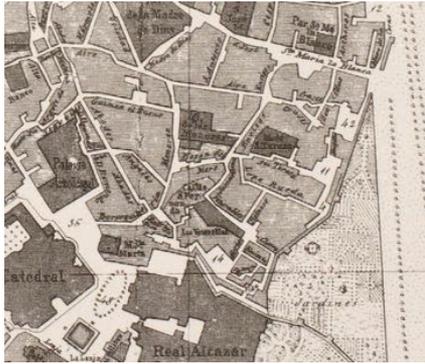


Sample map from Sevilla Vulgar Work in Progress

The areas of focus will be the Historic Centre, known as the *Casco Antiguo*, and its neighbourhoods which will be mapped using a series of historical maps published by the City Council, specifically the map of 1868, the first produced after beginning to tear down the old Roman Walls. The resulting cityscape would not seem unfamiliar to a present-day resident and the street layout resembles what one would find today almost exactly.

Maps will be elaborated from overlaid screenshots from the AirBnB apartment finder map tool, powered by Google, with google maps point of interest icons denoting the location of each *punctum*.

Section of D. Manuel Alvarez-Benavides y López's. 1868. Map of Seville.



Santa Cruz



Sample composite image of Barrio Santa Cruz with image signifier



Barrio Santa Cruz screen capture of Seville, [AirBnB.com](https://www.airbnb.com)

5. Informing influences



Stephen Shore. International Motel, Sacramento, California. July 22, 1973 - From Uncommon Places: The Complete Works.



David Goldblatt. At the corner of Kirk street and Van Riebeeck street. Steynsburg, Eastern Cape. 25 November 2004.

The images created will also draw heavily from the precedent formed by photographers working in the New Topographics tradition, including **Stephen Shore** and his *Uncommon Places: The Complete Works*, and **David Goldblatt**'s later work, 'Regarding Intersections'.



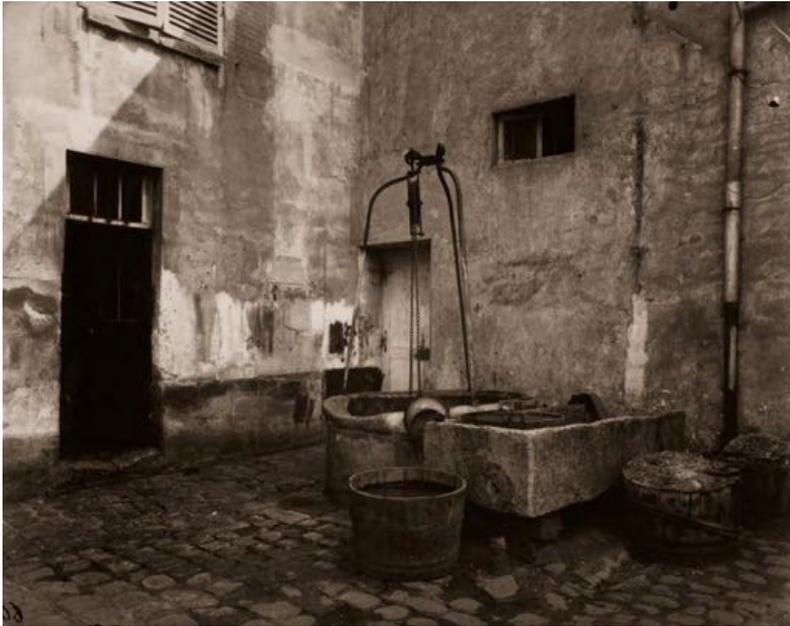
Alfred Stieglitz. *Equivalents*. 1923

Alfred Stieglitz, renowned photographer of the turn of the 20th century. In his early pieces in New York in the 1890s, his images had a noted psychogeographic nature to them. He said of his work in the city at that time:

“From 1893 to 1895 I often walked the streets of New York downtown, near the East River, taking my hand camera with me. I wandered around the tombs, the old Post Office, Five Points. I loathed the dirty streets, yet I was fascinated. I wanted to photograph everything I saw. Yet it was my business experience that drove me into New York’s streets, and so into finding myself in relationship to America”

(Norman 1973)

Eugène Atget, prolific photographer of *la vieux Paris* was acutely aware of the changes happening all around him. As a result of technique and process, longer exposure times, the early hour at which Atget set out to photograph his cityscapes, there is a deliberate emptiness to the city he inhabited.



Atget. Bourg-la-reine, ferme Camille Desmoulins. 1901



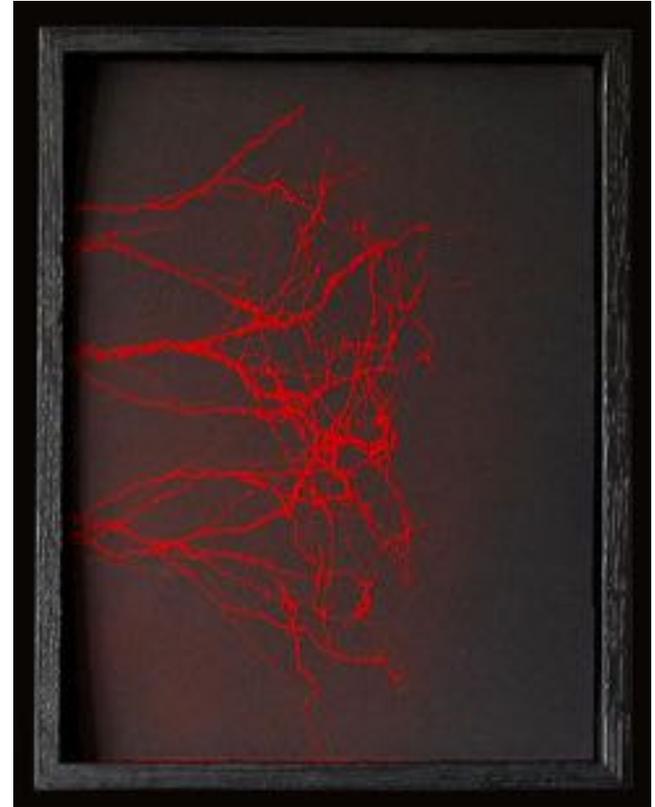
Atget. Passage Vandrezane, Butte au Cailles. 1900



Barnaby Irish is an artist working with cyanotypes that are based on data and found imagery, combining scans of the circulatory system with maps of cities or satellite imagery.

“Like cartography, we are freezing things in flux – stopping time, scaling things up or down to the human scale, false-colouring invisible but measurable factors so they can be seen, so we can process and understand them, and our position relative to them, and any meaning they give to our existence.”

– Barnaby Irish. Motivations. (available at <https://www.barnabyirish.com/motivations/>)



6. Objectives

...in order to see a photograph well, it is best to look away or close your eyes.

- Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida (1981)



D. Manuel Alvarez-Benavides y López. Seville 1868

- Further my knowledge of the streets of Seville
- Create a series of images expressing the psychogeographic nature of the neighbourhoods and my response to them.
- Explore the effect that the physical nature of the environment has on the photographic *dérive*.
- Elaborate a portrait of the city and the neighbourhoods.
- Further explore the intersection between psychogeography and photography.
- Investigate the effects of touristification on the areas surveyed during the *dérive*.
- Develop a better understanding of the relationship between photographic theory and my own work.
- Learn to create maps using different online technology.

7. Future work

Sevilla Vulgar will continue past PHO701 into the following module, PHO702 Informing Contexts, before transforming into a Final Master's Project to be developed.

Google Maps has become ubiquitous in the year 2019. Not only for navigation, the online application allows businesses such as AirBnB to easily display the apartments they offer. Another function of the application is the ability of any user to overlay their own locations or images, creating their own personalised map.

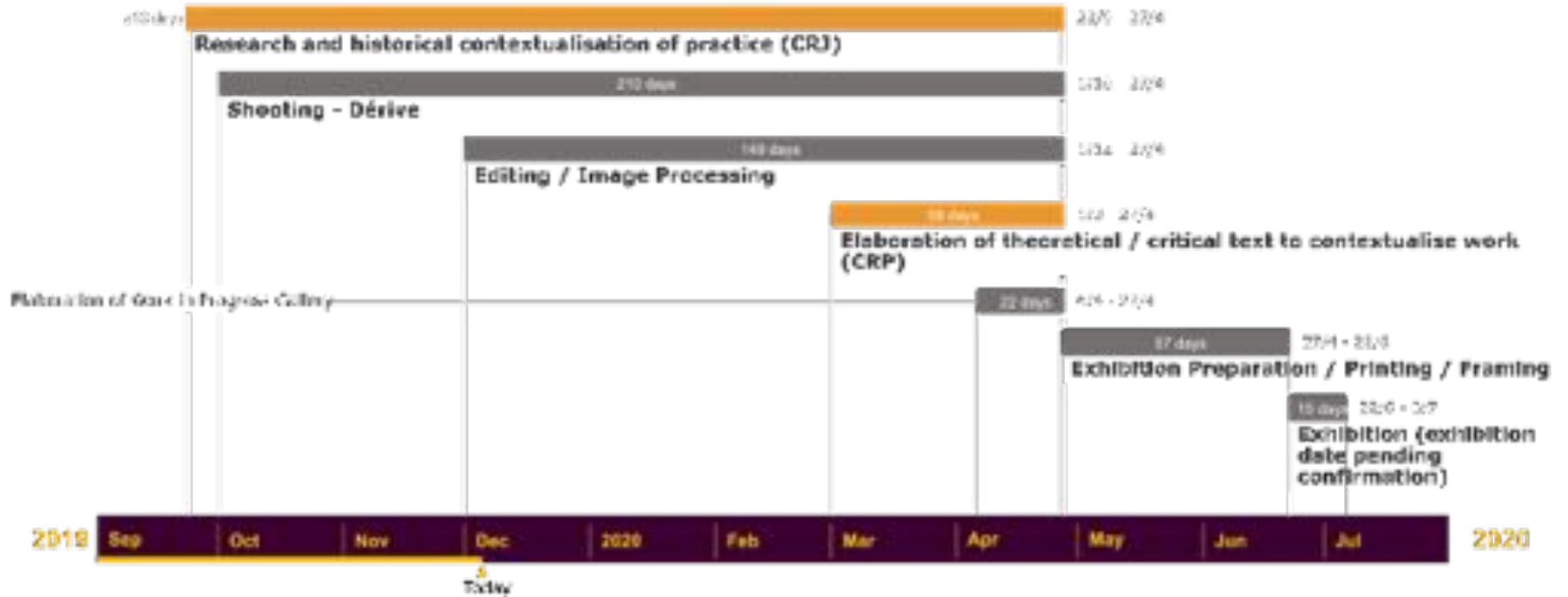
Once the historic center of the city has been mapped, my intention is to continue with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Throughout the upcoming modules, my intention is to study the use of this and other similar programs with an eye on the creation of an interactive final master's project.



Pending future research, my goal is to further develop my psychogeographic studies in the following two modules, Surfaces and Strategies, and Sustaining Prospects, and work towards developing an exhibition that uses the *city/studium* as gallery with the *images/punctum* displayed as projections/posters/signs posted throughout the city where they were created.

8. Timeline



Timeline of activities for PHO701 Positions & Practice + PHO702 Informing Contexts.

9. Estimated expenses

ITEM	QUANTITY	PRICE/PER	FINAL PRICE
Hiking boots	1	99€	99.00€
2TB external hard drive	1	80€	80.00€
Test prints	4 sets of 50	7.50€	30.00€
Final prints	18	25€	450.00€
Framing	18	10€	180.00€
Incidentals	6 / months	100€	600.00€
		TOTAL	1,439.00€

10. Bibliography

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Appendix I: Glossary of terms

Psychogeography - The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behavior of individuals. (Debord 2014)

Detournement - Short for "detournement of preexisting aesthetic elements." The integration of present or past artistic productions into a superior construction of a milieu. (Debord 2014)

Derive - A mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. The term also designates a specific uninterrupted period of deriving. (Debord 2014)

Studium - That which interests us about a scene, the subject or reason for making an image.

Punctum - The element(s) of an image that prick the viewer or break the studium and which maintain interest in the image.

Touristification: A process, and the resulting state in a definite space, of relatively spontaneous, unplanned massive development of tourism, which leads to the transformation of this space into a tourism commodity itself (Del Romero. 2018)

Appendix II:

Photographer's Name:	Padilla, Michael	Date(s) of Shoot:	December 2019 – May 2020
Assistants' Names:	NONE		
Tutor / Supervisor:	Michele Sank		
Location:	Seville, Spain		

PRIMARY RISK ASSESSMENT

HAZARD	City traffic	RISK OF	Being run over
OL MEASURE	Staying on the pavement / walking in pedestrian areas, avoiding high traffic areas unless necessary, daylight shooting to increase visibility.		
Description of work:	Structured city-walking, street / landscape photography,		

Persons at Risk Identify all those at risk

Technical Staff:		Academic Staff:		Students:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Admin Staff:		Canteen Staff:	
Contractors:		General Public:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Visitors:		Estates Staff:		Library Staff:	
Cleaning Staff:		Emergency Personnel:							

Other:		Especially at risk:	
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Check list					
Equipment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Flash/tungsten	Stands/tripods	Hot lights	Smoke machine/fire
Flammable materials		Risk of Fire	Welfare of Assistant	Welfare of model	Working at Heights
Location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transport to location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Parking	Vehicles/traffic
Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Confined spaces	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Derelict Buildings	Animals
Tides		Compressed Gasses	Water	Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
				Chemicals	

HAZARD	City walking / varied pavement types / cobblestones / degraded pavement	RISK OF	Fall / sprain ankle
CONTROL MEASURE	New pair of lace up walking boots, attention will be paid not only to the cityscape but also the ground for unlevelled pathways, cobblestones, degraded pavement or other hazards.		
HAZARD	Criminals preying on tourists with cameras	RISK OF	Theft / mugging
CONTROL MEASURE	Shooting during daylight hours, carrying only the camera and no other accessories to reduce risk of losing material, camera bag closed with zipper.		
HAZARD	Inclement weather	RISK OF	Illness / damage to equipment
CONTROL MEASURE	New rain jacket with interior liner for warmth, waterproof camera bag, umbrella, rain boots and dry socks.		
HAZARD	Riding bicycle to the areas where I will shoot	RISK OF	Bike accident
CONTROL MEASURE	Bike lights, use of cycling paths and helmet		

On site risk assessment: these are control measures that arose on your shoot

Emergency Information and Procedures

Phone	Charged mobile phone with full signal / Nearest Payphone / Landline +34 600 335 832
Medical Expertise	Are you or a member of your team First Aid qualified? – Yes. I am a registered nurse.
Emergency Procedure	In the event of an emergency dial 999 or 112 ensure that you or someone with you can accurately describe where you are (ideally nearest postcode)
Medical Treatment	Minor Injuries Unit, Falmouth Hospital Open weekdays 8am to 8pm A&E Treliiske Hospital, Truro, Open 24 hours
Evacuation procedures	Ambulance can evacuate from main road.
Incident/accident reporting	All incidents or accidents should be reported to tutor at Falmouth University

Assessment carried out by

- I have ensured that I have reviewed the hazards and risks associated with this project and taken necessary steps to remove hazards where possible or reduced the risks associated with the remaining hazards to a minimum.
- I have recorded the main hazards, risks and control measures in this document.
- I have ensured that those working with me have been briefed on the nature of the tasks they are to perform, and are aware of the hazards associated with the task and the measures in place to reduce the risks associated with those hazards. (if applicable)
- I will continually assess hazards and risks 'live' on site to ensure that nothing has been overlooked or has changed since initial assessment.

Signed: 	Date: 05 December 2019
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Assessment reviewed by