Mobile Making: Editorial

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This special issue of *Wi* takes an open approach to the theme of mobile making. It is motivated in part by the continuous proliferation of avenues for producing media on-the-go with mobile apps. But it also addresses constellations of mobilities and making that depart from a focus on apps, putting into play a wide range of tools and concepts. The issue avoids a simple narrative of more making that is more mobile due to more devices and apps. It also avoids establishing an ontology prescribing what counts as mobile making. Instead, the issue addresses an array of ideas and practices of making *through* mobilities, while also exploring mobilities *through* making. How is making mobile? How are mobilities in-the-making?

The mobility of making highlights both the way that making requires flexibility in practice and the way it draws on the movement of people, objects, data, communication, and affects. Making entails negotiation, collaboration, and what Timothy Ingold (2011) has referred to as "itinerant, improvisatory, and rhythmic qualities" (236) stressing the idea of making as a process of emergence rather than the imposition of preconceived forms on passive materials. Making need not result in a finished artifact, but can instead operate as a method of generating ideas and relationships. In approaches such as *critical making*, for example, shared acts of making, conversation, reflection, and engagement with pragmatic and theoretical issues are emphasized over the object made

(Ratto 2011, 253). Making that is directed at idea generation, on the one hand, and making as the creation of material 'things', on the other, can feed into one another reciprocally as in many approaches to research-creation (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012; see also Media-N vol. 11, issue 3). Mobilities, in terms of flexibility, improvisation, and emergence, and in terms of working with things in movement, foster the making of ideas and objects as well as their interrelations. Through these processes mobile making provokes perspectives and orientations that affect our understandings of what it means to be mobile.

Mobilities research has long been interested in the processual, while maintaining a keen awareness of the interdependence of mobilities and moorings (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry 2006) and a weariness towards uncritical nomadic metaphysics (Cresswell 2005). To understand the dynamics of fixity and flow, mobile methods stress the importance of finding ways of going along with the mobile phenomenon in question (Büscher, Urry, and Witchger 2011). To go-along-with is also to affect, to change, while being affected and changed – to participate in the making of the ongoing processes that are being investigated. In this going-along-with, what is being made is never only ideas or objects, but also the ways of making and the associated forms of mobility that enable and constrain possibilities for what can be made and how. Mobile making is always (re)making itself as much as anything else.

All of the contributions to this issue come from and/or engage with researcher-practitioners for whom making and research are thoroughly intertwined. As such, the

mobility of making, and the making of mobilities, are explored largely through plumbing specific projects that the contributors have been involved in.

Article Summaries

Aslak Aamot and Kaare Svejstrup's contribution simultaneously reflects on and performs mobile making. The authors revisit a series of radio documentaries on the theme of mobilities that they produced while traveling across the United States of America in a rented car. Back home in Denmark, Aamot and Svejstrup record another road trip in order to think through their original series and create a new incarnation of the project, presented here as an audio montage accompanied by video footage of their journey across America along with a brief written statement on the work.

Ben Lenzner and Craig Hight analyze the shifting strategies of the human rights organization WITNESS, focusing on how the group has adapted to the challenges of human rights video making in the context of globalization and networked mobilities. The authors show how, as digital video technologies rapidly change and play out in specific ways in local contexts, WITNESS is confronted with the task of meeting the mobility of video practices with a flexibility of organizational methodology – a methodology constantly in-the-making.

David Madden's contribution blends theory and practice to simultaneously study the highly mobile spaces constituting Montreal's Underground City and to intervene in contemporary locative sound art and sound mapping practices. Influenced by mobile methods drawn from both soundscape studies and mobilities research, Madden's project prompts a reorientation to urban sounds and highlights the possibilities for

mobile making with these sounds in order to foster alternative engagements with sonic processes and city spaces.

Writing on her recent artwork arising from a mass football game, Jen Southern explores the connections between art and social science research methods, tensions between unruliness and convention along with mobile making in relation to place-making, the game itself, and the methods she used to follow the action and create her work. In doing so, Southern highlights not only the inherent mobility of each of these elements on their own, but the ways in which attending to and participating in collective, entangled mobility attunes researchers and artists to improvisation and emergence.

Johanna Steindorf's contribution presents the 'audio walk' as an experimental mobile method, comparing and contrasting it with the ethnographic research tool, the 'go-along', and providing an elaboration of Steindorf's audio walk 'Disappearing Act', conducted with a group of thirteen women at the Cologne-Bonn airport in March 2014. Though audio walks are often presented as artistic works, Steindorf stresses that they may also be used as flexible and highly mobile research tools that modulate participants' awareness of their surroundings, bringing previously concealed aspects of experience into focus.

Linda O'Keeffe contributes a report on her Derry Soundscape Project in which she led a workshop with a group of older adults examining intersections of sound art, mobile technology, places, and memory. O'Keeffe's project not only engaged participants with a form of mobile making through field recording and composition using mobile devices; her reflections also touch on how such devices and apps are made in ways that

circumscribe making – how design decisions influence who can participate and in what ways – and she shows the importance of forms of support to facilitate creative practice. Malé Luján Escalante and Christopher Boyko's contribution investigates the entanglements of the making of space and the making of mobile technology. In particular, the authors use the idea of *digital public space* to consider the project *Numbers that Matter*, a cross-sector initiative exploring open data, wellbeing, and wearables. The article offers both a report on this project, and methodological tools for further examination of participatory design of wearables technology for wellbeing in digital public space.

Taien Ng-Chan explores the daily commute as space for mobile media making and locative art, developing the concept and practice of the *detour* as a way of uncovering the multiple social, historical, cultural, phenomenological and poetic layers of paths and places. Drawing inspiration from pyschogeography and feminist phenomenology, Ng-Chan elaborates the methodology of the detour, showing how at the same time as it has the potential to produce art objects, the detour's greatest value may lie in its ability to effect reorientations to one's surroundings, re-making ways of being mobile.

Ximena Alarcon explores mobile making both in terms of the potential of mundane mobile technologies, such as smart phones, for working creatively with sound, and in terms of the constitution of 'in-between' spaces in the context of migration. Developing a taxonomy of mobile sound apps, Alarcon also hypothesizes an as of yet unmade app that would take advantage of the affordances of current mobile devices to encourage listening and performing in the 'in-between', thereby participating in how such spaces are made and experienced.

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About the Author

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