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Street Photography in the Google Age

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Andrew John Ivory

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Abstract

The role and position of the documentary street photographer is examined in the context of other forms of contemporary visual survey, including Google Street View.

The Street View methodology is critically examined and related to the methodologies of other visual artists, including street photographers Peter Black and Robert Frank.

Comparisons are drawn between the methodological restrictions imposed by Street View and those imposed by the photographers in the course of their practice. The issue of authorship is discussed and the lack of specific authorship of Street View is related to its inability to augment the viewer's personal sense of place.

Wainuiomata, a suburb of Hutt City in Wellington, New Zealand, is introduced as a location for the author's research into how documentary photography might operate.

The author's own phenomenological history is considered, and it is proposed that Wainuiomata may act as a mirror which reflects a sense of place derived from personal history, triggered by the visual landscape.

The author's installation work *The 1 p.m. Project* is discussed and contextualised as a response to the author's research findings.

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