

Drift | Teri Rueb | 2004 | Interactive GPS-based sound installation (beta premiere)

The ubiquity of GPS (global positioning satellite) and other tracking technologies suggests that "being lost" may itself be an experience that is being lost. However, simply knowing one's geographical location as expressed in longitude and latitude coordinates has little bearing on one's personal sense of place or direction. "Drift" poses the age-old question "Where am I and where am I going?" in a contemporary moment in which geographic information systems provide evermore precise, yet limited, answers to this question. The installation embraces the flow of wandering, the pleasure of disorientation, and the playful unpredictability of drifting as it relates to movement and translation. Sounds blend ambient textures with spoken word in different languages. Spoken word passages are drawn from poetry and literature dealing with the theme of wandering, being lost, and drifting –Rousseau, Joyce, Mann, Dante, and Woolf among others. The Watten Sea becomes a metaphor for hertzian space as visitors are invited to wander among layered currents of sand, sea and interactive sounds that drift with the tides.

The installation covers a 2 km x 2 km region that is filled with zones of interactive sound. The region moves with the tide such that at low tide all the sounds are out on the Watt, at high tide they flood the town. Sounds play automatically as you wander through these interactive zones. The location of the zones changes constantly with the shifting tides - therefore, your best strategy for finding them is simply to wander. The general region of the installation is indicated on the large map in the window of the first aid station at the Strandbad Kugelbake. On-site "Ohne Schnur" staff can provide information about the general location of the sounds based on the date and time of day of your visit.

Credits:

"Drift" software was created by Computer Science students under the direction of Dr. Zary Segall, Distinguished Professor of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC):

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