(EM)Powering Mobilities
Cities/Architectures/Justices

C-MUS 10th year anniversary conference

Keynote abstracts:

Prof. Keller Easterling:

Medium Design
At a moment of digital ubiquity, it may be easier to treat digital platforms as primary means to innovation and to believe that, if coated with sensors in an internet of things, the stiff, dumb world will suddenly become responsive and "smart." But the heavy lumpy components of space are themselves information systems that don't really need digital devices to make them dance. *Medium design* treats space itself as an information system and a broad, inclusive mixing chamber for many social, political, technical networks. Designing medium is managing the potentials and relationships between objects—the activity or disposition immanent in their organization. It is something like preparing the growth medium, the rules of the game or the operating system that links and activates the components of an assemblage. The talk will rehearse the special repertoires of medium design that affect mobility by considering spatial switching to counteract the boomerang effects in organizations of automated vehicles, the role of spatial variables in political and environmental migrations, and the means to put the development machine into reverse in response to climate.

Prof. Steven Graham:

For a Vertical Turn in Urban Mobilities Research: Elevators, Flyovers and 'Sky-Taxis'
Entire libraries can be filled with volumes exploring the cultures, politics and geographies of the largely 'horizontal' mobilities and transportation infrastructures that are intrinsic to urban modernity (highways, railways, subways, public transit and so on). And yet the recent 'mobilities turn' has almost completely neglected the cultural geographies and politics of vertical transportation within and between the buildings of vertically-structured and volumetric cityscapes. Attempting to rectify this neglect, this lecture seeks to bring elevator and helicopter travel centrally into discussions about the cultural politics of urban space; to begin to explore the mobility politics surrounding imminent introduction of autonomous 'flying taxis' across the world's major global cities by companies like Uber and Google; and, finally, to analyses the complex vertical, urban and mobility politics involved in the construction and operation of urban flyovers and expressways.

Prof. Paul McIlvenny:

"Virtual Mobilities and Micro-Mobilities: Re-staging and Inhabiting Expanded Mobile Scenographies"
In this talk, I explore emerging prospects for qualitative mobilities research that arise from a creative use of new apparatuses of capture and technologies of virtualisation. First, the issue of virtual mobilities is revisited by addressing the actualisation of spatial movement and mobility through the prism of interactive 3D computer games, especially virtual and augmented reality (XR) immersive narratives, and the software engines used to build them. Second, contemporary research on micro-mobilities is introduced and

connected to the emerging sensory modalities paradigm, exploring how particular operational logics of anthro-mobility and perception-on-the-move are built into XR applications and technologies. Third, an enhanced, performative approach to re-staging and inhabiting video, audio and other time-based, as well as volumetric, sensing data in XR for qualitative mobilities research is demonstrated. Lastly, the potential and limitations of an expanded micro-scenographic approach in mobility studies are discussed.