

Narratives in Space + Time Society/Fourchettes Seminar Reflection

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It was a pleasure to attend the Narratives in Space + Time Society/Fourchettes seminar at NSCAD University Art Bar on February 17, 2017, where a gathering of minds took place to discuss methods of research and creation within arts and culture. The evening began with a presentation by Barbara Lounder and Bob Bean summarizing the group's projects and methods of community engagement, followed by ample discussion time.

The physical act of walking is a main method employed by NiS+TS, which simultaneously activates the spaces and sites they visit, as well as their varying audience of participants. This experiential approach promotes their idea of creative citizenship, through which NiS+TS asks their audiences to be co-creators— to layer their own personal narratives or knowledge within, the context of each intervention they make into public geographies.

I am continually inspired by the research and innovative projects conducted by the multidisciplinary members of NiS+TS. Their commitment to community engagement and storytelling helps them navigate inquiries into social justice and the fabrics, both historical and contemporary, that make up their communities. Those who participate in NiS+TS events discover more about where they live and how they identify with that place. The idea that multiple histories of a place are present, is an important one that NiS+TS harnesses using collaborative research methods and bringing in many voices.

As a new resident of Halifax at the time, my experience with their projects certainly influenced my perception of the city. They revealed stories, places, and people I might otherwise not have known. I admire their ability to create networks and bring people together through a shared multi-sensorial experience, and I agree with their notion that people are craving a connection to others and to their city. This seminar provided a forum to share ideas about how these vital connections might transpire through further engagement with art and culture and considering these projects are research in themselves, what are the measurable outcomes? What do people take away from these experiences and what new narratives are created?