

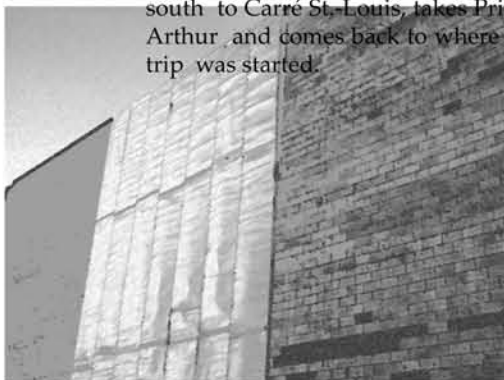


THE SITE:

The site was initially selected as St-Laurent and St.- Denis streets. St-Laurent Street was understood as a place of transition, while St.-Denis represented the place of belonging.

However a closer look to the nature of these two streets made it clear that such demarcations are rather arbitrary in this case. A street by definition is a place of transit, and by activities associated to it it could as well become a place of belonging. In both streets one can find areas which have acquired the quality of a place, to which one could become attached to. While in each of them there are other areas which seem to have no character of their own.

The definition of site has evolved from a precise area to a path, a loop which one could take every time and discover anew in each trip. The perambulation initiates at the corner of St.- Laurent and Prince Arthur, goes along St.-Laurent up to Duluth, then takes Duluth and continues until St.-Denis. From St.-Denis one moves south to Carré St. Louis, takes Prince Arthur and comes back to where the trip was started.



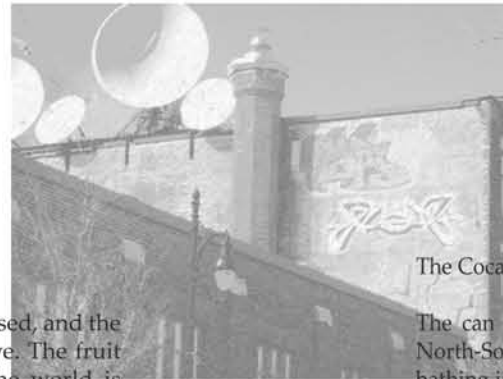
The Smirnoff Bottle

The street is deserted, almost all the eating-places are closed, and the few that are still open are preparing themselves to leave. The fruit shop ran by a Portuguese couple, old and tired as the world is closed. As usual, the light of their store is on. In a setting that defies a conventional fruit-shop and looks more like some one's living room, different objects are placed with an order only inherent to its owners. Next to cardboards that hold dozens of eggs, little flowerpots and not too fresh pears are placed.

A thin concrete skin is framing the connection between windows and the ground. The concrete band wraps around the store, except for the entrance door, and turns at the angle, where the street is connected to a small East-West street. There the height of the concrete band becomes significant, as the east-west street has a lower level than the main. At the very end of the Concrete Band, is placed a little bottle.

A close look reveals its identity: Smirnoff, Vanilla twist, 50 ML. The bottle is half-full, and small white particles are floating in the transparent fluid inside. At the other side there is a paper label, stock carelessly: Sample not for sale. The bottle is more or less in the shadow made by a fruit shelf inside. One can notice the tiny bottle only by looking carefully. Sample giving is a rather common ritual on this part of the street. Cars with banners, painted in vulgar colours bring tones of samples. Loud and aggressive people come out of the cars to distribute products to passer-byes, always ready to take the time to inquire about the products.

During the day, the owner of the fruit-shop comes next to the window, stares at the side walk with colourless eyes. As if his gaze is not attached to anything in particular, it slips on everything and turns in all directions. Meanwhile his wife is making insignificant moves, changing the places of different things in the store. Her lips move slightly. May be she likes to whisper something while working.



The Coca-Cola Can

The can was pushed against the curb, at the intersection of the big North-South Avenue and the little East-West Street. The side walk was bathing in the light coming out from a luxurious furniture store. It was rather late, but there were still a couple wandering in the store, sitting on sofas, happily chatting and laughing. From time to time their shadows would darken the light gray of side walk. From where they were, they could not see the can. It was pressed against the curb. It had become slightly deformed.

At the other side of the small street there was a little fast food place, deserted, as if no one had gone in for years. One could only see the can coming from North. Its surface was cold and humid. It might have stayed for weeks or simply few days there without anyone noticing? May be one car wanting to take a short-cut from the traffic jam of the big Avenue had crushed it, only to perturb the lazy sleep of street. The man and woman at the furniture showroom were now sitting on a sofa placed in the window shop facing the small street. Coming form far, one could take them for statues, or mannequins, sitting on the sofa and smiling. They waved occasionally to disillusioned passer-byes and laughed even more. The can was still there.

It could take days, or maybe months until some one would hit it unintentionally; to move it from that convex concrete surface it had attached itself to, to displace it again. May be one of these nights, some one would come with one of those garbage suckers, to clean the side walk from all the winter dirt which had sunk into its pores. The big mouth of the machine could then suck the can up together with cigarettes, and the few colourless dry leaves, which had escaped winter.

The couple finally came out of the store, held each other's arms and came down the few stairs to step on the side walk. They walked in the opposite direction of the can. A few minutes after, the lights of the store were turned off and darkness swallowed the side walk and the can together. There was no more sign of the shiny red and white metal. There was only dark gray and silence



THE PROJECT:

The shadowed presence of mannequins haunts the two streets: their trans-lucid and cold skin, their body frozen in an eternal pose, their immobile feet. They stay where they are for the longest time. Their immobility is only disturbed when the sales girls turn them impatiently to achieve a better "look".

Together with other objects, we watch them. They all belong to the realm of transitory. A passer bye's gaze with their beauty, sensuousness or simply curiosity. How could one capture the essence of these objects?

The project entails a series of documentation of the ever-changing characters of these two main streets. The idea of an urban promenade through the city is mapped out through a video, series of pictures and written text in order to depict some of the characteristics of what might seem ordinary in the first place.





OF DISPLAYED OBJECTS AND WANDERING GAZE
Pari Riahi