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**From Kreuzberg to Williamsburg: Exploring the trans-local nature of cultural scenes and the creation and diffusion of knowledge, practices and value(s) across space, scale and industry**

**Sponsorships**

Cultural Geography Specialty Group

**Organizers**

Taylor Brydges - Uppsala University

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**Session Abstract:**

A central focus in economic geography concerns the ways in which specific spatial dynamics, such as face-to-face interaction or clusters, facilitate and shape the creation of knowledge, practices and value(s). By extension, geographers are interested in the mechanisms, including local buzz and global pipelines, through which ideas and activities diffuse across space, scale and industry (Bathelt et al. 2004; Hracz et al. 2013). Although the existing body of literature on these themes is well-developed, few studies have analyzed the effect of 'global buzz' on local cultural scenes and neighborhoods. Moreover, there is a need to build on Bathelt and Henn's (2014) useful exploration of knowledge transfers over distance and trans-local networks by considering the role of individuals, including entrepreneurs, consumers and curators, who operate 'beyond the firm.' More broadly, the restless dynamism of the contemporary global economy and continuous introduction of new technologies provide opportunities to test, challenge and nuance theory.

One way to address these questions is to consider the ways in which individuals, practices and scenes intersect, influence each other and evolve over time. For example, despite their purported uniqueness and 'authenticity,' cultural scenes in cities such as Berlin, New York, Madrid, Los Angeles, Stockholm and Toronto appear to feature rather homogenous aesthetics. Indeed, the neighborhoods where these scenes coalesce contain a remarkably similar mix of shops (art galleries, record stores, vintage fashion boutiques), spaces (graffiti alleys, co-work offices), styles (Swedish jeans, indie rock), activities (cooking schools, craft collectives) and actors (artists, designers, baristas, bloggers, sophisticated consumers). As vital sites for the production, curation and consumption of cultural goods, services and experiences these scenes and neighborhoods are empirically interesting on many levels. Yet, as key drivers and indicators of trends they are particularly ideal places to study the creation and diffusion of knowledge, practices and value(s) across space, scale and industry as well as the tensions between local authenticity and global uniformity.

Drawing on diverse conceptual, empirical and geographical perspectives the papers in this session explore four interrelated questions:

1. To what extent are these scenes and neighborhoods actually homogenous?
2. What are the mechanisms, such as temporary clusters, new social media, low-cost travel and increased mobility that enable or encourage trans-local uniformity?

3. What are the implications of homogeneity and these mechanisms for actors, products, scenes, neighborhoods, the cities they are located within, policy agendas and broader social/political movements?
4. How can academic research on these phenomena inform, test, challenge and nuance geographical knowledge and theory?

## **Session One**

### **Chair:**

*Brian J. Hrats - University of Southampton*

### **1) Arts Clusters in the US, Canada, and France: commonalities and difference**

*Daniel Silver - University of Toronto*

*Terry Clark - University of Chicago*

*Brian Knudsen - Urban Innovation Analysis*

### **2) Trans-local gatewatching and socio-spatial interconnectedness**

*Atle Hauge - Eastern Norway Research Institute*

*Ola Haampland - Hedmark University College*

### **3) Discourses of, in and on Surry Hills at night**

*Peta Wolifson - The University of New South Wales*

### **4) Decoding the curated neighborhood: Exploring the similarities of trans-local cultural scenes through in-flight magazines**

*Taylor Brydges - Uppsala University*

*Brian J. Hrats - University of Southampton*

## **Session Two**

### **Chair:**

*Taylor Brydges - Uppsala University*

### **1) Investigating a new trans-local reality: the importance of trans-local connections in an increasingly fragmented music scene landscape**

*Tarek Virani - Queen Mary, University of London*

### **2) Global buzz and trans-local knowledge transfer: The case of the film and TV industry cluster in Sweden**

*Su-Hyun Berg - Uppsala University*

### **3) Locational narratives in creative clusters: consuming local buzz and producing local authenticity**

*Yosha Wijngaarden - University of Rotterdam*

**4) Theorizing information brokerage: locating St. Catharines in the field of North American interactive digital media**

*Jeff Boggs - Brock University*

**Session Three**

**Chair:**

*Chiara Valli - Uppsala University*

**1) From the Village to the Metropolis: Exploring Cultural Scenes in the Urbanized Countryside, the Small City and the Global Metropolis**

*Jens Kaae Fisker - Aalborg University*

**2) The emergence and evolution of new media industry cluster in Taipei: An agency perspective**

*Cheng-Yi Lin - National Taipei University of Education*

**3) Behind the scenes" in fashion curation. Who and what does influence concept stores in forming and diffusing homogeneous styles across scenes**

*Mariangela Lavanga - University of Rotterdam*

**Discussant:**

*Annette Koh - University of Hawaii*

**Session Four**

**Chair:**

*Brian J. Hracz - University of Southampton*

**1) Translocal Geographies of Creative Transgression: Inspiration, Reproduction, and Innovation in Multi-City Street Art and DIY Urbanism**

*Gordon Douglas - New York University*

**2) Destination Kreuzberg Revisited - contemporary trends in tourism and place consumption in Berlin's inner city neighborhoods**

*Johannes Novy - Technical University Berlin*

**3) Global Trends And Local Authenticities In The Post Urban Village. Conflicting Narratives In Bushwick, NYC**

*Chiara Valli - Uppsala University*

**Discussant:**

*Melanie Fasche - University of Toronto*

## **Session One Abstracts:**

### **Arts Clusters in the US, Canada, and France: commonalities and difference**

*Daniel Silver - University of Toronto*

*Terry Clark - University of Chicago*

*Brian Knudsen - Urban Innovation Analysis*

Neighborhood arts clusters are crucial generators of local buzz and vibrant cultural scenes. Though observers often note similarities in the composition and consequences of arts clusters across nations, little quantitative and comparative research tackles the issue directly. This article evaluates the homogeneity of arts clusters and related components of local scenes in the U.S., Canada, and France, finding surprisingly strong similarities in the types of neighborhoods in which they thrive, as well as some key differences. Using large-N data from the economic and population censuses of each country, we ask: (1) *How are arts clusters similar or different across countries?* Specifically, we assess whether types of arts establishments and jobs are similarly prevalent in these three countries, and if similar combinations of arts activities co-locate. (2) *What factors predict the location of arts clusters, and do they differ between nations?* We test the degree to which transportation (walking, transit, biking), urbanity, and socio-demographic factors like education, income, and rent, as well as key “self-expressive” amenities like used record stores and cafes, are conducive to arts activity, finding a distinctively powerful association with walking. (3) *What are the socio-political impacts of arts clusters, and are they similar or different for the three countries?* We find that, despite their national political differences, across all three countries, social movement organizations – human rights organizations, environmental organizations, social advocacy groups – are geographically concentrated in areas with more arts establishments. We also find strong interaction effects: the political impact of the arts is strongest in walkable neighborhoods. These results indicate recurrent socio-spatial processes whereby neighborhoods that encourage both creative artistic expression and open engagement with the urban environment through walking also generate the imaginative resources conducive to social movement activism, regardless of nation. Hence the recurrent clustering of similar neighborhood attributes across nations – young people, density, the arts, walking, new social movement organizations, and a host of amenities that encourage the value of individual self-expression, from custom T-shirt shops to second hand boutiques and street cafes. Neighborhood effects are durable and far-reaching. While the cross-national similarities are striking given the many differences between the three countries, we conclude by highlighting some of distinctive features of arts clusters in each country.

### **Trans-local gatewatching and socio-spatial interconnectedness**

*Atle Hauge - Eastern Norway Research Institute*

*Ola Haampland - Hedmark University College*

As shown in numerous studies (e.g. Hracz 2012, Mulligan 2014) the music industry is undergoing rapid and pervasive changes. Internet-based and other digital technologies offer exceptional consumer choice; practically everything is made available to the public, and the power has seemingly trickled down to the long tail of digital consumers (Andersson 2004). However, in reality what we see is a concentration of the majority of recorded music revenue around a small share of artists and labels. In fact, the assumption of the long tail seems to be misleading, and a “Superstar artist economy” appears to be a

more precise description (Mulligan 2014). Thus, picking winners, i.e. the artist with the highest commercial potential, is even more crucial for music labels today.

In this paper we explore how major labels monitor and screen social media and other digital channel to discover new talent, sounds and scenes. As with all other talent and innovations, even these seem to cluster. Although these sonic styles or scenes can be local or global, they are also increasingly trans-local. These virtual venues represent challenges and opportunities for the music industry and have radically changed how the music industry works with talent and unsigned artists. We argue that even in virtual space, these trans-local scenes are social constructions of interrelations rather than bounded and fixed (Brickell and Datta 2011).

### **Discourses of, in and on Surry Hills at night**

*Peta Wolifson - The University of New South Wales*

This paper draws on research exploring the multiplicity of discourses of, in and on the nightscape of Surry Hills, a socio-economically mixed and increasingly gentrified suburb in inner-Sydney Australia, to discuss how these discourses intersect to shape nightlife in the suburb. The City of Sydney has in recent years introduced a suite of policy documents under their strategic plan 'Sydney 2030: Green/Global/Connected', including a cultural policy: 'Creative City' and the 'Open' plan: 'Future directions for Sydney at night'. Their strategies aim to promote Sydney as a 'vibrant' and 'inviting' global city, with Surry Hills as a key nightlife area. The suburb's evening offerings are frequently represented in international, national and local media, which are often utilised to sell the City's message.

'Open' is driven by economic imperatives that see global competitiveness at the fore, with significant policy transference (both from within Australia and internationally) and the introduction of a global night time cities ranking index. Although understood by local government as a highly successful 'urban village' balancing residential amenity, a 'vibrant' nightlife and a burgeoning 'creative' sector, Surry Hills' is a nightlife that divides opinion and participation, particularly in its recent materialisation as driven by the City's 'creative city'-led 'Vision'. Ethnographic work, both inside and outside of the performative nightscape of Surry Hills, has identified multiple discourses that both compare and contrast to government and media discourses relating to this cultural scene. Economic diversification through new small bars, while said to 'bring with it' demographic diversity and positive social outcomes, is shown to extend feelings of exclusion, in contrast to those larger pubs or 'beer barns' they are framed against by the City.

### **Decoding the curated neighborhood: Exploring the similarities of trans-local cultural scenes through in-flight magazines**

*Taylor Brydges - Uppsala University*

*Brian J. Hracs - University of Southampton*

Global cities from Amsterdam to Los Angeles feature unique urban landscapes and cultural legacies. Yet, at some point, residents, tourists and researchers find themselves in a neighborhood that seems remarkably familiar and formulaic. Somewhere beyond the high street and ethnic enclaves, exists a world of independent boutiques selling the latest in local fashions, craft brewers and organic butchers, fair-trade coffee shops and gluten free bakeries, art galleries, vinyl record shops, tattoo parlors and home design emporiums.

Although these neighborhoods or scenes can be pinpointed in many cities and serve as vital sites for the production, consumption and curation of cultural goods, services and experiences they remain poorly understood. In particular, beyond anecdotal evidence, the actual homogeneity of these scenes has yet to be assessed. This presentation addresses this question by drawing on a content analysis of neighborhood profiles in Re:Porter - the in-flight magazine of the boutique regional Porter Airlines. By examining how scenes within cities including Toronto, Montreal, New York and Chicago are portrayed, branded, and promoted by the airline the presentation will demonstrate that curated neighborhoods across North America are increasingly homogeneous. In particular, the profiles spin similar narratives about formerly derelict quarters that have been transformed into desirably gritty destinations by hardworking and creative local entrepreneurs. By highlighting that these neighborhoods feature similar types of people, activities and urban aesthetics, this presentation provides a platform for future research which looks at the causes and consequences of trans-local uniformity.

### **Session Two Abstracts:**

#### **Investigating a new trans-local reality: the importance of trans-local connections in an increasingly fragmented music scene landscape**

*Tarek Virani - Queen Mary, University of London*

The work on trans-local music scenes since the 1990s and early 2000s defines them as physically detached local music scenes that connect around distinctive practices of music. This work has traditionally focused on music scenes that have enjoyed a global reach due to the popularity of their genre of music - for instance, the global Metal or Goth scene. This being said, a new reality exists: the distinction between local and trans-local music scenes has become substantially diminished in the digital age; and secondly, local music scenes are fragmenting into even smaller micro-scenes within, primarily, city regions. Despite these changes, trans-local connections have become an essential part of scene perpetuation, participation and boundary marking. This paper is about profiling trans-local connections / mechanisms within a new fragmented global music scene landscape made up of primarily local and micro-local music scenes. Through ethnographic work on a local experimental music scene in London, this paper argues: first, that most local and micro-local music scenes in the digital age have some type of trans-local component to them thereby elevating their status; second, through trans-local connections these scenes are able to define their own musical territory as local scenes continue to fragment; third, there is an increasing sophistication in these trans-local mechanisms driven by the increasingly important role of ICT; and fourth, in some cases trans-local mechanisms can allow local and/or micro-local music scenes to become elevated to the status of cultural and / or musical 'hub'.

#### **Global buzz and trans-local knowledge transfer: The case of the film and TV industry cluster in Sweden**

*Su-Hyun Berg - Uppsala University*

Recently, a few studies in economic geography and international business have employed local buzz- global pipelines perspective to analyze the dynamics of creative industries. There are few studies that have investigated the effect of 'global- buzz' on local context. My main objective, therefore, is to analyze the impact factors of 'global buzz' in creative industries by investigating the film and TV clusters in Sweden. The analysis of the 30 semi-

structured interviews confirms the dynamics of the film and TV industries in Sweden. First, Global-buzz boosted an explosion of the export of the Swedish film and TV industry. Second, the core of the film and TV production is concentrated within Stockholm, while dispersion of those industries occurred in Trollhättan, Luleå, and Ystad. Third, from an institutional perspective, tensions between the central government and the film and TV industry can be observed. This study highlights the role of global buzz that facilitates knowledge transfers over trans-local networks in creative economy. It is preliminary concluded that that global buzz could potentially be an important concept to explain and analyze knowledge dynamics of creative industries.

### **Locational narratives in creative clusters: consuming local buzz and producing local authenticity**

*Yosha Wijngaarden - University of Rotterdam*

Clustering literature has often focused on the attraction of new entrants (Baptista & Swann, 1999), buzz and knowledge spillovers (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Storper & Venables, 2004), and supply side externalities (Baptista & Swann, 1998; Marshall, 1920). However, clusters are also approached in terms of production, where the locality functions as a 'seal of quality' (Porter, 1998), authentic neo-bohemia (Lloyd, 2002), or provides 'artistic dividend' (Markusen & Schrock, 2006). We propose that the common denominator in these approaches is the cluster's reputation. Focusing on ten small-scale creative clusters in The Netherlands, we seek to demonstrate that a cluster's reputation is multifaceted. Reputation entails externalities that attract creative entrepreneurs (Asheim, Coenen, & Vang, 2007; Drake, 2003), and the creative or authentic reputation is also commodified as a marketing tool for locally produced products and services (e.g. Heebels & van Aalst, 2010; Scott, 2000; Molotch, 1996). Our research is based on an iterative approach, including several rounds of interviews and fieldnotes. Eighty co-located entrepreneurs within these small-scale clusters were interviewed about the role of the cluster's reputation in their locational decision making and how they tap into this reputation in order to promote and sell their products. Each locational narrative was coded and analyzed in Atlas.ti, and compared to the interviewees' web based references to his/her locational identity. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining locational narratives, develops a more fine-grained understanding of the meaning of reputation to creative entrepreneurs, and how this influences locational decision making and product marketing.

### **Theorizing information brokerage: locating St. Catharines in the field of North American interactive digital media**

*Jeff Boggs - Brock University*

For decades, regional development scholarship has recognized empirically, if not always conceptually, that localized production systems are not hermetically-sealed entities, only transacting with their external environment to buy inputs and sell outputs. Instead, localized production systems are part of a larger and dynamic system of urban fields linked through forces and flows that are more than just economic. Transactions within and without a local production system likewise involve more than just price signals. In addition to the timeliness and quality of the commodity delivered, these transactions and the activities leading to them briefly reveal an industry's competitive landscape. Especially outside an industry's dominant centers, the active search for these kinds of information -- information brokerage -- is key for the survival of lone establishments and small centers.

One newly dominant center of interactive digital media (IDM) production is Toronto, Ontario. At the center of a vast urban field, Toronto projects a wide cultural rain-shadow, much to the detriment of outlying locales. Despite this, one such outlying locale -- St. Catharines -- has continued to house a modest but productive collection of IDM establishments for over two decades. Drawing on interviews and secondary sources, I use the case of St. Catharines' interactive digital media industry to problematize and theorize four roles of St. Catharines' information brokers: identifying information gaps; mediating transactions between potential producers and consumers; shaping the information fields of producers, consumers and other actors; and altering the position of St. Catharines in the field of North American digital media.

### **Session Three Abstracts:**

#### **From the Village to the Metropolis: Exploring Cultural Scenes in the Urbanized Countryside, the Small City and the Global Metropolis**

*Jens Kaae Fisker - Aalborg University*

The spatial dynamics of cultural scenes in places like Kreuzberg and Williamsburg are not reserved for renowned neighbourhoods in global cities. They can be observed in places far beyond the global metropolis; beyond even the boundaries of the city and into the deep countryside. Current attention to metropolitan neighbourhoods in predominantly global cities relies on the assumption that the spatial dynamics in question are of a quintessentially urban nature. We do not seek to challenge this assumption, but simply want to point out that 'the urban' is not reserved for the global metropolis (Bell & Jayne, 2009), and nor does it end at the city limit sign. The urbanized countryside too belongs to urban society.

This implies that knowledge about the spatial dynamics in question may be drawn from across the full spectrum of places in urban society; from the smallest village to the largest metropolis. This paper therefore aims to enrich current debates by reaching across space and scale to tease out knowledges that have fallen under the radar due to geographically induced blindspots.

To do this the paper (re)visits both literature and empirical sites, and emphasises issues of local authenticity, global uniformity and translocality as they appear across urban networks and hierarchies encompassing the full range of urban society. Stretching the meaning of cultural scenes, the paper travels from the makers movement in Milan, through creative spaces in deindustrializing small cities and onwards to surfer communities in peripheral villages.

#### **The emergence and evolution of new media industry cluster in Taipei: An agency perspective**

*Cheng-Yi Lin - National Taipei University of Education*

Digitalization had created big threats on the existing cultural-product industries that had reconfigured the spatial-organizational governance of clusters, driving the multi-spatiality of the cognitive-cultural capitalism. However, little research has explored the adaption strategies of creative industries which absorbed with trans-local cultural scenes and

symbolic knowledge driving the cluster evolution toward a place-specific regional development. This paper aims to extend the knowledge transfer debate to the mobilization processes of trans-local cultural sense in the evolution of a creative cluster. In response, this paper develops an agency-based analytic framework to explore how the trans-local cultural scene is absorbed and translated as the catalyst driving the evolution of Taipei's pop culture and related new media industries. Drawing on the qualitative methodology, this paper empirically analyze the two questions: (1) How do the new media industries co-evolve with local environment? (2) What is the knowledge creation patterns of local creative workers in the new media production process. Through the Taipei case studies, this paper try to explain the evolution mechanism of new media clusters in order to further elucidate the relationship between the creative industry evolution and regional resilience in Taipei.

### **“Behind the scenes” in fashion curation. Who and what does influence concept stores in forming and diffusing homogeneous styles across scenes**

*Mariangela Lavanga - Erasmus University of Rotterdam*

The trend of opening concept stores and pop-up stores, especially in uprising neighbourhoods, is on rise across the globe. While each concept store seeks to be authentic and unique, a vanguard place in constant change with a strong identity and image, we can observe a certain level of homogenisation in the products that are sold and in the ways those products are “installed” or “curated” in the retailing space. One question to be asked is related to the role of local and global buzz in this respect. What and who does influence the owners of the concept stores in their selection and curation processes? This paper aims to look “behind the scenes” and unveil “levels or degrees of curatorship” in contemporary fashion and design industries. The paper offers a qualitative analysis of the decision making processes of buyers/owners/managers of selected concept stores in major cities in The Netherlands and the online and offline intermediaries that influence their decision processes.

### **Session Four Abstracts:**

### **Translocal Cultural Geographies of Creative Transgression: Inspiration, Reproduction, and Innovation in Multi-City Street Art and DIY Urbanism**

*Gordon C. C. Douglas - New York University*

This paper uses qualitative data and simple network analysis to demonstrate the trans-local nature of two cultural practices affecting public space in many cities: *street art* (defined as physical artwork that participates in or is installed upon the built-environment-as-canvas as an act of transgression and often illegally) and *do-it-yourself urban design* (unsanctioned yet ostensibly functional alterations to urban streetscapes intended as civic-minded improvements). Building out of my own and others' research on these practices, which I connect as acts of “creative transgression” in public space, I argue here that these trends are also sources of identity formation, acts of political engagement, and recognizable forms of cultural communication that can structure ties between people and places. The creation of street art or DIY urban design interventions is more than a local/individual act of informal placemaking; these practices can be seen to connect participants in the trends, residents and policymakers in affected areas, and cities themselves, thus illustrating the existence of global urban networks based on subcultural practices with

considerable policy implications. Information on multi-city street art is drawn from interviews, archival data, and network analyses for eight cities from a study completed in 2005. Data on DIY urban design come from interviews, participant observation, and analyses of spatial and policy contexts in seventeen cities conducted between 2011 and 2014. I draw on literatures ranging from cultural and economic geography to critical cultural studies, connecting the discourse on cultural globalization and global city networks to themes of privilege, inequality, democracy, and resistance.

### **Destination Kreuzberg Revisited - contemporary trends in tourism and place consumption in Berlin's inner city neighborhoods**

*Johannes Novy - Technical University Berlin*

Addressing the CFP's interest in the mechanisms that "enable or encourage trans-local uniformity", this contribution investigates the role of tourism in the transformation of Kreuzberg and other centrally located neighborhoods in Berlin. It posits that contemporary Berlin not only illustrates the increasingly powerful force of tourism as a driver of urban change as well as the globalizing and homogenizing effects tourism is associated with but at the same time also provides fertile ground to investigate the changing face of urban tourism as well as the implications the latter holds for urban development and research. The changes urban tourism has experienced that Berlin epitomizes are perhaps best described as a parallel differentiation and de-differentiation: differentiation due to a rise of niche 'tourisms' that are occasionally described as reflecting a 'new' or 'post' tourism (see i.a. Ritzer and Liska 1997; Poon 1994). And dedifferentiation because of wider changes in leisure, consumption, and mobility patterns that make it difficult to differentiate between tourism and other forms of migration and mobility, as well as other forms of leisure and (place) consumption. In terms of the latter, especially the growing presence of second homeowners and other "temporary city users" and especially "YUKIS" ("Young Urban Creative Internationals"), as they are called in Berlin, demand attention. Jointly with "regular" residents behaving "as if tourists" (Lloyd and Clark 2001) they not only challenge the to this day popular framing of tourism as an isolated, exceptional activity and associated assumptions about what tourism is and who tourists are. Rather, they also raise questions concerning several critical urban studies concepts – e.g. the notions of 'citizenship', 'community' and 'belonging' – and can be considered as one causal factor of the increasingly "trans-local nature" of urban scenes and spaces that the session seeks to investigate.

### **Conflicting local authenticities in a global post urban village. The case of Bushwick, NYC**

*Chiara Valli - Uppsala University*

In contemporary cities, a return to some traits of the 'urban village' portrayed by Jacobs (1961) is emerging, especially in terms of discursive elements on diversity, mixed uses, local scale, and authenticity. As the cfp highlights, this renewed interest for the urban village and an alleged 'local authenticity' is actually enacted as a 'global' urban trend, and presents a trans-local uniformity, because of enhanced flows of people and ideas. Therefore, contemporary ideas of the urban village are based on different ideas of 'the local', community, and authenticity if compared to Jacob's (Zukin 2010): the 'post-urban village' is composed of a puzzling mix of taste (and sometime fetishisation) for the local, an appeal for selected gritty elements, global cultural and fashion trends, worldwide

networks of ideas. At the local scale, the controversial concept of authenticity that makes up the 'post urban village' attracts multiple interpretations and often generates tensions amongst different social groups.

I will focus on the local implications of conflicting visions of authenticity, community and the right to the city in the post urban village. I will draw on the study case of Bushwick, NYC. Bushwick hosts an emerging and vibrant cultural and artistic scene, and is increasingly depicted in the media as the 'new frontier of cool', while undergoing a rapid process of gentrification. Drawing on 40 in-depth interviews and media analysis, I will show the impact of conflicting narratives about place authenticity and community resulting from global and local networks and discourses on Bushwick.