

Sense of Place: Reframing History + Social Activism

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Research Question

‘Sense of Place’ looks at Mental Health Activism and explores “othering” through “place”. As a reflection of time and space, it reframes history and creates social awareness through democratized voices. Viewing into the Mental Patient Association spaces brings to the forefront, *Why Place Matters?*

Community Engagement

Partnering with community historians of the MAD Movement, oral histories shared in dialogue were of remembering, telling, healing, reconnecting with leitmotifs of “moving away from feeling, thinking, and acting as a victim, to feeling, thinking and acting as a survivor.”



Findings

It’s a connection to community, a culture of resistance to imposed control by dismantling divisions and dispelling histories, which shifts our interactions; our narratives from being a voyeuristic outsider to an inquisitive participant, an insider.

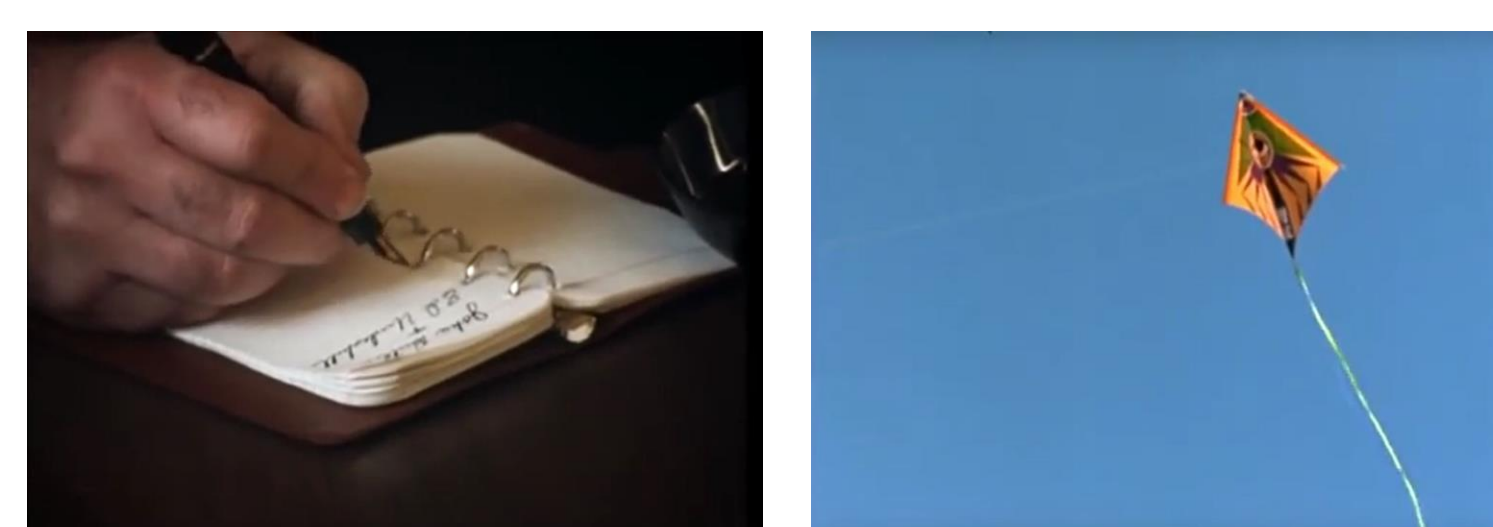
Community

The enigma of self-determination and the importance of community support is a place of affirmation + belonging.



Expression

Experiences gain a collective and public dimension, but for dominant groups in a social or political context, it disrupts an understanding of “place”.



Humanity

There is nothing new about denying the humanity of the “other”, much of history is but a footnote to it. Memory needs a place, a context. Its place, if it finds one is to be found in the stories we tell.

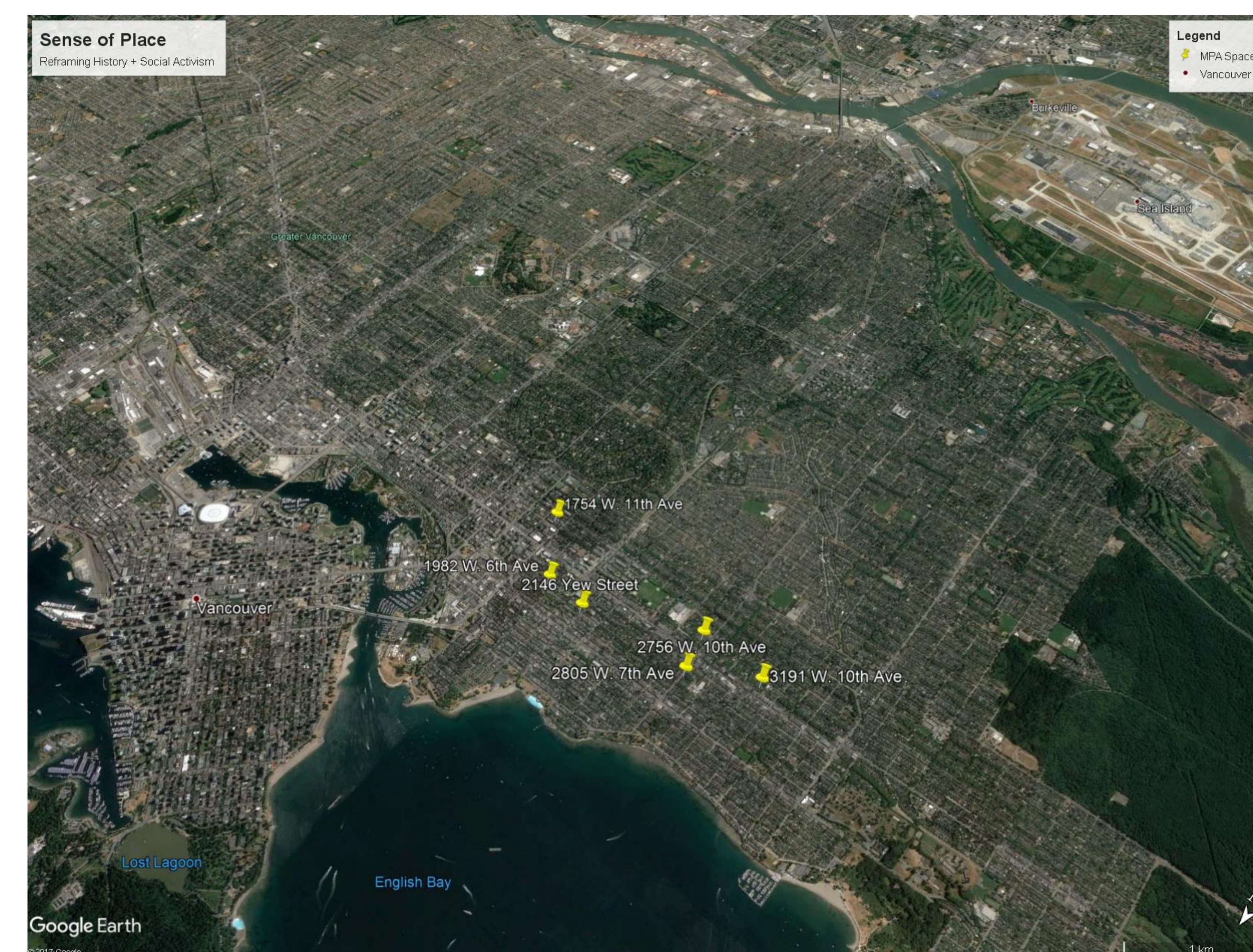
Geo-map

A geo-map of the MPA Drop In Centres and Residences place narratives in context. It integrates experiences into a memoryscape by activating spaces both visually and aurally that provides a “sense of place” and extends beyond a single generation to affects others in society.

“Surviving is not just about keeping on breathing.”

“When you expose your own shame, you help other people get through theirs... and your place changes from victim to powerhouse. That’s an amazing change!”

“Empathy shatters complacency; Truth shatters complacency.”



Images:
Patton, Richard, director. *Mental Patients' Association*. National Film Board, 1977.
Sheila Gilhooly + Irit Shimrat, retrieved from the Internet on November 27, 2017.