

## Capturing neo-capitalism: the spatio-political aesthetic of Thomas Kneubühler's *Land Claim* project

How can contemporary media practices map and – concomitantly – capture the diffuse machinations of the global political economy, a system that is itself an increasingly all-enveloping machine of capture? The aim of this paper is to examine how Thomas Kneubühler's *Land Claim* project tackles such a proposition by visualising the transnational machinations – and attendant spatial impacts – of several multi-national mining companies operating within northern Quebec. Through a number of C-Prints and video works, Kneubühler examines the interrelations between three seemingly disparate locations: Raglan, a nickel mine in the arctic; Aupaluk, an Inuit village in Nunavik – under threat by a planned iron mine – and Zug, Switzerland, a known tax heaven, where the headquarters of Swiss mining Glencore are located. In addition, Kneubühler's short video work *Forward Looking Statements* – which formed a part of this larger multimedia project – directly juxtaposes an extended visual examination of a traditional hunting ground for the Aupaluk community with audio extracts from Oceanic Iron Ore Corporation's conference calls with its investors, where the discussion circulates around the possibilities for resource extraction from this site. This paper will contest that such visual and aural juxtapositions function as both a polemical spatio-political critique of these multi-national's planned appropriation and exploitation of such precarious spaces, and as an attempt to capture the impact of the global political economy beyond the formal administrative boundaries of the city. Ultimately, through the employment of a rigorous spatio-political aesthetic, Kneubühler aims to throw into sharp relief the obfuscated socio-economic machinations of such multi-national organisations, thus visualising these particular machines of capture that are embedded within the contemporary global political economy.

### **Biography**

Patrick Brian Smith is a Film and Moving Image Studies PhD student in the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema at Concordia University, Montreal. His research interests include experimental nonfiction cinema, the politics of space, Marxist geography, precarious labour, and the essay film. He is currently working on a thesis project titled 'The Politics of Spatiality in Experimental Non-Fiction Cinema' which maps out the presence of a spatio-political tendency within a diverse corpus of contemporary experimental nonfiction films.