

TOPOPHILIA, MY LOVE

2007

When in the 1960's, the term 'topophilia' was coined ('62 by Yi Fu-Tuan), the U.S.A. Highway Act was only 5 years old and its 41,000-mile interstate plan was just beginning. An enigmatic term, topophilia belonged to the disciplines of geography, sociology and philosophy. Literally translating as '*love of place*' it was defined widely so as to include all emotional connections between physical environment and human beings. Yet, as Tuan thought of *place* he also considered *passage*.

A slower passage towards place - be it a process of utility, escape or wanderlust...now equated more than ever with the road and the automobile. Topophilia would not only stretch out as an emotive experience but also follow the socio cultural trend of the democratization of travel.

A landscape where the rules of passage (the road) purport the duality of escaping yet remembering; the line marker is the ever present code, aiding the forward propel as environmental gesture, while noting the perspective of distance gained. An emphasis on the line marker's *imageability* as an emblematic form underscores the selective longing for places of distinction, a place that if you had been desperately happy in its surroundings, makes you want to capture or record its essence. Places that are not home, but that are importantly away from home. A *place*, the *sense of place* that is often no more inventive or filled with splendour than the journey along the way; digested through popular and socio culture, city, suburb, countryside, and wilderness, line markers communicate as:

1. Cultural compass cards, worldly in scope.
2. Compliance and familiarity tenuously balanced by vigilance and the unexpected.
3. Idea trips full of subtle gestures, windows wound down.
5. Non-picturesque amongst the pastoral.
6. A Street's pop culture signifier that cradles the written word but not the slogan.
7. Terra tattoos, bestowed without prejudice and never on a whim.
8. Wires for pedestrians and margins for vehicles - all moving, balletic in their unity, choreographed only by edicts.
9. Common men.

The line marker, painted, is a reaffirmation of its code, full of cold communicae and contrasting to its photographic representation of itself. Star vs. understudy.