century European concept of Enlightenment, which, among other things, imposed a scientific way of interacting with and understanding the world. Following such principles of reason, observations were recorded on Cartesian grids, in the axes of longitudes and latitudes, as well as that of time and space. This process of mapping produced a specific colonial geography that sought to know and control compartmentalized land inhabited by compartmentalized bodies.

This colonial mapping was not exclusive to North America. In their latest single-channel video Mission to Kumasi, the collaborative duo Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens look at the way Africa has been constructed through an exploration of two different types of documentations: Ibghy’s photographs of present day Kumasi Market in Ghana taken during his research trip as an economist, and the 1817 published report by T. E. Bowdich, who was sent by the African Company of Merchants on a mission to the Ashantee capital of Kumasi. Using the context of European exploration of Africa, Ibghy and Lemmens call to question the way knowledge continues to be constructed into the tradition of the nineteenth century school of positivist thought. Eurocentric in its assumption that knowledge is exclusively attained through scientific observation and calculation, thereby rejecting all other forms of experiencing physical reality, positivism continues to motivate the current model of mapping and moving about the world. By examining the process of looking and learning, Mission to Kumasi seeks the possibility of moving outside of the grids of longitudes and latitudes, and what it means to be a moving and sensing body in an unknown place.

The video begins with a view from a descending airplane overlooking what is assumed to be present-day Ghana. A voice, Ibghy’s own, introduces Europe’s desire to acquire what remains outside of its realm of knowledge, namely Africa and the continent’s offerings. As the plane lands, the voice explains the economic uncertainty in Europe, the New World, and Africa after the British slave trade ban in 1807, and how Bowdich’s mission was to seek alternative economic possibilities. The video then fades out to a series of black screens with excerpts of instructions that Bowdich received, written in white text and read aloud in a voice-over. He was instructed to ascertain specific information on a number of areas, including geography, natural resources, and customs...
of the area's inhabitants. These instructions are paired with a series of still photographs of the Kumasi Market, cropped and fragmented, much like Bowdich's report.

The disembodied voice that coolly enunciates each word is indicative of the way the mission sought to obtain knowledge in sections and compartments. This positivist approach to knowing, involving identification and subsequent categorization, lays the groundwork for a unidirectional relationship in many guises. In the field of economics, for instance, knowledge of a region, systematically organized into categories, is imperative for trade that often results in unequally weighted benefits. By collapsing two different time periods, Ibghy's economic fieldwork in 2008 and Bowdich's mission in 1817, the artists not only implicate themselves, but all of us in the current global politics of trade and mobility. The mobility granted to Ibghy as a foreign economist is reserved for only some and denied to others.

The video ends with the sounds of the market: people chatting and cars honking. This ending demonstrates a non-occularcentric way of experiencing a place. The sounds from the market evoke the relationships among merchants, shoppers, families, and friends who move through this public place. The audio effectively subverts the elaborate instructions on what Bowdich should observe and report, and highlights how the looking process has become detached from the body under the aegis of objectivity. Looking has come to be instrumentalized in the process of colonial control.

In a critique of how such instrumental visual practices deprive us of other senses, media critic, curator, and theorist Laura U. Marks proposes a haptic visuality, that stands in dialectical relationship with optical visuality. Unlike the solely optical way of looking, haptic visuality “draws from other forms of sense experience, primarily touch and kinesthetics.” For this reason, haptic visuality “enables an embodied perception, the viewer responding to the video as to another body and to the screen as another skin.” This visual practice does not objectify what falls within the scope of its inquiry, unlike the way in which Ashantee and other African territories became the object of Europe’s curiosity. Instead, an embodied viewing practice offers moments when we can connect to the world recorded and replayed through video kines-
thetically as one could with Ibghy and Lemmens’ Mission to Kumasi.

When we find ourselves flinching involuntarily, or trembling with overwhelming emotion, we are moved in every sense. Inserting the moving body into the discussion of video—in a world of increasingly visual communication—foregrounds the fact that the moving body can sense so much more than a disembodied eye. Seen through a disembodied eye, moving is strictly a physical action. However, movement also poignantly refers to how heterogeneous groups work toward a common goal, often butting against the status quo and challenging the stale policies of nation-states.

The works in What Moves Us are a part of what I see as a movement to encourage embodied viewing experiences and reflections on the global power dynamics that influence the politics of mobility. Aleesa Cohene, Terrance Houle and Trevor Freeman, Richard Ibghy and Marilou Lemmens, Jayce Salloum, and Jin-me Yoon present us with moving images that entangle us in emotions and senses by connecting us to the spatio-temporal realities that their works unpack. These artists make apparent the inequities that exist in a shrinking globe with borders that seem crushingly distant to some of us. Yet, they offer us a way of imagining politics through the relations we create as we move. Moving implies plurality, because in moving from one place and time to another, we inevitably affect the space-time of another being. As sensing and moving bodies, we continually alter the matrices of social relations of which we are a part. We persistently move ourselves through the images we make, the words we write, and the actions we take. And at moments, we even stop to think about what it is that moves us.

NOTES

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Also dubbed torture by proxy, extraordinary rendition is a term that refers to extrajudicial transfer of suspects to other nation-states, in often case, known to use harsh interrogation and torture techniques. Because such renditions are extrajudicial, meaning outside the law, the suspects are deprived of legal counsel and due process. See Laura Barnett, “Extraordinary Rendition: International Law and the Prohibition of Torture,” Library of Parliament—Parliamentary Information and Research Services (July 17, 2008), http://www.parl.gc.ca/Information/library/PRBpubs/prb0748-e.htm (accessed April 20, 2009).
8. Ibid.
10. A fitting medium which Bruno does not consider in her work is video. In “Video 2005,” Tom Sherman observes that, to his dismay, the flexibility and accessibility of video has allowed the medium to absorb film. He states, “Unfortunately, video, that ubiquitous, liquid medium of the twenty-first century, has absorbed film and, in its saturation of all things cinematic, it appears to be something it isn’t. Video is not film. In this digital era, when computers are everywhere and everything is converging with digital telecommunications, video, too, has become digital.” Video certainly isn’t film, but the spatial logic Bruno describes aptly applies to video.
12. Ibid.
14. Bruno, 64.
15. Ibid.
16. Salloum, untitled part 3u.
17. Jayce Salloum, e-mail message to author, April 1, 2009.
18. The idea of “Performing the Border” is borrowed from Ursula Biemann’s work on politics of mobility, and her 1999 video of the same title. In this video essay examining the Mexican-United States border town of Juarez, Biemann looks at borders as “both a discursive and a material space constituted through the performance and management of gender relations.” See Ursula Biemann, geobodies, http://www.geobodies.org/home.pfl (accessed April 20, 2009).
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., xv.
24. Ibid., 57.
25. Ibid., 107-108.
28. Ibid., 4.