

**Expressive Culture, Locality and Big Business:
The Case of Presto in Kensington Market**

Naomi Fraser
PhD Candidate
Joint Programme in Communication and Culture
York University, Toronto ON

In the summer of 2002, a hybrid gallery and music venue named Presto opened its doors at 303 Augusta Avenue in Toronto's Kensington Market. Since the early twentieth century, Kensington Market has been home to numerous immigrant communities in the city, where today one can find a range of small grocers, cafes and alternative boutiques lining the streets of the colourful Victorian neighbourhood. Situated in the heart of downtown Toronto, the open-air market attracts local residents and tourists alike with its ethnically diverse and bohemian atmosphere, particularly in the summer where it becomes a vibrant and lively enclave in the city. On the surface, it appeared that the new club chose an opportune time to be welcomed with open arms into the community. Instead, the seemingly benign building was under constant surveillance by private security guards within weeks of its opening, due in part to vandalism. Upon closer examination, however, the security presence at Presto can be attributed to the fact that rather than being a place for a fledgling collective of artists or musicians that found an affordable space in Kensington Market, the club was a promotional vehicle for Nike's latest line of footwear, a marketing concept that would operate the showroom-cum-music venue for the summer months. Upon the exposure of ties to the controversial multi-national corporation, Presto's plan to align itself with a young, independent music scene and vibrant neighbourhood was thwarted. Protests were quickly organized that emphasized the corporation's widely criticized manufacturing practices in countries with poor human rights records, and each morning garbage would be piled on the club's doorstep. Citing noise By-law violations, the venue stopped hosting music nights after only a few short weeks in operation, and the building closed its doors in mid August.

The case of Presto and the resistance surrounding its presence in Kensington Market present a unique opportunity to explore the tensions that exist between big business, social

organization and expressive culture in the city. A deeper investigation into the various discourses surrounding the case of Presto will reveal the importance of the material environment of urban locations, the allure of vitality and its interpretations in mainstream commodity culture, and how the intersections between divergent forms of collectivization are acted out in city life. Presto is also exemplary of the ways in which the expressive qualities of city space and the cultural requirements of locality are continuously reformulated through everyday social interaction and struggle.

In order to understand the phenomenon of Presto it is important to look at Kensington Market as a distinct expression of locality within the city of Toronto. The Market is well known for its history as a home to various waves of first generation immigrants to Canada since the early 1900s. Kensington acts as a point of convergence in the city for different cultures, as the histories of Jewish, Portuguese, Italian, Caribbean and Asian communities all lend a piece to what Kensington is today. The open-air market was the creation of the local Jewish population who converted the first floors of their homes into storefronts at the turn of the century. By the 1950s, the influences of the newly established Portuguese, Italian and Ukrainian families could be felt through the appearance of brightly coloured buildings and new business establishments, while the 1970s and 1980s the Market saw even greater diversity of businesses and local residents with the introduction of Southeast Asian and Caribbean communities. Many have speculated that it is because of Kensington's tightly knit community atmosphere that newcomers to the city have taken to the neighbourhood, which has allowed for a sense of security in the otherwise unfamiliar surroundings of Toronto.

Historically, these different ethnic groups have employed a variety of material symbols and distinct uses of space to differentiate certain areas. Daily life in the city is

dependent on these symbols, not only as markers of people and locations but as ways to accommodate various activities which encode the built environment with meaning. For example, forms that orient individuals to one another on the basis of identity, ethnic or otherwise, will orient their interaction with one another as well. Locality and a sense of place are constructed through these signifiers, where social interaction is both a product of the built environment and a process by which human activity is continuously constituted and reconstituted through its spatial orientations. In other words, collective life takes form through its spatial existence. Mark Gottdiener (1997) explains that symbolic meanings inscribed into the physical structure of the city, which serve as a framework for making sense of our everyday experiences, are derived from traditional markers of ethnicity as well as themes found in consumer culture, popular entertainment and the media. The built environment increasingly orients individuals to the activities of consumer culture, priming them for social interaction that serves commercial interests.

The commercialization of city spaces is widely attributed to recent urban development models that have seen the relocation of manufacturing and industrial production to the periphery of the city. Global economic trends towards the production of intellectual and cultural goods allow new industries to take up residence in urban locations. Professions dedicated to capital's symbolic production, such as culture, entertainment, finance and brokerage, inscribe themselves materially in city spaces, creating distinct orientations for social interaction and habitation of the urban landscape. The city becomes the privileged space of professional activity, adjusting both the social and physical structure to support its functions, establishing places where professional expertise is learned and developed, and where the goods and services of the professional classes can be consumed. As contemporary cities become increasingly inscribed with the interests and behaviour of

dominant professional classes, their activities, knowledge, and definitions of authority and status become valorized (Isin, 2002: 239).

Moreover, commercial activity in downtown environments increases as cities look for ways to attract individuals through entertainment and shopping districts, competing for consumers' attention with suburban malls by recreating downtown areas in their image (Savage *et al.*, 2003: 92). While some city spaces have been completely transformed by influences of consumer culture, others have looked increasingly inward for meaning and a sense of community in their lives. These tensions surrounding the increased commercialization of city spaces have received critical attention from city residents, activists and urban scholars alike. Among other important concerns surrounding the disappearance of public space is the issue that increasingly commercialized environments diminish opportunities for other forms of cultural expression and undermine the city's unique cultural heritage in favour of a commercially homogenous environment.

Kensington Market represents a distinct expression of locality due to the aesthetic pluralism that has developed thanks to the different ethnic communities who have lived in the neighbourhood over time, and the themes of popular and local culture have also become woven into the physical environment. Furthermore, by remaining a location supportive of independent business owners, it has maintained a unique position in the city that has not been altered by the influence of big business advertising and aesthetics. Individuals are drawn to Kensington's independent ethics as well as its underlying recognition of difference. As a result, the physical environment of the Market frames social action in a way that almost mimics its surroundings. Market-goers cross paths, bump next to one another and continue on their way in much the same way that colours, shapes and smells throughout the Market have a tendency to clash, then harmonize, then disperse. The aroma, sound and colours

experienced in Kensington bear similarities to Bakhtin's language of the marketplace described in *Rabelais and His World* (1968). The exaggerated vocabulary of the senses, the cries of the hawker and the performative elements of buying and selling that characterize the marketplace also contribute to its ethos of "freedom, frankness and familiarity," erasing the social hierarchies and accepted boundaries of "polite" behaviour (188). Kensington Market represents a distinct expression of locality in the city of Toronto by liberating "norms and prohibitions" that order social activity in other commercial districts. As Alan Blum (2003) suggests, the hyperbolic activities of exchange exhibited in the marketplace serve to mock the vulgarity of buying and selling itself: processes which are hidden in commercial norms of the city (218).

The spontaneity and vitality of these and other spaces become design devices used by corporations to "recall" the urban experience. Gottdiener explains how contemporary arcades and shopping malls try to invoke the same aesthetics of city life, but transfer them to safe, predictable spaces sanitized of the perceived "undesirable" characteristics of urbanity. What is of interest in the case of Presto, is that Nike sought to employ the designs and symbolic motifs of Kensington Market to recall the experience of the neighbourhood within the neighbourhood itself. The parallels to the consumer aesthetics of malls are even more salient when locating what Kensington's residents had to say about the club. One resident was quoted as saying, "As soon as they get corporations in here they might as well put a roof on it and make it a mall," while more graffiti appeared in the Market: "Presto is less cool than my dad. Git out faker." (Quinn, 2002).

The fierce local reaction to the presence of Nike in Kensington Market may lead outsiders to believe that the community is resistant to change, or has a strict moral code by which business owners operate. Indeed, many community members remain wary of

gentrification projects prompted by bohemian neighbourhoods' appeal to property developers, retail chains and other corporate interests. Richard Lloyd (2002) argues that bohemian neighbourhoods, defined by their relatively low cost of living and concentration of artists, cultural amenities and experimental offerings become attractive to big business looking to capitalize on the innovative urban environment. With its significantly lower commercial rents (compared to those of nearby College and Queen Street West), the Market welcomes an entrepreneurial vanguard of small business owners, artists and musicians. Bohemian neighbourhoods like Kensington Market offer not only a flexible and creative workforce of cultural producers and creative entrepreneurs, but also an attractive aesthetic for consumption. These neighbourhoods' offbeat and unpolished surroundings along with their ethnic diversity, relative poverty and minor incidences of illicit behaviour become fetishized as gritty, contributing to an "authentic" urban experience (518). As a result, many residents of these neighbourhoods remain vigilant against big businesses looking to inscribe their products and services with a "bohemian chic."

This discourse of aesthetics is compounded with the introduction of Presto at 303 Augusta Avenue, a street that acts as a main artery from College Street into the Market. The reception of the Nike club in the neighbourhood was less than warm if graffiti expressing, "Nike = sweatshops = get lost!" is any indication of the local sentiment. However, the building itself gave no suggestion that the club was associated with selling shoes and Nike's trademark swoosh was nowhere to be seen, that is, until someone spray-painted one on the club's sign. Even without the trademark swoosh it was evident that there was an impostor in the neighbourhood. The stencilled, faux-graffiti façade of the building had the same aesthetic effect as a pair of jeans you can buy at the mall with that "worn-in" look, and the sleek design of the sign seemed out of place next to the local fruit stands or United Smiles of

Kensington dentist office a few doors down. Discourses surrounding cultural authenticity and corporate appropriation aside, Presto's storefront contributed to residents' instinctual response to the club's inauthenticity, perceptive of a veritable wolf in sheep's clothing, where the club had employed the Market's theme, but not the values of the locality itself.

Although we can assume that just as in any neighbourhood, the Market experiences its own clashes of personality and opposing visions for growth, changes have occurred in the area. Over the last several years, new loft spaces have taken up residence in the Market, while French bistros and specialty boutiques are nestled comfortably in between dilapidated general stores and vegetable stands. In fact, given its location in between trendy College Street and Queen Street West, it is hard to believe that Kensington has not undergone the same sort of "hip-ification" project of its peers. While other Toronto neighbourhoods have followed the natural trajectory of enticing the young and fashionable to once ethnic or bohemian neighbourhoods through the introduction of trendy restaurants and cocktail lounges, the Market has not experienced any sudden renaissance. Instead, the area appears to absorb change rather than be transformed by it, as city-dwellers discover and re-discover Kensington's charms on a sporadic, individual basis. While some neighbourhoods can be transformed overnight by the right restaurateur (or large sportswear corporation), the Market appears to be too parochial or even eccentric to allow for the same evolution. This can be attributed to Kensington's history, which has accommodated almost every influence imaginable: from Portuguese grocery stores to 1980s street punk without being consumed by any one trend.

This leads one to question what Nike's reasoning was for setting up their latest campaign in a place that has proven to be a black hole for conventional notions of hip. During the controversy, Michelle Noble, Public Affairs Manager of Nike Canada defended

her company's motives behind the promotion. She explained in half a dozen interviews that the idea behind the venue was strictly promotional and that it was Nike's desire to associate their new line of footwear with the vitality of the neighbourhood and to align Presto with the personality of Kensington Market. This artificial association of a product with the personality of city space and the playfulness associated with street life is a much-used strategy in marketing circles. There is an increasing amount of evidence that the cultural life of local areas have been targeted by big businesses, who "brand" the space with a variety of trademarks and advertising slogans. The proliferation of branded themes and motifs throughout the physical framework of the city has now invited the scrutiny of city residents, who have experienced the consequences of local spaces altered by the saturation of big business and its accompanying aesthetic. Naomi Klein (2000) shows how businesses seek out cherished city spaces and public events in order to infuse their brands with cultural significance. She argues that the appropriation of city spaces may in fact have the opposite effect, as individuals experience alienation from once intimate spaces and may come to resent the business in question.

The increase in advertising in the city also highlights the tensions between the revenue generated through advertising and the value placed on public space that is free of consumer messages. Dave Meslin of the Toronto Public Space Committee notes that corporations are able to work with city authorities in order to circulate brands such as Presto. In an interview with *The Globe and Mail*, Meslin describes that in the absence of public funding for city space, advertisers find themselves in the position where their marketing budgets end up supplying the infrastructure for the city. Whereas the City of Toronto projects a budget shortfall of \$344 million this year alone, city officials look towards advertisers as a way to subsidize the costs for garbage receptacles, bus shelters, and benches.

Business improvement areas (BIAs) increasingly influence decisions affecting the direction of urban development in the city. Currently, there are thirty-nine BIAs in Toronto who contribute an estimated one million dollars in annual taxes (Toronto Association of BIAs, 2004). The vested interests that BIAs have in attracting consumers to their neighbourhoods mean that desires to maintain commercial-friendly districts outweigh the need for public spaces, affordable rents, and community services. Similarly, as advertisers foot the bill for more and more for public infrastructure, city residents' interests and concerns are confined to their roles as consumers. As Meslin observes, "your attention is what the city is selling to these companies...Likewise, when you walk into Presto, the product is you" (Wilson, 2002).

In fact, Nike has targeted specific urban locations in the past, banking in on the cultural status of the hip-hop scene by providing poor youth living in Harlem, Philadelphia and Chicago with free sportswear (Klein, 2000: 75). This technique of "seeding" products into existing youth cultures in order to infuse Nike attire with "street credibility" or cultural legitimacy is part of the corporation's larger marketing practices of cultural appropriation. Goldman and Papson (1998) argue that although all advertisers must draw on existing referent systems for meaning, Nike's marketing genius differs from the mainstream not only by hailing its audience as "hip," but by reworking existing texts and styles to position itself as the maker of culture rather than simply co-opting these texts (27). For example, in 1995 Nike used Gil Scott-Heron's well-known song "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised," reworking the original lyrics into an effective television commercial featuring young basketball players from the NBA. The authors discuss how Nike's target audience of this commercial would not necessarily be familiar with music from the 1970s and less likely to "make connections to the political economy of racism that Scott-Heron so eloquently rapped about" (30). Indeed, the advertisement was effective because Nike was able to

remove the context of political protest from the song while retaining a posture of defiance towards mass culture. However, assuming the posture of “hipness” has proven itself profitable long before Nike wandered onto basketball courts in New York City or Presto moved into 303 Augusta. In tracing the rise in marketability of the transient notion of cool through the sixties, Thomas Frank (1997) concludes, “few things are more beloved of our mass media than the figure of the cultural rebel, the defiant individualist resisting the mandates of machine civilization” (227). The appropriation of youth culture continues to be used as a steadfast marketing technique as we search for any signs of authenticity and individuality in our hyper-commercialized lives.

It is therefore evident from a marketing standpoint that Kensington is a physical manifestation of this “defiant individual” where Nike an ideal setting for such a promotion. Noble reiterated that Presto was never intended to act in a retail capacity to sell Nike products, and proceeds from door sales were to be donated to St. Stephen’s Community House, located across the street. Thus, the desire to consume the hip, non-conformist Market setting is what the Nike promoters hoped would draw individuals to Presto and to eventually purchase the footwear that would recall the setting. This is not to say that visitors and residents of Kensington do not consume these surroundings as well. They indeed use the area to experience the unpredictability of urban life, the rhythm and flow of the local space. Kensington attracts because it orients individuals to believe in chance, whether it be the possibility of finding something special in a thrift store, or to experience the tangible and intangible flavours of the various local cultures.

By placing Presto in a setting conducive for the consumption of vitality, it seems only appropriate that Nike would choose its promotional vehicle to be an all-ages music and art space, bound to attract a youthful audience. Noble spoke openly of Nike’s intention to

associate Presto with Toronto's young artists and musicians. Referring to these individuals as "key influencers," it was important for Nike to be situated in a locality that could easily be connected with vitality, and could also circulate Presto footwear widely by dressing the "cool kids" in the product. Wardrobe guidelines stipulating that bands not wear the logos of Nike's competitors were issued, and all performers received a free pair of shoes. While many condemned Nike's attempt to seed their product as an authentic artefact of the scene's style, others argued that Presto was filling a demand for non-licensed music venues, which are extremely hard to come by in downtown Toronto. As a result, tensions rose from within the scene where some artists refused to play after learning of the club's association with Nike. Others, however, chose to eschew the independent ethics of the scene, opting to play regardless of any perceived complicity in the promotion of Presto footwear.

In his description of the Montreal independent music scene, Geoff Stahl (2001) outlines a number of principles characteristic of Toronto's scene as well, such as an opposition to "selling-out," and an emphasis on cultural expression over commercial success. A comparative analysis of the two cities' scenes would reveal, however, the importance of each city's influence on the scene through different histories, localities and styles of social organization. Therefore, Toronto's influence on its young independent music scene is in part this scarcity of all-ages spaces. The bands that pulled out of their agreements to play at Presto upon the revelation that it was a promotion for Nike, also recognized the need for these spaces, especially in Kensington Market after the closing of Whos Emma [sic], a local anarchist "info-shop" that hosted some all-ages shows in the past. The artists and musicians that pulled out of scheduled appearances were personally outraged at the exploitation of the scene's dependence on these types of venues. Further tensions arose as a

result, in part because this need for space was exposed as a weakness for the scene, and in part because the quality of the scene's membership had been called into question.

In conjunction with issues surrounding space were issues associated with the perceived breach of the scene's moral economy. Therefore, the call for a boycott was based in part upon Nike's poor treatment of factory workers but also the potential loss of independence from corporate interest and co-optation. If the scene could no longer differentiate itself from a mainstream youth "market" then its quality would be up for debate. Consequently, some individuals tried to convince others to boycott the club, hoping to limit artists and musicians' involvement with Presto. Within days of discovering Presto's links to the corporation, a thread appeared on one of the scene's better known message boards with the heading, "Don't be like Mike," urging individuals not to attend Nike-sponsored events, while posters that appeared around the city advertising Presto events were promptly defaced, providing another medium to express disapproval with anyone who attended the club.

Blum suggests that if individuals are oriented towards one another within scenes, it is in part because of the specialized activity of which the actors are participants. Therefore, in the case of the artists, musicians and their audiences Presto targeted, there is a constant requirement of space to perform their activities. Participants in the scene continually seek out licensed and unlicensed venues, and because many are still in their late teens and early twenties, individuals will also set up shows at community centres, church basements and private residences. However, these inventive uses of temporary and adopted space may not always be conducive to the scene's activities, based upon issues of noise or the exclusion of underage participants. Furthermore, although the scene has proven that it can survive based upon its own creativity to find new uses for space, a designated venue for these activities

would lead to a feeling of both permanence and sense of locality for the scene. The source of tension is therefore evident when a scene is offered a secured space with the condition that they will lend their marketability to a promotion for running shoes.

A scene's association with locality in the use of communal spaces is significant for many reasons. The space is not only instrumental for the activity of this scene to take place, but is the material condition for the scene to exist in the first place. This is because of the private and public function of the scene. While participants in the scene are oriented towards one another on the basis of the activity of performing or participating as an audience, but also find enjoyment engaging in a collective act in a public space. Therefore, the ability to be intimately oriented to others in public allows for individuals to feel both the sense of occasion or ceremony of being in a communal space and the sense of connecting with others in a meaningful way. Blum confirms that sharing an activity in public is important to the life of the scene because it offers individuals the enjoyment of "being with others in an undemanding way" (2001: 24). However, in addition to the establishment of the public function of the scene it must also take form in an appropriate locality of the city as well. Through the engagement with a city's cultural geography, individuals will designate an appropriate location to congregate as they understand that their coming together is based upon the locality's ability to accommodate their interests. Just as there are commercial districts, club districts and theatre districts in any given city, so too are there locations that are conducive to various music scenes. This is true not only in terms of the location's ability to accommodate the activity in question, but also for a variety of reasons that may include the location's proximity to where the participants live or places that they frequent, the symbolic connections individuals may feel to various locales, or where similar or related activities already occur. Therefore the relationship between gathering spaces and scenes are

engaged with an understanding of this locality in the city, as certain areas are inviting based upon the scene's values and interests.

The struggle between scenes uses of space and expressions of culture compared to those of Nike is further understood by incorporating the work of Michel de Certeau (1984) through his formulation of strategies and tactics. According to de Certeau, actors that have the power to distinguish themselves from space and impose their will on it, such as corporations, institutions or governments, employ strategies. Conversely, tactics are employed by actors who must manoeuvre through space, using their inventiveness to “make do” within the boundaries imposed on them. As ‘tacticians’, the young participants of this music scene must rely on their ability to move and act through space, responding to opportunities that the city might present at a moment's notice. Through their creativity to manipulate the conditions that are imposed on them by the city, the scene engages both limitations and possibilities of expression that the dominant order presents to them. As de Certeau observes, the production of meaning through the use of what is readily available in new and unintended contexts articulates pleasure through the process of struggle.

Conversely, Nike operates as the strategist by surveying the city and pinpointing Kensington Market as an ideal space to impose its agenda of aligning its product with the hip residents of the scene. With the advantage of being able to survey various spaces and scenes within Toronto, Nike could carefully tabulate where the promotion for Presto would be the most effective. Significantly, as one interview with Nike's marketing partner Youthography reveals, the backlash to the corporation's presence in the Market was expected, and cynically implied that the inevitable controversy would help to circulate the brand name. Promoters used terminology such as “authentic areas,” and the expectation of “active detractors,” to describe why Kensington Market was selected as a home for Presto. Therefore, those

occupying the arena of tactics find themselves within the corporation's "field of vision," having to respond to the appropriation of their scene's style, music and cultural expression on a regular basis.

While strategists such as Nike have the ability to target youth cultures and city space, predicting a series of outcomes and ways in which they can introduce their product into the natural discourse of the city, they are also as de Certeau observes, limited by the visibility that comes with this power. It is evident why Presto's guise a genuine art and music space was quickly exposed when considering de Certeau's argument that the greater the forces at the disposition of the strategist, the less the strategist will be able to use deception (37). No matter how carefully Nike had anticipated public backlash once the club was revealed as a promotion for footwear, the advertising savvy of the scene was underestimated. For example, a quick inspection of Presto advertising would reveal that signs for the new club were not spray-painted on garbage cans, but instead were costly screen-painted wraps – an evident warning sign for "scenesters" to understand that this was not an independently owned and operated club (Aster, 2002). A quick Internet search would confirm suspicions and local pressure to boycott the space began before it had even officially opened. By manipulating the circumstances presented to them, the scene could effectively disrupt Presto's marketing strategy whereas the limitations of Nike's visibility made it difficult for the corporation to change its plan of action or respond to growing pressure after their involvement was exposed.

The strong reaction against Nike's presence in Kensington Market from both members of the music scene and local residents represents the unique ways in which the issues surrounding a growing corporate presence in downtown neighbourhoods are acted out in everyday life. Moreover, the case of Presto also points towards the intersections

between scenes, neighbourhoods and activist communities. For example, both musicians and activist organizations such as the Maquila Solidarity Network organized the “OpPresto” counter-concert that took place in mid-July as a day of protest against the corporation. The event is exemplary of the difficulty in determining where a mutual orientation constitutes a scene, and where it constitutes a social movement. Blum suggests that a social movement may be engaged as a scene when it is treated as an occasion rather than an instrumental association (2001: 22). However, ambiguities still exist as many contemporary social movements see the expressive nature of such occasions as instrumental for reframing the boundaries of acceptance and difference, as well as providing a public stage for representation. Moreover, the young, independent music scene in Toronto is heavily influenced by punk music, and is well aware of its long-standing signification of resistance to commercial fare and the inequalities of capitalist social relationships they represent. While evidence exists that a scene’s membership may fall on a spectrum where subcultural style exists on one end and actual political awareness on the other, important intersections remain between scenes and social movements, as they inform one another in their redefinitions of social and cultural conventions. Finally, scenes remain a necessary component of city life because of these intersections between expression, style and action, where individuals construct meanings and negotiate identities through various social groupings.

Much in the same way the organization and expressive activities of scenes go beyond conventional cultural understandings to contribute new languages and meanings to the discourse of the city, so too do contemporary social movements offer a new vocabulary of representation and the articulation of alternative ways for life. Alberto Melucci (1996) argues that a central tension within contemporary social movements is the quest for identity, which emerges out of the individual’s distinction between the instrumental association of belonging

to a group and the meaning derived from personal experiences and understandings of participating in collective life. In doing so, contemporary social movements not only seize opportunities to redefine and create cultural codes, but also deepen our capacity to grasp the complexities of social relationships and how we articulate collectivization in order to develop a more critical understanding of these processes. This tension in social collectivization is also found in scenes in their various manifestations and differing levels of intensity. The scene acts as a stage for individuals to negotiate between the tensions of solidarity and the continual redefinition of individual identity. Although the participant must continuously manage meanings as an individual and as part of a collective, he or she is committed to the scene's persistence as a social form (Blum, 2001: 12).

This sense of commitment allows participants to experience both the pleasure that is involved in participating in collective expression, and the meaning derived from having a vehicle for representation within the larger discourse of urbanity. This bears similarities to Melucci's understanding of contemporary social movements, where many participants are less interested in gaining so-called political power, but instead desire a place for recognition in a public context and the representation of their beliefs and concerns in a larger debate. Both scenes and social movements act as cultural forms to circulate information, to articulate their visions for an alternative way of life and to have these visions acknowledged in a wider context. Therefore, the intersections between the culture of scenes and movements become more complex. Organized activists can also provide scenes with important knowledge and skills to actively protest the presence of corporations in their neighbourhoods. By voicing their collective opposition to Presto, these actors also created a space for their own representation of what constitutes a "good city."

The discourses surrounding Presto only begin to highlight the various tensions and opportunities threaded through the texture of city life. By signalling the material and symbolic uses of local space and the allure of scenes and settings, we can begin to locate instances of struggle, growth and change. Although Presto is exemplary of a larger debate concerning the commercialization of public spaces and community resistance, it also provides a way to discover how meaning and action is constituted in local spaces. A discussion of locality also reveals its importance in mapping collective life, cultural expression and the formation of identity. Presto illustrates the relationship individuals have with their material environment and how it is negotiated between personal and group values, as well as how this relationship is altered through the strategies employed by big business. Significantly, individuals act and react through these changes, but now must question how navigating the geography of the city is transformed by corporations such as Nike, through the possible consequences of altered and disappearing localities. The case of Presto and Kensington Market also exposes the ways in which we obtain meaning and pleasure through experiences of collectivization. Social formations are engaged as both instrumental for action and important arenas to understand individual experiences. Divergent social formations therefore add to the language of the city, circulating ideas and finding opportunities for expression, consciousness and action in our everyday lives. By relying on their own creativity, individuals can engage this language in a more meaningful way and contribute to the discourse as well.

Bibliography

- Aster, Andrea Zoe. (2002) "Did the Presto campaign backfire?" in *Marketing* 107(42).
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. (1968) *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
- Blum, Alan. (2003) *The Imaginative Structure of the City*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Blum, Alan. (2001) "Scenes," in *Public* 22(23).
- de Certeau, Michel. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Frank, Thomas. (1997) *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goldman, Robert and Stephen Papson. (1998) *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*. London: Sage Publications.
- Gottdiener, Mark. (1997) *The Theming of America: Dreams, Visions and Commercial Spaces*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Isin, Engin. (2002) *Being Political: Genealogies of Citizenship*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Klein, Naomi. (2000) *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. Toronto: Vintage Canada.
- Lloyd, Richard. (2002) "Neo-Bohemia: Art and Neighbourhood Redevelopment in Chicago," in *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24(5).
- Melucci, Alberto. (1996) *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quinn, Eilis. (2002) "Market forces challenge Nike corporate presence," in *The Toronto Star*. July 11.
- Savage, Michael, Aland Warde and Kevin Ward. (2003) *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity*. 2nd edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- St. Stephen's House. (2002) "The History of Kensington Market," available online at <http://www.ststephenshouse.com/kensingtonalive/history.html>
- Stahl, Geoff. (2001) "Tracing out an Anglo-Bohemia: Musicmaking and Myth in Montreal," in *Public* 22(23).

Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas. (2004) "Consumer Information," available online at <http://www.toronto-bia.com>

Wilson, Carl. (2002) "Stealth swoosh: a new club/gallery in Toronto's Kensington Market turns out to be a front for a Nike campaign," in *The Globe and Mail*, July 20.