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Great VCU Bike Race Book Faculty Reflections

Great VCU Bike Race Book

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Poetics of Public Space

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Reflections

The bike race was an interesting event. Long pauses of activated (and for this one week, thoroughly public) spaces punctuated by racing cyclists churning down streets normally reserved for automobiles. Our goal was to learn new ways of seeing, where the divisions between space and time are collapsed into rhythm. Movements. Cadences. Pauses. We experimented with a process that the French sociologist Henri Lefebvre proposed as *rhythmanalysis*. Through a series of [exercises](#) we trained ourselves to be in space-time differently. We trained ourselves to be patient, and to watch for all of the minor notes of humanity that filter up through the noise of everyday hustle, residues of a culture intent on equating time with money, with making every moment count. Efficiency. Spectacle. Convenience. We're all well versed in those mundane excitements, those predictable formalities of consumer culture, car culture, debt culture. But for this one week our city opened itself up to living and being "public" in a new way. We used this rare opportunity to conduct our *rhythmanalysis*, and to learn how to become aware of the poetics of public space: joy complexity contradiction consumption meandering movement boredom connection propinquity. What do you see?