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*La Noche Cíclica* is a multi-part project that examines the absence of night in Google Street View. For both legal and functional reasons, most imagery on the platform is captured during the day, effectively establishing daylight as its “default.” As a result, traces of night are difficult to find. Yet the platform’s algorithmic reconstruction is far from seamless; its occasional irregularities inevitably conjure fleeting fragmented moments of night within a world overwhelmingly centered around daylight. These rare occurrences – caused by delays in data collection or processing errors – rupture the smooth logic of digital cartography, surfacing as temporal glitches within a self-rationalizing media infrastructure. Within a capitalist temporality that prioritizes productivity, efficiency, functionality, continuity, and visibility, night is compressed into a brief, transitional state – merely a seam between days. Referencing Jorge Luis Borges’ poetic vision of cyclical time, this project uses night to challenge the linear logic of machine vision. What appears as error becomes archive; what is overlooked becomes site. Through these endangered nocturnal fragments, *La Noche Cíclica* questions how the visible world is constructed through data, algorithms, and a systemic preference for daylight.

**Keywords:** Media Infrastructure,  
Machine Vision, Algorithmic Governance,  
Street View, Nighttime Anomaly,  
Capitalist Temporality, Glitch.

**Fig. 1.** Overview of the project *La Noche Cíclica*, showing all four components: the CRT video sculpture, interactive web archive, layered print album, and conceptual feedback intervention.



## Introduction

I have long been a compulsive *flâneur* in Google Street View, drifting through its streets without a destination. In January 2025, while searching for a direction of my graduate thesis, I came across a post on the Google Maps subreddit titled “Have you ever seen a street view at night?” The post linked to several coordinates that appeared to have been captured at night, accompanied by unexpectedly poetic responses from other users.

The discovery reframed how I understood the platform. Though designed as a three-dimensional spatial simulator, Google Street View quietly embeds a temporal logic, one that overwhelmingly privileges daylight. Encountering night within this system – rare, unstable, and often short-lived – raised a series of questions. When night appears in a data-driven model of the world, is it merely an error to be corrected, or does it reveal something about the values embedded in machine vision? I noticed that after reporting these coordinates to Google, the night would sometimes disappear days later, prompting a persistent concern: who decides what the world should look like, and what kind of time does the machine believe in?

As machine vision increasingly mediates how the world is documented and made legible, Google Street View has emerged as a dominant visual infrastructure shaping shared perceptions of space – and implicitly, time. Far from a neutral mapping tool, Street View operates through algorithmic selection, image stitching, and automated updates that produce a highly standardized visual world. Within this system, daylight functions as the norm. Night, marked by reduced visibility and uncertainty, is largely excluded and treated as an error rather than as a condition worth preserving.

This preference for daylight reflects not merely a technical decision, but an ideological one. It reveals an underlying visual and temporal logic that prioritizes clarity, continuity, and productivity. Within capitalist frameworks, night is rarely understood as a time in its own right, but as a transition between days, an interruption to be minimized or managed – a seam, not a scene. Lighting technologies and surveillance sys-

tems increasingly colonize nighttime, attempting to prolong the utility of day and reinforce a temporal logic that aligns visibility with value. The near-absence of night in Google Street View exemplifies this drive toward a continuous, controlled, and visually efficient representation of the world.

Yet the system occasionally falters. Due to processing delays, incomplete datasets, or algorithmic breakdowns, fragments of nighttime imagery sometimes surface within Street View. These moments – often unstable, partially overwritten, or visually fragmented – appear as anomalies within the platform’s otherwise consistent logic. Though fleeting, they expose the infrastructural processes and forms of algorithmic governance that determine what becomes visible, what is erased, and how time itself is represented.

*La Noche Cíclica* emerges from these ruptures. The project is a multi-part installation that gathers and re-contextualizes these rare nighttime fragments through a CRT-based video sculpture, an interactive archive of coordinates, a printed collection of screenshots, and a conceptual intervention that reports the images back to Google as mapping “errors.” By focusing on breakdowns rather than seamless representation, the project examines how digital infrastructures suppress temporal difference, and how moments of failure can open space for aesthetic reflection and political critique.

Existing discussions of Google Street View have largely focused on questions of urban representation, privacy, and technical accuracy. Much less attention has been given to how the platform organizes time, particularly through the systematic absence of night. *La Noche Cíclica* engages this overlooked dimension by approaching Street View not only as a spatial mapping tool, but as a temporal system shaped by algorithmic decisions.

## Project Components and Technical Implementation

### Video Sculpture

The video sculpture of *La Noche Cíclica* is presented on a 1970s portable Panasonic monochrome CRT television and radio cassette recorder combo. Using the channel dial, viewers alternate between a globe in diurnal rotation and a series of Google Street View night coordinates presented as a walking simulation, each revealing a distinct visual glitch. Amid static and fragments of public broadcast, a re-edited walkie-talkie reading of Jorge Luis Borges’ *La Noche Cíclica* intermittently emerges. A vertical black burn-in line remains visible on the screen, formed over time through deliberately repeated display as the CRT phosphor wears down and permanently retains the trace, marking the collapse of night into a fissure within the perpetual daylight of the Earth’s rotation. Together, these elements stage a tension between global surveillance systems and moments of visual failure, allowing night to persist in fragmented form.

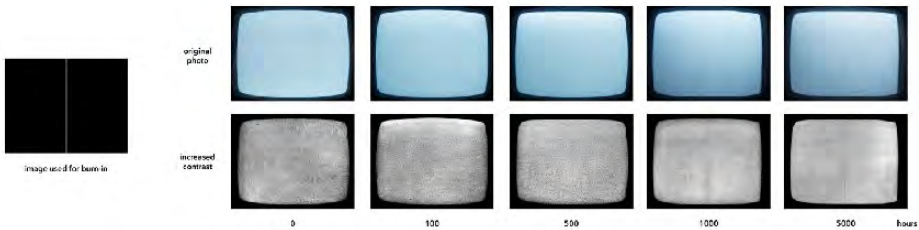
**Fig. 2.** Viewer interaction, switching channels to reveal different effects, video contents, and local radio broadcast.



**Fig. 3.** Deliberate vertical burn-in line on the CRT display.



**Fig. 4.** Burn-in results.



**Fig. 5.** Displays on misaligned channels with different visual artifacts.



To achieve the screen burn-in effect, an image of a white vertical line is displayed on the television over 5000 hours cumulatively. Figure 4 illustrates the changes during the process. During the test, the contrast is set to maximum, and brightness is adjusted to keep the black area mostly unlit. The white line on the displayed image continuously excites

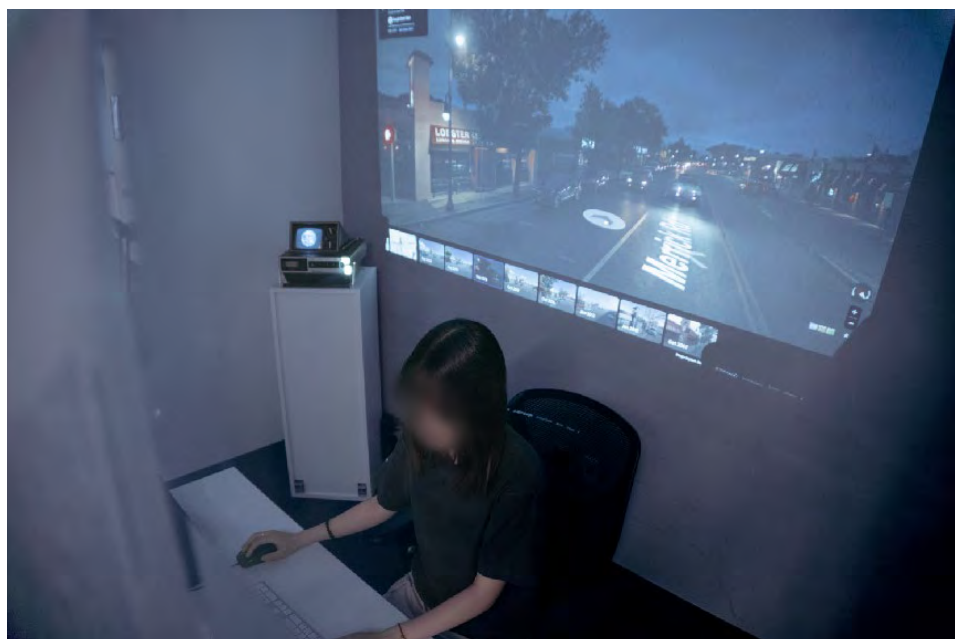
the phosphor layer of the screen, degrading the phosphor and leaving a permanent mark on the tube.

The analog glitches are produced by intentionally operating the device in abnormality. PAL signals are provided for the television's NTSC channels, where the partial alignment of frequencies interferes with the device's normal demodulation process. The analog glitches – video noise and misaligned scans – are reclaimed as visual artifacts. The distortions and disruptions are captured and re-discovered in parallel with the unproductive capitalist nights, reaffirming the core argument in the medium's manifestation.

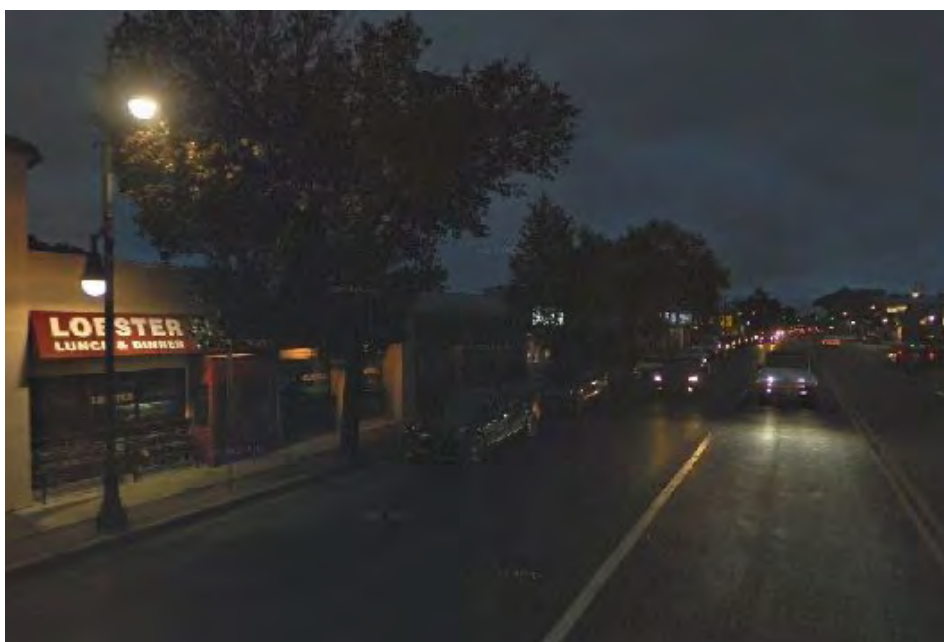
## Web Archive

The project includes an interactive web archive ([www.lanochecliclica.com](http://www.lanochecliclica.com)) that maps the geographic coordinates of nighttime scenes found within Google Street View. Each entry is manually identified, captured, and annotated with basic metadata, including location and last update. Visitors access the archive through a portal that links directly to individual night coordinates, built with the Google Maps JavaScript API to render a navigable 3D globe. Clicking a marked “black spot” triggers a performative zoom into the nighttime landscape, while a CRT-inspired display mode and public submission module extend the archive across digital, physical, and participatory dimensions. Movement unfolds step by step through landscapes marked by visual glitches, where night briefly interrupts the platform's dominant daylight logic. Unlike Google Street View's frictionless navigation, this interface emphasizes traversal itself, framing temporal rupture not as an error but as a space to be entered. The archive functions both as a poetic interface and as a data-driven resistance to infrastructural smoothness.

**Fig. 6.** Viewer browsing the web-based archive, walking through nighttime coordinates in GSV. Their screen is projected onto the wall, transforming the act of navigation into a performative gesture.



**Fig. 7.** Screenshot of GSV nighttime  
coordinate (45°8'13" N, 92°31'43" W)



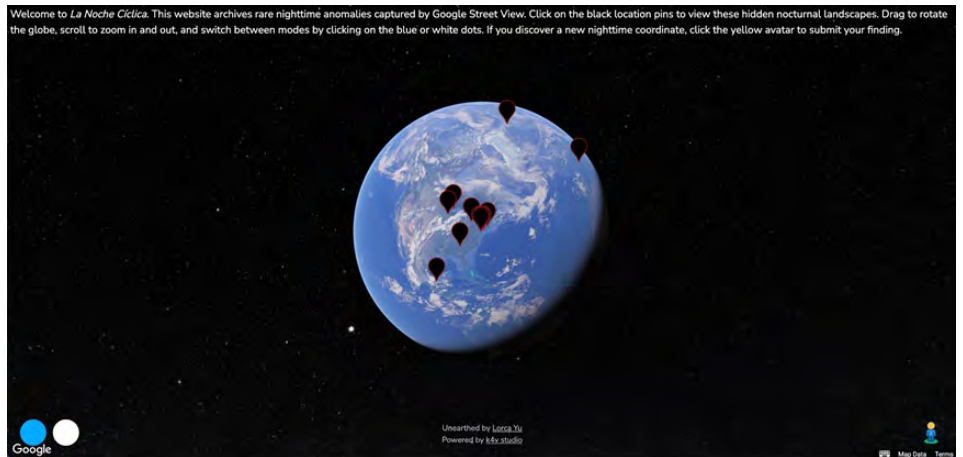
**Fig. 8.** Screenshot of GSV nighttime  
coordinate (79°54'33" N, 13°47'10" E).



**Fig. 9.** Screenshot of GSV nighttime  
coordinate (40°10'40" N, 74°37'51" W).



**Fig. 10.** Screenshot of the web archive portal. Viewers enter through this interface to access and navigate the collection of nighttime coordinates.



## Print Album

A printed album extends the digital archive into a tactile, layered object. Each page contains two overlapping elements housed in a transparent sleeve: a clear film printed with Google Street View interface components such as navigation arrows, toolbars, and timestamps, and a corresponding nighttime screenshot beneath. When closed, the album presents a uniform, interface-like appearance. As pages are turned, the transparent layer can be removed, physically separating interface from image. This gesture exposes the constructed nature of machine-mediated vision, revealing the interface not as a neutral frame but as an active force shaping perception. Once detached from its algorithmic overlay, the nocturnal image gains visual autonomy and political weight, inviting viewers to question the mechanisms through which visibility is produced and controlled.

**Fig. 11.** Prints of the first televised view of Earth from orbit, echoing the video sculpture.

**Fig. 12.** Overlay of transparent interface film and printed nighttime screenshot within the album.

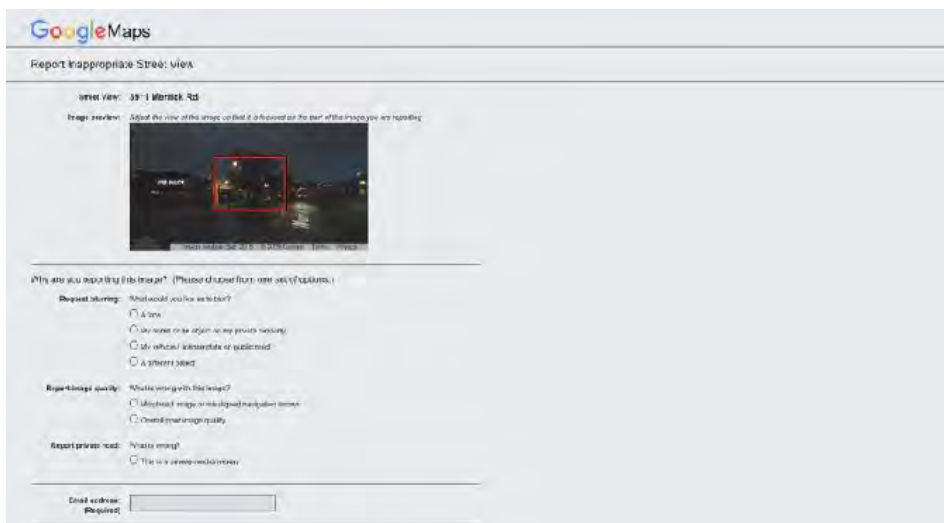
**Fig. 13.** Simulated “Report a Problem” interface embedded in the album, mirroring Google’s correction system.



## Conceptual Intervention

The project includes a conceptual intervention that directly engages Google's correction system. Each nighttime coordinate is manually submitted through the platform's feedback interface, which invites users to flag inaccuracies or request updates. This gesture shifts viewing into participation, testing whether these images are classified as errors and subsequently replaced by daytime imagery. By tracking locations before and after submission, the intervention exposes how algorithmic governance operates through routines of visual maintenance. In doing so, it raises questions of normalization and authority: What counts as a mistake, and when does correction become erasure? The intervention reveals how even ordinary users are quietly enlisted in sustaining dominant visual standards, one feedback action at a time.

**Fig. 14.** Google Street View reporting interface.



## Discussion: Spectatorship, Governance, and Infrastructure

### Viewer as Subject

In the CRT video sculpture, viewers are given control over the channel dial without instruction, while some channels produce no signal at all. This ambiguity generates hesitation rather than guidance. A reworked walkie-talkie reading of Borges' poem occupies a single FM frequency embedded within ordinary broadcasts. As the dial is tuned, the voice surfaces intermittently – faint, fragmented, and surrounded by static. In this brief disturbance of the everyday soundscape, night emerges as a concealed temporal channel, interrupting the apparent continuity of daylight.

The web archive similarly alternates between orientation and disorientation. Visitors may navigate existing coordinates or submit new ones through public forms and community forums. Movement within each location unfolds incrementally, without a defined frame or endpoint. Viewers proceed step by step, uncertain when – or if – daylight

will return. The abrupt transitions echo the logic of waking: sudden, unannounced, and difficult to situate.

The print album introduces a more intimate gesture. By lifting a transparent interface layer to reveal the image beneath, viewers enact a small but deliberate separation of system from content. Across all components, the viewer shifts from passive consumer to critical witness, implicated in the recognition and circulation of the glitch.

## Feedback as Governance

*La Noche Cíclica* does not end with documentation but enters a feedback loop. In the exhibition space, a banner asks viewers whether discovered nighttime coordinates should be reported back to Google. This choice reframes spectatorship as participation, revealing how users are drawn into platform optimization.

Google Street View operates as a form of distributed algorithmic governance, mobilizing user actions to preserve visual consistency. Through reporting and replacement, anomalies are converted into infrastructural enforcement. What appears as benign crowdsourcing becomes a mechanism for normalizing deviation.

The project's own development reflects this process. Early coordinates circulated within communities such as *r/googlemapsshenanigans* and *r/geoguessr* as curiosities. Once reported to Google, however, they risk erasure. One such site, (40.6498945, -111.8349159, February 2020), was later overwritten with daylight imagery. In this cycle of discovery and deletion, viewing itself becomes a form of governance, where visibility is continuously renegotiated through infrastructural response.

## Infrastructural Privilege and the American Night

Although *La Noche Cíclica* appears to document global anomalies, most of its coordinates originate in the United States and Europe. As the primary testing grounds and update hubs for Google Street View, these regions receive denser and more frequent coverage than most regions. Paradoxically, it is within the most intensely surveilled and optimized environments that algorithmic inconsistencies most often surface.

The “night” captured here is not universal, but reflects where infrastructural attention is most active. In this sense, the term American Night, borrowed from cinema, extends beyond its original technical meaning and points to a condition shaped by uneven distributions of visibility and care.

By contrast, large portions of the Global South, rural areas, and conflict zones remain visually static – not due to stability, but because they fall outside the system's rhythms of care. In these contexts, absence is not a glitch but an infrastructural norm. Visibility, like error, follows lines of infrastructural privilege.

## Crowdsourcing and Inclusion

Equally revealing is what *La Noche Cíclica* excludes. All coordinates in the archive derive from Google's official panoramic imagery, excluding user-contributed photospheres and blue-dot uploads. While many user submissions depict nighttime scenes, they exist outside the platform's primary spatial-temporal logic and are not integrated into the navigable continuum of Street View.

This distinction is critical. User uploads are permitted precisely because they remain marginal to the authoritative map and do not threaten infrastructural coherence. The nighttime scenes central to this project, by contrast, arise when the system itself falters – when Google unintentionally reveals what it otherwise suppresses.

By focusing exclusively on official imagery, *La Noche Cíclica* engages not with alternative content, but with contradictions internal to the system. Night is framed not as user expression, but as a structural inconsistency that emerges from within the apparatus of algorithmic control.

## Conclusion

*La Noche Cíclica* invites audiences to reimagine visibility beyond data and daylight, as something shaped by gaps, glitches, and darkness. Systems once framed as transparent increasingly operate through opacity and enclosure; yet it is precisely through their failures that alternative ways of seeing become possible. The project reclaims night not merely as a temporal absence, but as a field of politics, perception, and potential.

Across its components, *La Noche Cíclica* resists seamlessness in favor of interruption, friction, and disappearance. Acts of navigation, archiving, printing, and reporting reveal how users are entangled in the governance of visual reality, often without noticing their participation. Rather than stabilizing night as an archive, the project allows it to remain unstable – it appears, vanishes, and reappears elsewhere – reminding us that even the most optimized infrastructures are never complete.