

Curatorial Text written in connection to the **EXIT ART** Exhibition: **AUTOTOPIA**

by Ph.D and Art Historian Sarah Lookofsky in 2010

(when the name of the project was still CO2 E – Race)

E-Race, or Art as Process of Erasure

E-Race is a changing fleet of low emission vehicles that congregate along a choreographed route in various host cities around the world. Each participating vehicle, a progressive alternative to fuel-driven transportation, is equipped with a geo-tracking device. As the convoy follows the prescribed route, the signals emitted collectively trace the form “CO²” on a geographically distanced digital map.

CO² is a gaseous chemical compound. Although immaterial in form, it presents tangible and devastating effects to the earth’s environment. Emulating this duality in artistic form, E-Race is an artwork that exists between the material and the immaterial. While very dependent on technological materiality, the piece cannot be reduced to any of its component objects. Its nature is fundamentally immaterial: a multi-centered and non-lasting gathering.

Occupying this split between materiality and immateriality, the CO² image exists as a lasting document of the performance. Yet the image is not a tangible entity, nor is it the product of a singular creative subject. Produced from the sum of vehicles, and only virtual in existence, this image is rather a symbolic manifestation of collective environmental action.

Unlike street art’s tagging—a lasting presence in an urban environment intended for the accidental passer-by—the CO² trace is only visible at a mediated distance from the site of performance. Though departing from the site-specific, E-Race is a global art event that proposes artistic viewership beyond the local. CO², presented as the global “writing on the wall” in the piece, here only becomes visible from a macro perspective.

CO² is drawn, but this trace leaves no mark. Driving in order to reduce emissions, drawing in order to erase, E-Race is the making of an artwork as unmaking and, in turn, the positing of art as a test-run for the undoing of the global environmental crisis.