

# Toxic Over-Time



## Caption

This is a triptych that includes a set of three photographs of downtown Los Angeles. Each of these photos were taken by different photographers, John Malmin, Fitzgerald Whitney, and Robert Durell, in 1955, 1973, and 1990, respectively. These years correspond to important events:

1955 Air Pollution Control Act (the first U.S. federal legislation that pertained to air pollution)

1970 Clean Air Act

1990 Clean Air Act Amendments (important ones)

These photographs attest to the ways in which 'smog' has continuously been perceived as a social problem in Los Angeles for half a century. They all focus on the significance of smog as a risk and the visual experience that a smog hovering over a city's center can produce.



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ETHNOGRAPHY

Chae, Yoo. 2019. "Toxic Over-Time."

In "Toxic Data Infrastructures: Emission and Ridesharing." In Visualizing Toxic Subjects, curated by James Adams and Kim Fortun. The Center for Ethnography. May.

<https://tinyurl.com/y3hsapyl>

## Design Statement

I organized this triptych in order to provide a sense of narrative, from left to right, without being accompanied by text. The increase in the density of buildings and the change in the color scheme of photographs enables the audience to intuitively understand the flow in time. The triptych, hence, demonstrates the historicity of air pollution as an ethnographic subject. This is different from capturing moments in time where smog was present in Los Angeles. It conveys to the audience that air pollution was a persistent social problem that perhaps had its own trajectories of development.

## Project Statement

My work is centered around the formation of civic data about vulnerable communities, primarily focused on the practices of categorizing and classifying transportation and pollution data in in Southern California. My work is committed to furthering research on civic infrastructures and human-computer-interaction by revealing the complex data economy among emerging transportation infrastructures, such as Uber and Lyft, and its social consequences. I am particularly interested in how information infrastructures, while making certain data visible, selectively renders others opaque. The invisibility of the link between transportation problems in Southern California and related risks, ranging from air pollution to governance, creates a kind of grey politics that is especially harmful to marginalized communities in the area. The images I propose attempt to capture this link through various data-driven work including; 1) visualizing data sets accessible from OEHA, 2) found images, and 3) and a short analysis of the visualizations.

