

CREATIVE

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Watch a Chinatown street change over time

Part Google Street View, part Wayback Machine, the mobile app is meant to augment the experience of a city street.

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By Juliana Reyes / STAFF

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Anula Shetty and Mike Kuetemeyer, shown here in their Kensington studio, built an app that shows how one street in Chinatown changed over time.

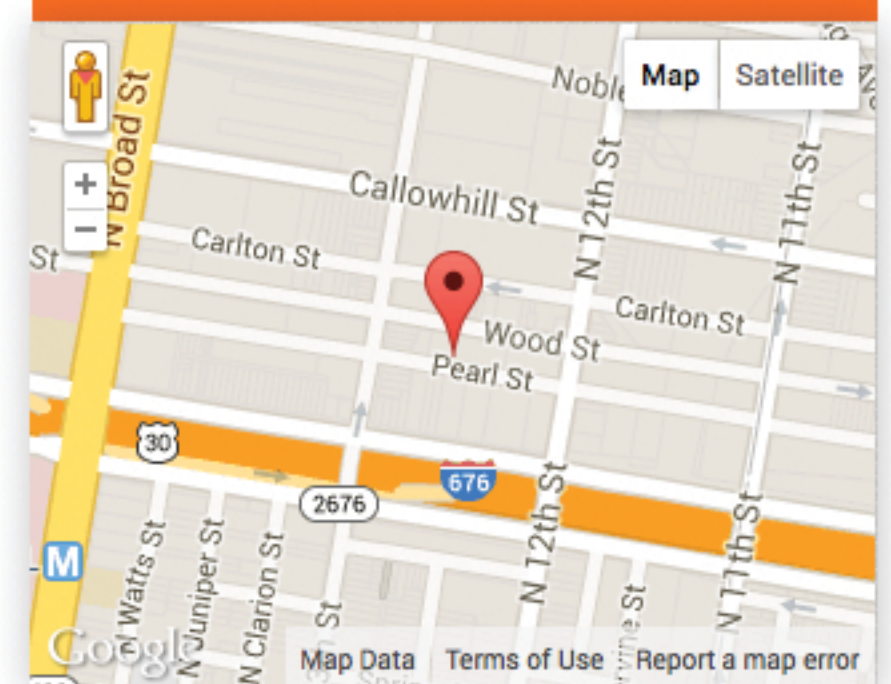
Like any street, Chinatown's Pearl Street has seen its share of mundane changes over the last year. Now with a mobile app from local artists **Anula Shetty** and **Mike Kuetemeyer** you can witness them on your phone.

The app, **Time Lens**, lets you explore four blocks of Pearl Street in a Google Street View-esque fashion — but with a twist: the tour takes you back in time, showing you what the street looked like previously.

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The app is also filled with video interviews of the people that populate Pearl Street. Shetty and Kuetemeyer interviewed homeless men, local artists and other community members to draw attention to the stories hidden within the pavement.



A screenshot of the Time Lens app. (Photo via iTunes)

The pair hopes that people will use the app while they're on Pearl Street itself. It's a nod to the idea that every spot in the city is laden with its past and its future, the artists said.

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Backed by an **ArtPlace** grant through the **Asian Arts Initiative**, Shetty and Kuetemeyer launched the app in February but have continued to update it with new video interviews and images. The pair, known as **Fire Work Media**, have made [similar apps](#) for trails in Hawaii.

Shetty and Kuetemeyer say mobile apps are the ideal platform for location-based media. They also believe it's important for artists to claim the mobile app space for themselves, rather than relinquishing it to the private sector.



Juliana Reyes began as lead reporter at Technical.ly Philly in July 2012. Previously, she was a city services beat reporter for the Philadelphia Daily News, as part of a project called "It's Our Money." She is learning to drive, learning to bike (in the city) but is an expert at taking SEPTA. She grew up in North Jersey and Manila, Philippines but she left the tropics for Bryn Mawr College, where she majored in linguistics. She now lives in West Philly.

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