

# Hyperrhiz 12

SPECIAL ISSUE: MAPPING CULTURE MULTIMODALLY  
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HYPERRHIZ 12 (/HYPERRHIZ12/) » INTRODUCTION

## Introduction: Mapping Culture Multimodally

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This special issue of *Hyperrhiz* uses the phrase *cultural mapping* to describe both a practice and an emerging interdisciplinary field. With multiple roots extending through theory and diverse areas of practice, from artistic inquiry to community planning, cultural mapping reflects the spatial and place-based research in cultural and artistic studies, architecture and urban design, geography, sociology, cultural policy and planning, and e-media studies. Its recent adoption within a variety of disciplinary areas has necessitated new methodologies, perspectives, and disciplinary objectives.

Many of the contributions to this special issue of *Hyperrhiz* originated in the international conference, Mapping Culture: Communities, Sites and Stories (<http://www.ces.uc.pt/eventos/mappingculture/>), which was organized by the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, May 28-30, 2014. The conference explored both conventional and alternative approaches to mapping cultures and communities in an international context. Emphasizing the importance of linking practice-based knowledge and experience with academic research, the event was tied to two lines of research: explorations on the role of artistic interventions in the development of more sustainable cities (Duxbury, 2013; Hristova, Dragičević Šešić, and Duxbury, 2015; Culturing Sustainable Cities project (<http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/culturizing/>)) and work on cultural mapping methodological approaches (Duxbury, Garrett-Petts, and MacLennan, 2015).

As part of the conference, a special plenary session brought together the work of the *Making Interdisciplinary Inquiry Visible* research group, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This session explored the "visual turn" in research—especially the role of artistic methods in mapping culture and representing research visually. Craig Saper, Lynn Tomlinson, and John Craig Freeman participated in that plenary session.

Will Garrett-Petts' organizing of this plenary session grew directly from his multi-year and multi-faceted project, the Small Cities CURA (Community-University Research Alliance), which sought not just to collect statistical demographic and economic data on the quality of life in small cities, but to appreciate the changing mood and expressions of those places. To map these aspects, the researchers needed to approach the aesthetic dimensions of mapping culture. An international research group sought to appreciate the texture and mood of community growth and change by using multimodal and artistic practices. This entire issue of *Hyperrhiz*, which includes only a few of the participants in Garrett-Petts' international study group, addresses similar issues and stresses the same importance of appreciating the design aspects of mapping towards *addressing* social problems.

The critical and creative works selected for this special issue of *Hyperrhiz* – augmented with a few additional complementary projects – stood out for their use of artistic approaches to map and to present the knowledge produced through these mapping processes in non-textual multimodal means. This issue is divided into three sections: Augmented Maps, Conversing With Maps, and Meta-Mapping.

### ABOUT

**Nancy Duxbury**, PhD, is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal, and Co-coordinator of its Cities, Cultures and Architecture Research Group. In addition to ongoing research on cultural mapping methodologies, her current research focuses on "culturing sustainable cities," examining both the integration of culture in local sustainability planning and community engagement through environmental-artistic projects. She is a member of the European Expert Network on Culture, and was Chair of the Policies group of a European research network on "Investigating Cultural Sustainability" (2011-2015). She is also an Adjunct Professor of the School of Communication, Simon Fraser University, Canada, and was co-founder and Director of Research of the Creative City Network of Canada. She is lead editor of *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry* (<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9781138> (Routledge, 2015)).

**Craig Saper** is a Professor in the Language, Literacy, and Culture Doctoral Program at UMBC in Baltimore, and previously the Bearman Family Foundation Chair (2012-2015) and Program Director (2012-2015). He was previously on the faculty at Indiana University, University of Pennsylvania, University of the Arts, and the University of Central Florida, where he was the Director of the Texts & Technology Doctoral Program (2002-2005). He is the author of *Amazing Adventures of Robert Carlton Brown: Real-Life Zelig of the Twentieth Century* (2016),

**Augmented Maps** features works incorporating augmented reality apps and other systems to insinuate historical images and contested issues into our mundane navigation of places we dwell and visit. They also highlight various means through which memories can be reinserted into the current day and mingled with contemporary observations.

Jessica Auchter presents an insightful critical commentary on John Craig Freeman's work, *Border Memorial: Frontera De Los Muertos*, an augmented reality public art project and memorial dedicated to the thousands of migrant workers who have died along the U.S./Mexico border in recent years trying to cross the southwest desert in search of work and a better life. The critical commentary situates the work within the framework of new media, focusing on the themes of space and place, and argues that the project offers a revolutionary take on memory and mourning.

Lisa-Katharina Förster and Folker Metzger report on an app, 'Time Window Weimar', through which they create an augmented map that brings to light Weimar's particular relevance in early twentieth-century German history. Linked with a special exhibition, *1914 – War of Ideologies*, the project's app locates the "age of modernity" in the contemporary urban space through both visible evidence and intangible histories. The project was a pedagogical experiment on how history or historical knowledge can be imparted via maps and how virtual space can be used for aesthetic-cultural as well as historical-political education.

Félix Burgos "uncovers" a place-based history of the campus of a university in the United States that was built on the grounds of an institution for the criminally insane. Burgos' ongoing multimodal project explores the campus' dissonant heritage and connections with Spring Grove State Hospital. His project blends archival images and other resources and provides a campus map, tour, and détournement that digitally relocates the Hillcrest Building, a facility that hosted criminally insane patients, on its former space within the campus. Based on Gregory L. Ulmer's conception of electronic monumentality, *Uncovering the Campus* becomes a testimonial present everywhere and nowhere.

Contributions in the **Conversing with Maps** section play with sound mapping – from natural and social contextualizing elements to more direct exchanges and dialogues – in relation to the territory and situations that inspire and support such utterances.

Petra Johnson's *Composing The Ordinary, Part 1* and accompanying essay outlines the origins and methodology of a participatory practice called 'walk with me' that "mines the narratives that inform us," and has been carried out in cities in China, Germany, and the U.K. Johnson's essay articulates and reflects on the process of translating this embodied practice into a web-format using a non-commercial online tool developed by artist Martine Neddham and programmer James Hudson. Initially inspired by Clifford McLucas' work on deep maps, the digital conversion becomes a stage for the various outcomes of this work, creating a "complex spectrum that in turn reveals unexpected articulations and shifts in cartographic methods of presentation."

Marta Carrasco and Sergi Selvas present Interactive Sound Maps from their project *A. Fluent. Reconstructing the Paths of Water* (Avinyó, Catalonia, Spain, 2013). Like Burgos' piece, their project involves a *dérive* as a method to listen to and explore the transformations of the landscape using sound and interactive media. The work aims to peel off different layers, one by one, through an exploration of the stories embedded in the physical and geographical space in order to "recompose and edit the narrations of this transparent, hidden and often forgotten landscape." Through these interpretations and subjective representations, the authors articulate reflections about the evolution of place identity, as well as human transformation of territory. The maps created go beyond geographical representations of discovered subjectivities, becoming "a new relational space" that allows spectator-participants to interact as "active and transformative subjects of the territory."

Caroline Gausden and Helen Smith present a second audio work with a very different orientation, focusing on conversational mapping, through which they promote a reevaluation of the social aspects of art. Their work uses conversation as a methodology and as a usually unacknowledged cultural form. The "audio fragments" incorporate dialogue between the artist-researchers as well as the voices of participants and social activists. The work offers a multi-modal experience of the complex aspects of the conversational side of social practice as the conversation includes working through problems of participatory action research with artist-embedded social practices.

The **Meta-Mapping** section presents three works that explore the often figurative or metaphoric aspects of maps. Using video, interactive forms, and, in Michelle Ferrier's work, a digital quilt, these works explore the idea of mapping ideas and stories onto layers of maps.

Alys Longley, James Hutchinson, Charlotte Šunde, Sasha Matthewman, and Karen Fisher present a video animation alongside experimental/critical writing emerging from the multi-year, art-science-education project *fluid city*, which focuses on communicating water sustainability issues in Auckland, New Zealand. Through a series of interactive public art installations *fluid city* aims to highlight the intangible and tangible values of water in the city. The work presented here aim to creatively place viewers/participants within "hydrological

*Intimate Bureaucracies* (2012), *Networked Art* (<http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/networked-art>) (2001), *Artificial Mythologies* (1997) and has co-edited and introduced volumes on *Electracy* (2015) and *Imaging Place* (2009). He has co-edited special issues of *Rhizomes* (<http://rhizomes.net/>) on *Posthumography* (<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue20/index.html>) (2010) and *Drifts* (<http://www.rhizomes.net/issue13/index.html>) (2007). He has just edited, with new introductions, editions of Bob Brown's *Words* (2014), *Gems* (2014), *The Readies* (2014), and *1450-1950* (2015), published with <http://rovingeyepress.com> (<http://rovingeyepress.com/>).

ways of thinking" about the ecologies of the everyday, through which to construct potentials for living in and understanding our world differently, guided by Deleuze's concept of "liquid perception."

Michelle Ferrier uses quilting as a metaphor for characterizing the practice of digital rhetoric or "hyperrhetoric" within a technologized environment. Interweaving quilters' tactics and theory of digitextuality, Ferrier organizes discourses of Hurricane Katrina survivors through a communal, polyvocal digital ethnographic method. *The Digital Story Quilt*, a work of cultural memory mapping, reached across geography and time to unite a fractured and mourning community and now serves as a memorial to that tumultuous time. The work also re-establishes the value of cultural memory as an alternate record of history by providing a narrative mapping space for situated knowledge to reinvest historical production.

In a complementary **Mapping E-lit** section, Scott Rettberg, a leader of electronic literature studies, maps the current terrain of inextricably-digitally-born projects that appear as inter-genre and inter-medial works mixing algorithmic poetry, documentary media, and new forms of fiction and non-fiction as well as political and scholarly interventions that defy easy categorization. His article and the projects he presents make clear that the old maps of cultural forms using genre, media forms, and national borders do not make any sense in the current cultural milieu. We need new maps and types of mapping. Rettberg's video documentation of his CAVE collaboration with Roderick Coover gives one a small sense of how the project immerses participant-viewers in an illumination of, and an allegorical relationship between, the troubling situations of both the serious degradation of our environment and the reading of transcripts of U.S. soldiers involved in what many consider degrading "torture." His works demonstrate the need to dispense with older categories and maps both in the humanities disciplines and, perhaps more importantly, in understanding our contemporary world where keeping these terrains strictly segregated is part of the problem -- not a solution. Rettberg's work here could serve as a useful introduction to contemporary E-Lit or a speculative provocation of what a map of the engaged-humanities and interventionist social geography might look like already.

#### AFTERWORDS/CONCLUSIONS

Closing the issue, a "video-esSéance" (essay-meets-séance) developed by Craig Saper and Lynn Tomlinson virtually embodies techniques of projection mapping to explore the nature of digital culture in contemporary times. Informed by a tradition of scholarship that inextricably links design and argument, the video-essay is inspired by and resembles proto-cinematic performances, and the video art that mined those performances. In the accompanying essay, which works as an Afterword to both the video-essay as well as the special issue as a whole, Saper explains how translating a live improvised performance into a digital work is much more than a matter of "capturing" but requires a complete rethinking in terms of performance criteria and demands, and the sense-making processes and receptivities of in-person vs. distributed/digital audiences.

Cultural mapping as a practice and an emerging interdisciplinary field is one that is increasingly embedded, on one hand, in communal engagement and the creation of spaces to incorporate multivocal stories and, on the other hand, as a tool and method of artistic inquiry, organization, and presentation. Spanning both dimensions is the use of digital multimodal media to explore, document, and share the knowledges and insights that emerge through the mapping processes. In this multidirectional bridging and emergent knowledge process, new tactics, platforms, and methodological approaches are created, as is evident among the contributions presented in this special issue.

This introduction serves as map key, but also another entrance to appreciating these projects as maps and an alternative geographical approach to scholarship. The work in this volume demonstrates how the false opposition (or at least distinction) between the art and design of maps, and the social theories usually invisibly underpinning those maps, often prevents map-makers from incorporating avant-garde problem-solving strategies and art practices in experimenting with the conceptual issues of mapping. Gregory L. Ulmer coins the term "heuretics" to describe this process of problem solving or mapping. The mappings in this issue seek to use experimental methods of augmented, meta-, and conversational maps to rethink the relationship between culture and mapping away from the literal and geographic, towards inquiries into alternative representations of human-place relations and the ideas we use to mark and navigate.

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