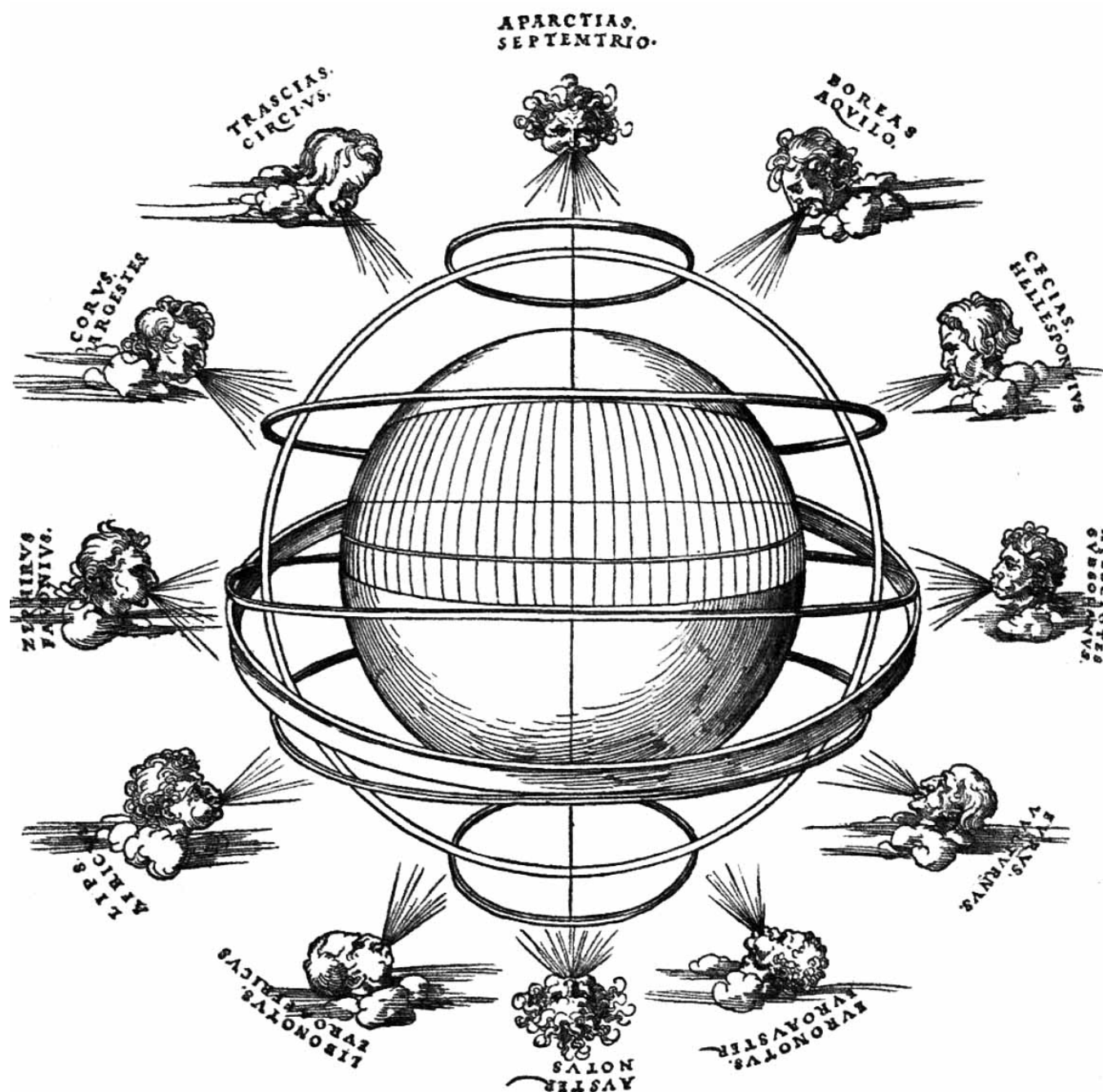


Architects, Photographers and Ethnographers

working with
the concept
'place' through
practical exercises



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Architects, ethnographers and photographers each work in their own way with the concept of 'place'. While our modes of doing and making as well as our research methods within each of these fields vary from practitioner to practitioner, we are all interested in this notion. The aim of this project is to broaden perspective and learn from other practices how they relate to 'place'. In this workshop we focus on three particular aspects of these fields.

1 The **cartopological approach** in an architectural context. Cartopology finds itself at the intersection of two families of disciplines: those born from a spatial perspective (architecture, urban planning, and cartography) in which the use of plans based on standardized notational systems and those born from a fascination for human behaviour and the everyday lived reality (ethnography and anthropology). Cartopology is connected to both families through mapmaking by means of drawing. This field delivers a cross-disciplinary approach through the practical investigation of multiple ways of mapmaking and drawing. (linked to the practice of Marlies Vermeulen)

2 **Photography as a social practice** in which the production of a photograph is an event shaped by various human and non-human actors of which the photographer is only one. The photographer is, in such a practice, tasked with humility, with accepting conditions brought in by other actors and using their skills to do justice to more than her own view and ideas. The photographs resulting from this practice are made rather than taken, they are produced *with* rather than *of*. (linked to the practice of Andrea Stultiens)

3 **Visual Ethnography** draws upon audiovisual media's unique ability to share insights about people and places on multiple registers – discursive, sensory, embodied, spatial, etc. Furthermore, with the growing prominence of digital media, Visual Ethnography offers an expanded framework for producing contemporary anthropological research. Multimodal approaches have become increasingly important components in ethnographic research for collaborating with research communities and expanding the range of scholarly outputs. Visual Ethnography highlights the vital role anthropology plays in the greater public. (linked to the practice of Mark Westmoreland)

The purpose of this workshop is to explore, compare and learn from each other's approaches and media to investigate particular locations through visualizations. These approaches are found in the programs in which Andrea, Mark and Marlies teach as well as in the media we use in our individual research and/or artistic practices. Each of these approaches requires certain skills. The media that could be used range from writing, drawing and photography to film, and are used as tools in investigating, documenting as well as presenting spatial experience. The general purpose is not to teach each other skills but to learn from and be influenced not only by the explored space itself, but also by each other's way of looking, mediating, understanding and presenting.

You will be triggered to experiment with a layered and composite way of visualizing spatial experiences that expands our respective practices. You are expected to engage with your immediate surrounding and to actively interpret and read the different approaches and their outcomes. We expect this to lead to considerations on how to use and develop both approaches and outcomes further in your respective fields.

1 Marlies Vermeulen has a background in architecture and works as a cartopologist. She aims at representing our spatial environment by combining places, the properties of places and the daily life of those places in maps. Besides her independent practice (www.dearhunter.eu) she teaches cartopology at Zuyd Hogeschool (The Netherlands) and the KULeuven (Belgium) several universities, is setting up the institute of cartopology (cartopology.institute) and works on a joint doctoral project in artistic research at the Research Center for Arts, Autonomy and the Public Sphere (Zuyd Hogeschool), Maastricht University's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the RWTH Aachen Faculty of Architecture.

2 Andrea Stultiens was initially trained as a photographer (BFA, MFA) at several universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. Questioning her medium led to a shift in her practice from that of a relatively conventional documentary photography to an artistic research practice that questions the positions, roles and affordances of historical photographs to understand both past and present day imaginations of 'Africa'. She finalised a PhD 'in and through the arts' at Leiden University on 'Photographs in Uganda'. Her artistic practice, in which intervening in the general distribution of photographs, is her main research method.

3 Mark R. Westmoreland combines his training in cultural anthropology and cultural studies with a multimodal research practice that critically engages representational legacies within the discipline of anthropology, while striving to cultivate creative collaborations that intervene in broader public debates. His work engages both scholarly and practice-based approaches at the intersection between art and ethnography, particularly at the interface between sensory embodiment and media aesthetics in on-going legacies of contentious politics. He previously served as editor of *Visual Anthropology Review* and now spearheads the *Writing with Light* curatorial collective for ethnographic photo-essays. He coordinates the Visual Ethnography master specialisation at Leiden University.

Monday 9th of November: Exercises by Marlies, Andrea and Mark

- 09.00 - 10.00** Online gathering, make introductions and explain the plan for the day including interdisciplinary groups for the workshop
- 10.00 - 15.00** Individually carry out exercises
- 15.00 - 15.30** Students meet in interdisciplinary breakout groups, exchange experiences
- 15.30 - 16.00** Online gathering and sharing reflections, each interdisciplinary teams asks one team member to share their experiences as a group
- 16.00 - 16.30** Explanation of the next assignment, questions

Tuesday 10th of November: Group work

- Latest at 09.00** Students submit individual written reflections uploaded in the folder of the group on Teams
- 09.00 - 10.00** Idiot hour: open hour driven by student questions
- 10.00 - 12.00** Working (starting with reading each others reflections)
- 12.00 - 15.00** Group feedback (based on individual reflection)
- 15.00 - 16.00** Finalising exercises
- Latest at 16.00** Upload the final version of the exercise formulated per group
- 17.00 - 18.00** Feedback to student groups if needed

Wednesday 11th of November: Exercises by Groups

- 09.00 - 10.00** Hand over and swapping the exercises including an introduction
- 10.00 - 12.00** Execution of exercises
- 12.00 - 14.00** Upload of outcomes, group reflection on the executed exercise, (including lunch) - possible to talk to Andrea, Mark or Marlies
- 14.00 - 16.00** Online presentations, each group presents and offers reflections and others react (first five minutes presentation by the groups based on outcomes of the exercise they were given. Second five minutes response by the group that formulated the exercise)
- 16.00 - 16.30** Break
- 16.30-17.00** Brief reflections from Mark, Marlies and Andrea on the presentations - Evaluation and closing of the workshop
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What to bring

1 Marlies

Print the grid (p. 11) on drawing paper (120g), black pen 0,2 and 0,5

2 Andrea

A device of choice to produce photograph, timer

3 Mark

A device of choice to produce video

What to read

1 Marlies

Interview with Dennis Wood. <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/110/mapping/act-one-0>
Presentation of Ben Highmore. <https://youtu.be/ezClcFecoXI>

2 Andrea

Vilém Flusser, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, 1984, pp.21-32 with emphasis on the last pages in the chapter entitled "The Apparatus".

3 Mark

David MacDougall "Voice and Vision" *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*. 2005, pp. 8 - 32–63. Princeton University Press. 8-32.

The anthropologist Marc Augé describes non-places as spaces of transience where human beings remain anonymous and that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as "places". What Augé also describes is that a non-place is related to the person using that place. Take the street you live in for example, for one it feels like home, for another merely a transit zone to achieve another destination. My place is not your place, even if it is the same place. Do you still follow? Tim Cresswell explains that this suggests ownership or some kind of connection between a person and a particular location or building. While a street can be nothing more than an anonymous non-place for one person, for someone else the place might be much more 'owned'. But how? How do I recognize these different types of ownership and connection with the place around me? Ben Highmore explains that the non-everyday (the exceptional) is there to be found in the heart of the everyday. There, on the threshold you notice a flowerpot carefully positioned by an inhabitant. Or, somebody left his bike such a long time ago that only the frame is left. These are the hauntings of ownership and remnants of what might turn a place into a non-place or the other way around.

Take the position of a traveler and try to relate to your street as if it were a non-place to you. Question this role: If I would be a traveler on my way to another destination, what would be important? What would I be looking for? Would I be looking around or would I be preoccupied? Do I only notice traffic signs or also maybe the bakery at the end of the street?

The idea of the cartopological exercise is to document objects that you come across in your role as traveler. As such you will try to understand the importance of certain objects and how they relate to our habits as a traveler. You will use the grid you printed as a research instrument for this exercise. It is made to draw the objects but also to position them in your street.

a. Go to **Google Maps** and search for your street. Rotate the map to have your street positioned as horizontal as possible on your screen. You have to change Google Maps to satellite view and then use the compass symbol to rotate.

b. **Zoom** in or out so that, more or less, 100m of the street covers your screen. Take a **screenshot** of that map and trace the most important lines of the street onto the horizontal box by sticking your paper to the screen. (You might have to darken the light in the room to have enough contrast).

c. Now **go outside**, take your notebook with you and walk the part of the street you have traced in the grid. Don't forget the role of a traveler. Focus on your role and on what would be the objects a traveler would notice. Have a **good look** at the object. Is it one small object or is it the combination of multiple objects in a spatial setting? Is it a detail or a more abstract context? Make little sketches, write little things down, take photographs to be able to remember the object.

d. **Make a selection and draw each object (max. 3) separately in one of the boxes** on top of your plan. Note that it is not (only) about the drawing. Using drawing as a mapping and research technique in the process of getting to know the place and its objects. If you really do not manage to draw the object, you can write down why it is so hard to draw it.

e. **Draw** your walk. Draw the route you took on the plan: where did I cross the street, where did I stop for a while,... Indicate precisely the objects you have been drawing using the numbers.

Try to be as specific as possible, also when you are drawing your walk. For example: it can be one line, but think about different types of lines such as a dotted line, a double line, a sketchy line, ...

f. Now, go back and add '**signs of ownership**' to the drawings you have drawn so far. There can be little details of use or more important changes related to the initiated use and/or design. Take your time for this step, go back and observe. Because the level of ownership is merely visible in the relation between the object and the user. As such, try to focus on that connection.

g. If you did well, you now have a **grid of drawings** related to floorplan of the street indicating places of ownership in a non-place conform to a predefined user.

h. **Write a 200-word reflection** on what sort of insights you've gained from the exercise, the impact of mapping and changing roles.

This exercise is meant to offer the opportunity to reflect on the way 'photographic apparatuses', as Vilem Flusser calls them in the text you read, are programmed and program us in the present. It is also meant to give an opportunity to dwell in a particular, and somewhat familiar place for longer than you normally would, and to then reflect on and reconsider what you thought you knew and how it is made visible in the online world.

a. Preparation

Choose, in Google Maps, a photograph in your immediate surroundings. The area is defined by what is realistic for you to go to and dwell within the given timeframe of the day.

Make some notes on what you see on the photograph, in case you already consciously know the depicted place then also make notes on the relation between the way you know, remember the place and how it is presented in the picture.

b. Go Out .

Go to the place depicted in the photograph. Find a place to dwell (sit, stand, hang, have a coffee, wait) with the frame in the photograph comfortably in your view.

Spend half an hour in this spot. Allow for a conversation to unfold in case there are people around wondering what you are doing. Or just be there and look around you. Not at your phone screen!

At the end of this 'dwelling' time, make a picture yourself to present your time in this place to the others in your group.

c. Reflect and upload

Write a reflection (200 words) in which you:

Briefly describe the dwelling experience and reflect on the relation between the online available (re)presentation of the physical space and your own observation. Use the notes you made in preparation when relevant and mention if you do.

Reflect on the way the 'apparatus' made you see the place when encountering the photograph on Google Maps, and the role of the apparatus (whether your phone or another photographic recording device).

Upload one document to the folder of your group in Teams containing:

The photograph encountered on Google

The photograph you made after your 30 minute dwelling period

The written reflection

Although visual ethnography is not limited to one specific mode of mediation, this exercise will ask participants to utilize video as a device to visualize the spatial experience of movement in this particular urban environment.

Cinema, the movies, motion pictures, these are all medium-specific notions that capture a kind of essential quality of movement that has synergy with the movement common in urban spaces. Frederic Stout argues that the cinema is a machine with urban origins: "The great themes of the city – its kinetic activity, its juxtapositions and ironies, its massive forms and tiny details ..." (2000:146), parallels the aesthetics of cinema. And as noted by Mark Shiel, the capacity of the movie camera to capture the kinetic motion of urban life and also to travel through this space presents cinema with "a striking and distinctive ability to capture and express the spatial complexity, diversity, and social dynamism of the city through *mise-en-scène*, location filming, lighting, cinematography, and editing" (Shiel 2001:1).

In the earliest films, movement in front of the camera was enough to captivate the intent of the filmmakers and the interest of the audience, but before long filmmakers realized the capacity of a moving camera unbound from a fixed location. Our senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell provide us specific sensory modalities for experiencing the world, but proprioception or kinesthesia, sometimes called the 6th sense, gives us an awareness of our own movement and body position based on our relation to other bodies and objects around us.

Your task will be to **juxtapose these two movements** — external to the camera and internal to the operator's movements — as ways of visualizing spatial experience as embodied and observed by engaging with four modes of cinematic movement.

Find an **open location** where you can observe movement happening in multiple dimensions — primarily, side to side and front to back, but possibly vertically, too.

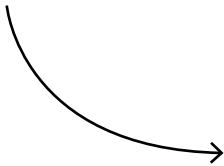
a. First, **situate your camera** on a stationary object so you can record at least a 3-minute long-take. Using a very wide frame, observe the movements across the frame. As you record, note places where the depth of movement is most concentrated and frequently overlaps. Repeatedly shift your attention between these points of density and the wider frame of collective movement as if moving from a focused vision to a peripheral vision.

b. Second, based on your observations in part one, **adjust the camera by zooming** in to one or more points on the far side of this space while ensuring that the composition contains density of movement. This will collapse the movement from front to back into a compressed frame. How does this change the experience of that space? How does it change the mode of visualizing that space?

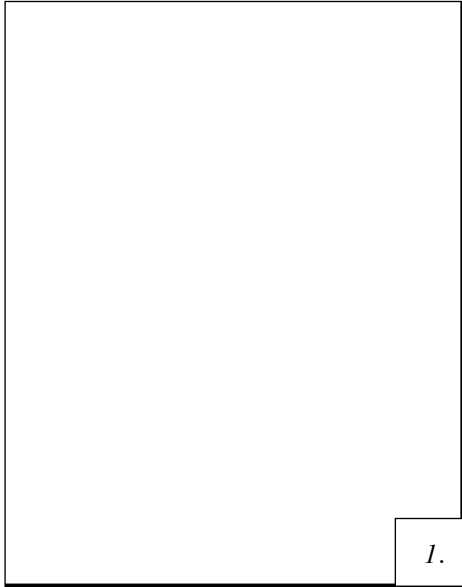
c. Third, **target one of these distant spots** and navigate your way across the open space to the other side, while pointing the handheld camera at your feet and recording. Watch the video back and note the movement of your feet and any other feet that enter the frame.

d. Lastly, **repeat the third exercise**, but this time remain looking at the LCD (or through the viewfinder) as you attempt to navigate the space back to your original location.

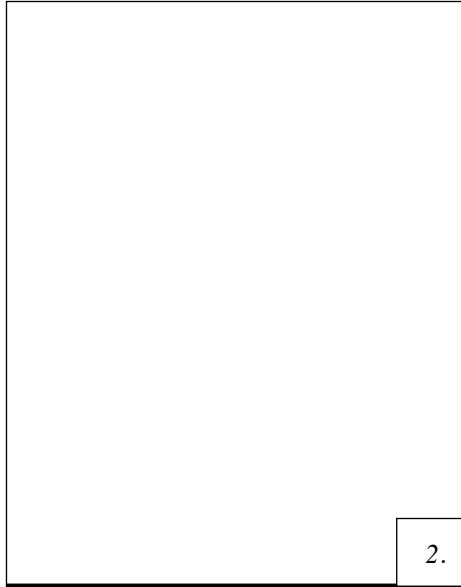
e. **Write a 200-word reflection** on what sort of insights you've gained from the exercise and how each modal iteration shifts your understanding of and relationship to the other modes.



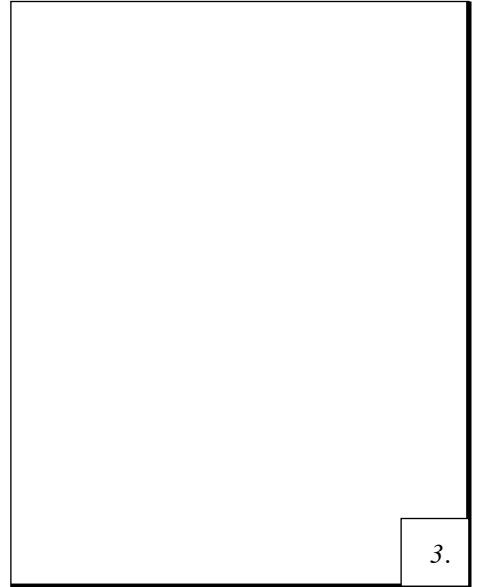
OBJECTS USER:



1.



2.



3.

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STREET NAME:

CARTOLOGISTS NAME: