



Onsite [at] OCAD U, Faculty of Design

2018

## Diagrams of power [Exhibition Catalogue]

Davila, Patricio

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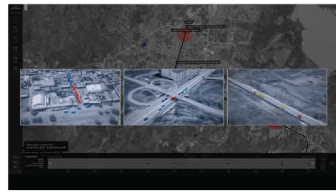
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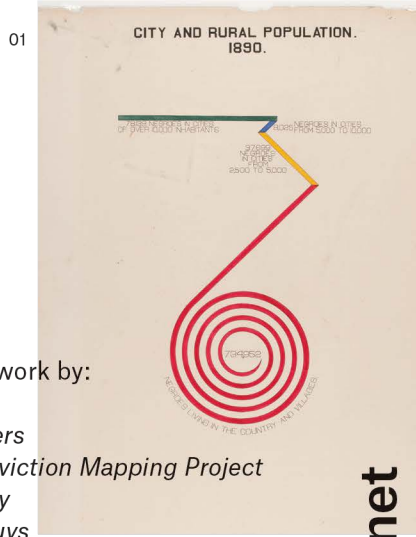


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# DIAGRAMS



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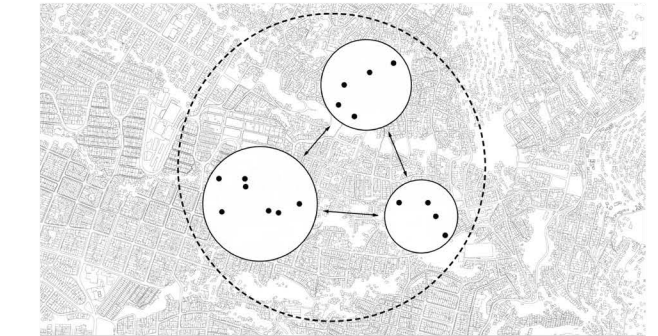
Featuring work by:

- Joshua Akers
- The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project
- Josh Begley
- Joseph Beuys
- Vincent Brown

diagramsofpower.net



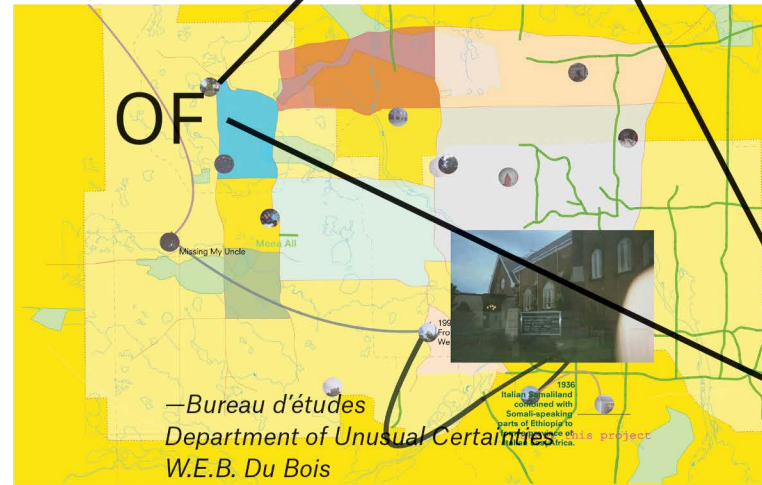
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Public space is a space of knowledge

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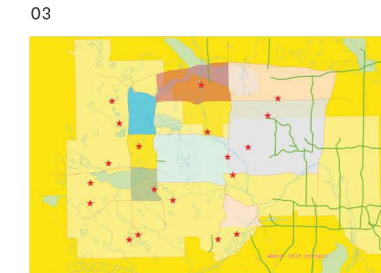
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—Bureau d'études  
 Department of Unusual Certainties  
 W.E.B. Du Bois  
 Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman  
 Forensic Architecture —



02

# POWER



03



07

02



04



- Iconoclastas
- Julie Mehretu
- Lize Mogel
- Ogimaa Mikana
- Margaret Pearce
- Laura Poitras
- Philippe Rekacewicz
- Visualizing Impact

Curated by Patricio Dávila

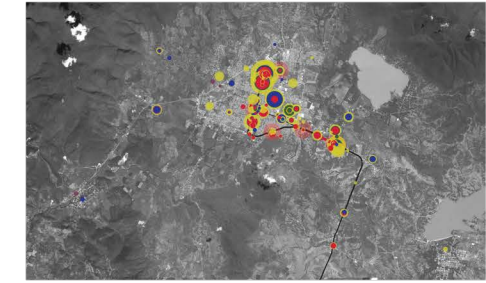


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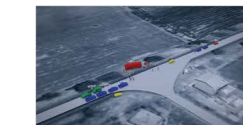


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02

Shrink distance, expand access  
 wealth poverty

06

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07.11 — 09.29 2018

02



ONSITE GALLERY

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Diagrams of Power* presented at Onsite Gallery, OCAD University, Toronto.

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01. W. E. B. Du Bois, *[The Georgia Negro] City and rural population*, 1890.  
Image courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division  
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

02. Forensic Architecture, *The Ayotzinapa Case: A Cartography of Violence* (still),  
2017. Video, 18 min. 24 sec.

03. Julie Mehretu, *Minneapolis and Saint Paul are East African Cities* (still), 2003.  
Interactive website. Courtesy of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA.

04. Margaret Pearce, *Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada*, 2017. Map.  
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05. Laura Poitras, *O'Say Can You See* (still), 2001/2016. Two-channel digital video, color,  
sound. Image courtesy of the artist.

06. Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman, *The Medellin Diagram*, 2016. Digital image.

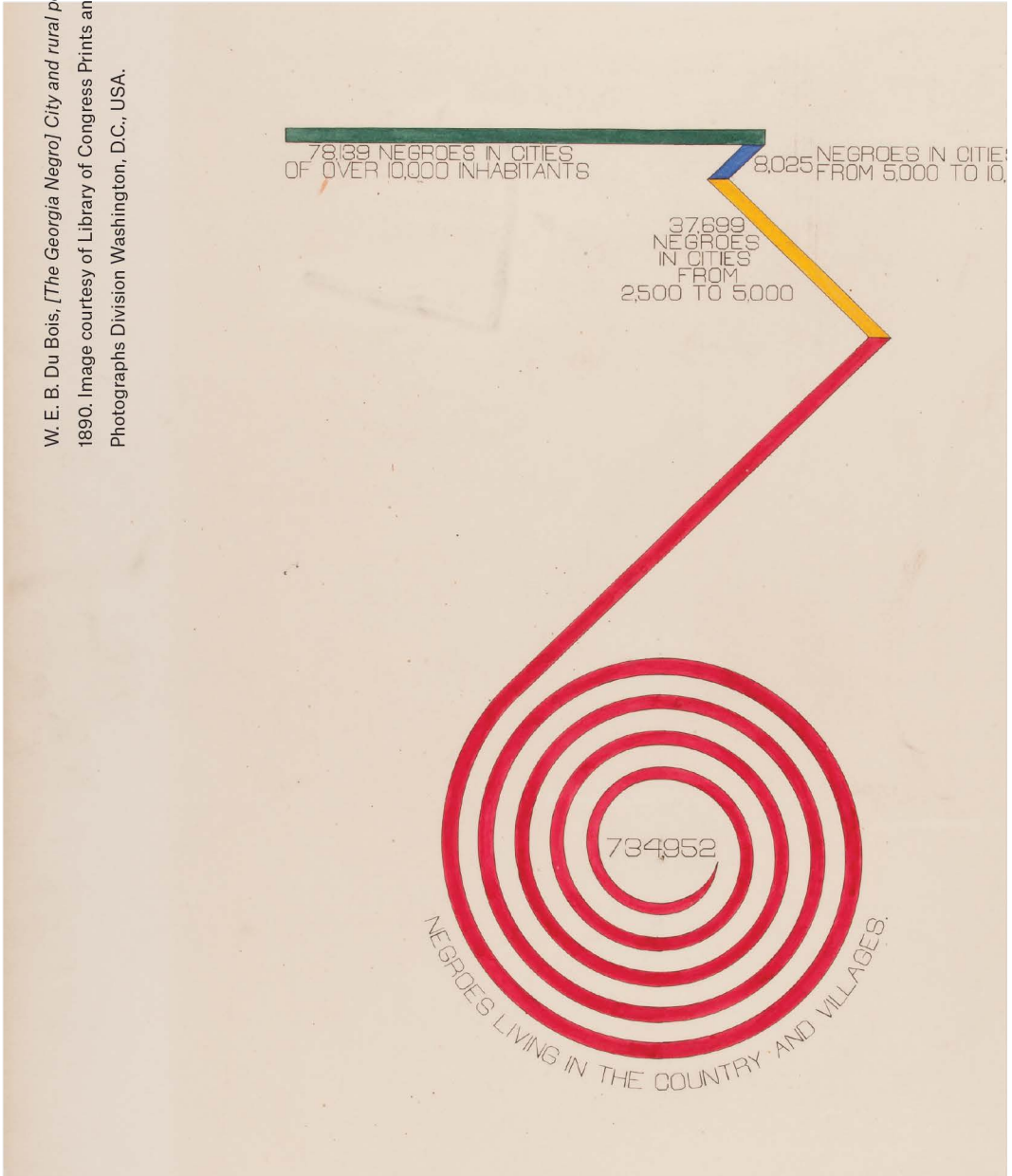
07. Josh Begley, *Best of Luck with the Wall* (still), 2016. Video, 7 mins.

04



*Each designer, artist,  
cartographer, geographer,  
researcher and activist  
demonstrates a commitment  
to using this mode to tell  
inconvenient stories that upset  
and resist the status quo.*

W. E. B. Du Bois, [The Georgia Negro] City and rural population, 1890. Image courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C., USA.



DIAGRAMS

POWER

OF

*When I draw with pencil and paper — an idea, a bicycle, a family tree, or a park — I draw a diagram that floats between my concept of a thing and the actual thing.*

I draw it for myself to help me think and to help me communicate to others. My diagram represents what I know and/or what I want to be true. It uses lines, colour, text and information that I have gathered to put forth a vision of what I think is important. The word diagram comes from the Greek — to write through. A diagram is not just a collection of gestures on a plane. It is not a static object. Since it works to organize thoughts and facts about the world, a diagram creates an effect — when I write across a page or a screen, I also inscribe a line through a landscape or between members of a group.

This may be counterintuitive, but a diagram also describes a non-visual thing. It describes an arrangement of things that are felt. For example, I am situated in a map of relations that include an employer, students, regulations, physical buildings, etc. This can be thought of as an abstract machine where different and interchangeable parts may operate directly or indirectly with one another. What is important to note is that these are structures that are flexible and mutable, and that reproduce in different instances with slightly different parts. Visualization involves several processes like gathering data from people and things, sorting and analyzing and re-analyzing data, representing data in a tangible form such as a map or graph and, most importantly, circulating this artifact among different people, experts, or organizations. Thus, as a process, visualization arranges people and things.

It is through these two meanings of diagram that I come to the idea of a Diagram of Power. It is both a visual work that represents and communicates ideas or data as well as a process that arranges bodies and things. In both of these dimensions, I note the way in which power can be depicted and exercised. In other words, a diagram can be used to show how power is distributed and it can also be the actual way in which power is distributed.

Maps do this kind of work. They are used to understand the features of a landscape and its inhabitants. From the beginning, maps were used to communicate the understanding of an inhabited territory as well as to transport knowledge of a remote, newly discovered place to a central governing place. In this way, maps have often been used to control a space and dominate a people.

Visualizations and maps are often viewed as depictions of truths produced by scientific inquiry or statistical analysis conducted by experts in universities or governments — this is how they draw some of their power. We forget they can never be fully objective. I am reminded of how theorist Donna Haraway warns us of the god trick that maps (and visualizations) can perform. They have a tendency to make us think that they are beyond human and therefore beyond reproach. Yet, we must ask who is doing the representing? Are they made by an objective and omniscient being that only sees truth and therefore cannot lie? Or are they situated in a specific place with a specific knowledge and experience,



Laura Poitras, *O'Say Can You See* (still), 2001/2016. Two-channel digital video, color, sound. Image courtesy of the artist.

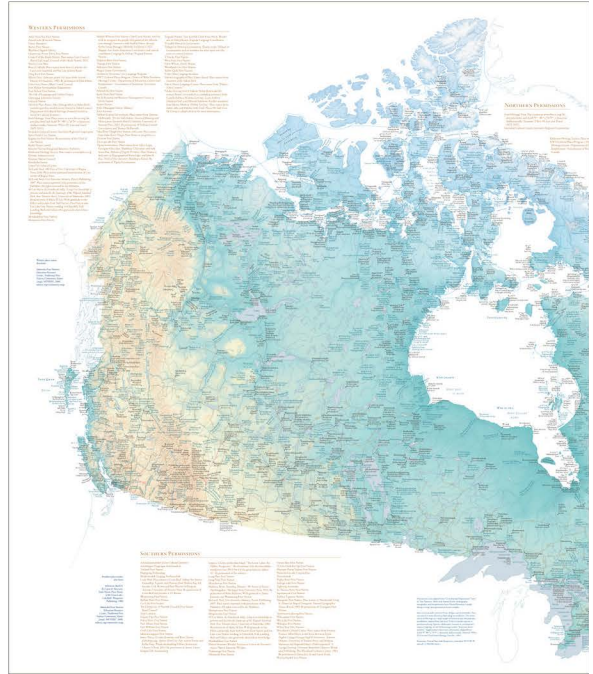


and committed to a specific agenda — all of which guides the gathering of data, the premise of the analysis and the style of the visualization?

Rather than perform a god trick, **Diagrams of Power** speak from a position — they are situated and they work against representations that hide other stories and other realities. They take extra care of what and who is represented, and who does the representing.

Margaret Pearce's work, *Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada*, does precisely this. Margaret has designed a map of Indigenous place names in Canada. A radical project in the sense that it performs the root work of grounding us live within an Indigenous territory and knowledge. The radical work is also performed through the respect given to the traditional Indigenous knowledge keepers of place names. Margaret's map decentres the dominant idea of Canada as English and French coded territory by reinscribing the names that existed before settler colonization and continue to exist today. She assembles knowledge and thereby forms relations between herself as a cartographer and the many Indigenous communities throughout Turtle Island.

Laura Poitras' *O'Say Can You See* is another diagram performed. It sets up a relation between those who watch and those being watched. Laura helps us to see and perhaps feel part of the power relation that implicates us in the war on terror. The image of mourners gazing at the ruins at the 9/11 site in New York City are juxtaposed with the interrogation of a suspected terrorist. The two images are mapped on to each other and therefore imply a causal relationship. Do we relate to the bodies watching or the body being watched? This



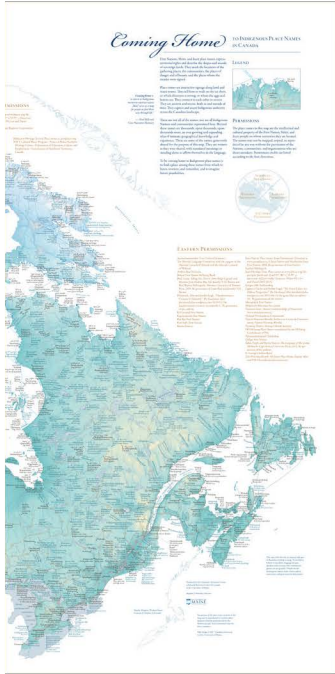
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01. Margaret Pearce, *Coming Home to Indigenous Place Names in Canada*, 2017. Map.

02. Forensic Architecture, *The Ayotzinapa Case: A Cartography of Violence* (still), 2017. Video, 18 min. 24 sec.



06



work and others prompts me to view mapping and visualization as media practices that act critically and not just affirmatively.

All the designers and artists in this exhibition either challenge a dominant idea or unearth hidden knowledge. They present evidence by assembling data, images and/or personal accounts into cohesive wholes to be explored. The arrangement of evidence is a task that diagrams, as visualizations, are particular adept at doing. *Ayotzinapa*, a work by Forensic Architecture, functions in this way as it assembles eyewitness accounts, social media posts, police reports and many other sources that relate to the disappearance and murder of 43 university students in Iguala, Mexico in 2014.

Part of acting critically involves resisting narratives used to displace, control, or forget. For example, the Argentine collective Iconoclastas, formed by Julia Risler and Pablo Ares, uses a mappa mundi (a medieval world map) to reverse a dominant understanding of ownership. In their work *¿A quién pertenece la tierra? / Who owns the land?* they have made two strategic choices to resist deep-seated

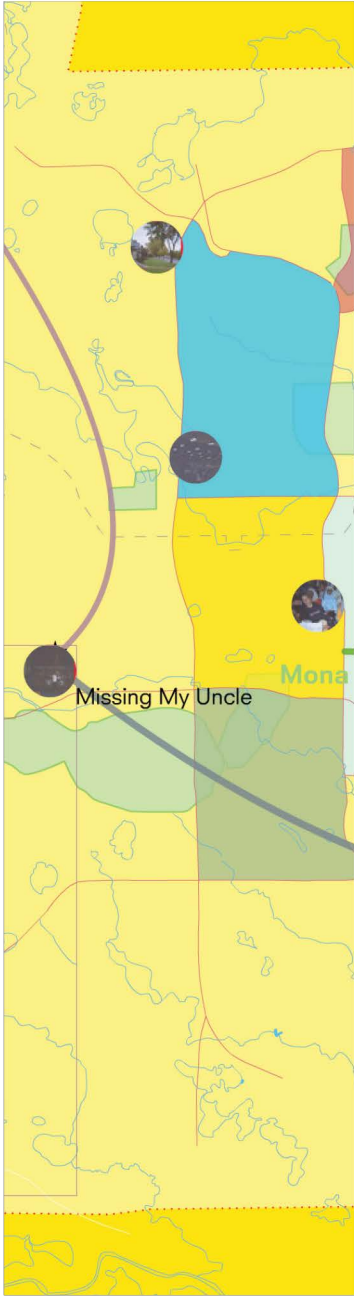


assumptions. First, they flip the North Pole and the South Pole in their map in order to challenge the intuition that north is up and south down — more precisely that the Global South is at the bottom of the Global North, a technique famously used by artist and theorist, Joaquín Torres-García. Second, Iconoclastas use what is commonly referred to as the Gall-Peters projection which includes the characteristic elongated look of land masses — an attempt to accurately represent countries of the Third World which are often depicted erroneously as equal in size to European countries. These strategies make sense to me as tools for radical pedagogy informed by their practice which revolves around the use of mapping in popular education, collaboration and community-led research. Their critical *mappa mundi* performs this function, it works as an educational tool to engage viewers and challenge unquestioned assumptions — in *¿A quién pertenece la tierra? / Who owns the land?*, who owns what.

Onsite Gallery

Ownership and relationships that form networks of power are complex and notoriously difficult things to make visible. Power through governmental or corporate entities, or through capital flow or military force, are largely felt when they intersect our everyday life but hard to see as lines of direct relations — especially at their global scale. Bureau d'études is not daunted by this scale or complexity and aims to make these connections through their *World Government* maps. Through successive iterations, they create more comprehensive documents of global finance and governmental control.

*Maps are often good vehicles to engage community members and visualize their lived experience.*





Julie Mehretu, *Minneapolis and Saint Paul are East African Cities* (still), 2003. Interactive website.  
 Courtesy of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA.

Visualizations of global scale dynamics can be complex and demand an analytical approach yet when I look at Julie Mehretu's work I find instead the aesthetic and expressive dimension of global movement, history and flows. I read her large-scale paintings and prints as both diagrams and as landscapes. They incorporate image as data to influence the structure and feeling of her works. Her marks on the canvas work as vectors and as trails of movement. Her drawings often evoke rudimentary maps of ambiguous entities in a territory either migrating or gathering. In contrast to these modes for which she is very well known, one of her works, *Minneapolis and Saint Paul are East African Cities*, is particularly interesting due to its digital, interactive and participatory nature. Working in collaboration with Ethiopian and Eritrean youth living in the USA, Julie mapped their stories onto the city's territory. While I find that there are visual similarities between this work and some of her more well-known works, there is also a conceptual bridge here that links her use of the diagram and map to evoke a feeling and insert a narrative. Participation in the mapping and telling of stories situated in a specific space also constitutes a diagram. In Julie's project, the diagram involved the represented, in this case the youth, in a process of representing, in this case the digital interactive map. This is an attempt to distribute power amongst the participants via their choices of what to tell and how to tell it.

Maps are often good vehicles to engage community members and visualize their lived experience. Groups like The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project, take a similar approach with their maps that tell the story of resisting displacement through geo-located data and survivor stories. In fact, they make participation even more meaningful by conducting other activities such as interviews, events, creating murals and zines. While the premise is a mapping project, this group, sponsored by the San Francisco Tenants Union, amplifies the positive effects of mapping and visualizing through activities directly aimed at representing and supporting residents.

Maps, diagrams and visualizations are both artifacts and processes. They are tools that tell a story, and create ways of bringing people and things together in the telling of that story. The outcomes are often visualized so that they can be viewed and inspected, but also performed so that they can be heard and felt. Evidence that other realities exist is presented through compelling forms. An exhibition like **Diagrams of Power** shows the wide variety of ways in which different people engage in this type of practice. Each designer, artist, cartographer, geographer, researcher and activist demonstrates a commitment to using this mode to tell inconvenient stories that upset and resist the status quo.

For an enhanced experience of the exhibition please visit our online platform: [diagramsofpower.net](http://diagramsofpower.net)

For more information on research dialogues and public events please visit: [diagramsofpower.net/programs](http://diagramsofpower.net/programs) or [ocadu.ca/onsite](http://ocadu.ca/onsite)

# Bio- graphies

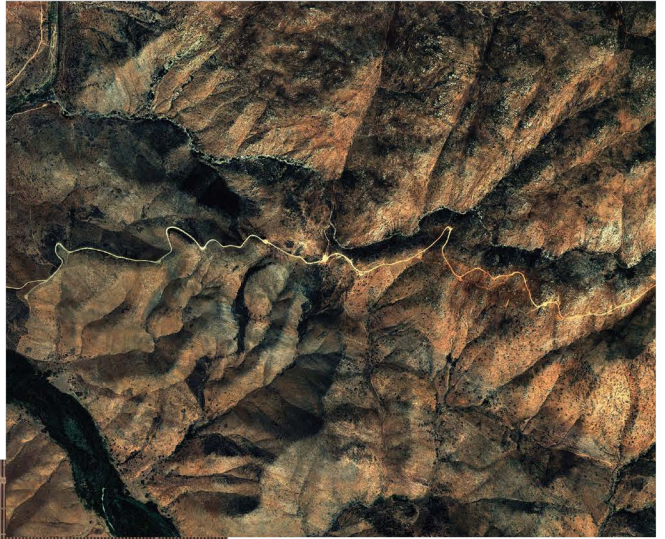
**The Anti-Eviction  
Mapping Project**  
[www.anti evictionmap.com](http://www.anti evictionmap.com)

Erin McElroy is the cofounder of the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project and the activist-based peer-reviewed *Radical Housing Journal*. She is a doctoral candidate in Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, focusing on techno imaginaries and postsocialist Romania and Silicon Valley. The Anti-Eviction Mapping Project is a data visualization, data analysis, and digital storytelling collective documenting dispossession and resistance upon gentrifying US landscapes.

**Joshua Akers**  
[www.propertypraxis.org](http://www.propertypraxis.org)

Joshua Akers is an Assistant Professor of Geography and Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. He is the founder and director of the Urban Praxis Workshop and member of the Property Praxis Research Collective. Akers' research and writing examines the intersection of markets and policy and their material impacts on everyday life. This work has appeared in *Environment and Planning A*, *Geoforum*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Urban Geography*, *Derive* and *Guernica*.

Onsite Gallery



Josh Begley, *Best of Luck with the Wall* (multiple stills), 2016. Video, 7 mins.

## Josh Begley

[joshbegley.com](http://joshbegley.com)

Josh Begley is a data artist and app developer based in Brooklyn, New York. Begley is the director of two short films, *Best of Luck with the Wall* (2016) and *Concussion Protocol* (2018). His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, *New York Magazine*, the Whitney, the Met Breuer, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New Museum of Contemporary Art.

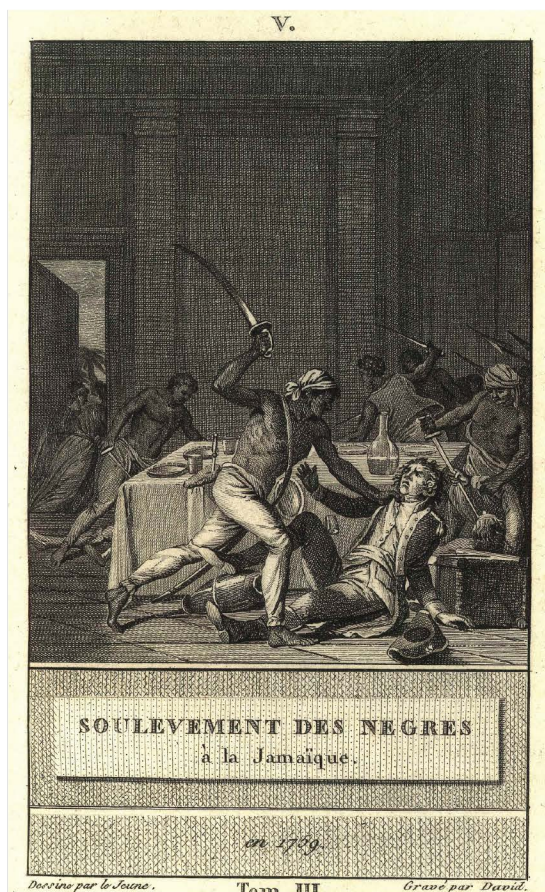
## Joseph Beuys

Joseph Beuys (12 May 1921 – 23 January 1986) was a German Fluxus, happening, and performance artist as well as a sculptor, installation artist, graphic artist, art theorist, and pedagogue. His extensive work is grounded in concepts of humanism, social philosophy and anthroposophy; it culminates in his “extended definition of art” and the idea of social sculpture as a *gesamtkunstwerk*, for which he claimed a creative, participatory role in shaping society and politics. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential artists of the second half of the 20th century.

## Vincent Brown

[revolt.axismaps.com](http://revolt.axismaps.com)

Vincent Brown is the Charles Warren Professor of History and Professor of African and African American Studies and Director of the History Design Studio at Harvard



*Map of the County of Cornwall* (detail), 1763. TNA, CO 700/JAMAICA17. As part of Vincent Brown's *Jamaican Slave Revolt*, 2012. Interactive digital map.

University. He is a multi-media historian with a keen interest in the political implications of cultural practice. Brown is the author of *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Harvard University Press, 2008) and producer of an audiovisual documentary about the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits broadcast on the PBS series *Independent Lens*. He is currently writing a book about African diasporic warfare in the Americas.



**Bureau d'études**  
bureaudetudes.org

Bureau d'études is an artist collective that lives and works in Saint Menoux, France. For 15 years, the group has developed research on the structures of power and capitalism. The group is currently working on a collective project on agriculture, commons and resymbolizing research: www.fermedelamhotte.fr.

**Department of Unusual Certainties**  
wearedouc.com

The Department of Unusual Certainties' objective is to use thoughtful, research-driven design to inspire engagement and dialogue. They practice the tradition of pragmatism, strategically applying design in the physical world to affect the social good. In 2010, Department of Unusual Certainties started

as a result of a shared need to ask questions about our everyday existence. This curiosity continues to grow and has manifested over the years through projects that traverse urban design, public art, education, cartography and social engagement.

**W. E. B. Du Bois**

Scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois was born on February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. In 1895, he became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. Du Bois wrote extensively and was the best-known spokesperson for African-American rights during the first half of the 20th century. He co-founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) in 1909. Du Bois died in Ghana in 1963.

Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman, *The Medellín Diagram* (detail), 2016. Digital image.

**inequality first**  
created a new political agenda

**1.B**  
Mediating urban conflict

**1.C**  
Cultivating a new civic imagination

**PROCESSES**

**2.**  
**Designing Governance**

Medellín transformed municipal bureaucracy

**2.A**  
Assembling transparent and inclusive public management

**2.B**  
Integrating and redistributing knowledges and resources

**2.C**  
Bringing design intelligence into public policy

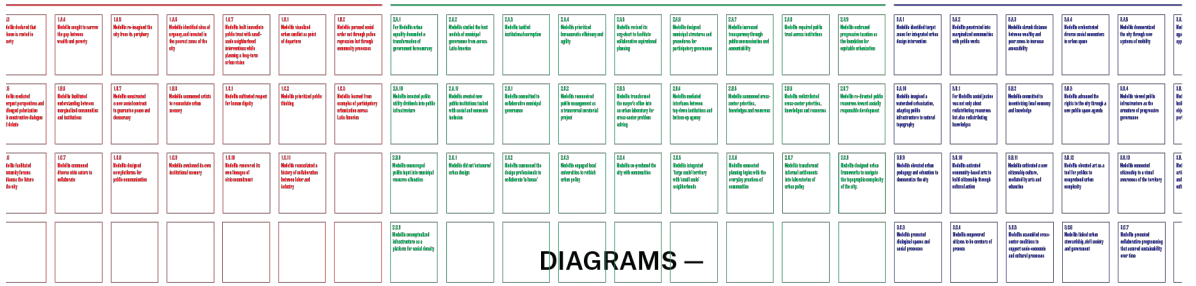
**INTERVENTIONS**

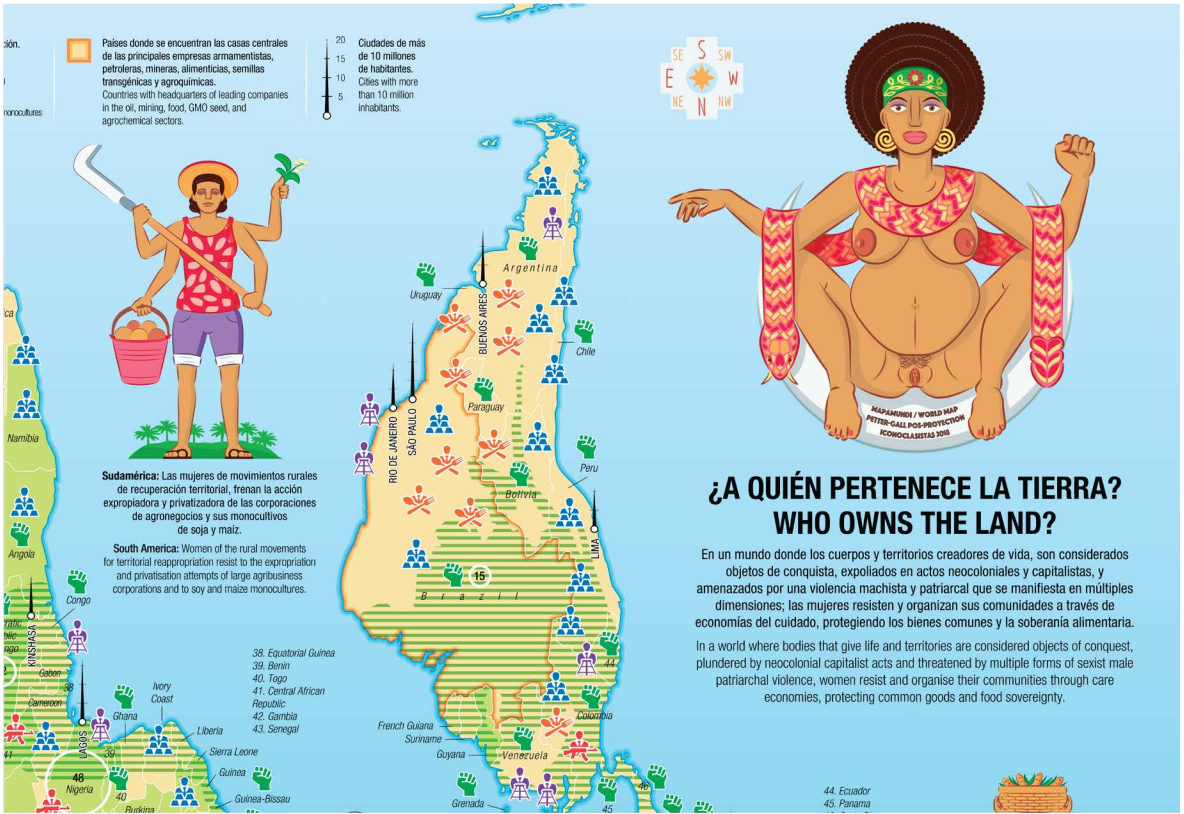
**3.**  
**Spatializing Citizens!**

Medellín built performative infrastructure

**3.A**  
Transgressing urban borders

**3.B**  
Creating public spaces that educate





**Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman**  
[estudioteddycruz.com](http://estudioteddycruz.com)

Teddy Cruz is a professor of Public Culture and Urbanization in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego, and Director of Urban Research in the UCSD Center on Global Justice.

Fonna Forman is a professor of Political Theory and Founding Director of the Center on Global Justice at the University of California, San Diego. Cruz + Forman are principals in Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman, a research-based political and architectural practice in San Diego. Blurring conventional boundaries between theory and practice, and transgressing the fields of architecture and urbanism, political theory and urban policy, visual arts and public culture, Cruz + Forman lead a variety of

urban research agendas and civic/public interventions in the San Diego-Tijuana border region and beyond. They will represent the United States in the 2018 Venice Architectural Biennale.

**Forensic Architecture**  
[forensic-architecture.org](http://forensic-architecture.org)

Forensic Architecture is a research agency based at Goldsmiths, University of London, consisting of architects, artists, filmmakers, journalists, software developers, scientists, lawyers, and an extended network of collaborators from a wide variety of fields and disciplines. Founded in 2010 by Eyal Weizman, Forensic Architecture is committed to the development and dissemination of new evidentiary

Iconoclastas, *Who Owns the Land?* (detail), 2017. Digital image.

techniques. It undertakes advanced architectural and media investigations on behalf of international prosecutors, human rights and civil society groups, as well as political and environmental justice organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, B'tselem, Bureau of Investigative Journalism, and the UN, among others.

### Iconoclasistas

*iconoclasistas.net*

Formed in 2006, Iconoclasistas is Pablo Ares and Julia Risler. Their projects combine graphic art, creative workshops and community-based research. Their works are offered online through Creative Commons licenses allowing free distribution and encouraging the creation of derivative works. Through the use of graphic devices and the design of several tools, Iconoclasistas fosters critical reflection that supports resistance and transformation.

### Julie Mehretu

In the age of globalization, Julie Mehretu has created a new form of history painting whose themes include identity, cultural history, geography, and personal narrative. Born in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, raised in East Lansing, Michigan, educated in Rhode Island and Senegal, and she resides in New York City and Berlin. Her life experience is reflected in her visual vocabulary, which is drawn from maps, urban-planning grids, and architectural forms. These are combined to make dynamic, delicate paintings, drawings, and prints that blur the line between abstraction and figuration. Mehretu's art embodies the interconnected and complex character of the world.



Documentation of Lize Mogel's *Performing Infrastructure: NYC Watershed workshop*, 2017.

### Lize Mogel

*publicgreen.com*

Lize Mogel is an interdisciplinary artist and counter-cartographer. Her work intersects the fields of popular education, cultural production, public policy, and mapping. She creates maps and mappings that produce new understandings of social and political issues. She has mapped public parks in Los Angeles; future territorial disputes in the Arctic; and wastewater economies in New

York City. She is co-editor of the book/map collection *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*, a project that significantly influenced the conversation and production around mapping and activism.

**Ogimaa Mikana**

Ogimaa Mikana is an artist collective founded by Susan Blight (Anishinaabe, Couchiching) and Hayden King (Anishinaabe, Gchi'mnissing) in January 2013. Through public art, site-specific intervention, and social practice, Ogimaa Mikana asserts Anishinaabe self-determination on the land and in the public sphere. Ogimaa Mikana has created new work for this exhibition with assistance from Eliana Macdonald and Margaret Pearce.

**Margaret Pearce**

Margaret Pearce is a cartographer and writer based in Rockland, Maine. Since 2006, she has dedicated herself to exploring and developing the expressive capacities of cartographic language to represent human experience and dialogues across cultures to decolonize narratives and empower silenced voices. Pearce has eighteen years of experience teaching cartographic design, map history and Indigenous geographies at the university level, most recently as Associate Professor of Geography at University of Kansas. She is enrolled Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and former president of the North American Cartographic Information Society.

**Laura Poitras**  
*praxisfilms.org*

Laura Poitras is a filmmaker, journalist and artist. CITIZENFOUR, the third installment of her post-9/11 Trilogy, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary, along with awards from the British Film Academy, Independent Spirit Awards, Director's Guild of America and others. She recently presented a series of immersive installations and new work for her solo exhibition, ASTRO NOISE (2016), at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her reporting on NSA mass surveillance based on Edward Snowden's disclosures won the George Polk Award for national security journalism, and shared in the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. She is on the board of the Freedom of the Press Foundation, and is co-creator of the visual journalism project *Field of Vision*.

Laura Poitras, *O/Say Can You See* (still), 2001/2016. Two-channel digital video, color, sound. Image courtesy of the artist.



**Philippe Rekacewicz**

*visionscarto.net*

Philippe Rekacewicz is a French geographer, cartographer and information designer and associate researcher at the University of Helsinki. With Philippe Rivière, he developed *visionscarto.net*, a research website dedicated to “radical and experimental cartography and geography.” Rekacewicz follows issues such as demography, refugees and displaced persons, and migration and statelessness persons. He has worked on a number of projects bringing together cartography, art and politics, especially studying how communities and political or economic powers produce the cartographic vision of the territories on which they operate, and how they can manipulate those maps.

**Visualizing Impact**

*visualizingimpact.org*

Visualizing Impact is a laboratory for innovation at the intersection of data science, technology, and design. Visualizing Impact creates impactful tools highlighting critical social issues around the world.





Visualizing Impact, *Palestine Shrinking, Expanding Israel*, 2015 (updated 2017).  
 Digital Image.

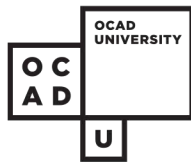
Onsite Gallery offers powerful, thought-provoking exhibitions of art, design and digital media to stimulate conversations on critical issues facing Toronto and the world.

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**Hours—** Wednesday: noon to 8 p.m.  
Thursday and Friday: noon to 7 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday: noon to 5 p.m.

**Connect with us—** Facebook: facebook.com/OnsiteOCADU  
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Onsite Gallery construction project funded in part by:



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