Maps represent, maps reveal, maps entice, maps distort. They selectively omit, they unwittingly exaggerate, and they even make outright lies. Though maps strive to project authority and objectivity, they cannot help but embed the biases, blind-spots and idiosyncrasies of their human authors. As our lives are played out in increasingly networked realms, we have become carto-literate as never before; we read maps produced by governments and corporate interests, yes, but also collaboratively author maps online, inscribing new representations of ourselves and our priorities.

Contestational Cartographies introduces the thoughts of leading “experimental geographers” who employ mapping techniques in new modes of critical practice and cultural research and, in so doing, help us “read between the lines” of the world around us.

Contestational Cartographies is co-organized by the Miller Gallery and the Studio for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University. Produced with support from the CMU School of Art Lecture Series, the Vice Provost for Education, Dorkbot Pittsburgh + the Brillobox.

BIOS

Pablo R. Garcia is the founder and principal of Pablo Garcia/POINT, Pittsburgh, a multidisciplinary research and design studio dedicated to experiments in the spatial arts, in a variety of scales from the portable to the urban. From 2004-2007, Garcia worked as an architect and designer for Dilse Scafidi + Renfro. Currently he is the Lucien and Rita Caste Chair in Architecture and Assistant Professor at Carnegie Mellon.

Jessica McPherson is a plant ecologist, independent journalist, and activist. Recognizing that many critical conservation decisions center on land use, she developed skills to help communicate the existence of natural ecosystems and explain their interdependence with humans. McPherson also produces radio news stories for Pittsburgh Indymedia.

Lize Mogel (BFA ‘92) is an interdisciplinary artist who works with the interstices between art and cultural geography, and she inserts and distributes cartographic projects into public space and in publications. She has mapped public parks in Los Angeles, private military contractors in Iraq and Colombia, and future territorial disputes in the Arctic. She is co-editor of the book/map collection An Atlas of Impossible Geography and co-author of the touring exhibition “An Atlas.”

Trevor Paglen is an artist, writer, and experimental geographer whose work blurs the disciplines of social science, contemporary art and investigative journalism. Paglen’s meticulously researched books examine the secret relationships between land use and military power, and include Torture Taxi: On the Trail of the CIA’s Rendition Flights and, most recently, Blank Spots on a Map.

Richard Pell (BFA ’99) is a founding member of the Institute for Applied Autonomy, an art, engineering and tactical media collective. His work includes robotic, web and video based projects that call into question the imperatives that drive technological development. With Rich Pell, in connection with the UCLA BioOutlaws Conference. $20 admission includes a webcam.

The Studio for Creative Inquiry is a center for experimental arts at Carnegie Mellon University, connecting artistic enterprises and research laboratories across the campus, the region, and internationally. The Studio supports atypical, interdisciplinary, inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary research projects and educational initiatives at the intersections of arts, sciences, technology and culture.

AT THE MILLER GALLERY

UPCOMING

ART WORK: A National Conversation About Art, Labor, and Economics

Feb. 2010

Featuring the writings of Temporary Services, Julia Brion-Wilson, Holland Cotter, Harrell Fletcher, Future Farmers, Justseeds,錯花錯葉, W.A.G.E., 16 Beaver Group, many more.

BEYOND YOUR TOWN, INC.

Big Box Reuse with Julia Christensen Curated by Astria Suparak, organized by McPherson at Carnegie Mellon University Feb. 25 – March 19, 2010 @ Richmond Center for Visual Arts, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI

SCHEDULE

All events are free + open to the public unless otherwise noted. For more information visit www.cmu.edu/millergallery

Jan. 28, Thurs.

5:30pm: Blank Spots on a Map: Lecture by Trevor Paglen, co-presented by the School of Art Lecture Series.

@ McConomy Auditorium, University Center, CMU

Trevor Paglen has methodically amassed rich visual evidence for “nonexistent” military installations, secret prisons in Afghanistan, and secret collections of even more obscure “black sites” startlingly close to home. Here, Paglen takes us on a road trip through the world of hidden budgets, state secrets, covert bases, and more, guiding us through a landscape that intelligence insiders call the “black world.”

8:10pm: Information Mapping: Dorkbot with Chris Harrison + Susanne Slavick A special edition of the world-famous geek salon. Dinner (meat/vegetarian/vegan) + drinks available. Followed by DJ /rupture ($7 pre-sale / $10 at door).

@ Brillobox Upstairs, 4104 Penn Ave at Main, Lawrenceville

Jan. 29, Fri.

12pm: Experimental Geography: Tour with artists Lize Mogel + Trevor Paglen

@ Miller Gallery, Purnell Center for the Arts, CMU

1-2pm: Closing Reception: Experimental Geography exhibition with refreshments @ Miller Gallery, CMU

5pm: The World as a World Map: Lecture by Lize Mogel

@ Studio for Creative Inquiry, College of Fine Arts, CMU

As technology and commerce blur more and more geographic boundaries, the iconic world map can’t adequately describe the intricacies of globalization. In this lecture, Mogel presents ‘radical cartography’ projects that question and re-think familiar representations of the world.

6pm: Squatting the High Ground: Panel Discussion with Pablo R. Garcia, Lize Mogel, Trevor Paglen, Rich Pell

@ Studio for Creative Inquiry, CFA, CMU

Jan. 30, Sat.

Workshops include snacks.
To pre-register email mmbm@andrew.cmu.edu

12-2pm: Make a Video Microscope from a Hacked Webcam: Workshop with Rich Pell, in connection with the UCLA BioOutlaws Conference. $20 admission includes a webcam.

@ Studio for Creative Inquiry, CFA, CMU

Learn how to turn a cheap, off-the-shelf webcam into a video microscope that works with common video streaming programs like Skype and Chat. We will use them to explore the microbial lifecycles that are currently living around and on us and share the results on the web.


@ Baker Hall #140F, CML

Maps are political documents because they define the contents of our world. Many of the ones we use the most leave nature out of the picture. We’ll learn how to use GIS to re-envision traditional mapping and display vital information about the state of the natural world.

RELATED EXHIBITION

On view through Jan. 31, 2010

EXPERIMENTAL GEOGRAPHY

Guest curated by Nato Thompson, organized by ICI (Independent Curators International)

@ Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University

The Exhibition includes participants from the Experimental Geography exhibition —and artistic experience of the earth, as well as the periphery where the two realms collide, through a wide range of mediums including interactive computer units, sound and video installations, photography, sculpture, and experimental cartography.

ICL

Mixed Spectacles: New Art for an Interdisciplinary World

Jan. 29, 2010

@ Studio for Creative Inquiry, CFA, CMU

The exhibition includes works by: Liza Mogel, Lize Mogel, Pablo R. Garcia, Trevor Paglen, Richard Pell, Chris Harrison, Susanne Slavick, and Astria Suparak.

Cert no. XXX-XXX-000

Printing: Margaret Cox

Based on：http://www.cmu.edu/millergallery

@ Brillobox Upstairs, 4104 Penn Ave at Main, Lawrenceville
CONTESTATIONAL CARTOGRAPHIES SYMPOSIUM

Thurs.-Sat., Jan. 28-30, 2010
All events are free + open to the public unless indicated (*).

Jan. 28, Thurs.
5-6:30pm: Blank Spots on a Map: Lecture
@ McConomy Auditorium, University Center, CMU.
8-10pm: Information Mapping: Dorkbot
dinner + drinks available @ Brillobox upstairs, Lawrenceville

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@ Studio for Creative Inquiry, CFA, CMU

Jan. 30, Sat.
12-2pm: Make a Video Microscope
from a Hacked Webcam: Workshop*
@ Studio for Creative Inquiry, CFA, CMU
3-5pm: Basic Geographic Information Systems
for Artists, Activists and Naturalists: Workshop*
@ Baker Hall #140F, CMU