Geographies of This World

Geography is an action of writing that is practiced by each one of us at every moment. This writing results only from being located, and it is now composed of the dots and routes that appear on GPS devices, at present so many and so common. Positioned and repositioned, in single place or on the move, we are written, with concrete evidence. Thus confirmed on the screens of these tiny devices, our existences seem to amount to our movements and stop in the here and now, continuing in the next space and time. Without a doubt, this technology fosters the rise of a geographic awareness by the user. It invites us to experiment with mobility and the writing of the self. However, it is not necessary to use it in order to express geography. Geography precedes technology, and locating is not enough to account for the extent of this experience.

In Brazilian artist Caeato Dias’s video O Mundo de Janiele (2006), a little girl on top of a roof in a favela twisted a hula hoop around her waist. Between heaven and earth, Janiele traces loops around her like a Spirograph, embracing the surroundings, endlessly attempting to include it while aspiring to exteriority. Like a planet circling around its star, the camera regularly rotates around the girl, gradually revealing the surroundings to which she belongs. This work expresses the need for spatial extension for the subject. This essential territorial fundamental limits this expansion with a clear cut circumference. Janiele’s geography is carried to the outside in a centrifugal movement in radiance, but her writing remains restricted to a delimited zone.

Maybe it is in the human nature to yearn for the writing of oneself beyond the horizon—as suggested in O Mundo de Janiele. Very far from there, the map of China is tattooed on the back of a man, a map marked by lines and inscriptions in place of the stopping points of the Long March (Ploquent 2002-2003). This initiative from Qiu Ga is part of a series of interventions performed by an artist collective, in the spirit of the Long March, and then in the memory of a great historical value. The Tintin Long March is documented on Qiu Ga’s back. It is a response to the long journey of the collective—one stroke for each decisive moment of it—that is forever etched in the flesh of the Chinese revolution.

It is important to note that geography is a negotiation of a journey corresponding to the remarkable challenge of writing oneself into a territory through a long march. This geographical project engages the artist in the territory as much as the territory is engaged in the artist. Our world is, in this sense, a world where geography is experienced personally because geography is experienced individually. Like Janiele in Caetano Dias’s video, we are all poles at the center of the Universe, animated by a desire to move and to connect, a desire of open space. Like Qiu Ga, we wander about this world, criss-crossing it according to a drawing of our own initiative, and we, in turn, are marked by the world.

Interface

Geographically, geographic awareness—previously being put to the test—is not only limited to an individual writing or one human being, but extended to a collective act. This is what Janiele from above. Equally limited to this group of artists who have adopted this view from above. Geographically, geographic awareness is a collective writing that samples a zone of the world, and lately it has given rise to a multitude of artistic projects.

The environmental crisis also contributes to the development of geographic awareness, since the world is now perceived as a single place, a common environment. Climatic change, in particular, has fostered a widespread preoccupation. In this context, borders are abolished; territories are perceived in continuity with one another, since ups and downs spread far beyond their perception. Artistic representations tend to be universal, every individual. Such preoccupations are, incidentally, at the center of Andrea Poll’s many works on atmospheric conditions. In other respects, Carmen Gonzalez and Leslie Garcia, from the Mexican collective Dream.Addictive, created Atmospheric Pollution (2007), an interactive work that uses Photoshop to analyze and organize images and maps of different regions, and then to perform geographical representations called GeoWebMaps.

Geographies

Contemporary artistic practices that reflect on geographic awareness are numerous and diversified. By referring directly to places (using cartography, geolocation technologies, Earth visualization software and many other means), these practices question our geographic perceptions and offer new forms of writing. This issue of EIC presents a series of articles aimed at exploring these productions and providing a variety of perspectives.

Hence, Erika Nimis explores the impact of an international cultural event such as Bamako’s biennial of photography (Mali) on the way African photography is perceived in the world of contemporary art. Taking a close look at this situation, the author exposes the machinery that favors the interest of the market over an actual knowledge of African creation. Ludovic Fouquet is also interested in the effects of geolocation technologies on the consumption of geographic information. His work deals with the circulation of the same shows on a worldwide scale, focusing on several theatrical creations that explore the themes of geography.

Sylvain Campeau shares a reflection about the new mode of vision that results from geolocation technologies such as GPS. Both philosophic and poetic, his text concentrates on the works of several Quebec artists who have adopted this view from above. Equally interested in the GPS, Andrea Uriberger deals with artistic practices

various kinds of exchanges interfacing geographies and multiply meeting points. Within the context of the much discussed globalization (political, economical, cultural, etc.) human activities are considered according to their location, relocation and geographical extension. On the one hand, cultural diversity is more visible than ever, and networks of exchange have multiplied. On the other hand, a tendency toward cultural homogenization threatens this diversity as well as the identity of certain human communities. Works on these themes are numerous, whether documentary, activist or poetic. Take for example the works of Ursula Biemann on nomadism and the notion of border such as Michael Genser (2006) which deals with migratory movements in Northern Africa. Or the initiative of netartist Heath Bunting, Bordering Guide (2002-2003), which provides all of the necessary instructions for illegal border-crossing. These are but two examples among a very rich international artistic production.
Thus, the geolocation principle appears as a way to 'embody' oneself in space. It is possible to read geographical phenomena as a 'trace' in the sand (in a work of Dutch artist Esther Polak), coordinates that are primarily used for on-board navigation, because they provide real-time tracking of trip indications. Alternatively, artists explore different potentialities of GPS generated coordinates. One of the first and most common artistic acts of geolocation is to record journeys. Often presented in the form of dots, lines, and even traces in the sand (for instance, as in the work of Dutch artist Esther Polak), coordinates draw a representation, both cartographic and narrative, of an explored landscape. The GPS then becomes a recorder, similar to a film camera or photo camera, which captures a traveled territory. For Masaki Fujihata, one of the first artists to have used GPS, it is a device that can record the tridimensionality of a territory.

Unlike a synchronic map whose overall view often leaves the 'time' factor out, geolocation produces a representation of mobility. The physical space is represented by travels, specific uses and ephemeral positions, which are calculated in real-time. In other words, an often personal experience turns into a rather objective recording of the world. However, the GPS is not only a travel recorder. Geolocation also allows for the identification of one's own spatial position in real-time; through positioning, it allows an access to representations, images or data related to a location. For Peter Weibel, director of the important Center for Art and Media (ZKM, Zentrum für Kunst und Medien) in Karlsruhe, Germany, many landscapes are juxtaposed—a physical landscape with mental or psychological ones. The latter are composed of maps, images, narratives and networks. For Weibel, it is possible to access specific geolocation points in a mental landscape from a given location in the physical space. Thanks to geolocation, it is now possible to either escape more easily from the physical space, or conversely, to anchor the sphere of diverse representations, images, narratives and networks in a specific location. Through the articulation of these different layers, greater porosity between territories and representations emerges. Yet, such porosity does not mean easier physical circulation, but it does create additional possibilities beyond being represented in a space and interacting with it.

Thus, the geolocation principle appears as a way to 'embody' oneself in territories and to be part of them. Since it permits deep connections between humans and their environments, geolocation is not just a simple augmented reality, it is an articulation, an intensification of the links between an action and its territory, and between a point in physical space and the corresponding position in a mental space.

In principle, the use of geolocation is possible everywhere (bearing in mind technological limitations), but it seems more pertinent in some zones of a territory than in others, such as in border zones, where the exact determination of coordinates has often been, or still is an issue whose importance is greater than that of knowing where I am. The geographer Jacques Lévy does not believe that borders exist without States: "It does not have an object. Before [the State] has the means to chart and defend it, it remains a dream. In a militarized world open to exchanges, it loses its meaning." The border that creates specific territories (active interfaces connecting two spheres, two States, two juridical systems, etc.) refers to a particular occupancy of, and inscription on, space. Its exploration, and even experimentation seems very important, and it is the object of several geolocated artistic projects.

**Recording the Alsace**

In 1992, with the intention of capturing a climb of Mount Fuji, Japanese artist Masaki Fujihata used GPS for the first time. He then in this work located at the Franco-Swiss border, 5 km from the climb and the videos, but also digital images of the Mount Fuji, integrating time, and thus the speed of the climb, to create Improving Velocity (1992-94). In 2000, he began a series of works entitled field-works, which uses again the idea of video localization and of the construction of a territory that is enriched, or rather transformed into a representation beneath the surface. This is a possible response to a question, "Where are we in France?" and "Where are we in France?" and "Where are we located?" In this work, the border is neither geolocated on a map nor is it treated as an object; instead, it emerges from the narratives and perceptions of people who meet. The idea of the border cease to be a pure geopolitical limit to become a more mobile and vague concept, closer to individual uses than to a drawn and rigid limit established through countries' negotiations and conflicts.

The border separating Germany from France is represented by narratives of passers-by, while Masaki Fujihata's trip is geolocated by a GPS recording. On a black background, these lines represent the border separating Germany from France or rather a shifting of these means, by opening up to new possibilities, new uses, and thus new territorial representations.

In the commerce sector, the GPS and other geolocation devices are primarily used for on-board navigation, because they provide real-time tracking of trip indications. Alternatively, artists explore different potentialities of GPS generated coordinates. One of the first and most common artistic acts of geolocation is to record journeys. Often presented in the form of dots, lines, and even traces in the sand (for instance, as in the work of Dutch artist Esther Polak), coordinates draw a representation, both cartographic and narrative, of an explored landscape. The GPS then becomes a recorder, similar to a film camera or photo camera, which captures a traveled territory. For Masaki Fujihata, one of the first artists to have used GPS, it is a device that can record the tridimensionality of a territory. Unlike a synchronic map whose overall view often leaves the 'time' factor out, geolocation produces a representation of mobility. The physical space is represented by travels, specific uses and ephemeral positions, which are calculated in real-time. In other words, an often personal experience turns into a rather objective recording of the world. However, the GPS is not only a travel recorder. Geolocation also allows for the identification of one's own spatial position in real-time; through positioning, it allows an access to representations, images or data related to a location. For Peter Weibel, director of the important Center for Art and Media (ZKM, Zentrum für Kunst und Medien) in Karlsruhe, Germany, many landscapes are juxtaposed—a physical landscape with mental or psychological ones. The latter are composed of maps, images, narratives and networks. For Weibel, it is possible to access specific geolocation points in a mental landscape from a given location in the physical space. Thanks to geolocation, it is now possible to either escape more easily from the physical space, or conversely, to anchor the sphere of diverse representations, images, narratives and networks in a specific location. Through the articulation of these different layers, greater porosity between territories and representations emerges. Yet, such porosity does not mean easier physical circulation, but it does create additional possibilities beyond being represented in a space and interacting with it. Thus, the geolocation principle appears as a way to 'embody' oneself in territories and to be part of them. Since it permits deep connections between humans and their environments, geolocation is not just a simple augmented reality, it is an articulation, an intensification of the links between an action and its territory, and between a point in physical space and the corresponding position in a mental space.

Geolocating Artistic Practices—The Border Issue

Crossing and understanding territories with a GPS or a cell phone is to link mobility with a technological device which allows for a live and automated determination of spatiotemporal coordinates. This link brings geolocation into being.

Geolocation does not break with old means of navigation and representation such as the map, the tale or the image, but it can signify an extension, or rather a shifting of these means, by opening up to new possibilities, new uses, and thus new territorial representations. In the commerce sector, the GPS and other geolocation devices are primarily used for on-board navigation, because they provide real-time tracking of trip indications. Alternatively, artists explore different potentialities of GPS generated coordinates. One of the first and most common artistic acts of geolocation is to record journeys. Often presented in the form of dots, lines, and even traces in the sand (for instance, as in the work of Dutch artist Esther Polak), coordinates draw a representation, both cartographic and narrative, of an explored landscape. The GPS then becomes a recorder, similar to a film camera or photo camera, which captures a traveled territory. For Masaki Fujihata, one of the first artists to have used GPS, it is a device that can record the tridimensionality of a territory. Unlike a synchronic map whose overall view often leaves the 'time' factor out, geolocation produces a representation of mobility. The physical space is represented by travels, specific uses and ephemeral positions, which are calculated in real-time. In other words, an often personal experience turns into a rather objective recording of the world. However, the GPS is not only a travel recorder. Geolocation also allows for the identification of one's own spatial position in real-time; through positioning, it allows an access to representations, images or data related to a location. For Peter Weibel, director of the important Center for Art and Media (ZKM, Zentrum für Kunst und Medien) in Karlsruhe, Germany, many landscapes are juxtaposed—a physical landscape with mental or psychological ones. The latter are composed of maps, images, narratives and networks. For Weibel, it is possible to access specific geolocation points in a mental landscape from a given location in the physical space. Thanks to geolocation, it is now possible to either escape more easily from the physical space, or conversely, to anchor the sphere of diverse representations, images, narratives and networks in a specific location. Through the articulation of these different layers, greater porosity between territories and representations emerges. Yet, such porosity does not mean easier physical circulation, but it does create additional possibilities beyond being represented in a space and interacting with it. Thus, the geolocation principle appears as a way to 'embody' oneself in territories and to be part of them. Since it permits deep connections between humans and their environments, geolocation is not just a simple augmented reality, it is an articulation, an intensification of the links between an action and its territory, and between a point in physical space and the corresponding position in a mental space.
travel, time of existence and thus time of narrative in territorial representations.

Mobility and geolocation make border territories active, adding data to delineations on a map. Some artistic projects broach the subject of the hardening of certain borders, like that between the USA and Mexico for Toronto1, and some try to wear away the lines marking differences between countries, as do the works of Masaki Fujihata and Nogo Voyages. By closely linking mobility, representation and territories, they certainly reflect ongoing geopolitical transformations, but they are also in the line of a utopian thinking whose dream is to abolish every boundary (Lévy, op. cit.).

Andrea Urlberger

Notes

1 Ever more hybrid appliances integrate both the Global Positioning System and cellular phone-related systems. This explains why it is better to use the word geolocation instead of GPS, even if the latter refers to the device most commonly used.
2 Esther Polak is a Dutch artist who experimented with GPS location in many projects. Nomadic Milk (2006–08) consists of following different routes of milk in Kenya routes of imported milk and routes of the milk produced by a group of nomads, the Foulani. The GPS allows for the recording of these two sets of routes and, with the help of a small robot, it permits the production of drawings in the sand, something closer to Foulani’s customs than geographic maps. CF. http://www.nomadicmilk.net/
3 Jean Louis鲍利，Interview June 21st 2006. See also http://www.wircen.com/ciken/learnet/realres/ Paysage_Technologique/index.html. This web site is the result of the research project Paysage technologique. Art, architecture et paysages, 3rd session, DARA, Bureau de recherche architecture, urbaine et paysage-monde.
4 The mobile phone http://www.mobilable.net/2008/
5 See the interview with Peter Weibel about the use of GPS in artistic practices on http://www.ciren.org/ciren/laboratoires/Paysage_Technologique/theorie/index2.html.
7 http://wwwENCEMAGE.ch/expos_events.php?id=14
8 CF. Also the work of an Italian group of artists, architects and photographers, Multiplicity, especially the work Border Devices or Solid Sea. http://www.multiplicityulumatrix.com/mathsmap.html.
9 In another Field Work, Margarete Tvaeg (2003–2005), visitors equipped with a video camera and a GPS are invited to travel the coast of Mersea Island in Essex, UK. The recording of the lines associated with the films renders back the Island’s geographical shape.
11 From October 30th to December 14th, 2008.
15 http://www.torolab.org/

WHERE AM I?

"The Earth is blue like an orange," wrote surrealist poet Paul Eluard. The first astronauts—the first men to have observed it from such a distance, in orbit, cut off from our basic earthly habitat for a short and rare time—have compared it to the very same fruit—identical in shape, but not in color. The meeting of these two perceptions conferred the rank of a seer on the French poet, and turned poetry into a divination. However, such distanciation—which allows for such poetic appreciation—is now accessible to everybody, in virtual form, thanks to a small device known as a GPS (Global Positioning System). Moreover (and this is why there is still a huge difference), what is experienced in this virtual—and even mediated—distanciation is a satellite-based look at our own position, our own place on Earth, through a projected positioning. So, this experience occurs in a reconstructed space that gives a specific idea about its location, cast on the surface of a map reduced to arteries, streets, roads and highways. And this information—requested and granted—is also subjected to the position's specific time, because it is well-known fact that the person who uses and consults GPS does so with a potential trip in mind, often to be undertaken in the near future. GPS provides information about the place where we are at in relation to the place where we want to go, and vice versa, within the context of a journey that happens at a given time.

Furthermore, the small device also reveals to us that we are always situated in some place, in a relative location in a travel, captured between our destination and our point of departure—by an uncertain and continuous, transmitted jerkily on a luminous screen. In short, the device confort us: we are always by one place, and, therefore, going somewhere. We are at a distinct point, betrayed by an oscillating needle, conspicuous among so many other paths and movements, made individual, transferred on an active and shifting map, followed by this man-made star, situated at the core of a map to come, which unfolds and reveals itself with our every move. It's as though we have our own star, a divine eye that follows and guides us—or rather, the human eye, which has no doubt replaced the divine, and which helps us on our road and in our journey. Incentially, we should lift our head to the sky upon consulting this apparatus of presence, because the data is on the screen, and yet it comes from above in response to data that was sent from the ground, from our own position.

Planisphere Vision

Above all, GPS opens a new level of vision. With it, seeing is not limited to horizontality anymore, with variants of high and low angles. Nor is it about a view that is restricted by landscape or by obstructing geographical accidents. These points of view were those of terrestrial bipeds and crawlers, they condition and have conditioned our usual mode of vision. But with GPS, we enter a new era, an era involving scanning and mapping, measurement and cartography of routes, and the capturing of the world in its totality. A work with major consistency and exposure has given us an example of this new era of GPS: "Bill Vazan." On August 13th, 1959, with the help of Ian Wallace he put "Canada between parentheses", one drawing a line in Paul's Bluff, Prince Edward Island, and the other in Vancouver, British Columbia. Obviously, we felt and knew nothing about this; all we have now are the images of the parentheses inscribed in the sand. On a virtual level however, this was a globalizing performance, a work constructed on a planetary scale. This was about inscribing a human trace in the slit, a trace of presence and transformation, even if imaginary. The creative mind thus reached unprecedented heights, producing a work without noticeable effects, yet with exceptional imaginary consequences. The same occurred with Worldline/La ligne mondiale, on March 5th, 1971. In collaboration with 25 galleries and museums in 18 countries, a virtual line was traced and represented on a world map—the work only being perceptible as a purely virtual route whose replica on the map was but an extension intended for the eyes. Other works followed that were of a similar esthetic of cosmic reproduction. The écorce series for example—each being a gridded image that created a global reproduction, a world map of places captured through photography; Montmorency Falls (2000), Ouareau River's waterfalls (2000) or locations in Egypt (2004). In these pictures, even a place on Earth, each a telluric element and contributing, in its own way and scale, to the great Cosmos. All of these create a sort of constant and repeated situating of locations, raising them to a planetary status and showing their organism.

Images from the Celestial Sphere

In a way, the same goes for Alan Paillement's Parages, a magnificent and imposing work presented in four different pictures, each cutting a horizontal section from a house where he had an apartment. The installation therefore presents several of these "satellite views," scrutinizing through scanning all of what composes the surface of things, of places, even capturing beings head first. Other works make the same bet, like F3 (Living Chaos), Constellation (Sguot) or Feed Spot. In these works, the various ground levels cancel each other out and merge on a single surface. The Earth's scattered matter rises up to us smoothly, without any palpitations. Nothing resists this accumulation of levels, grafted together via digital manipulation. Stairways transform into a construction that is lathed with joined boards. Snow that covers a single surface. The Earth's scattered matter rises up to us smoothing every protuberances. Nothing resists this accumulation of levels, grafted together via digital manipulation. Stairways transform into a construction that is lathed with joined boards. Snow that covers
Another work, this time by Eric Raymond, clearly reveals the scope of the constant scanning of scrutinizing satellites. Scanlines consists of digital images on screen mounted on robots moving in a defined periphery of three meters by three meters. The robots' movement reconstructs the image of a disoriented surf level. In this instance, the Grand Canyon. These moving plates construct a path made of horizontal and vertical movements until they cover an pre-determined surface; at the same time, they are animated with a camera that records each robot's position and tells it which direction to take. Furthermore, these images look like videos, but they are actually photographic, and they spread out and complete each other until they reconstruct the geographic area that is supposedly captured and reproduced in real time. What we have here is a simulation of capture and reproduction made by satellite. It is the condensation of data and information in a closed circuit, the robotic animation of images that appear to be provided in real time by some Spunik.

Let us choose a reference to fully understand what this is about: Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon as analyzed by Michel Foucault. This device and model of vision was presented in a study on the origin of prisons, disciplinary measures and monitoring of individuals. This device was, as he wrote, "a kind of dark room where individuals could be spied on. ...a transparent construction where the exercise of power can be under the control of the whole society." Because, thanks to it, "everybody can keep watch on the smallest of watchers." (Michel Foucault, Surveiller et punir, Paris, Gallimard, p. 209; Discipline & Punish, New York, Vintage Books. Our translation.) Thus this is total surveillance, going as far as to say who is watching to whom is being watched—until both merge: self-regulation of society by means of mutual and continual surveillance.

Yet, something else is at issue with satellite vision. What we face is the abstraction of regular movements, with respect to what I would describe as an anxiety and a pleasure taken in one's own distanced localization. Here, each individual is projected on an imaginary map, geographic and manageable, intended for oneself and aimed at the visualization of a place and a route in the world of one's day-to-day activities. But this individual is in this world, in a reified version, geographic and manageable, intended for oneself and aimed at the transmission of data and information in a closed circuit, the robotic animation of images that appear to be provided in real time by some Spunik.

Where Am I Going?
The device will tell me. Better: it will show me. Hence, I will be able to become the movement and course that anticipates me. In what State Do I Wander? Precisely, I do not wander anymore. I am really at the place indicated by the arrow. So I go there, for I need to catch me. That is it, as to my presence in this place.

Sylvain Campeau

**BAMAKO: CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY WITH A VARIABLE GEOGRAPHY**

Bamako, Mali's Capital, has hosted an international biennale of photography since 1994 (mostly initiated and directed from outside of the country), which has become, against all odds, the entire African continent's showcase for photography. This paper is aimed at discussing how Bamakense photographers and all of the participants in this event succeed in becoming, an ex that at times are in high contrast with each other: local realities, day-to-day livelihoods, and Western art market realities—a market that they don't comprehend but whose requirements they need to comply with in order to gain exposure on the international scene.

Let's begin with some precurser facts. In Africa, African photography is the photography produced by Africans, that is, by people who are born and practice in Africa; yet, contemporary African photography seems to entail many complex realities that are yet to be defined. For the art collectors and merchants (most of them from Northern countries), it is critical that the photography is as old as the invention of the medium itself, but whose requirements they need to comply with in order to gain exposure on the international scene.

Actually, we should go a little further and talk philosophy. The technological apparatus, along with science, responds with a short and laconic answer to our concern and anxiety regarding the meaning and foundation of our presence in this place, on Earth, providing us with an eye, these immediate surroundings become a world, a globe, a named it, in the flight of a live reflection—analyzes the geographic parameters of our presence in order to inform us about our movements, our spatial destinies and our journeys. I said geographic, but some distinctions need to be made, for this is not about landscape, unembodied and detached, but about geographic parameters that could be spied on, "a transparent construction where the exercise of power can be under the control of the whole society." Because, thanks to it, "everybody can keep watch on the smallest of watchers." (Michel Foucault, Surveiller et punir, Paris, Gallimard, p. 209; Discipline & Punish, New York, Vintage Books. Our translation.) Thus this is total surveillance, going as far as to say who is watching to whom is being watched—until both merge: self-regulation of society by means of mutual and continual surveillance.

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activity. This economic reality leads the dominant Western art market to "fabricate" an African photography that primarily meets the interests of biennales, galleries, and collections. It is a photography that speaks volumes about the often stereotyped Western view of Africa by which only a few experts assume the right to determine the "African" value of a photography that meets art market standards. Published in 1989, Sally Price's Picturing the Civilized World is surprisingly still of great topical interest. Indeed, it is astonishing to realize how great this similarity is between African artists dubbing or fictional and the photographic portraits from Africa—regarding the way they are collected, the invention of the object from a Western perspective, the opinions of "connoisseurs" having authority, the creation of a market. The American anthropologist goes even further, claiming that this is a typical event (in the form of exhibitions and publications) that reveals our own interests in and quest for the Other, rather than informing about the artists and their works.

To say a city is the capital of a discipline means that it has an important role to play, that it is a dynamic place; unfortunately, this is not the case with Bamako! It is in these unflattering terms that Malian photographer Harandane Dicko, in an interview for Africultures referred to the biennale which he himself is somewhat a product of. From Biennale to biennale, Bamako has become a place for field experimentation: little photographers are manufactured for the foreign market. Besides Keïta and Sibidé, no there are contemporary photography products that have been created from scratch (thanks to the help of some outside "talent revealers") and intended for an exclusive Western consumption. There are numerous examples of this economic reality, this genre that made Fosso famous is common among the supporters of what he calls "artafricanism" ("art africainiste") as for photographers just like any other, and not merely bearers of the label "Africa." Between the construction of national art and the orientation toward a certain "African photography" in the West, and the reality of photography as it is practiced in Africa, it is urgent to take position in order to avoid enslavement (like in the Bamakassé "mirage") and overcome obstacles (such as the economic precarity of living photographers, a market and political void that causes rapid degradation of archives).

Let's end on a combative note, with reflections by Hassan Musa, a Sudanese artist living in France. Without compromises, as much for the supporters of what he calls "artafricanism" ("art africainiste") as for the supporters of a black identity, he thus concludes an article published in 2002 in Les Temps modernes: "In order for us to get us closer to the current reality of Africans, it's time to look at this other African art that is overlooked by the Europeans: that of survival."

Érika Nimis

**Geography and Identity: Some Theatrical Forays**

There are many ways to begin a reflection on geography and theatre. One way is simply to consider the circulation of shows, which traces a worldwide map and increasingly exposes us to a common culture. As with cinema or certain contemporary artists, it is indeed possible to follow the productions of directors such as Robert Lepage, Dumb Type, Romeo Castellucci, Bob Wilson, Peter Sellars, Peter Brook, Martheil and Ariane Mnouchkine. Attending the most well-known festivals, one realizes how the local character is under-represented to the benefit of works having an international circulation. Paradoxically, these works contribute to the creation of a sort of global culture while nonetheless claiming geographical moorings regarding the actors of different cultures, it is that discovered the Italian Romeo Castellucci and the Polish Warlikowski (who was then directing the British Sarah Kane). Like many festivals, the FTA (Festival TransAmériques) tries to mirror the contemporary international theatrical scene, and it is possible to see shows in their original languages to thus get a taste of the contemporary creations produced abroad. Now, I have seen the same shows in Montreal, Paris, New York, Brussels, Tokyo, etc. It would be valuable to study this particular, global culture, one that spins its standardizing web and imposes upon us through worshipping events. I wish to examine the geographical as a theme, stimulus, reflection and source of questions, through the creations of companies that specifically belong to this festival culture, and that appear in all of the capitals of the world.

Robert Lepage's work is, of course, to be considered foremost: his creations travel the world while simultaneously transforming these travels into one of the most original of his shows)—precisely exploring the issue of identity via geographical moorings. Lepage's universe is shaped by the experience of the foreigner/Other and the reverie it induces, and by the journeys it sets in motion. Most of his protagonists are individuals in training, who are traveling far from home and who, while candidly discovering other cultures uncover themselves. Cultural difference becomes a vehicle for dream and fantasy in Lepage's work.

As a child, Lepage dreamed of pursuing studies in geography. This was partly due to the power of evocation of an Atlas (and we can also find road maps, astrological and sky charts in his shows—microcosm intermingling with macrocosm, and with the individual at their junction). So the plays are often about travels, encounters, trips and landscapes experienced. The US roadmap is one of the two main points of departure in the show Circuits (1984). Visually and symbolically, it evokes the journey, the roads and the...
geographic itinerary that will be the protagonist's to experience. As a visual element, it unfolds along the trip, but it also suggests blood vessels with the drawing of its lines—suicide trails, by severance of the veins. In 1988, this journey through a continent was followed by the collision of tectonic plates—a geological model of movements that renders the same wanderings or geographic-ontological quests, in the show of the same name. Eleven years later, the fable unfolds on a worldwide scale: Zula Time is a show that relies primarily on this global circulation via international airports. The international Zulu cultural properties and realities. Each of the story's environments is made out of the code becomes a new Esperanto; the maps multiply as solitudes pass global circulation via international airports. The international Zulu

styrofoam snowflakes, for the 6-years-old Italian who imagines much more than Nike, Adidas, Reebok..."

The very title Voyage suggests a visual rendering of the geographical

delusion sensations, these links and connections in the making. So geography is both journey and formation, dreams and nightmares. The photography project of maps and road signs, before turning quickly into a metaphorical map, the line of the road meeting the stroke of the calligrapher or tattoo artist. Then, we have the impression that the blue dragon would be the name of a new collective; another one more for the child's inner sense of violence and collisions of tectonic plates. So it should not come as a surprise that Lepage has directed Brecht's La vie de Galilei (1989), which recounts the dispute about the Sun and Earth's positions in the Universe, or that he envisioned The Far Side of the Moon in 2000, in which the random and moving map expresses, in a little inkling, a transmutation and progressive globalization. But they can also shed light on new, emerging behaviors. I'm referring to Airport Kids, a show by the Argentinian Lola Arias and Stefan Kaegi of Switzerland about the children who attend international high schools (lycées), who live all over the planet and who represent a third international culture which scoffs at geographical membership.

Kaegi now questions identity, identity and the geographical on a wider scale, after directing Memepark, a show which introduced Indonesia to the whole world (including Montréal). It depicts a Swiss family of reti­red model-making enthusiasts. This said, Airport Kids is about having teenagers from an international high school of Lausanne play, talk, and relate their stories. These teenagers are always travelling from one country to another, speak many languages, have no ties with the world as their reference and name brands as their values. They determine everyone's pour creuser ma tombe' (2003), L'Histoire de Bonald, le clown de McDonald's (2003), an airport hangar where containers and children can be transported, which scoffs at geographical membership. This brings into question the notion of the foreigner/Other is upset, giving way to another sort of global consumption that serves as identity: "These children are part of the Third Culture Kids, according to a professor of sociology. They neither have a homeland or an adoptive country, but a third place whose belonging relates to a global culture, nationless and borderless, without any geographical references or memberships. They answer to it as if it were a brand: Angola, China, Brazil don't mean anything more than Nike, Adidas, Reebok..."

The set is made with cardboard boxes and steel, expressing many variations of the container theme. They determine everyone's constricted space, which is customized in turn by their continuous movements (a drum set, an office, a pillow corner and a sky filled with styrofoam snowflakes, for the 6-years-old Italian who imagines himself as a 'sky stewardess'). It seems as if the spectator is in an airport hangar where containers and children can be transported, while snails are filming along a map of the world, crossing countries and even continents in an instant: a powerful metaphor! Since it is not always easy to separate a local identity from an international one, there is a little game involving small presentation cards indicating an individual's country of origin, and then a common nationality (Swiss). The game alludes to local characteristics: the little African who sings, the Brazilian, who is awkward but thoughtful, but playful and with a cute lisp, and the composed Irish sitting at his booth, pretending to be an air traffic controller. When interviewed, each describes his container: the tree in the city (in the sky), the house in the sky (in the clouds), to have many houses, to have but one currency, one language...). The video allows for manipulation of scales and distances (one sees inside the boxes, people speak through cameras—invisible in an Internet era), but it also fills a void: one of the actors has gone back to Indonesia, fulfilling her parents' latest job transfer. She could not be physically present in the show, but is present in image, and at first the spectator does not know that this is not filmed live from her box. Travel, presence, culture, image and dreams are microcosms (the small boxes, the small family), and microcosms by lonely children) against macromos (the travel, the plane, the space, all of this in a mobile set that is once again drawn from airports environments. An original cell and flux, a transiting container that becomes synonymous with membership. The geographical can also be a pure visual source that does not concern a cultural belonging as much as a larger attitude facing the world, a floating and drifting attitude without any point of reference, experiencing dilation and conflicting scales of dimension (microcosm against macrocosm).

Since it is not always easy to separate a local identity from an international one, there is a little, Japanese collective Dumb Type has created Voyage, a mesmerizing show presenting individuals against a backdrop made of sky charts and roadmaps projected on a wide screen, and then reflected on an adjacent mirror plate. Maps, lines and landscapes unfolding, dilation in the image with the help of a giant reflection, that of an image into which the actor is immersed. Immersion and suspension are the two dominating moods: "A mood of unprecedented opaque uncertainty surrounds us. Asleep or awake, when you try to forget it and to paralyze your mind, it does not go away, like a second skin of anxiety and fear. Pretend to be indifferent: you will not hold on to Indonesia, fulfilling her parents' latest job transfer. She could not be physically present in the show, but is present in image, and at first the spectator does not know that this is not filmed live from her box. Travel, presence, culture, image and dreams are microcosms (the small boxes, the small family), and microcosms by lonely children against macrocosms (the travel, the plane, the space, all of this in a mobile set that is once again drawn from airports environments. An original cell and flux, a transiting container that becomes synonymous with membership. The geographical can also be a pure visual source that does not concern a cultural belonging as much as a larger attitude facing the world, a floating and drifting attitude without any point of reference, experiencing dilation and conflicting scales of dimension (microcosm against macrocosm).

Dumb Type often refers to our attitudes and behaviors toward death, political correctness, foreigners/Other and to our contemporary technological environments, in performances merging image, dance and theatre of a few words with the visual presence of the text. In Voyage, the traditional mapping is substituted by the digital world, a world of lines and digits, sometimes replaced by images of trees. That both move is not trivial: digits with trees, digital codes with landscapes, the map and the world. The very title Voyage suggests a visual rendering of the geographical relayed by videos and mirrors, the double and the reflection, as many doubled proximities that open onto the larger and wider, even to the infinite. For years, Lepage has been drumming into us that we can grasp the whole world in our kitchen; it is in a container, in a little box that children describe to us in the global circulation; it is only in the reflection of oneself or of a map that the world is broadened. This is how the geographical turns into an ontological, if not metaphysical, quest.

Ludovic Fouquet

Notes

1 (Translator's note) Respectively I Bought a Shirt at H&M to Dig My Tombs. The Story of Ronald, the Clown from McDonald's, Human Gardening, and Throw my Ashes over Mickey. Since these plays are yet to be published in English, all title translations are mine.

2 Stefan Kaegi as quoted in the Festival d'Avignon Almanack.

3 Fouquet

4 Prompt notes on the project, accessible on the web site of their European producer:

http://www.epidemic.net/geol/curvy/prjcreation.htm (in French and in English)