
The Atlantic's lead read:

How scarcity, crime, over-population, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet.

The Coming Anarchy is by Robert Kaplan. It is about global chaos. It's a dark story; little is left out. Twenty years later Kaplan's geo-political track is remembered not just for its ghastly eloquence, but its prescience.

Kaplan's Anarchy provoked “The Cartographer's Dilemma.”
“The Cartographer’s Dilemma” started out as an exhibition. The venue was a University Art Gallery. Robert Kaplan was part of the gallery tableau. The University’s announcement lead off with this.

The Cartographer’s Dilemma examines the digital fog of image and sound and how it affects our democratic public sphere and civic identity. It asks why existing noetic economies (knowledge systems) discourage the creation of a public sphere that promotes contest, collaborations and creativity.

The exhibition included sculpture, poster art, paintings, videos and interactive media. Content referenced an Edgar Allan Poe story about a man and a crowd, Samuel Clemens on the misery of uncertainty, and Jorge Luis Borges on cartographers and mania. There was a Walter Benjamin. It was Benjamin’s “Angel of History,” GPS augmented. Next to the “Angel” were three small paintings, miniatures, icon like. Along side the triptyc was a larger painting. It was an “excerpt” taken off a Facebook fan page. It was the same “fan face” as the one on the three icons. It’s A. Q. Khan’s face. It was his fan page. Khan was the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb. He set the gear in motion, and sent it on byte, and kit by kit, to North Korea, Libya and Iran.

Kaplan was part of the ensemble because of the need to map. It is what bound this assemblage together.
this future map — in a sense, the “last map”— will be an ever-mutating representation of chaos.
to see the twenty-first century truly, one's eyes must learn a different set of aesthetics. Imagine cartography in three dimensions, as if in a hologram. In this hologram would be the overlapping sediments of group and other identities atop the merely two-dimensional color markings of city-states and the remaining nations, themselves confused in places by shadowy tentacles, hovering overhead. This future map -- in a sense, the "last map" -- will be an ever-mutating representation of chaos.
rich egger (re):

the current exhibit at the western Illinois art gallery is “the cartographer’s dilemma.” it’s a rather unusual title for an exhibit can you explain that?

paul guzzardo (pg):

it’s presented with the intent of provoking, creating an ongoing ambiguity. I see it as a magnet for getting people in and looking about. As the kids say, “cartography rules today.” it represents a bucket of ideas in terms of information culture, in terms of where we are going. Moving through information, and sorting our way as things change. We are all cartographers, artists are cartographers, we try to create new paths through a confusing tomorrow. and we are dealing with these issues here.

re:

and how are you trying to deal with those types of issues? do you want to take a particular piece and talk about it a little bit?

pg:

if you come into the gallery the first piece you are going to see is plexi case filled with early 20th century and mid 20th century wood blocks stamps. the stamps are all jumbled in the case. if you take a close look you will see that many of them are stamps about making stamps. so the exhibit opens with case - in a chaotic format- dealing with replication, reproduction and duplication are critical issues of our time. and that’s the underlining theme of what’s going on both inside the exhibition and outside; internet systems and these multiple storage systems which are part of our own extension now.

pg:

and this plexiglass case represents representation, duplication the way it used to be. cartography, but at the same time the people who created the stamps “made stamps about stamps,” they were interested in some sort of reflection on the nature of duplication, so these are not just stamps but the stamps-making think about what is like to make stamps talking about stamps, and that’s circular, goes on and on.

pg:

is there parallel today represented in this exhibit?

re:

no.

pg:

the exhibit is filled with multimedia and graphics. to appreciate the relationship between duplication and mapping (there you have to do it step by step, that’s how the exhibition was set up), john and i discussed that we would like to have people walk through the exhibition a number of times. hopefully that will lead to the same level of reflection that these early 20th century stamp makers brought to their craft.

pg:

john was pointing to this particular piece over here. perhaps you want to talk about it.

re:

true collaboration involving a number of people that i’ve had the opportunity of working with; the politics of that are obviously of some national concern. the current technologies which create these aggregate communities. and how these communities effect the security of the nation and the world.

pg:

this part of the exhibit deals with earlier research and development that i’ve done involving new media technologies and the investigation of those technologies can not be done simply in a gallery but like any laborator, it is a little more detailed than what we can go into here. new media technologies and the concept of history. whether or not history is progress or whether is it chaos. and that’s an issue today and tomorrow. and we are dealing with those issues here.

re:

how do you map tomorrow and whether or not tomorrow is going to be a “quality place to be in.”

pg:

it is burning storm. it sounds like it should be the name of a coffee shop, but it’s not.

pg:

yes. re:

and of course the GPS image here is showing the general area where we are standing right now.

pg:

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people again need to come and read the graphic. it deals with benjamin’s concept of history, whether or not history is progress or whether it is chaos, and that’s an issue that cartographers have to deal with. whether this information is nothing but chaos or chaos or whether there is some way of sorting through the information, going it order. the media guru Mar-shall McLuhan says the need for places too peer into the future, into what’s coming.

re:

on another wall we have the painting of a facebook page, can you talk about this a little and why you chose this particular page?

pg:

first of all i reference the painter and the graphic designer who did the benjamin piece. it’s my colleagues here today. a former graduate from here boxed Illinois university. now in seattle. we’ve worked together on a number of projects. the painter is also a multimedia artist. he and I also worked on projects, a Kentridge piece. this exhibition is a true collaboration involving a number of people that I had the opportunity of working with in the past, now to your question. this is the facebook page of AQ Khan. AQ Khan is the father of the Pakistani nuclear bomb. four years ago the new york times did a series on AQ Khan. what was ironically referred to as “Nukes Are Us.” it was on the movement of nuclear technology from Pakistan to Iran, North Korea, and Libya. There is a facebook community which celebrates Dr. Khan. the politics of that are obvious to some national concern. the Khan series is part of sequence - it follows the benjamin model of history and chaos. i hope people in the gallery would reflect upon the nature of benjamin’s view of history and these current technologies which create these aggregates communities, and how these commun- ities effect the security of the nation and the world.

pg:

you mentioned current technologies relating to course of facebook and the internet. you also have examples here of other types of technologies, projecting images on to a wall.

re:

this part of the exhibit deals with earlier research and development that I’ve done involving the banker project and Samuelian dream, exploring the nature of myths and grammar. i think it is a little more detailed than what we can go into here, new media technologies and the investigation of those technologies can not be done simply in a gallery but like any labora- tory need multiple venues to examine and see how they might be developed. these two particular exhibits involve myth. and how we might extract from the past. myths we might use in creating new platforms for cartography.

re:

also in the same room you have a touch screen. is this designed to be interactive?
this touch screen was done by david walczyk, a co-curator. he will be here next week, giving a number of presentations. what we have here is a touch screen and a jeweled book. the subject of both “interfaces” is edgar alan poe’s “the man in the crowd.” “the man in the crowd” is the first flaneur narrative. it address the person on the street, moving through the city, and the walk as a form of interface. this exhibition that deals with interface and cartography we wanted to focus on a particular literary source. david walczyk through his touch screen and emily grothus in this jeweled book which contains the text of a man in the crowd begin that process.

let’s step into the other room, here’s a place that looks as if you were putting some finishing touches on when I arrived here, can you describe it.

the room that we’re in is formally designed. it has one large projection. it has a sculptural form we call the pod. across from that is a small flat screen video. the pod is a venue. it is to sit and observe a looping video of a child. the pod was designed by a recent graduate of WIU, Jordan Morrell.

so stepping over to the other side there is a space for someone to sit in, and there is a set of headphones here.

background here, this is a child doing a riff on text by Thomas Hobbes. Thomas Hobbes is the author of the Leviathan, a foundational book on western political thought and computer theory.

so you have that image of a flat screen TV on one end of the room, and on the other end of the room we have images being projected on a wall.

there’s a large projections of a nine minute video. it examines Jorge Luis Borges’s “Del rigor en la ciencia” or “On Exactitude in Science.” it is a short fable involving cartography by the famous argentine story teller borges. we hope that piece which is both in spanish and english offers and ambient umbrella to this sometimes daunting and complex exhibition.

the story is about a place where the cartographer’s wish to make a map the size of a city. after they make the map the size of the city, they are not satisfied with it. they then decide to make a map the size of a state. they make the map and they are unsatisfied. finally they decide to make the map the size of the nation and world. they do, and all that people are tired of cartography and they ask them to walk away.

and this is a complex exhibit. it might be a bit difficult to follow through the audio tour might be difficult to follow the first time through. as you mentioned, you are hoping people come through a couple times and pick up on different things.

the purpose of the exhibition is to invite people to these ideas. for them to spend some time, give some thought, and go to sources. do a little borges reading, think about hobbes, explore the nature of facebook, and then go back to walter benjamin. it’s incredibly rich material.
The cartographer's dilemma

Installation ledger

University

Berkeley

The nine wall graphics reference Guzzardo’s new media documentary buildbetterbetter. Codling did the wall graphics. The documentary is a chain of short vignettes. Backdrops include Cahokia Mounds, the Chicago lakefront, the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, and a St. Louis street front media lab. Dystopic Kid and Nanook open and close the nine wall graphics reference Guzzardo’s new media documentary buildbetterbetter. Coding did the wall graphics. The documentary is a chain of short vignettes. Backdrops include Cahokia Mounds, the Chicago lakefront, the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, and a St. Louis street front media lab. Dystopic Kid and Nanook open and close the documentary.

1 Duplication Tools
A case with identical boxes. Stamps, origin: St. Louis, Mo. The stamps are from early to mid 20th century. A number of the stamps are “meta—stamps” or stamps about making more stamps. Courtesy Paul Guzzardo.

2 Navigation Tools
The tripod is a “off on Walter Benjamin’s off on a Paul Aix paintings. The painting “Angel’s Face” (1982–1940) was a German historian and cultural critic. He was the author of the seminal essay “The Block of Ice in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.” The following quote is from the essay’s epilogue: “The destructiveness of war...” The paintings reference the face and the facebook page fan box of A.G. Khan. A.G. Khan is the father of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program. He admitted - and subsequently retracted - being the CEO of what is generally known as “Nukes are Us.” “Nukes are Us” sold nuclear technology to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. Details involving the transactions are murky.

3 Facebook Tools – Alan Brunettin
The paintings reference “the face and the facebook page fan box of A.G. Khan. A.G. Khan is the father of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program. He admitted - and subsequently retracted - being the CEO of what is generally known as “Nukes are Us.” “Nukes are Us” sold nuclear technology to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. Details involving the transactions are murky.

4 Remix and myth tools – Paul Guzzardo
This exhibit examines a cartographic arts practice. The practice uses digital tools and toys to navigate through information environments. Remix, as a myth-generating tool, is essential to a cartographic practice. These two “mini-video projections” reference practice research and development. Video 1 – Josephine Baker Fbi file video (4 minutes 40 seconds). The video by Beth Plane Murphy launched a cycle of multimedia productions/content known as “secretbaker.” The cycle included a 2006 installation at this gallery. Further information can be found at www. secretbaker.com

Video 2 – Samuel Clemens Remix Concert (15 minutes) – “A Sam Clemens Remix” concert opened the 2007 National Media Education Conference. The concert explored how Clemens’s texts and associations. The triptych is “a riff on Walter Benjamin’s riff” on a Paul Klee painting. The painting is “Angelus Novus.” Benjamin (1892-1940) was a German Jewish philosopher of culture. The “Leviathan” by identifying the nature of “discrete and aggregate,” or the individual in society, also opened the computer era. Dystopia is the other side of utopia.

5 A Pod – Jordan Morre
The design and construction of the pod is meant to be a representation of a vehicle intended for navigating a landscape of information. The design of the pod is very transparent. Information is there in the physical object of the pod. This pod is made of wood and plastic evokes the memory and myth building platform. It was a largely improvisational – thirty-minute mul- timedia performance. Content and further credits can be found at the zoekgouz channel on You Tube. 2010 is the centennial anniversary of Poe’s 1840 short story “The Tell-Tale Heart.” Benjamin described this story as a “chain of short vignettes. Backdrops include Cahokia Mounds, the Chicago lakefront, the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, and a St. Louis street front media lab. Dystopic Kid and Nanook open and close the documentary.

6 Poe Man of the Crowd Book – Emily Grothus
The nine wall graphics reference Guzzardo’s new media documentary buildbetterbetter. Coding did the wall graphics. The documentary is a chain of short vignettes. Backdrops include Cahokia Mounds, the Chicago lakefront, the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts, and a St. Louis street front media lab. Dystopic Kid and Nanook open and close the documentary.

7 Clemens (the navigator) – Kaplan (jewel aesthetic) Panels – Jesse Codling, Paul Guzzardo
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8 Dystopic Kid – Jesse Codling, Paul Guzzardo (2 minutes, 28 seconds)

9 A Pod – Jordan Morre
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10 Borges: exactitude of Science – Jesse Codling, Paul Guzzar do (3 minutes: 35 seconds)

11 buildbetterbetter - Alan Brunettin, Jesse Codling, Paul Guzzardo (4 minutes)

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The art of cartography attained such perfection.
CARTOGRAPHERS GUILDS STRUCK A MAP OF THE EMPIRE WHOSE SIZE WAS THAT OF THE EMPIRE AND WHICH COINCIDED
THE CARTOGRAPHER’S DILEMMA
Paul Guzzardo and Lorens Holm discuss a new perspective on cities with Patrick Geades’ help

Paul Guzzardo, an urban designer and researcher, and Lorens Holm, an artist and urbanist, came together to explore the concept of urban design and its impact on cities.

Lorens Holm, M.D. Student, 2010

In this spring issue of Urbanism in Scotland, we feature a conversation between Paul Guzzardo and Lorens Holm about the importance of understanding the urban environment.

Del rigor en la ciencia” by Jorge Luis Borges was the subject of The Cartographer’s Dilemma’s video short “In this Empire” by Jesse Codling.

iterations post the cartographer’s dilemma exhibition included a documentary and a publication.

from the documentary

Opening Audio Track

john graham
the main organizer of the exhibition “the cartographer's dilemma,” and guest curator is paul guzzardo. he is a Western Illinois alumnus from the political science department; however, his interests have branched into exploring information or access to it in the public sphere. And much of his research and design work relates to that theme.

paul guzzardo
“the cartographer’s dilemma” is a moniker for a series of projects. most of my work involves knowledge and urban space, practically everything i have done for the last ten, fifteen years has either directly or indirectly dealt with issues of the build environment, the new knowledge environment as a result of the last twenty years, in terms of these information systems. And how we might create an interface within public space that responds and sustains a dialogue with this new knowledge environment. Or what we call sometime, “how do we create a wiki on the street?” So in this rather peculiar and odd mix of multimedia, sculpture, painting, behind it all is that question. How do we create that wiki - that wikipedia - that encyclopedia on the street? What are strategies we address? What are the problems we confront? And how do we - and in my capacity both as an attorney and as a designer - deal with the legal as well as the design aspects of what these cities might begin to look like?

from the publication

The dilemma in the tera-perabyte world is getting deciphering gear on the street. Without that techne the city is less and less a stage for knowledge creation and synthesis. We need new place making action plans. We need new interfaces on the ground, linking the city space and data-landscapes. Place making that takes no heed of the evolving knowledge environment is no longer sustainable. If the end game is a sustainable city, the city has to be a knowledge generator. And without a street/data/scape interface - new crossover nodes - it’s neither. Time is short. This brief should have been started twenty years ago. That’s when the info-age began slamming us. But it never got written. Now the digital buckshot is coming at hyper-speed. And we’ve got a gaping hole in the city. We’re wedged between a data space and a hard place and left with a shrink-wrapped something or other.