



cartographic perspectives

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Members of NACIS,

The last issue of *Cartographic Perspectives*, the Atlas Issue as we so fondly call it, sported a new look for its cover. Matt Knutzen from the New York Public Library (NYPL), and NACIS member for the past three years has agreed to publish his artwork as the cover of *CP*. Matt has a BA in geography from UC Berkeley and an MFA in art from Pratt in Brooklyn. Between his BA and MFA, Matt worked at Eureka Cartography and Benchmark Maps. Matt's current position at the NYPL is Assistant Chief of the Map Division, which taps into his broad knowledge of practical cartography and of modern and historical printmaking and bookbinding. In his words, Matt "draws inspiration for [his] artwork from numerous wells; from intellectual sources; i.e. semiotics and deconstruction as they apply to the dissemination

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of geographic information ([he] like[s]) to invert the

“cartographic gaze”) to the non-rational; i.e. the map as metaphor for finding one’s way on the path (life/spiritual)...the map as symbolic of the process of self understanding”. These covers will be unique to *CP*, and will only serve to enhance the uniqueness of our journal.

I am excited about this particular issue of *CP* for a number of reasons. First off, it carries an opinion column from Denis Wood. The title of his piece is *Cartography is Dead (Thank God)*. I sense that you are all sitting up a bit straighter now. It is a piece that is sure to challenge most anyone’s thinking, especially those who cling to the label of “cartographer”. Grab yourself a stiff brandy and give it a read.

Second, this issue of *CP* departs from tradition in that it has only one paper—one long paper—that I am guessing will be provocative to the readership of *CP*. The title of the paper, *Cartographic Design: Rhetoric and Persuasion*, comes to us from Mark Denil at the GIS

and Mapping Laboratory, Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International.

Rather than trust what I might have to say about this paper, let me instead share comments from the reviewers of this piece for you to consider:

“I think this is the right time for something like this. The combination of edginess, and hands-in-practice and head-in-theory and pride, and wistfulness make for a really fresh attack on the space where making maps and thinking about them collide. I really welcome this voice...because it’s free of the suspicious, ironical, cautious, sophisticated, superior tones that came to academia on the postmodern wave. It’s: “I make maps. How can this stuff speak to me?”

and:

“It makes a strong argument for the integration of Gestalt Psychology, semiotic theory, communication theory more broadly, and the theory and language of art and

art appreciation as an overarching framework for understanding and guiding cartographic practice... what is interesting and new about this paper is that it brings together other insights, from [these] quite different disciplinary traditions to say something more specific and detailed about [map design].”

Those comments really do say it all. Mark’s paper, I suspect, will be a welcome addition to the cartographic literature. I hope that you find this paper as thought provoking as I, and the two reviewers did.

We are putting together the 3rd and final issue of *CP* for 2003, and the first issue for 2004, the Practical Cartography issue, is well underway and should be completed and off to the printer by the end of February, 2004.

As always, I welcome all comments about *CP*. Please consider *Cartographic Perspectives* as an outlet for your work.

Warmest Regards,

Scott Freundschuh