

Mapping in Memory

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1.

I am a blue, radiating, dot.



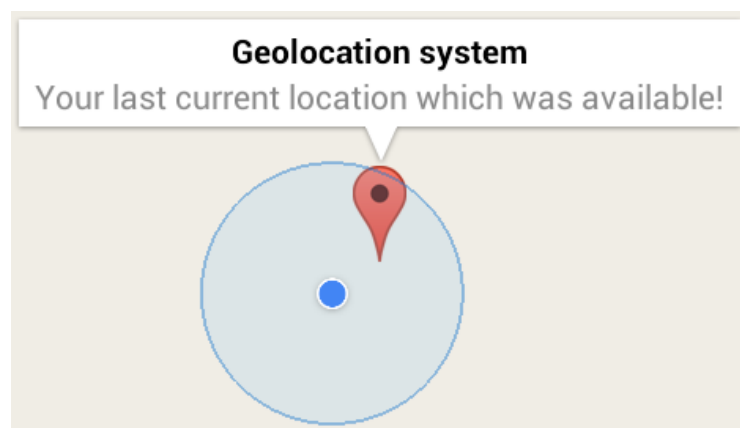
My whereabouts, defined as a geotracking location, signaled by my smartphone's GPS-enabled features, place me (little pulsating blue dot) on my abstract grid of criss-crossing grey/blue/green lines called "Berlin."

And where this small dot is, a heartbeat visible on my touchscreen, signifies where I am, and if the city really looked like that (if I were really an expanding and contracting little blue circle) I'd be completely lost. I wouldn't recognize these flat dimensions around me.

The English translation of Heidegger's Dasein is "Being-there." Being where? In-the-worldness. But that dot doesn't really represent me – it represents my phone! Because I can turn my phone upside down and the little arrow will change direction even if I've sat still.

But the definition of Dasein translated literally is far too simplistic an understanding, for there is history to be accounted for. Dasein is dragged along through a series of experiences, up to the eventual conclusion that the being of Dasein is time itself. This blue dot then is swathed in memories, past locations, dislocations and associations, wormholes and teleportations. Yet there it stands alone and I can't see any of that.

Your last current location which was available.



Then I'm asked to turn off my phone.

Aerially crossing over the Ural Mountains, the thought in my head, "I've never been there before." But here I am. Peaks float above the clouds, snow-covered and jagged, a thunderstorm below.

Memories erased, grids disappeared, and I'm left in this vast beige-coloured wasteland of oblivion. Where was I, where am I?

As the plane thuds down onto the runway, I wait for service, and then a new landscape replaces the old. As if I'd just appeared from nowhere at all.

It's the same from the exterior to the interior, thresholds of spaces. Blockages and borders that delineate and describe experience in a certain way. The canvas has so much in common with a map. It deterritorializes, abstracts, and reimagines. Construct a circuit through the canvas to find clues, continuity can be constructed. Similarly, it leaves to the imagination an important role. Even these sites, represented, are filtered through a singular perspective.

2.

Curating is a journey. It's one long journey composed of many smaller ones, and it never ends with a show, it keeps expanding. It's a derive with no clear beginning or ending. Speaking of global citizens, I was accused of being the archetype. I refused this saying that I'd never left "the west" other than one summer I spent in Beijing. So maybe there's a longing for really knowing an elsewhere, finally gaining a new familiarity, because sometimes I feel restrained, because new movement is impossible in places of comfort. I'm obsessed with maps. I collect them from trips and paste them on my walls. It ends up forming one massive megacity with different neighbourhoods or hubs called "Barcelona," "Krakow," and "Delhi." I feel this is closer to reality

than a world map because I'm more likely to go see an exhibition in Berlin than one in West London. It takes less time to get from Schönefeld to Stansted Airport than it does for me to get to Notting Hill. Memory is a purely temporal process. Even immediate pain that runs up your arm, from the finger on the stovetop, takes a moment to process. And remembering can happen anytime for so many reasons. "Coming to mind." In German there is only one word "Erinnerung" to describe both memory and remembering. There are separate words to describe types of remembering, "Gedenken", referring to a specific subject, "Andenken" to refer to an initial moment. Falling into memory. Memory as a noun doesn't make sense anyway, how can you take this phenomena and imagine it

as a whole? It is a vapour, a shifting mist, and each time the story is told, it changes a bit, like lapping water. The same particles, flung over and over onto the same old rock, that eventually cracks away into a vast ocean. Oblivion. Memory has its own process of becoming that doesn't rely on a physical state. It exists, it can be extracted and controlled, but sometimes it overtakes you, its triggered by the outside and then it washes over and you retreat in embarrassment, or laugh wildly at seemingly nothing. It's a state of existing in multiple temporalities like transparent film that melts away on contact, becomes part of the whole picture, while constantly reproducing itself. We can go into Bergson, think of the huge potentiality of the mind, but I always

thought his diagrams weren't sufficiently complex. I always ask Jonathan Miles to "tell me about Marc Chaimowicz" but he never really gets around to it. I think they studied together in London, but I'm not sure how well they knew each other. So for now, I try to create an image of what a name could bring to mind. *"Ma (間) is a Japanese word which can be roughly translated as "gap", "space", "pause" or "the space between two structural parts." ... Ma is not something that is created by compositional elements; it is the thing that takes place in the imagination of the human who experiences these elements. Therefore ma can be defined as experiential place understood with emphasis on interval."* But a map is also power. It charts territory, and

maybe to destabilize this in a canvas is to reverse this power. To arrange elements in unconventional terms, to form connections between objects that are otherwise impossible. It's to reorganize thought and question a hegemony of rationality, a cultural construct. When Hito Steyerl talks about linear perspective being overshadowed by aerial-view surveillance, it brings up notions of conquest and colonialism. The map is a device. We're taught to read them, it's not something that comes naturally. We picked up two guys in the small village of Amazer, they were headed in the same direction of us, towards Marrakesh, so we agreed to give them a ride. It was hot and the sun was beating down on the Martian landscape of the Atlas mountains. We asked where they

wanted to go and showed them a map, they pointed at a lake. As we drove they made some indication that we should turn right, but looking at the map it seemed impossible that the road would ever bring us to their destination, so we kept going without turning. We brought them there and stopped the car. They were confused and disappointed, we hadn't listened and had brought them further from their destination. They had pointed at the name of the lake but meant to refer to the town by the same name that was kilometers away. That blue feature in its geographically traced location meant nothing to them. There's a famous scene in Elio Petri's *Indagine su un cittadino al di sopra di ogni sospetto* (1970) in which Il Dottore played by Gian Maria

Volonté sits in his office chair framed by a map of Rome. Hung up like a canvas, it outlines his territory of power. It is a birds-eye-view of his crime scene investigations, and in the context of the film his own crime and his own uncomfortable memories are framed within this context. His own terror and power schemes are highlighted by the figure amidst a tortured background formed of lines, grids, order and disorder, which control a territorial mapping.

Dasein - refiguring, controlling, and warping what surrounds it.
Being-in-the-world.

3.

The exhibition is about Mapping in Memory. The works approach these subjects in different ways. The journeys made by the artists is the connecting thread. But there's a lightness to objects and images, they seem to float around the canvas.

Even in **Hyun's** painted sites, a film sits over the image veiling the totality of the scene. Interventions cover the canvas and bring the site into question. Even decay melts away, into an irreversible entropy. The forgotten takes a central role, objects of oblivion, unnoticeable quotidian every-day interventions magnified. Degrees of interruption, focus, and fascination take on the challenge of the unobserved.

Site becomes displaced in **Dai's** photographic journeys that break up the structure of time and representation. Time becomes abstracted, natural elements take control, and an image is formed through repetitive process. Even images become pixels, a matrix to work within, fire and time are both consumers, unstoppable creative forces. But these can be worked with rather than against. For a painter who doesn't use paint, the "medium" of the work is rather the situations that surround their making, a process that questions authorship while mastering the elements.

And **Zhang**'s objects and motifs float in a placeless space, forming ripples of thought, reflecting off of each other in a watery cascade. Objects displaced from meaning, arranged in an abstracted time and space that forms no part of reality while remaining closer to an experience of flashing memories or singular thoughts. Past and future collide in a siteless constellation. A single object can represent everything at once in a practice that absorbs the world into an intensive process of deterritorialising movement and objects.

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