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“Putting the Arts in their Place”: A Case for Map-Making in Art History

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Putting the Arts in their Place

Marco Jalla, Guest Editor

ARTL@S BULLETIN

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Cover: Foreign circulations of the artworks from Matsukata's confiscated collection (1944-1958). In Saint-Raymond, Léa and Maxime Georges Métraux. "From Enemy Asset to National Showcase: France's Seizure and Circulation of the Matsukata Collection (1944-1958)." *Artl@s Bulletin* 8, no. 3 (2019): Article 2

Editorial Statement

The *ARTL@S BULLETIN* is a peer-reviewed, transdisciplinary journal devoted to spatial and transnational questions in the history of the visual arts.

The *Artl@s Bulletin*'s ambition is twofold: 1. a focus on the "transnational" as constituted by exchange between the local and the global or between the national and the international; 2. an openness to innovation in research methods, particularly the quantitative possibilities offered by digital mapping and data visualization.

We publish two to three thematic issues every year. If you would like to contribute to the journal with an article or propose a theme for a future issue, please contact the editors Catherine Dossin (cdossin@purdue.edu) and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (beatrice.joyeux-prunel@unige.ch). We welcome suggestions, ideas, and submissions from scholars worldwide and at every stage in their career.

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“Putting the Arts in their Place” A Case for Map-Making in Art History

Art history inherited in the 20th century a conception of creative activities according to which “the spirit blows where it wants” and the location of practices and objects would be at best contingent. *Putting the Arts in their Place* expresses the desire to do justice to the spatial and territorial dimension of the visual arts – without the conservative meaning this expression generally has towards hierarchies of all kinds. The theme of this issue of *Artl@s Bulletin* hence concerns the place of the arts, understood as all the sites and spaces invested by artworks, artistic activities, artists or artistic institutions. The challenge we proposed to the authors was to use maps for contextualizing the arts, and more specifically as a tool for questioning the territorial logics as well as the borders of objects and artistic practices, the centers and peripheries of the art worlds, the places/spaces of art and their specific values, customs or assets.

In the context of this introduction, I will briefly go back to the origin and follow the development of spatial concerns in the field of art history. By highlighting some of the epistemological and ideological consequences of the references to place and context in art historiography, I will then consider the reasons for seeking to map the arts. Recognizing that arts are produced somewhere is neither new nor metaphysical – things have to be done somewhere –, but the question of whether the

nature of art is conditioned by place, whether it is produced by place as a practice rather than simply on site, is of greater importance. This question has led art historians to develop spatial approaches to arts both as a form of understanding and as a method of investigation.

Cartography, a Tool for Art Historians?

Art historians do not instinctively turn to cartography as a research tool. We need only to examine art history books and articles to realize how scarce maps actually are. In 1987 already, Dario Gamboni regretted, in his *Géographie artistique*, the very occasional use of maps in art history, partly because of a conception of culture “which sees in the work of art the product of an activity which by its very nature escapes historical determinations, such as they materialize in particular in space”, and because of the lack of experience of art historians in collecting “systematic and quantifiable data such as those collected by ethnologists, dialectologists, economists or sociologists”.¹ I personally would add to this diagnosis the fact that art historians usually consider that it is not their task to produce new images alongside those of the artists they are studying, which are much more important and interesting to them. To support this argument, I would point out, for example, that while many art

¹ Dario Gamboni, *La Géographie artistique* (Disentis: Ars Helvetica, 1987), 2.

historians use to draw and take notes in front of the artworks they study, very few publish their sketches – even when those drawings helped them to outline or understand something they would not have noticed otherwise.² To be fair, many art historians think that drawing a map is too complicated, that it requires technical skills that they feel they do not have or do not have time to acquire. Listening to cartographers talking about GIS system, vector data, raster data and such is indeed a little overwhelming. Art historians are not ordinarily trained to use advanced cartography software. But does this mean that art historians must do without cartography, ignore this instrument, or that maps cannot be useful to them?

I advocate that it is not the case and bet that many readers of the *Artl@s Bulletin* have tried to put down some data on a map, just by hand, in order to see them from a different angle. This thematic volume brings together a series of articles by art historians who took a step further and engaged themselves in the realization of maps for translating and sharing their research results. Some authors used advanced cartographic software, while others relied on simpler drawing tools. It is not the aim of this volume to encourage art historians to invest time in long training in order to manage complicated software. On the contrary, the contributions offer different graphical strategies encouraging us to reflect on the many possible practices for mapping arts.

Placing Arts: some Milestones in the History of the “Geography of Art”

If art history conceives works of art as products of a particular moment in time, it also generally links them to a place in space. When a painting is, for example, described as a French impressionist or a sculpture as Florentine Renaissance, these objects

are located in periods of time that are not only defined according to the stylistic movement, date or cultural period in which they were created, but also linked to specific places.

The chronological history of the arts is naturally related to a historical geography. The fundamental idea behind such a periodization of art history is that different places know and produce different arts.³ This idea in itself has a long and complex history.⁴ In antiquity, for example, Vitruvius attributed the various orders of columns to various populations and used the term “school” to designate a community of thought and a relationship of philosophical filiation, which would be also used later in the artistic field. In the Middle Ages, the awareness of a technical and formal diversity linked to places inhabited by distinct communities was also reflected in expressions such as, for example, *opus romanum* (work of the Romans) or *opus francigenum* (work of the Franks). At the very beginning of artistic literature, the first “art historians” opted for a biographical model but were nonetheless engaged in the exaltation of their own country and its artistic centers, such as Florence and Rome for Vasari.

At the end of the 18th century, Luigi Lanzi in his *Storia pittorica della Italia* dismissed the Vasarian *Lives of the Artists* model in favor of a historical-geographical scheme, and Christian von Mechel reorganized the Belvedere Gallery in Vienna according to schools in order to propose a “visible history of art”. The idea that the conditions associated with a place influence not only the lifestyle of its inhabitants but also their characters, customs and the products of their activities finds a scholarly version in the 19th century with the theory of the *milieu*, while romanticism and the movement of nationalities promoted the cultural and territorial identity of the “folks”.⁵ The nationalization of styles continued in disputes of attribution, particularly around the origin of the

² On this topic, see Jérémie Koering, “Au moyen du trait: Meyer Schapiro et le dessin comme outil épistémologique”, *Les Cahiers du MNAM* 136 (2016) : 74-111 ; ---, “Au moyen du trait, 2: Louis Marin et le dessin comme outil théorique”, *Les Cahiers du MNAM* 142 (2017-2018) : 84-101 ; ---, “Au moyen du trait, 3: Hubert Damisch et le dessin comme outil analytique”, *Les Cahiers du MNAM* 149 (2019 in press).

³ Thomas da Costa Kaufmann & Elizabeth Pilliod, ed., *Time and Place. Essays in the Geohistory of Art* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005).

⁴ The next remarks rephrase some compelling points made by Dario Gamboni in the introduction of *Le Grand Atlas de l'art* (Paris: Encyclopaedia Universalis, 1993), 10-17 (especially 12-13).

⁵ On the development of art history and the search for “ethnic” origins of artworks, see Éric Michaud, *Les invasions barbares. Une généalogie de l'histoire de l'art*, (Paris: Gallimard, 2015).

Gothic, and the search for spatio-stylistic units that led, for example, to a “departmentalization” of French Romanesque schools.⁶

The official appearance of a Geography of art (*Kunstgeographie*), as a specific branch of research, at least in terms of claim, took place at the beginning of the 20th century in an article written by the Viennese geographer Hugo Hassinger.⁷ He proposed to study the diffusion of various forms of architecture by using cartography and imagined the first art history atlases.⁸ Unfortunately, the ideology of “blood and soil”, entangled with nationalist and regionalist issues, would put artistic geography at the service of racism and Nazi imperialism, making it a politically stigmatized research field.⁹

It was not until the 1960s and 1970s that geography regained some attention from a new generation of art historians. This first led to a series of severe criticisms of ethnic approaches to the notion of artistic style.¹⁰ Concomitantly, the obvious usefulness of geography for considering artistic forms, styles, schools and, above all, their diversity, in relation to the places of production, the roads and paths followed by artists, or the diffusion channels of techniques or objects was being widely acknowledged. Scholars adopting this approach rejected fixist and essentialist perspectives and favored a historical perspective by abandoning references to the ground, the *Stamm*, the race. They privileged questions relating to circulation, contacts, artistic exchanges and stylistic hybridization.

One of the concepts then put forward by several historians is the “center-periphery” notion, advertised for example by the English art historian Kenneth Clark who in a 1962 conference on “provincialism” highlighted the role of metropolitan centers.¹¹ This concept was also the pivot of a seminal text written in 1979 by Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg for the *Storia dell'arte italiana* (vol. 1, Questioni e metodi), which would have a considerable impact on the spatial approach of the arts.¹² The two Italian scholars broke with the search for spatio-temporal units – the *Kunstlandschaften* of the old artistic geography – and proposed a dynamic and even agonistic conception of the relationships between “centers” and “peripheries”, understood as changing and relative entities. For example, they showed that the phenomenon of stylistic delay described by ancient historiography actually corresponds in many cases to strategies of deviation from the norm, so that the periphery, “rather than being the place for delayed artistic development, could also be that of the elaboration of alternative propositions and equally valid”.¹³ They also observed and described significant situations of “resistance to the model” and highlighted the existence of border regions, that is to say pivotal areas in situation of “double periphery”, meaning places “where various cultures could meet and original experiments be elaborated”.¹⁴ These analyses finally led to a renewed geography of art, *i.e.* a geographical analysis of artistic production and practices that takes into account not only places, but also

⁶ See the book collection about Romanesque art “La Nuit des Temps-France” (1954-1999), which established the reputation of the Zodiac publishing house in French art history. It presents Romanesque art through the prism of the French regions in 40 volumes, *e.g.*, *Bourgogne romane* (1954), *Auvergne romane* (1955), *Val de Loire roman* (1956), *Poitou roman* (1957), *Touraine romane* (1957).

⁷ Hugo Hassinger, “Über Aufgaben der Städtkunde”, *Dr. A. Petermanns Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes Geographischer Anstalt* 56 (1910): 289-294.

⁸ In 1916 Hassinger also published an atlas of history of art in Vienna: *Kunsthistorischer Atlas, der K.K. Reichs- und Residenz-stadt Wien und Verzeichnis der Erhaltenswerten Historischen, Kunst- und Naturdenkmale des Wiener Stadtbildes* (Vienna: Schroll, 1916).

⁹ For an in-depth account on how the Geography of art was first viewed from an ethnic, nationalist and even racial perspective in Germany and Austria, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁰ A very early critic was put forward by Meyer Shapiro before World War II, see Meyer Shapiro, “Race, nationality, and art”, *Art Front* 2 (1936): 10-12. In Germany, we can mention Reiner Hausserr’s analysis, which questions the search for stylistic constants and the correlation between these constants and ethnic entities: Reiner

Hausserr, “Kunstgeographie – Aufgaben, Grenzen, Möglichkeiten”, *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 34 (1970): 158-171. Herbert Beck and Horst Bredekamp also criticized the notion of artistic region, and more precisely of *Kunstlandschaft* (about the art of the *Mittelrhein*, between Mainz and Cologne): Herbert Beck & Horst Bredekamp, “Die mittelrheinische Kunst um 1400. I. der Mittelrhein *Kunstlandschaft*” in *Kunst um 1400 am Mittelrhein, Ein Teil der Wirklichkeit* (Frankfurt: Liebighaus, 1975).

¹¹ Kenneth Clark, *Provincialism* (London: English Association Lecture, Oxford University Press, 1962).

¹² Enrico Castelnuovo & Carlo Ginzburg, “Centro e periferia”, in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, ed. G. Previtali, vol. 1. Materiali e problemi, I. Questioni e metodi (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), 285-352. For an English translation, see Enrico Castelnuovo & Carlo Ginzburg, “Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History”, transl. Maylis Curie, *Art in Translation*, 1, no. 1 (2009): 5-48.

¹³ Enrico Castelnuovo & Carlo Ginzburg, “Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History”, transl. Maylis Curie, *Art in Translation*, 1, no. 1 (2009): 19.

¹⁴ Enrico Castelnuovo & Carlo Ginzburg, “Symbolic Domination and Artistic Geography in Italian Art History”, transl. Maylis Curie, *Art in Translation*, 1, no. 1 (2009): 24.

communication routes, borders, central and peripheral points, and different scales of distance.¹⁵

Contextualizing the Arts: Acknowledging the Interconnexions with the Geographical Beyond

In other words, new agendas opened up, sensitive to the dispersion of places of artistic activities, to the creativity of the peripheries, to their more or less direct connectivity, and generally to the circulation of objects and people. Gradually, it became clear that artistic models circulate in all directions, and not only from the center to the peripheries. The analysis of these incessant circulations also drove historians to rethink the concept of place itself.

From then on, placing the arts has not implied the mere domiciliation of artistic activities and objects, but a reflection on how the arts are determined by, or determine the place in which they are made; how the arts relate to people, culture, region, nation or state; and how arts in various places are interrelated, by diffusion or contact. In other words, placing the arts requires from then on historians to think not only about how the arts can be spatialized, but also about how the arts themselves create particular contexts for their own activities and, in turn, spatialize the world in various ways. Interestingly, in the 1960s and 1970s, Land Art artists embraced these questions in their artistic practices, such as Robert Smithson who shaped a portion of land itself, embedding his artwork in its location.¹⁶ Also, worth noting is the role played in the 1980s by the sculptor Richard Serra in promoting and diffusing the concept of "site specificity", that he conceived as a consubstantial

relationship between the work of art and its location.¹⁷ Thus, he defended the preservation *in situ* of his sculpture *Tilted Arc* in Foley Federal Plaza in Manhattan, claiming that moving it would be equivalent to its destruction.¹⁸

Since the late 1980s, geographers have also begun to engage with cultural studies and to consider the connections between place and identity, between place and meaning. For cultural geographers, a place is not a mere patch of ground, a bare stretch of earth, or a point on a map. A place gathers people, experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts, which means that "being in a place" is being in a system with a high level of interconnections.¹⁹ It became thus essential to think the nature of local places as being shaped by social relations and linked to often distant material circumstances and to the "historical accumulation" in time of many artistic, social, cultural, commercial or political relations within and abroad. In this sense, the local place would then be always a part of the "global", where global in this context refers to the geographical beyond, surrounding the place itself. This approach transformed the understanding in particular of the production, mobility and reception of arts. For example, we can consider the importance of the routes of Santiago de Compostela for the history of Romanesque architecture or the impact of then called "primitive" objects brought back in colonizing countries to serve paternalistic and often racist discourses, which, displaced from their original context, ultimately became sources of inspiration for Western artists.

As a result of these developments in spatio-historical concerns, the *Grand Atlas de l'art* (1993) was the first attempt to materialize a global mapping of the arts.²⁰ The authors challenged

¹⁵ See for example, Roland Recht, Catheline Périer-d'Ieteren & Pascal Griener, *The Grand Atelier. Pathways of Art in Europe. 5th – 18th centuries* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2007). On an interesting parallel with the spatial approach in history of science, see Jean-Marc Besse, "L'approche spatiale dans l'histoire des sciences et des arts", *L'Espace géographique* 39/3 (2010): 211-224.

¹⁶ We think in particular of the work *Spiral Jetty* (1970). See Hikmet S. Loe, *The Spiral Jetty encyclo. Exploring Robert Smithson's earthwork through time and place* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2017).

¹⁷ Miwon Kwon, *One place after another site-specific art and locational identity* (The MIT Press, 2004).

¹⁸ Harriet F. Senie, *The "Tilted Arc" Controversy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). For historiographical considerations about Serra's argument, see Dario

Gamboni, "Déplacer égale détruire? Notes historiques sur un argument théorique", *Annales d'Histoire de l'Art et d'Archéologie de l'Université de Bruxelles* 17 (1997): 33-46.

¹⁹ For a discussion of this idea, see Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); or shorter by the same author, "Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World?", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91, no. 4 (2001): 683-693. For a general discussion of the evolution of the concept of place in Geography and History, see Charles W. J. Withers, "Place and the 'Spatial Turn' in Geography and in History", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70, no. 4 (2009): 637-658.

²⁰ *Le Grand Atlas de l'art* (Paris: Encyclopaedia Universalis, 1993).

themselves to take the concept of the atlas literally and systematized a spatial and cartographic approach embracing the world map from the Arctic to Oceania, from Rome to New York, from Japan to Mexico, from Cameroon to the Cyclades. The book covers many different cultural areas and each of these major subdivisions opens with a global presentation of the context, phenomena and issues. Specific studies then describe the places, art forms, artistic currents, the diffusion of techniques and styles following the classical construction of any atlas. Such an organization also characterizes the *Atlas of World Art* directed by John Onians and published in 2004.²¹

Of course, these ambitious and comprehensive projects of producing an atlas for the arts necessarily raise difficult questions, in particular: how can we avoid silencing local peculiarities by viewing a region's dominant culture? The wider the time span or the geographic stretch, the harder it is to make fine distinctions, which is certainly a useful lesson of big atlas projects.²² But at the same time, these volumes do reveal the value of maps to articulate places and contexts together.

Mapping Arts: A Tool Between Description and Exploration

Representing research data on a basemap proves a highly heuristic effect: it is much easier to see clusters and patterns, spaces or dividing lines on a map than in raw tabular data or prose description. Using a map allows us to locate points, borders or important spaces, and thereby, to identify continuities between works, artistic practice and the places in which they appear or of which they may just bear the mark. Mapping enables us to “develop”, in the photographic sense of the term, space as an important, even integral, part of artistic

works and practices. All in all, complex systems articulating places and context are hard to understand without visualizing them first. Sometimes the data we have to deal with is so overwhelming in terms of volume or complexity or intricacy that we cannot comprehend it without some layer of visual abstraction. Cartography applied to art history thus delivers images of the spatial distribution of artistic activities and allows us to pre-organize our data in a geographical form of understanding, space providing a structure. In that regard, cartography must be placed on the side of graphic tools allowing us to classify and represent data and ideas in a visual form – with the advantage that maps give us a more immediate and eloquent reading of their content than graphs because of our familiarity with cartographic visualizations in everyday life (e.g., tourist map, metro plan).²³

Yet, mapping is frequently the target of a critical discourse about the visual representation of space and place, exposing its ideological and ideational constructedness.²⁴ Obviously, maps are conceived with interests in mind and make statements upon the world, expressed through what is included or excluded, staging and constraining what can be known about the spaces and places represented. For example, the commonly used Mercator projection of the globe is a well-known inaccurate representation: The North hemisphere is vastly expanded at the expense of the South and Europe is placed squarely in its center.²⁵

Nevertheless, let's not be halted by the fact that maps do not simply describe reality but construct the object that they both refer to and represent. I would assert that the usefulness of maps is not necessarily undermined by that construction because their value rather resides in helping us to answer research questions and formulate new

²¹ John Onians, ed., *Atlas of World Art* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²² See for example Larry Silver's review in *The Art Bulletin* 86/4 (2004): 783-787.

²³ Jacques Bertin, *Sémiologie graphique* (Paris: Mouton Gauthier-Villars, 1967). Based on his considerable experience as head of the Cartography Laboratory at the Parisian Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Bertin provided a multitude of examples and a theory for the visualizations of scientific information on a flat sheet of white paper. For an English translation, see Jacques Bertin, *Semiology of graphics: diagrams, networks, maps*, transl. William J. Berg (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

²⁴ On this topic, see *Art@s Bulletin* 7, no. 2 (2018): Cartographic Styles and Discourses, edited by Delia Cosentino (<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/vol7/iss2/>), as well as David Woodward, *Art and cartography: six historical essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Both formalize an art historical engagement that lay bare the ideological and cultural contingencies of maps as spatial representations. See also, Paul Jaskot, “Commentary: Art Historical Questions, Geographic Concepts, and Digital Methods”, *Historical Geographies* 45 (2017): 92-99.

²⁵ See *Art@s Bulletin* 8, no. 2 (2019): Parler des Suds: le défi de Caliban, edited by Roland Béhar & Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel (<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/vol8/iss2/1/>).

hypotheses.²⁶ For example, addressing the question *where did an iconographical innovation spread?* by representing this data on a map might help us to determine how it became successful.

This means that maps are not just used to describe and demonstrate what is already known, but that they can also act as visual confirmations. Indeed, in this case, maps are meaningful illustrations, helping clarify complex ideas and effectively ending up visualizing what we already knew or suspected. The map is then a declarative visualization, saying: “Here’s what’s happening”. On the other hand, maps can also serve, what I would call, a visual exploration process. Instead of being driven by a hypothesis, we can map our data, mining for spatial patterns, trends and anomalies, without knowing in advance what will emerge. In that case, mapping acts as a tool to generate new ideas and hypotheses. Therefore, I argue that maps can be used both as a descriptive and a prospective tool. The key-argument of this thematic volume is that mapping arts is not an end in itself, but a basis on which building rich empirical stories.

In this issue, all contributing authors demonstrate that maps are far from being just stylish tool. Accordingly, they rely on maps to readily visualize and explore data in order to then effectively communicate complex results in visual frameworks. Two articles reveal very different perspectives on Michelangelo Buonarroti’s artworks. [Federica Vermot](#)’s essay analyzes the propagation of an architectural ornament invented by Michelangelo in 1563 for the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome. Representing the Roman diffusion of this ornament on a map sheds a unique light on a little-known aspect of the great artist’s reception among the architects of the next generation. Mapping helped the author to discover spatial patterns behind the apparently global diffusion of Michelangelo’s ornament: Vermot shows that its chronology follows a clear city

district logic, pointing to prestige rivalries between patrons or even between architects themselves.

[Catherine Walsh](#)’s essay then invites us to a fascinating journey through time and space following the marble blocks from which Michelangelo sculpted the figures for the Tomb of Pope Julius II. Walsh’s maps not only cover the distance from Carrara and Seravezza to the current locations of each sculptures, but also visualize the gigantic timeline travelled by the marbles, from their prehistoric origins to the Anthropocene. The maps stand here as a grid for thinking through incommensurable portions of time. Drawing our attention to immense temporal dimensions beyond those of humans and at the same time emphasizing the effect of human activity on the natural order of things, Walsh invites us to look at Michelangelo’s statues in a new way which reflects the environmental concern of our time.

The article by [Laura Bohnenblust](#) focuses on the second half of twentieth century with maps describing the exhibition odyssey of Argentinian and Australian artworks on board of two ships navigating on three oceans. The author explores the routes of the two “floating exhibitions” and suggests that the oceans provided an open exhibition space for national artistic representation during the so-called “second wave of art biennials” at the beginning of the 1950s. The maps in this case reveal alternative routes for modern arts, other than the prevailing Paris–New York axis. By questioning the tendency to consider the crossing of the North Atlantic as the center or the primary scene of action, Bohnenblust takes us through different routes out of the tracks of the usual narrative on modern art. Her maps are used here as a demonstrative tool, revealing major blind spots in the research field. Therefore, as the author wisely points out, mapping in this specific case does also visualize research desiderata, because it is highly probable that further notable data are to be found along these alternative routes.

²⁶ Jane Azevedo made a similar point in *Mapping Reality: An Evolutionary Realist Methodology for the Natural and Social Sciences* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), see especially p. 107 and p. 144.

In the article by [Léa Saint-Raymond and Maxime Georges Métraux](#), maps also have a similar descriptive and declarative purpose. Authors exhume archival data on the use of artworks from the Matsukata's collection for exhibitions in France and abroad. Their visuals challenge the official story of the sequestration of the rich Japanese collection at the end of World War II. The goal is straightforward: to set context for better understanding why the French retained some artworks for their own public collections and returned others to Japan. Saint-Raymond and Métraux reveal how the circulation of a set of artworks was related to the final choice to keep specific paintings in France.

[Giorgio Pietro Vitali](#)'s contribution aims to establish a "creative map" of the works of Venezuelan cartoonist Eneko de Las Heras Leizaola. To this end, Vitali uses mapping as "distant reading", a conceptual method that he borrowed to Franco Moretti. Concretely, Vitali seeks to understand Eneko's very large corpus of satirical drawings not by studying each one of them, but by aggregating and analyzing amounts of data about them – mostly spatial and thematic, but not only. Maps enable him to uncover specific "regions" within the corpus of drawings, both thematical and geographical, and lead him to build hypotheses on the relationships between specific places and themes. In a second phase, mapping calls for a closer "reading" of the drawings addressing the ideas disclosed by distant reading. This cartographic approach typically intends to generate new hypotheses.

[Nadine Oberste-Hetbleck](#)'s article considers ART COLOGNE, formerly known as Kunstmarkt Köln, which was the world's first art fair to specialize in modern and contemporary art in 1967. Starting from a dataset compiling all the galleries that participated in the fair from 1967 to 1997, the author assesses the internationalization of ART COLOGNE. Key questions here are: When and how did international galleries start taking part in the event? Which countries did they come from? What was the ratio of German to international participants during the first thirty years of the fair?

The author uses "deep mapping", a multi-layered and multi-media cartographic representation, to explore how a place is interconnected to others and to stress out a dynamic history of spatial relationships in between the big art fairs.

After having discussed the subject of contemporary art fairs, it was then normal to invite an artist to take the floor. In her interview with Nikoo Paydar, [Kasia Ozga](#) explains how many of her works depict relationships between human bodies and physical, social, and political systems and how she explores the imaginative power of geographical forms to address issues such as (im)migration, environmental justice or "internal" geographies. Particularly, she invites us to think about the limits of the definition of a map and reminds us to continue exploring and experimenting new paths between art and cartography.

Finally, in the section "Artl@s at work", [Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel](#)'s commemorative essay for the 10th anniversary of Artl@s resonates both with the artist's invitation to experimenting and with the questions raised in this special issue. For example, Joyeux-Prunel points toward a digital and collaborative cartography, intended to expand the horizons of art history and facilitate the transition to spatial thinking. She argues that maps can help analyzing artistic globalization (descriptive approach) as well as asking new questions (heuristic approach). Her essay also highlights the current limitations of cartography applied to art history: it does not allow us to analyze images themselves and their "influential" effect on visual culture. Therefore, from a 10 years of Artl@s perspective, she emphasizes the need to cultivate our art historical skills, our visual erudition and iconographical methods, while widening our cartographic and digital ambitions to tackle those many and immense numeric corpuses of images that await only researchers to study them.