of memory, history, and modernity as their more lasting counterparts built in stone, iron, and concrete.

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Notes

Jeanne Haffner
The View from Above: The Science of Social Space
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013, 224 pp., 26 b&w illus. $32.00 (cloth), ISBN 9780262018791

Laura Kurgan
Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology, and Politics
New York: Zone Books, 2013, 232 pp., 175 color and 50 b&w illus. $36.95 (cloth), ISBN 9781935408284

In February 2003, then US secretary of state Colin Powell presented to the United Nations Security Council satellite images that allegedly verified Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction. The war that resulted seemed to have been based on a claim of the images’ legibility. In 1990, the US military went to war in Kuwait, and American audiences turned on their televisions to watch the action live. Just a year earlier, the first satellite in the Global Positioning System (GPS) had been launched, and the entire network was completed by 1993. Well before the production of digital and satellite imagery, photography had played an essential role in military activities. During World War I, pilots took to the skies with side-mounted cameras for reconnaissance purposes, and in the following decades, planes documented the destructive consequences of aerial vision in Guernica, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. As Paul Virilio has posited, “There is no war, then, without representation.”

These military techniques and methods of making maps, representing space, and observing people were always integral to knowing a terrain and designing built environments, informing surveying, planning, and building practices. Two recent publications—one historical, the other cartographic—consider the architectural and historical contexts from the early twentieth century to the present. Both pose basic questions to architects, urban planners, and historians: How do aerial and satellite images mediate the places we build and inhabit? How do the scopic regimes of these technologies, which are complicit with militarism, surveillance, and geopolitics, condition the production, use, and narratives of our built environments and social spaces?

In The View from Above: The Science of Social Space, Jeanne Haffner traces the emergence of the concept “social space” to aerial photography during World War I, linking its development and use to planning and building the grands ensembles of French housing in the 1970s. Haffner investigates how visual techniques of observation and representation were constitutive of this concept, focusing primarily on Henri Lefebvre’s formulation of l’espace social in The Production of Space (French, 1974; English, 1991). By pointing to a particular point of view, the vue d’ensemble, or the whole view, she argues that a distinc
tively aerial visual culture was not the result of the French state’s urban planning practices but their very basis. For Haffner, there is no social space, then, without representation.

The history begins with the development of the mechanically rendered aerial view taken from the airplane that found its utility in military reconnaissance and surveillance during World War I. In the first of five chapters, Haffner argues that the significance of these images was not necessarily the novelty of what and how a terrain was pictured, but how it led to the reorganization of the French Army. Moreover, during the interwar period, this aerial view became associated with a technological optimism providing not only new visual access to colonial territories but also new methods for disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography. Chapter 2 traces how geographers linked the study of social organization to spatial forms. Pierre Gourou’s aerial views of the Tonkin Delta of Vietnam served as the basis for a geographical understanding of social development in which concepts of culture and landscape were formulated relative to each other. These sociospatial ideas and methods developed in the research of French colonies accordingly permeated the study of domestic rural regions by social scientists and historians such as Marc Bloch and of urban and suburban areas by architects such as Le Corbusier and Marcel Lods, who used 1930s aerial studies as the basis for the design and construction of the Cité de la Muette, a large utopian housing project northeast of Paris. (It was later was transformed into a prison camp by the Nazis during World War II.)

Chapter 3 focuses on the development of postwar planning efforts pressured by the housing crisis throughout France. By the 1950s, the aerial view became an integral part of the policy of l’aménagement du territoire, or land-use planning, and was used by the Ministère de la Reconstruction et de l’Urbanisme (MRU) to identify and define linked social and urban problems. It was during this period, discussed in chapter 4, that the concept of “social space” fully emerged, prompted by the writings and research of Paul-Henri Chambert de Lauwe and tied directly to not only the aerial image but also the aerial view as an analytic concept. Robert Auzelle, architect and head of planning under the MRU, developed new visual techniques to study urban life, expanding beyond aerial photography to “maquettescopes.” These devices took pictures of models and could “respond to the following question: What will an observer situated in such a place determined by the model see: street, window, panoramic views?” (88). The model was animated through ground views as the city was objectified by aerial views. Consequently, the meaning of the aerial view expanded beyond its technological values associated with airplanes to encompass an integrated scopic regime that supported political governance and social administration.
The final chapter addresses the idea of “social space" in Henri Lefebvre’s writings, which functioned as a critique of what he saw as the state's privileged position in the capitalist production of space during the postwar era in France. The debates over the organization of cities centered on mass housing, whose design justifications ranged from the technocratic to the participatory among the numerous players involved, including inhabitants, architects, developers, politicians, bureaucrats, and social scientists. The last group is the main interest in Haffner’s study, and while she is concerned with the *vues d’ensemble* that undergirded the planning projects of the 1960s and 1970s, the reader may wish for a more nuanced account of these political debates. By leaving the meaning of participation and their actors largely undefined, the study unintentionally reiterates a misconceived duality associating aerial views with top-down administration when participatory actions were often in line with many top-down urban policies. Moreover, even the definition of the user (inhabitant or participant) as a category in the research, design, and planning of French housing projects aligned with quantification methods that determined French urban and administrative policies. So, who were the participants that comprised social space? And more essentially, what were the counterviews?

For a text that argues for the significance of the aerial view in urban planning and social scientific discourses, there is surprisingly little analysis of specific images and maps. Haffner makes an insightful claim for the *vues d’ensemble*, but it would have been important to understand what defines that ensemble or whole, especially when, paradoxically, many of the images expose only fragments of cities and parts of the terrain. Many fascinating images are reproduced in the text but only cursorily addressed, and basic questions about their production and reproduction, their legibility and access, and their visual rhetoric and graphic conventions are not systematically engaged. Why was the vertical privileged over the oblique? What advantages did stereoscopic images provide over other forms of mapping and picturing the terrain? Some of the reasons to use one photographic technique rather than another were outlined in multiple essays compiled in Jean Royer’s *L’Urbanisme aux colonies et dans les pays tropicaux*. Published as part of the Colonial Exposition in 1931 and well known among practitioners during the French interwar period, it is absent from Haffner’s study. There are also gaps in the secondary-source bibliography, including the scholarship of Zeynep Çelik and M. Christine Boyer as well as Jean-Luc Arnaud on urbanism and cartography, Enrico Chapel on statistics and urbanism, and Mary Dorrian and Frédéric Poussin, who both have long worked on the aerial view. Despite these absences, the book is an important descriptive study that contextualizes urban planning within the coexistence of the aerial view and “social space,” and Haffner’s interdisciplinary approach and synthetic readings of the question of when space became social hold great merit. Her strict adherence to a teleological narrative, however, is not able to carry a critical message and does not allow for the nuances and contradictions in the visual material and among the players to be captured. Ultimately, her perspective remains aerial.

Whereas Haffner’s study represents a top-down intellectual history of *l’espace social*, Laura Kurgan picks up on the participatory methods of mapping and argues through her cartographic projects that there is no representation, no war, and no information that is not spatially situated. *Close Up at a Distance: Mapping, Technology, and Politics* presents Kurgan’s body of work since the 1990s, especially at the Spatial Information Design Lab at Columbia University. As a catalog of nine works with two short essays by the author, the selected mapping projects are as much artistic and cartographic as scientific, as much quantitative as qualitative, and in that balance demonstrate the map as a visual construction based on decisions made in specific social and political contexts. They also show her efforts and the inherent contradictions in subverting and critiquing methods and techniques so thoroughly embedded in military cultures of surveillance by using the same methods and techniques. This represents a productive tension in her practice as she attempts to deploy top-down mapping techniques for bottom-up causes.

For scholars familiar with the field of human geography and Geographical Information Systems (GIS), her theoretical perspectives on mapping fully synthesize established scholarship beginning with Brian Harley’s canonical essays to more recent studies by Jeremy Crampton on critical cartography, geopolitics, and GIS. Moreover, Kurgan’s mapping methods are in line with the work of many critical practices, such as ethnocartography, countermapping, community or parish mapping, participatory mapping, and psychogeography that emerged in Continental Europe in the 1960s and the United States in the 1970s. Yet while geographers and cartographers have developed interpretative models and practical methods in and through French critical theory, their historical and theoretical approaches to mapping have largely remained outside architectural practice and history if not urban planning and design. Thus, Kurgan’s important contribution provides an excellent overview and a needed critique to new kinds of digital satellite images to the field, bringing questions about their production and distribution to bear on architectural and planning methods and practices.

The first critical position Kurgan takes, which is similar to Haffner’s, is to think beyond a nineteenth-century conception of a map and consider its definition and category expansively. Readers will not find coordinate plans outlining national boundaries; instead the generously illustrated book reproduces images of movements from the roof of the Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona recorded through a GPS receiver, digital landscapes of uninhabited terrain via satellites, LANDSAT images of Kuwait, IKONOS satellite images of Cape Town, and SPOT satellite images of Kosovo. The two projects most recognizable as traditional maps are Around Ground Zero, a set of foldout maps to help visitors navigate the collapsed area of the World Trade Center, and Million-Dollar Blocks, a study that analyzes the movements and dwellings of incarcerated individuals in New York City. All the projects comprise plans, image maps, diagrams, graphs, drawings, photographs, and prints.
whose diversity of cartographic material cohere not by a shared visual expression but by the methods of their production based on overlapping themes of scale, fragmentation, quantification, and digitization. Two of the strongest projects are highlighted.

Kosovo 1999: SPOT 083-264 manipulates the scale of satellite views, generating spatial and visual disorientation linked to war and emphasizing that these images are concerned not only with a politics of representation, a term borrowed from Rosalyn Deutsche (18), but also a politics of resolution. We are told that we are looking at SPOT satellite images of the Drenica Valley in Kosovo on 3 June 1999, and Izbica, Kosovo, on 6 June 1999, where mass graves were located. Kurgan then presents various reproductions of the images with their resolution and scales shifted and blurred to complete illegibility. As in Michelangelo Antonioni’s Blow-Up, we zoom in to locate the crime and the murderer only to find that the pictured objects have dematerialized into a gray-toned haze. Looking at her blurred digital satellite images, Kurgan asks, “What can we see in this image data?” (118). The provocative question is asking less about which objects can be identified and located and more about the tenuous relations of data in the form of pixels, their composition into a digital image, and their production for and dissemination to civilians.

For many who followed the war in the press, the images of newly dug mass graves in Izbica released by NATO and the Pentagon in order to justify military intervention are familiar since they were reproduced and circulated widely. Kurgan explains that these were images taken by military satellites “as a series of locked pixels with undetermined coordinates” (114). In other words, the public was given the image but not the data to contextualize its production, meaning that the location of the image remained undisclosed if not the image itself. Kurgan states that therein lies a double violence and, ultimately, the stakes of the project, one in mass murder and the other in its representation: “The image becomes a memorial to an evacuated violence” (114). Thus, her reconstruction of the image, while visually illegible, is actually locatable, for, unlike the military, she maintains its data. Her research also questions the false characterization of digital data as immaterial. Kurgan was able to locate the military’s images in space and time because satellites cannot see through clouds. In order to find the original image in a large database of information, she searched for cloudless days, finding only three during the entire military campaign. Thus, digital information is not without mediation; it is collected and carried by tangible machines, limited by environmental conditions, and produced in print and on screens.

The project Million-Dollar Blocks mapped the residences of inmates at Rikers Island and the costs of their imprisonment. Shifting away from crime maps to incarceration maps, by mapping people and not criminal events, this project aggregated census and economic data on inmates in order to produce a series of maps and diagrams. For GIS users, this practice of translating quantitative data to maps is familiar; the notable aspect of this project is which data sets were accessed and how they were used. Excerpts from www.chicagocrime.org and New York City databases are pictured to show that the addresses were originally organized into lists, and by mapping that information—where the inmates came from, where they moved to—the discovery was made that, while crime is dispersed across the city, the incarcerated are concentrated in just seventeen Brooklyn city blocks with disproportionately high prison expenditures. Unlike the Kosovo project, which used the same data as the military in a different way to find different patterns, this one used different data in the same way as the police to find different patterns.

Herein lies the critical challenge in Kurgan’s work and one against which Haffner’s narrative warns. While maps and aerial views are composed of various sources of information, the immediate legibility offered by their synoptic and reduced presentation flattens that diversity, fills in their lacunae and differences, framing the discourse and data as a coherent whole. This is the real power of maps: to present their graphic forms as given and in so doing make invisible that they do not account for social relations. Paradoxically, maps often occlude what they set out to determine. So, do Kurgan’s utilizations of digital spatial technologies designed for the military present a new model for participatory cartographic practices or simply reify the same model for new uses and forms of reconnaissance and surveillance? Are we, the readers and viewers, complicit in this ever-pervasive surveillance? Kurgan claims: “The map is not a top-down view. And neither is it a bottom-up account. It is both” (204). She leaves unanswered the question as to what bottom-up might mean and who is at the bottom looking up.

Both texts call attention to the necessity of historicizing and theorizing the mapping and visual cultures of our environments and the ways in which these techniques and technologies condition what is built and how they are used, whether they are the grands ensembles or 9/11 memorials. These aerial and cartographic representations are not merely descriptive but ultimately generative, for the map is often the ground from which policy decisions are made and on which design and development begin. Haffner’s and Kurgan’s work serves as a caution against the potential fetishization of data and the utopian dream that new imaging technologies can solve sociospatial problems. As they posit, there is no representation, then, without interpretation.

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Notes
The most inventive aspects of this solid, well-written, and thoroughly researched book (more than twenty archives were consulted) lies in exploring how the history of architecture is simultaneously a history of mediation and a history of networks. Rifkind’s study emphatically shows us the extent in which media venues (journals in this case) can be valuable, if not pivotal, architectural building blocks. Quadrante promised an interdisciplinary approach in its mission statement, and it is thrilling to see how Rifkind successfully mimics this structure in The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy. The history of the journal is told in terms of networks—of buildings, master plans, other journals, key players (whether they be architects, engineers, writers, or filmmakers), films, exhibitions (V’ Triennale di Milan), conferences (CIAM), patrons (Valdarni), industrialists (Olivetti), painters (Soldati, Giiringhelli, Picasso), competitions (such as that for the Palazzo del Littorio), government officials (Botta), and even bars (meeting places such as the Bar Craja). The reader comes away with a real understanding of the period—what and who (Bardi, Bottoni, Ciocca, Del Debbio, Faludi, Fasolo, Figini, Fiorini, Griffini, Libera, Lingeri, Monotti, Nervi, Pagano, Persico, Piacentini, Pollini, Ponti, Ojetti, Rava, Rogers, Sartoris, Terragni, et al.) were important in terms of the built environment. Some of the figures we meet are household names, some are not. Given all the people, places, and projects mentioned, an index would have been useful. While we are thoroughly convinced of the importance of Quadrante and the architects circling around the journal, writing articles, serving as editors, and so forth, we are left hungering for information about its reception. Rifkind mentions that as many as five thousand copies of each issue were printed. But where did they go? Who had subscriptions? What schools, libraries, institutions? Were there contemporary subscriptions in the United States? Elsewhere in Europe? How does the circulation of Quadrante compare to other period journals such as Architettura, Domus, or Casabella? Did Quadrante’s intentional disregard of these projects have important historiographic implications? Does it explain why Mazzoni took so long to catch on? To answer this, we first need to know how influential Quadrante really was. And this speaks to reception. Quadrante ceased publication in 1936, just as the regime was embarking on its most aggressive imperialist and racist acts (invading Ethiopia being the first of many). It would have been interesting to see what this most fascist of journals had to say. Of course, it would also have been interesting to see how foreign architects such as Le Corbusier might have been rescripted for a country that was becoming increasingly autarchic and anti-French (among other things).

Finally, this is a well-illustrated book. The many illustrations and pages reproduced from Quadrante give the reader a good sense of how the journal was laid out. These are coupled with strategically placed color plates and photographs of extant buildings taken by the author. That said, the book is not pretty. And for this, no blame