

FROM HERE TO *THERE* REALITY MAPPING

by Freek Lomme,
director Onomatopee

Jozua's tactics thus manifest themselves in the operative gap between art, architecture, sociology and urban planning – visually, yet analytically, collecting data in the public domain and allowing insight into different patterns of the socio-cultural tendencies which engage in public space.

As he moves along the straight lines he drawn on maps, Jozua traces the remnants left by the informal use of public space – traces left by people from different generations – such as kids' secret hideouts, teenage hangouts, or the graffiti tags of a particular youth culture, places where grownups meet for clandestine sexual intercourse or the places they dump waste, elderly people's allotments such as are found alongside railroad tracks. Gathering and clustering such phenomena, he construes a spectrum of empirical, naturalistic footage, featuring photos, sound recordings, text material and other data. Jozua, in order to encourage us to navigate these recorded phenomena, often collaborates with graphic designers, with David Bennewith in the past, and recently, (mediated by Onomatopee) with Arthur Roeloffzen.

Through this collaborative process Jozua transforms empirical phenomena into visual poetry and subsequently into analytically functional data. In doing so, various human traces are given a voice and develop into something symptomatic of our notions of the private, the public and their coexistence.

This oeuvre presents us with the possibility of tracing for ourselves. The book comprises maps of various cities worldwide, from Montréal

to Barcelona, from Naples to Eindhoven, in particular it highlights a mapping, produced specifically for this project, of the Brabant Urban region (a chain of cities within the Province of Brabant, the second largest urban area of the Netherlands). Here, we can take in the relationship between the traces of various formally ascribed elements and those which have manifested themselves organically and informally.

Simultaneously, specific writers featured here, trace Jozua Zaagman's particular qualities – his consistently organic methods, his analogue processing reflecting actual human traces (Arie Altena), his organic method, subversive in its contrast to the top-down, official organisation of public space (Andreas Müller), or how these traces, processed by Jozua, function as pawns in an organic chess game, facilitating tactile, playful tactics, as they analytically compose empirical matter (John Dummett).

Jozua Zaagman thus not only brings together ethics and aesthetics, he also invites us to play along. Ever since I first worked with Jozua in 2008, within Van Abbemuseum's self-organising and mobilising platform, 'your-space', and later on assembling a broader range of data by Jozua and fellow colleagues, Jacqueline Schoemaker and Maartje Dros, of the 'Traces of Autism' group, for the Van Abbemuseum exhibit 'Tricksters Tricked', I have remarked on the enormous capacity of this work. At 'your-space' we were able to encourage many young architecture students of the Technical University Eindhoven to relate differently to the public within space, by executing actual architectural

interventions and proposals. We also managed to stimulate policy makers and urban planners in the Eindhoven city council to relate differently to public space. Time and again, Jozua's sincere, bottom-up, humanist approach forged new ground through inspiration and stimulation. The exhibit at the Van Abbemuseum once more affirmed the power of this work, not so much through sharing and implementing a mode of thinking enhanced by respectfulness for the informal, organic processes of public space, but rather by allowing this methodology to play out its remarkable analytics on the visiting public, by offering access to these unique maps as well as by inviting the public to walk and to generate data and perspectives for themselves. The exhibit affirmed the importance of their endeavour.

All in all, these perspectives enable us to experience and understand the world around us – not in abstract terms constructed by our private ideologies or via demands mounted within administrative policies, but through living, human reality. Why shouldn't it be possible to plan and organise our public domain in the same way that we reflect upon ourselves – by truly facing up to ourselves via those people close to us. I feel we all recognise, within this artistic programme, the utilization of affect, not naively appropriated but generated and positioned in a sober and valid manner that allures and inspires. We can both allow this multiple democratisation to occur whilst also managing its currents by allowing ourselves a greater awareness of its organic movements. Take on the game of mapping reality!

Isn't speculating upon the socio-spatial dynamics of atlases something we all enjoy? Don't we all wonder about the possibilities which public space may offer, each of us attempting to establish our personal place?

This booklet could be considered an atlas which has been compiled from a bottom-up perspective, one which offers insight into how we as individuals behave in the public sphere and so help to establish the public space. The maps and data comprising Jozua Zaagman's young oeuvre, chart various empirical traces – actual imprints of people in space, constituted by real urges and personal wishes, and, possibly, justifiable demands relating to notions to do with the planning of public space.