

❖ **Volume 5, Issue 2: 2011**

## **Editorial**

### **Mapping Ecologies of Place: Local, Virtual, Digital**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Volume 5 Issue 2 of Global Media Journal/Australian Edition. We are pleased to offer an issue that emerged from the interests within our Design teaching and research staff and based on a symposium organised by Kaye Shumack, Helen Armstrong and Juan Salazar on the topic of *Mapping*. The idea of *Mapping* remains a key metaphor in this issue which presents a selection of papers supplemented by articles that respond to the usual agenda of GMJ/AU.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work of Kaye Shumack and Helen Armstrong who have guest edited this issue. I would also like to acknowledge the support provided by Lisa Kaufmann our editorial assistant as well as the work of those involved in the tasks of web production (Roman Goik) sub-editing (Myra Gurney) and formatting (Antonio Castillo). Thanks as well to those who have responded to our referee requests and provided their views on the submissions to this issue of the journal.

Our next issue will be edited by Dr James Arvanitakis and Prof David Rowe on the theme of *Globalisation and Culturalisation: Advancing Cultural Research in Sweden and Australia*. The final issue of GMJ/AU for 2012 will be guest edited by Diana Bossio and Saba Bebawi on the topic of *The Arab Spring: A Symposium on Social Media and the Politics of Reportage*. GMJ/AU, in collaboration with Swinburne University's Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, will present a symposium on the Arab Spring on *Friday June 8, 2012, Melbourne Australia*.

Hart Cohen

## **Guest Editorial**

### **Mapping ecologies of place: local, virtual, digital**

This issue of *Global Media Journal* (GMJ) emerged from a workshop – Mapping ecologies of place: local, virtual, digital – held in 2011 at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and convened with the support of the Centre for Cultural Research (CCR). The backstory of how this workshop came about is worth telling here. Firstly, in 2006 the editors of this issue had a growing interest in the practices of creative community mapping through our association with Dr. Elaine Lally's research project titled the "Digital Cultural Atlas" (DCA) (1). Dr. Lally's project linked regional creative activities with the geospatial, offering alternate ways of reading and researching cultural knowledge linked to place.

At the time, her project highlighted for us the potential of addressing mapping practices, as well as some of the limitations of the digital as an interface and platform – there was a sense that whilst digital techniques may be transferable and universal, cultural details are often local and non-transferable. There was also a sense that mapping needed to be explored as emerging critical media and communication practices around social enablement and power formations.

Our subsequent work with the CCR theme group "Culture, Nature and Environment", provided the impetus for the workshop project and encouraged us to explore the field of critical cartography further, seeking to engage with what this field might offer for cultural research. This led us to invite Chris Perkins from the field of geography and critical cartography as a workshop keynote, and Anne-Marie Willis with her background as a design philosophy scholar.

Our aim was to build a dialogue across these discipline fields, opening up critical spaces for researchers. We noted that mapping was being explored in a wide range of fields and practices evidenced by publications in a variety of specialised

journals. Our intention with the workshop was thus to provide a trans-disciplinary platform for scholars and practitioners from a range of fields to come together to explore both applied and conceptual approaches to mapping as forms of, and processes within, cultural research.

The workshop presentations were from a range of disciplines including the arts and sciences. The three papers included in this issue reflect this diversity. Whilst the event was small and modest, the energy and interest generated as a result of interaction between participants around critical mapping practices was rich and fascinating, resulting in a kind of seepage across discipline boundaries. Our essay in this issue aims to contextualise many of these diverse perspectives, and also discusses the hands-on mapping project as "Future Research Scenario". Several other papers from the workshop are scheduled for future publication in the journal *Design Philosophy Papers*.

The three papers in this issue cover a variety of approaches to mapping as both critical theory and practice. "Researching mapping: methods, modes and moments in the (im)mutability of OpenStreetMap" provides an analysis of the Open Street Map (OSM) phenomenon using an approach developed by Dodge, Perkins & Kitchin, (2009) as the "modes, methods and moments of mapping". These instances emphasise the value of the local in mapping studies and direct critical attention to the construction of meanings and tensions around crowd-sourced mapping practices. "Transport mapping: emotional cartography, mobility and the body politics of place" describes an action research process around "emotional cartography" as a form of affective geography that sheds light on local patterns of transport mobility. "Mapping Hyde Park Futures with Effective Public Participation" describes a case study of Sydney's Hyde Park, and introduces the potential value of mapping using effective public participation (PPGIS) for the urban planning of public spaces. All these papers suggest mapping practices for enabling and re-conceptualising forms of public communication about urban space, place and the design of communication systems and services.

The essay section in the journal includes two works, the first presenting an overview of the mapping workshop, and also some new thinking about how mapping might inform the practice of 'scenarios' as a research and practice-oriented tool that is associated with future studies. The second essay deals with the new frontier of communication within and about indigenous communities.

The interview with Christian Nold reflects on his current practices of critical cartography and provides some insights about the publication "Emotional Cartography"(2009). Nold's work is widely acknowledged as groundbreaking and at the forefront of critical cartography and social action. This in-depth interview reveals new insights and personal reflections about his practice and his work with participatory methodologies and affective mapping.

There are a number of pertinent book reviews in this issue, with *The Map Reader* being of particular relevance. This text is a comprehensive overview of critical cartography, and no doubt will be of interest as a teaching and reference text.

The mapping workshop provided a focus for the generation of the papers in this issue. The workshop sought to create an environment for an emergent field that is rapidly evolving and is influencing many different disciplines and practices. This collection offers a wider audience a taste of the heady energy and innovation involved in the intersection of digitality with critical cartographies.

Helen Armstrong and Kaye Shumack

Theme editors

(1) Hodge, B. & Lally, E. (2006). Cultural Planning and Chaos Theory in Cyberspace: some notes on a Digital Cultural Atlas Project for Western Sydney *FibreCulture* Issue 9 general issue [http://www.journal.fibreCulture.org/issue9/issue9\\_hodgelally\\_print.html](http://www.journal.fibreCulture.org/issue9/issue9_hodgelally_print.html)

#### **About the guest editors**

Dr. Helen Armstrong is Professor-Emeritus at Queensland University of Technology. Professor Armstrong was the Inaugural Professor of Landscape Architecture at Queensland University of Technology 1997-2003. She is currently a practicing landscape architect and Adjunct- Professor, Institute for Culture and Society (ICS), University of Western Sydney. She has undertaken a number of projects in Western Sydney, in both research and practice, which have involved various forms of mapping. Her *Guide to Creative Mapping with Communities* produced in 2008 explored creative mapping with a range of diverse communities.

Dr. Kaye Shumack is Associate Professor in design and visual communication in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). She is a practicing artist, design theorist and media producer. Her current projects include mapping as participatory practices of critical visualisation of local contexts around transport mobility, urban landscapes and food systems.

*Note: We at Global Media Journal do not endorse the views of any of the authors who have contributed their work to this issue. However, we have respected their views and have scrutinised the materials submitted for fairness, accuracy and consistency. This is the gold standard of scholarship and journalistic integrity. We welcome reader comments and suggestions and any errors found will be acknowledged in updates to the issue on a regular basis.*