

## *Space Discovery:* A review of *An Atlas* of Radical Cartography

By Daniel Tucker

The first time I went to Central New York state was the first time I knew where it was. The first time I heard about Sudan on the news was the first time I knew where it was, and what was on the nearby borders. Our personal maps of the world are continuously changing. Through our experiences, we become aware of places and ideas previously unfamiliar. Through culture and tourism, we feel invited to explore what feels new to us. Through disasters and devastation, we become conscious of locales that are further away than anywhere we could have imagined. All of this information and these experiences inform the expansion and creation of our map of the world and how it works.

Lize Mogel and Alexis Bhagat edited *An Atlas of Radical Cartography*, a beautifully designed, 160-page book of ten essays and ten 17" x 22" maps, all of which fold up and fit into an elegant slipcase. It's the second book to be released on the *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press*, a sister project to the original and ongoing annual *Journal*, which has become an important hub for critical and creative writing about the intersections of contemporary art and politics. The "An Atlas" collection is unique and unprecedented, and gathers together many of the primary voices that have connected the visual and semiotic language of cartography with current political and artistic discourses.

The map is an obvious and practical device for people attempting to better understand the world in all its complexity. "An Atlas" illuminates this "why mapping" question. Some of the reasons that essayist and map

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**SOURCE:** Ed. Lize Mogel & Alexis Bhagat; *Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press* 2007. (Map and Essay information below)

makers in this volume identify for their interest in maps include shaping arguments; shaping policy; considering the continuity between geography without physical connections, as an ongoing research process; just to follow the connections between things we do every day and complex infrastructures, or to encourage a critical civic engagement and understanding of how things are planned and how they work.

*An Atlas of Radical Cartography* is an amalgamation of several different ideas. It is an experimental primer course in geography, a sampling of spatially oriented trends in contemporary art, a portable mini exhibit and a field guide to ongoing international debates about space and place. The collection of maps/essays starts to differentiate between the aesthetic experimentation and art trends that sample or reference geography, and the political mapping practices that take seriously their goals to change how we think about and use the world around us. *An Atlas* will be of interest to quasi-planners, drifting artists, experimental geographers, lovers of places, haters of maps, lost students and engaged citizens alike. It calls out attention to vital "radical cartography" work that is happening in cities and communities with which we could all relate. *An Atlas* asks us to handle maps, examine thoughts and rediscover space at a time when there is great confusion about what is where, what is near, how far is far, where we should go? *An Atlas* asks us to take great care with the world we currently have, to better understand its complexity and how it works, and to more thoughtfully consider: *how we are getting where we are going?* ♦

**With maps by** An Architektur, the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), Ashley Hunt, Institute for Applied Autonomy with Site-R, Pedro Lasch, Lize Mogel, Trevor Paglen & John Emerson, Brooke Singer, Jane Tsong and Unnayan

**With essays by** Kolya Abramsky, Maribel Casas-Cortes & Sebastian Cobarrubias, Alejandro De Acosta, Avery F. Gordon, Institute for Applied Autonomy, Sarah Lewison, Jenny Price, Jane Tsong, DJ Waldie, Ellen Sollod, Paul S. Kibel, Heather Rogers, Jai Sen, and the Visible Collective with Trevor Paglen.