Experiments in Correlative Ontography

Presentation to participants in:

Arts & Cartography Workshop: Mapping Environmental Issues in the City
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“I propose to photograph the city of Montreal using a simple and straightforward methodology: I will choose places based on difference (e.g., high-low) and spend time in these places, occasionally photographing. I will attempt to photograph in a way that has no specific aim other than representing being. I will attempt not to force any other conceptual schema upon the process of photographing, including ones that attempt to represent the difference mapped in the dataset. The resulting work will of necessity be “in-formed” by my “being-in-the-world,” which includes my previous and ongoing artistic and design research practices. As the dataset represented in the maps provided for the workshop will include extremes, e.g. of high and low income, the photographic evidence that will result from my workshop participation might offer insight into the extremes of “that which sustains being” and “that which is unsustainable to being.” It will be interesting to see in what ways the “ontographic” results will map onto the datasets represented in the provided maps.”
Man taking picture and kiosk, from Pinhole Topologue, 1981
Midtown Manhattan around noon, from Pinhole Topologue, 1983
Visualization and Prelogical Experience
Quartiere Trastevere, Rome
“...face to face with death, fate, mystery, etc., the click of the shutter is heard at regular intervals.”
Crenbrook Reservoir at 18% capacity. Southeast Queensland, Australia, 2007. From the series Remnants.
Sites photographed in Montreal, July 5–25, 2010
Very low presence of diseases indicative of environmental causes*

*Based on aggregated data in general zones
Mill near Convent Notre Dame du Vieux Moulin in Pointe Claire
Beaconsfield development near Near St Edmund of Canterbury church at Boul St Charles
Low presence of diseases indicative of environmental causes*

*Based on aggregated data in general zones
Altered wall on Avenue de Gaspé
Schulich music building, McGill University on Sherbrooke
Medium presence of diseases indicative of environmental causes*

*Based on aggregated data in general zones
Environmental complex in Saint-Michel
High presence of diseases indicative of environmental causes*

*Based on aggregated data in general zones
Industrial site in Lachine
House with garbage bags near Cote St Catherine and Rte 15
Very high presence of diseases indicative of environmental causes*

*Based on aggregated data in general zones
Biosphere and trees, Parc Jean-Drapeau
Mattresses with cherubs under overpass near St Andre and Viger
Rubble piles and building near Boul Rene Levesque and Atwater
Development lot in the Latin Quarter
Next steps

- Caption photographs with a greater amount of data, including e.g., socio-economic and soil toxicity (see example)
- Dig down into data to provide more specificity for geospatial coordinates of the site photographed
- Explore representational strategies for projecting all photographs onto map a Montreal
Beaconsfield development near Near St Edmund of Canterbury church at Boul St Charles. Very low presence of diseases indicative of environmental causes; median income 29,200-103,500; BTEX and general soil toxicity low

Example of a photograph using more quantity of data.