

III.

Patterns of Control

In our minds, abstract cartographic representations consisting of lines, planes and dots become concrete images of spatial structures and relationships. The vast world-space, or parts of it, become clear, concise – and thus controllable. The scroll map from 1790 on display in the exhibition shows the coastline of China from Korea to Vietnam and the adjoining maritime areas (*cat.* 23). The specific knowledge recorded on this nine-metre-long map was mainly used to secure and control access to the sea – access that was of economic significance and at the same time constituted the frontier of Chinese territory. Places marked on the map include ports, water police stations, and the potential hiding places of enemies or unwelcome immigrants.¹ Only an exclusive circle of government officials will probably have had access to this map. To this day, those in positions of power have collections of maps at their disposal that are not available to the general public. Such collections contain secret knowledge about a state's own territory, foreign territories or military sites – knowledge that is used in the making of critically important strategic decisions. This is one of the main reasons Google Earth does not disclose everything.

The control exerted over land and maritime areas with the aid of detailed maps can be a double-edged sword. In 2000, the American artist Joyce Kozloff created a walk-in globe with the title *Targets* (*cat.* 24). The artist deliberately intended that the external appearance of the work evoke associations of both a globe and a hand grenade.² Inside, visitors find themselves looking at 24 aerial maps, each one copied by hand onto canvas. The images are based on maps produced by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and used by civilian and military pilots for orientation purposes. In selecting the maps, Kozloff

1 Walravens 2006, pp. 32–34.

2 Princenthal 2008, p. 14. See also Earenfight 2008, pp. 27–28.

focused on places and regions that were subjected to aerial bombardment by the United States between 1945 and 2000.³

In this work, Kozloff aims to explore the map as a powerful instrument of modern warfare. While military conflicts up until the Second World War were mainly fought hand-to-hand on the battlefield, in aerial warfare – or now, in the twenty-first century, in drone warfare – combat can be conducted from a safe physical and, presumably, emotional distance. The fighter-jet pilot or drone pilot, now sometimes situated thousands of kilometres away, locates the target to be attacked solely by means of the map displayed on the screen in front of him or her. The quality of the map and the ability of the user to correctly read and interpret its signs and symbols become the basis for a decision that can cost the lives of countless people at the push of a button.

One party's control or appropriation of space is often accompanied by another's disempowerment and dispossession. *Pattern of the World* is the title of a work by British artist Susan Stockwell from 2000. She depicted the world on three dressmaking patterns that, pinned together, form a model of the world that can be altered (*cat. 25*). She deliberately chose the infamous Mercator projection of the world as the starting point for her pattern. With Europe at its centre and its distorted proportions, the Mercator projection is regarded as a manifestation of notions of dominance and superiority that were used to justify the ruthless seizure of foreign territories in the age of colonialism. The continent of Africa, which in the Mercator projection is shown as far too small in relation to Europe and North America, appears on Stockwell's world map with the sewing instructions "shorten or lengthen here". In addition, the artist stained the individual pieces of her map with tea and coffee, once important colonial commodities, thereby emphasising economic interests as key motives for unbridled appropriation and brutal oppression, which continue to determine the shape of our world to this day.⁴ By translating the map of the world into an alterable sewing pattern, the artist prompts a debate on the emergence, establishment and ultimately the validity of world orders that can be devised, transported or propagated via the map medium. At the same time, the piece highlights the fact that maps are always constructions designed according to individual or collective interests – nothing more, but also nothing less.

The days when all cartographic representations of the world were “tailored” by human hand are long gone. Algorithms and data structures constantly generate new images of the world. The smartphone is the pocket globe of our time, enabling us to quickly and easily locate ourselves – and be located – more or less wherever we are. *Where the F**k Was I?* is the title of an atlas published by British artist and computer scientist James Bridle in June 2011 (*cat.* 26). Consisting of 202 maps, it constitutes a public presentation of his movements from June 2010 to April 2011. The recordings of his movements, translated into visual terms via OpenStreetMap, are based not on personal notes or memories but on data that the “consolidated.db” file on his iPhone had stored automatically – without him having given his express consent.⁵ Bridle himself has said of this work: “This is an atlas, then, made by that other nature, seen through other eyes. But those eyes have been following me, unseen and without permission, and thus I consider provoking breach a necessary act.”⁶ The power of the map has taken on a new dimension, one that can serve us – but can also observe us.

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Simplicity 600 628 1
SKIRT FRONT

Pattern for the Skirt
Pattern for the Skirt
Pattern for the Skirt
Pattern for the Skirt

Place pattern on flat surface
Trace the pattern on the fabric
Cut out the pattern pieces
Follow the instructions for sewing

For complete instructions concerning the pattern
Visit our website at www.simplicity.com
or call 1-800-451-7777

Center back - Place line on fold of fabric

6763
BACK SKIRT

Pattern for the Skirt
Pattern for the Skirt
Pattern for the Skirt
Pattern for the Skirt

Lengthen or shorten here

For complete instructions concerning the pattern
Visit our website at www.simplicity.com
or call 1-800-451-7777