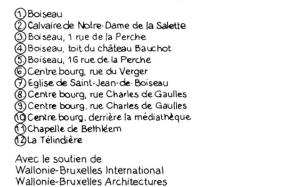


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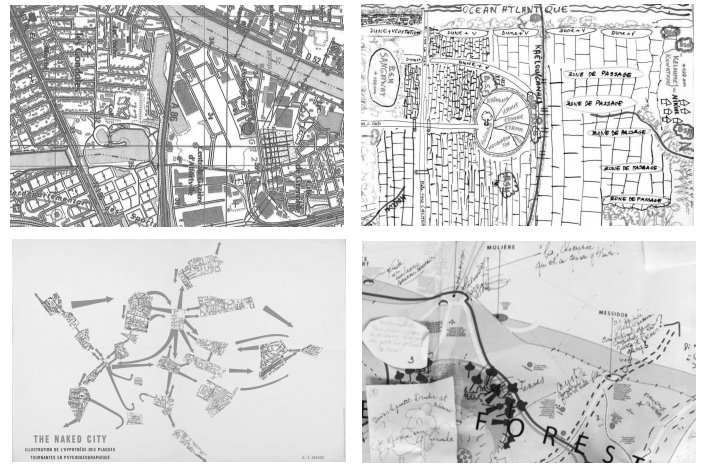
## Préambule

This article was created in the context of a research about the contribution of cartographic practices in planning and landscape projects. The research entitled "Territorial Reinventions through Cartographic Operations" questions the process of the development project. It repositions the context, in all its sociological, ecological and cultural depth, at the center of it, with the hypothesis of the potential of cartography as a springboard.

The objective of the research is gradually clarified through field experience and bibliographic background which is enriched in parallel: It is a question of defining the possibilities of representing the particularity of relations to an environment located by means of a co-constructed cartography producing the common.

The research aims to improve the process of "problematization", with the help of a tool, the card or the card set with multiple entries, making the stories coexist without smoothing the confrontations.

By the simple fact of describing a physical situation by drawing, researching and proposing what could be its structure or coherence, cartography is also part of the project process which transforms the territory by the methods of his revelation.



2

*The first part of the research focused on the analysis of card typologies, from official cards to subversive cards, by making a detour through co-constructed cards. These multi-hand maps appeared to be a particularly interesting way of staging different types of actors and attachments around territorial issues.*

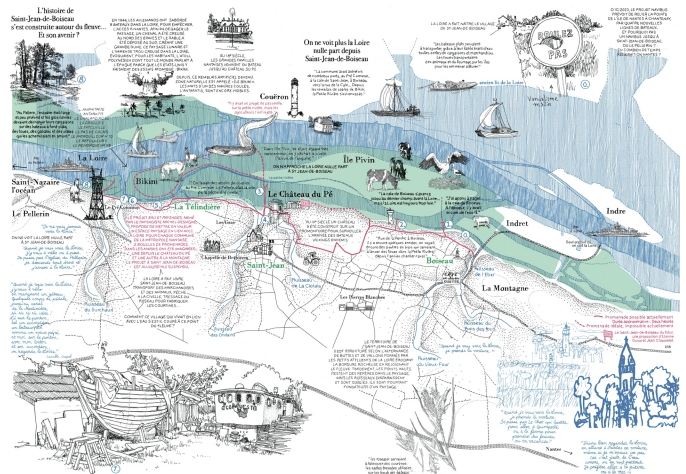
## In Practice

The research project is experimenting with the potential of the map through several case studies in order to propose new operating modes in cartography.

The first concrete experience of making cards was created on an opportunity, from a specific order: that of the residence "Architects and illustrators" organized by the WBA (Belgium) and the Maison de l'Architecture des Pays de la Loire (France).

Practices, uses, feelings, attachments anchored in this specific territory; basically, what the usual maps don't show will be at the heart of the cartographic operation.

The combined elements which, by means of individual visions, will build a collective vision, will make it possible to redefine and represent, in dotted lines, what could constitute today, beyond the administrative limits, this territory, its subsistence landscape, while the gap between this "country where we live" and "the world we live in" is constantly widening<sup>1</sup>.



3

*The residence "Architects and illustrators" organized by the WBA (Belgium) and the Maison de l'Architecture des Pays de la Loire (France) aims to question peri-urbanity and the role of contemporary architecture in the densification and reinvention of these territories. In this context, the proposed multidisciplinary team<sup>2</sup>, immersed in the context of study for six weeks, presented, using maps, a reflection on the entity of Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau, a commune in the Nantes periphery. The initial goal is to represent the place by expressing the point of view of the inhabitants, in particular with regard to the rapid changes that their rural region is undergoing in the face of land pressure on the edge of the metropolis.*





4

*At the start of the experience, from the heart of Wallonia, the idea of the landscape of Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau does not awake a specific imagination other than that of all the edges of the Loire represented by the painters, notably Felix Vallotton, then perhaps staged through the artistic practices of Nantes Estuaire. Impatience.*

*The first meeting with the field is less enchanting. Practiced from carriageways, the territory seems to be homogeneously covered by decontextualized built complexes. The streets are empty and oversized. Historical nuclei are difficult to spot in this tasteless slick. No link with the valley.*

*The break between the generic representations of Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau and the fieldwork deserves to be questioned. Like old paintings, the Google view gives pride of place to the river. But it broke the link with reality, with the relief and the movements. From this point of view, it tends to standardize the image that one can have of a territory. It trivializes it.*

The territory imposed as part of the residence constitutes a good breeding ground for research: Its dimensions are physically suitable - the communal perimeter covered in two hours on foot; it is made up of multiple urban fragments and it is encased in a larger and clearly identifiable territory - the Loire estuary and the Nantes metropolis.

In order to go beyond the first trivialized representations, it is the landscape, in all the richness of the term, which is to be discovered and shared: its spatial structure, its organization, its experience, its values and its practices, the sensitive experiences that it proposes, its future<sup>3</sup>. The great schools of town planning are now endeavoring to find new ways of representing the territory, the cartography being intensely convened, the image participating in the foreground of the reinvention process. At various scales, under various theoretical labels, the laboratories of Paola Vigano or Alberto Magnaghi put forward, by a superposition of layers, the network of agricultural and economic resources, physical, landscape and hydrological mesh; studying their historical evolution, revealing their specificities as a potential for reviving an eco-centered urban planning, capable of leveraging a territorial resilience, considering what is there and having to stay there, as much as thinking what is not there yet.

Here, the approach proposes to cross physical realities with the imagination of the inhabitants on a more intimate scale, also emphasizing values and attachments, promoting the mobilization of actors. The objective of the maps is built around "problematization" and debate: it is a matter of reconfiguring a reduced territory according to relationships with circles and areas of controversy, ground for a possible common.

UNE PREMIERE APPROCHE  
TOUTRUVANTE DE ST JEAN  
AVEC LA LATITUDE LA  
SENSATION QUE CETTE  
COMMUNE S'ETEND SUR  
1 MILLIARD DE KILOMETRE  
ET NE PEUT S'ARRETER  
QUE EN AUTOMOBILE.  
OVERDOSE PAVILLONNAIRE  
  
~~ON A MANQUE DE PRELIMINAIRE~~



## 1. Understanding the landscape: Investigating

Three types of experiments were set up to investigate. The survey by walking, the collection of documents and testimonies, and finally the sharing walks.

### *Wander, follow tracks, side roads*

Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau is organized by its road layout, limited to the south by a four-lane expressway and crossed from west to east by a causeway parallel to the river. Along it unfolds a continuous suburban fabric making it difficult to perceive the original denser hamlets and consecrating the absence of the river. According to Tim Ingold and his story of lines, we had to leave the roads, to cross the “occupation lines”<sup>4</sup>, to find paths, feeling the texture of the place through an infinite interlacing of tracks, and to look for passages to reach the landscape and the Loire.

However, La Loire is not readable. Despite attempts to bring it together, it was impossible to touch or see it. In some places we could feel it...

But the Loire is an enigma.



7

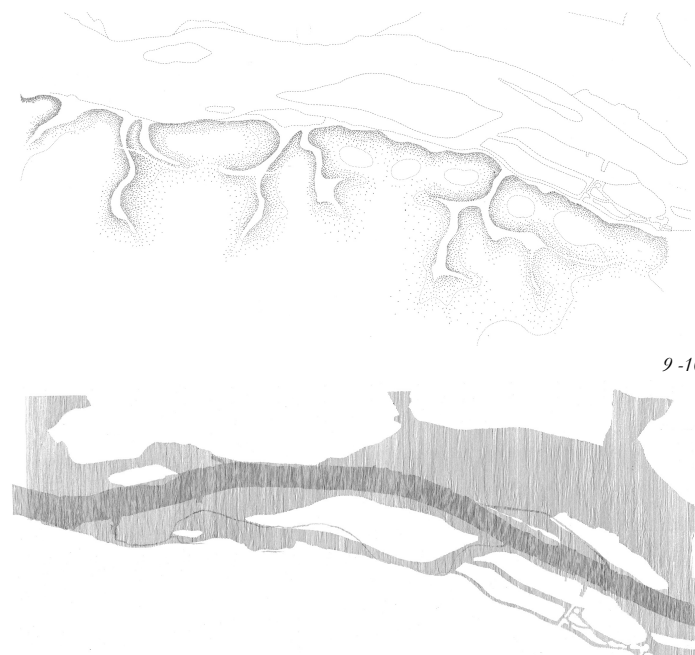
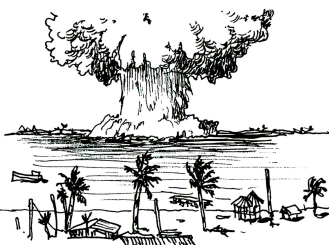
The discovery of paths and side roads made it possible to approach the territory as a network of tracks rather than as a network of connected points. Contrary to this infinite weaving of tracks, the lines of occupation are those drawn by the politician. They can be abstract, like the administrative limits, but can also concretely impose a rectilinear organization on the landscape, like the road network, based on an economic order that rarely takes into account the lines of habitation, the weaving of paths and paths.

### *Harvest, re-map, capture physical components*

Drawing and redrawing old maps provides the premises for an explanation. Trying overlays, choosing the essential elements to keep as support; a capacity for schematization seems to emerge. The territory then acquires a more specific structure that the hand can easily synthesize.

8

The books tell of the Loire canalization and the burial, in 1945, of wrecks of German boats narrowing the width of the river, creating the sandbanks which will take the name, historically connoted, of bikini. We connected the stories related to the river, memories of fishing, boat trips in the marsh, workers' comradeship around the Indret foundry, created in the 18th century for the royal navy. Historical maps offer concrete traces of these stories.

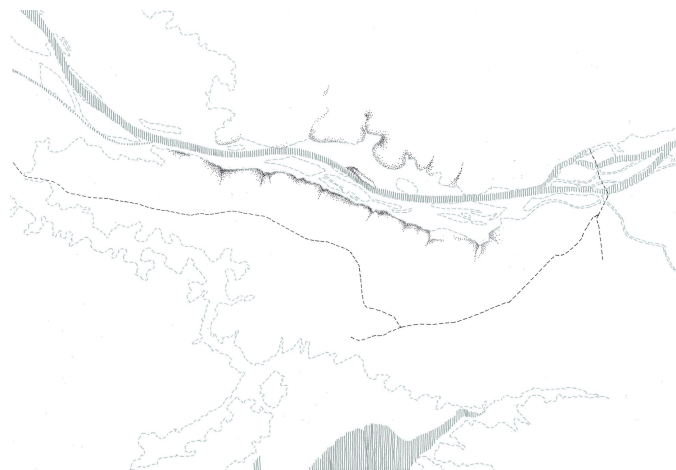


9-10



The representation of the territory via the map is already a project act. The operations of selection, classification, schematization necessary for the production of a map make it an "operator of construction of the landscape", to use the expression of Gilles Tiberghien taken up by Jean-Marc Besse<sup>5</sup>. The process behind this cartographic production responds to the logic of inventive thinking. We describe by drawing and language a reality that is not comprehensible in its entirety by the human eye. This allows a total and synthetic vision, an entity valid for the real, and therefore necessarily creative since inventing a project for reality.

The ability to reveal a structure to make exist, using the map, a new idea of the territory, is part of the exploration.



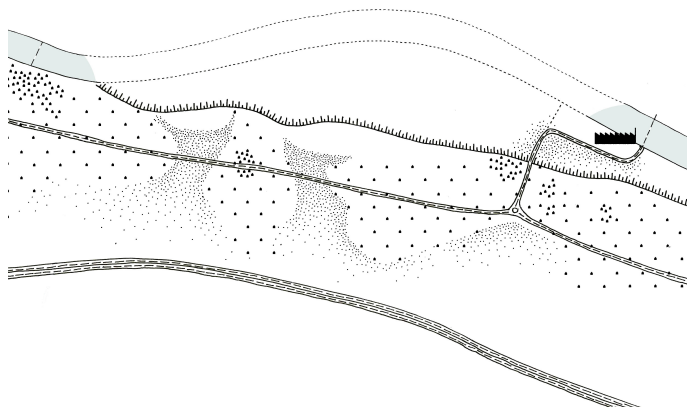
11

*Redrawing the traces of the past on the present makes it possible to account for the gradual reduction in the influence of the river, for the rapid transformation of the landscape, whose delta character dissipates strongly. For agro-economic reasons linked to the evolution of tools and agrarian practices, the marshes are drying up and the Loire is losing ground. While it occupied the width of the valley bottom with a series of arms, constituting an omnipresent swamp landscape (map 11 high), it is reduced today to a single narrow ribbon (map 11 low).*



12

*The research comes through to the ability to schematize the field of study. To abstract the essential and leave the door open to new anchored representations. Here, the diagram reinforces the interpretation of a territory cut off from the river, the villages being organized in strings along the main road, and tending to meet.*



*Meet - follow new paths to talk about living space*

Producing a sensitive map based exclusively on our visitor experiences would undoubtedly shed new light on the place, but would miss out on the cartographic potential that we would like to test: could the map be a tool for exchange between the inhabitants, making bridges between representations and imaginations?

It is with a method close to that of the "itineraries" of the sociologist Jean-Yves Petiteau<sup>6</sup> that a knowledge of the practices and values linked to this territory was gradually built up. The method is to be taken along by a resident on the route of their choice. During the walk, the inhabitant comes, by evoking his habits, his memories, his attachment to place or his fright at his transformation, to justify the choice of the route he offers us.

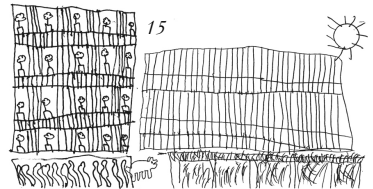
The method also reveals a form of anticipation, the guide evoking his worries and hopes regarding potential changes. The story is collected by notes on the fly. Afterwards, it is stripped to keep only the part that is most apt to captivate and question on the territorial space: surprising and unsuspected practices, positions, moving memories, sensitive questions, words of attachment. This selection is then illustrated by a series of drawings emphasizing this new mesh of values.

"Following a path is, I believe, the fundamental mode that living beings, human and non-human, adopt to inhabit the earth. In my opinion, housing does not mean occupying an environment in a predefined world so that the populations who arrive can reside there. The inhabitant is rather someone who from the inside participates in the world being done and who, by tracing a life path, contributes to its weaving and its mesh"<sup>7</sup>.

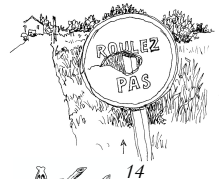
We feel the difficulty of living today in occupational environments, which guide, enclose, contain, to the detriment of a renewal of sensitive experience. However, these rigid structures are not immutable. "They are continually undermined by the tactics and tricks of the inhabitants, whose "lignes d'erre" or "entrelacs de parcours" - to use the expressions of Deligny and Michel de Certeau respectively - bypass the strategic aims of the leaders of society, so that they wear out and end up disintegrating"<sup>8</sup>. This would therefore be the object of the cartographic experience, which is discovered as the research progresses: revealing these lifelines, creative resistances to the recommended occupational routes. Escape tactics and space practices without capitalization objective are at the heart of walking stories. This is what was spontaneously retained in the stripping of the stories collected in the march: what takes place "otherwise", in the margins of the institutionalized, planned places, where the uses are agreed. Here, the reference to Michel Foucault's heterotopias particularly finds its place.



13



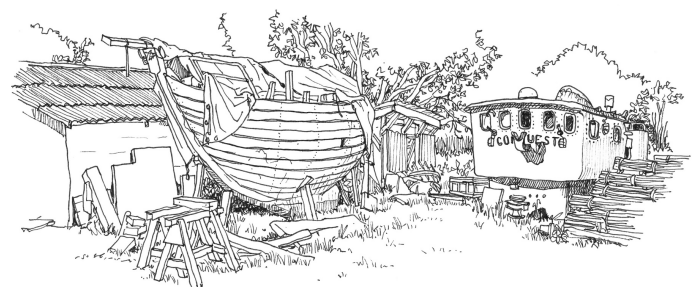
"Mon père dit que ces petits immeubles, ils poussent comme des champignons, et qu'on ne se sent plus à la campagne."



14



16



17

"The ship is the ultimate heterotopia. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage replaces adventure, and the police, corsairs"<sup>9</sup>. Difficult to make a link between this world without boat and without dreams, and Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau where the river recedes ... The boats seem abandoned in the wasteland and the water is nowhere ...



## 2. Which map ?

The collection of sensitive data was done in a very short time according to a method allowing to quickly reach exploitable results (stories linked to the place). Here we explore the potential of a specific tool, the map : its synthetic nature, its ability to accommodate drawing and text in a single view, which gives strength to this image, which ensures its dissemination. Certain typologies of cards, advancing the argument of objectivity, aiming for universality, require the terrain to marry Euclidean space, thereby erasing a whole part of the narratives that could generate chorography. "The basemap is only an alibi, what is important is the narration"<sup>10</sup>. According to Sébastien Caquard, mapping stories requires "thinking of the map not as a finalized object, but as part of a process"<sup>11</sup>. The framework in which the card is built is fundamental. In Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau, this framework is gradually being built. Since the starting, order is very free. The choice to produce maps comes from the hypothesis that this synthetic object can transmit to the inhabitants, through drawing and stories, through a set of assumed selections, a series of fundamental questions on the evolution of this specific terrain.

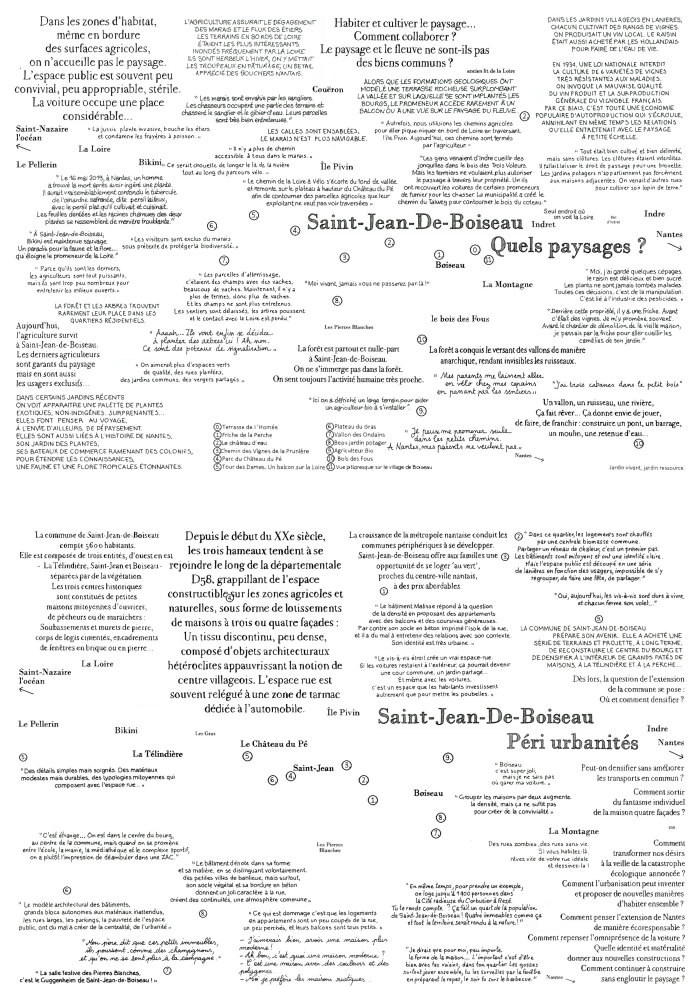
Through legend and place names, the presence of text is inherent in any map, and the text-image relationship gives it its ability to inform. In the maps of Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau, the text overflows from the legend and takes shape in the map. It enters the drawing to ask the questions formulated by the inhabitants in ordinary language, with reference to the place. It rediscovers the place through the narrative filter. This integration of writing into drawing certainly deserves in-depth graphic research in order to more effectively combine meaning and form: text is also graphic material.

By hand

The choice of hand drawing was instinctively imposed, to translate postures and stories, as an easier way to reach the reader and for his ability to translate a situation that is not frozen, but always in motion, to become.

### Abstraction figuration

Through new cartographic experiences, the figuration-abstraction cursor deserves to be successively moved to capture the gains (strength of the image) and losses (simplification of the content) in the transmission of ideas. We can evoke to illustrate these processes the work of other cartographers, sources of inspiration.



18

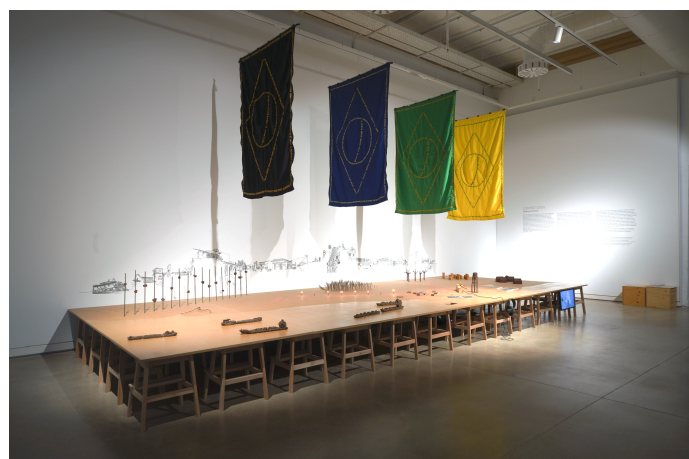
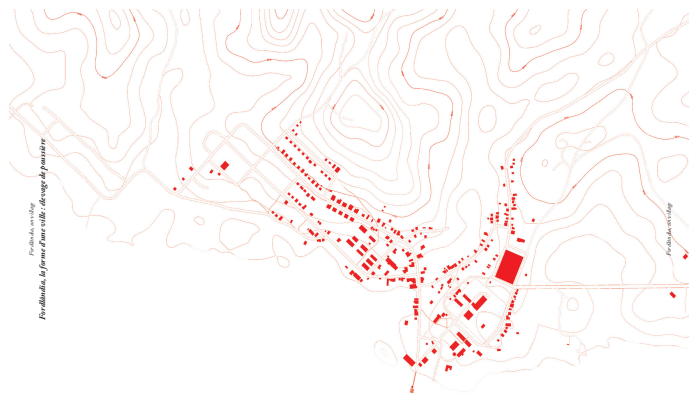
*The text is a material, a texture, significant by its content, but also by its graphic form. Research is to be continued in this direction.*



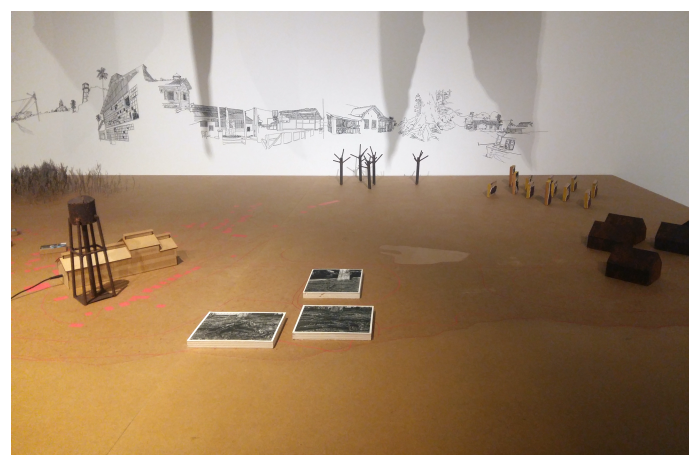
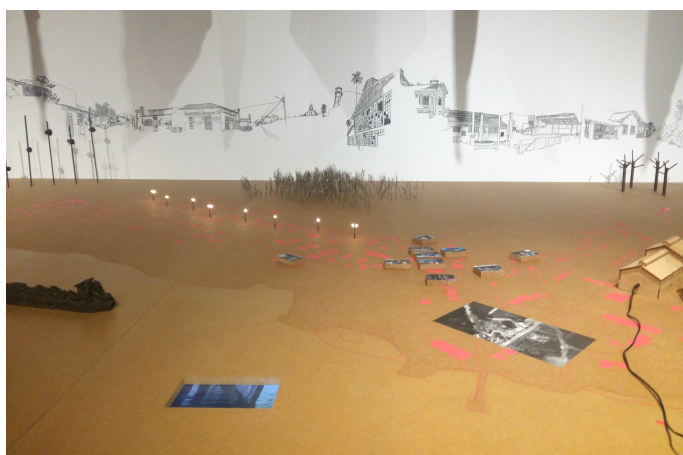


Suspended spaces is a collective made up of artists and researchers working from historic sites abandoned by modernity.

Its installation Mapping Fordlândia<sup>12</sup> offers a sensitive and co-constructed map of the village drawn from a hyper synthetic background map. These are the specific interventions, placed on the map in a specific way, which together build a vision of the site, deliberately fragmentary but emphasizing certain components, staging a critical and committed reading. The place, in its multiple facets, is translated by a collection of points of view. The position of the figuration-abstraction cursor minimizes the graphic impact of the background in favor of the ideas of the place conveyed by the assembled artifacts. Each artefact is an abyss which contains in it a representation of the place.

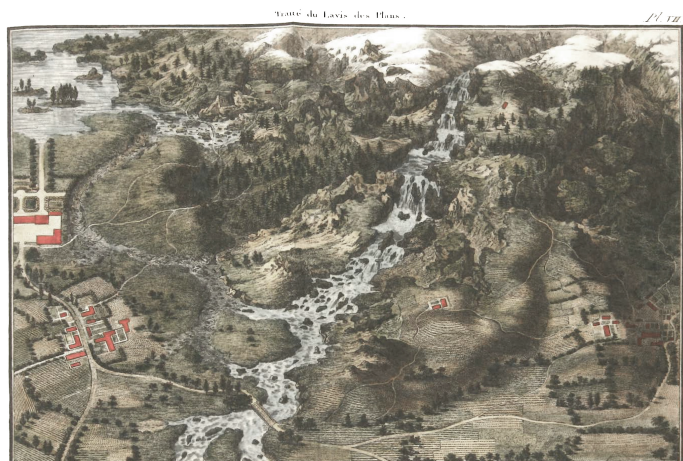


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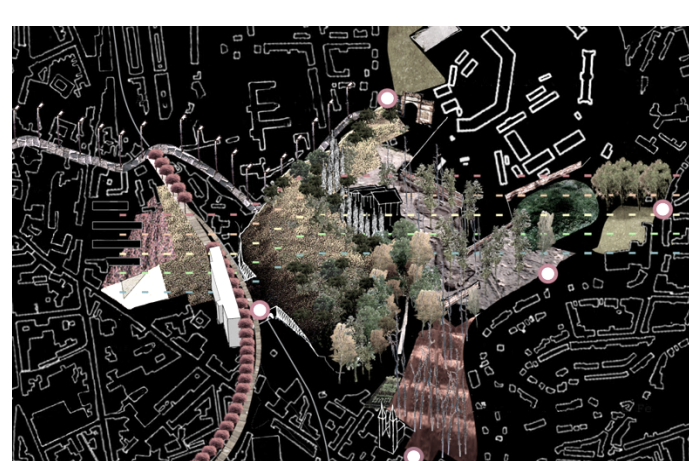


In other maps, the cursor is opposite, and the background itself tries, by exploring the potential of the drawing, without code and practically without legend, without reference, and without abyss, to say the physical thickness of the place, its ambiances, its specificities, its atmospheres.

*The map of the Chartreuse estate attempts to reveal a rich landscape, composed of varied atmospheres and ecological environments, which results in a posture of a minimalist, non-interventionist project author. The map in itself, along with on-site tags, is the heart of the project, envisaged as a medium for the dissemination and promotion of the intrinsic qualities of this neglected space, in place of in situ interventions.*



21



22



These different types of cards open the question of their distribution. The Fordlândia Mapping performance necessarily requires substantial logistical support and ends with an inaugural event that brings together an audience. Its dimensions have a symbolic impact but it is ephemeral.

The option of producing folded cards offers other possibilities: the publication gives rise to a festive event bringing together the public, after which the card is adopted individually. The object contains all the explanations and can become autonomous. We can take it for a walk... or it can take us for a walk: the objective of the route map is also to make the user individually rediscover experience and feelings on the route. The choice of the scale of the design bowed to the idea that the cards should be able to be taken on the paths.



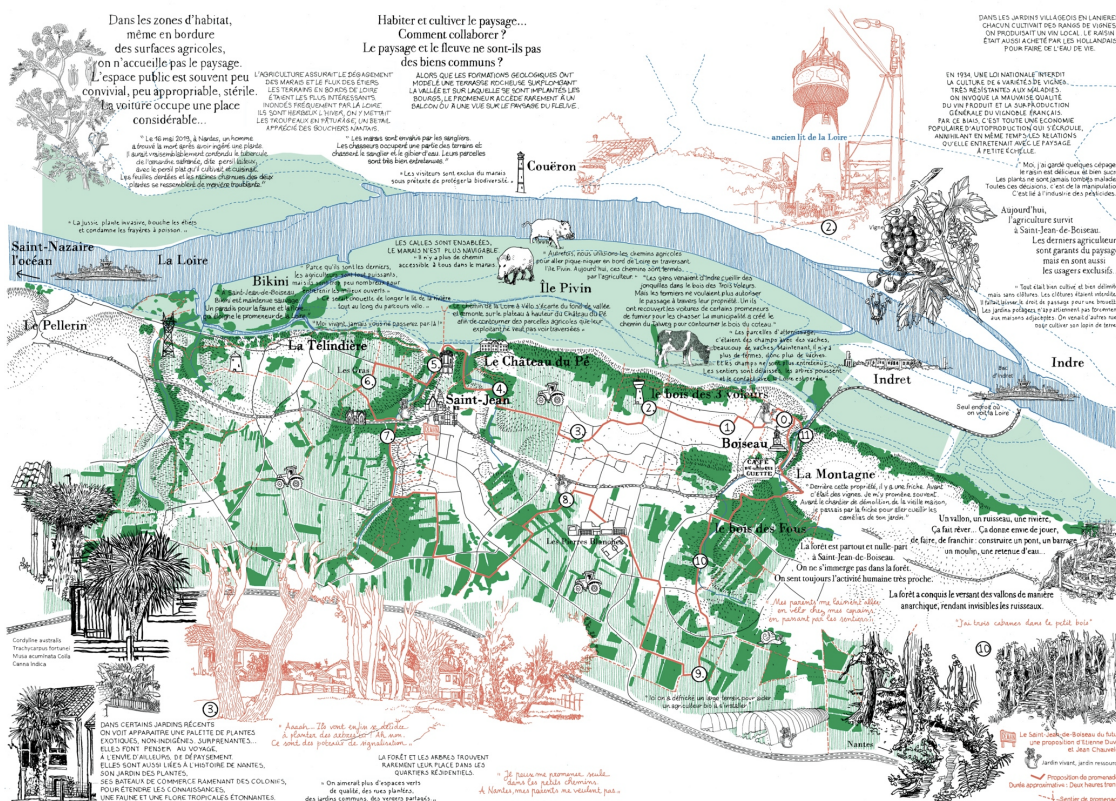
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*To discover Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau by the trails is to get a glimpse of the background. The maps produced offer a form of offbeat guided tour, at the crossroads of valiant and improbable places, forgotten traces, spaces of freedom calling into question the notion of monument. It could be an unexpected, diverted tourist map.*



24

*The moment of public presentation of the maps was an opportunity to unite the inhabitants around this artefact which represents them and put them in motion around territorial issues.*



## Saint-Jean-De-Boiseau

### Quels paysages ?



Cette carte fait partie d'un ensemble  
de 4 promenades thématiques  
proposées dans la commune  
de Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau

Où est la Loire ?  
Quels paysages ?  
Petits patrimoines  
Péri-urbanités

Elles ont été réalisées en 2019, dans le cadre d'une conférence organisée par Wallonie Bruxelles International et la Maison de l'Architecture des Pays de la Loire, par Virginie Pigeon, paysagiste, Anne Ledroit, architecte, et Eric Vakkie, plasticien.

Les témoignages et citations repris sur les cartes ont été recueillis au travers de rencontres et de promenades grâce à l'aide de la mairie de Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau, de la médiathèque Edmond Berteux et de l'école Robert Dandinter.

Nous remercions particulièrement Madame Lydie Girard, Monsieur Michel Durant et la classe d'élèves de Madame Malhilde Champy.

Merci aussi à la seconde équipe, participant à la résidence, l'exploisif Jean Chauvelot et son pompier Etienne Duval.

- son compér
- 0 Terrasse de l'Homée
  - 1 Friche de la Perche
  - 2 Le château d'eau
  - 3 Chemin des Vignes de la Prunière
  - 4 Parc du Château du Pé
  - 5 Tour des Dames. Un balcon sur la Loire
  - 6 Plateau du Gras
  - 7 Vallon des Ondains
  - 8 Beau jardin potager
  - 9 Agriculteur Bio
  - 10 Bois des Fous
  - 11 Vue pittoresque sur le village de Boisseau

Avec le soutien de  
Wallonie-Bruxelles International  
Wallonie-Bruxelles Architectures

### 3. Project lever

Cartographic operations question the dimensions of the project, insofar as these representations transform as much as they inform. They open up new perspectives of "project" at three levels. Considering the landscape as a world common to all forms of life, the action or the project would depart from their usual meaning to serve to enhance and strengthen the relationships at work on the site, in continuity of research by Philippe Madec. When he evokes "the landscape or the primacy of the site", it is well with the idea of giving the site the opportunity to express its needs rather than imposing abstract programming on it<sup>13</sup>.

Here, the map shows the common good - the landscape - through representation, in a clarified and synthetic state: it is already a project, a creative interpretation valid for the real.

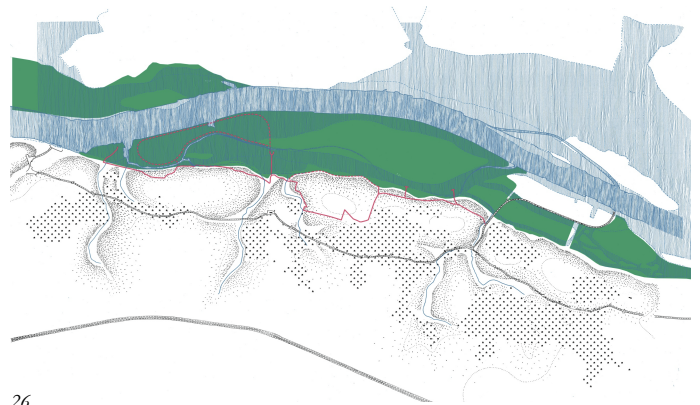
The map contributes to the creation of a community: the co-constructed artifact brings together the inhabitants. This new cultural object belongs only to them and united them. It constitutes a form of contemporary mythology.

Finally, it opens up a space for nuanced and inclusive debate around the future of the site. Considering the common as a place open to controversy, the map meets the conditions, setting up a framework that it is urgent to make exist, that welcoming the confrontation. Therefore, it constitutes the premises of new projects according to the ethics of "care" <sup>14</sup>.

" Autrefois, nous utilisons les chemins agricoles pour aller pique-niquer en bord de Loire en traversant l'île Pivin. Aujourd'hui, ces chemins sont fermés par l'agriculteur. "

" Aaaah... Ils vont enfin se décider à planter des arbres ici ! Ah non. Ce sont des poteaux de signalisation. "

" Derrière cette propriété, il y a une friche. Avant c'était des vignes. Je m'y promène souvent. Avant le chantier de démolition de la vieille maison, je passais par la friche pour aller cueillir les camélias de son jardin. "



26

*The synthetic drawings of the landscape of Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau propose to review what are the important elements in the way of representing - representing oneself - this specific territory. They offer a design for the place.*



27

*The time of restitution strengthens the feeling of sharing and community. This will be extended in the march.*

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- 4 An evening on the Loire - Felix Vallotton (1923), Google Earth Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau
- 5 Photos of Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau - Virginie Pigeon and extract from Chauvelot J. (2019). In a Walcourt residence in Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau, a comic book with a fun documentary vocation. France: LeMéguot editions.
- 6 Extracts from the residence material produced by Virginie Pigeon. Map of the area of urbanized areas and maps of the trails and traces covered.
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- <sup>7</sup> Ibid 4. p108.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid 4. p136.
- <sup>9</sup> Foucault M. (1967). Des espaces autres. Conférence au Cercle d'études architecturales, 14 mars 1967. In Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité. n°5, p 46-49. France : Le Moniteur. [En ligne].
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- <sup>12</sup> Suspended spaces (2020). Mapping Fordlândia. Extrait de la plaquette de présentation transmise par le Collectif.
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