



[AIGA Philadelphia presents “MAPnificent: Artists Use Maps”](#)

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While it is true that the map is not actually the territory, a group of artists at the AIGA Philadelphia Space prove that these useful representations can serve as much more than orienteering tools. For the show “MAPnificent: Artists Use Maps,” some 15 individuals and a couple of groups including the Brooklyn Art Library and the Hand Drawn Map Association utilize these important and ancient objects to take visitors in entirely new conceptual directions that cannot be found on your average compass rose.

Practically everyone is familiar with the popular “I (Heart) NY” shirts, pins and apparently maps that stemmed from the successful 1970s tourism campaign. Still a strong and recognizable symbol to this day, artist Viviane Rombaldi Seppey harnesses the power of this advertisement by illustrating a realistic heart across one of these promotional maps. Tiny, intricate lines blend together to form the arteries and chambers of a not-so-cartoony heart, which hovers just above the island of Manhattan. Mirroring busy roads and rivers from an aerial perspective, it’s no stretch to think of New York’s streets as flowing with yellow taxi cabs instead of red blood cells. It’s surely no mistake that high-capacity urban roads are referred to as ‘arterial,’ either.

In a similar vein, Jeff Woodbury tries his hand at dissecting maps and then re-folding them. These busy thoroughfares become bridges and overpasses in a complicated three-dimensional world that reflects but does not represent our own. They resemble the fractal interior of a heart as well, but return to their rectangular original boundaries. Chopping sections out of these pieces of paper and reconstructing them makes the maps appear more like woven baskets of some sort than a means to find a way home.

Paul Fabozzi seeks to return to cartography’s archaic past by composing abstract and weathered-looking pieces that seem more like treasure maps of old than the bits of NYC that they are actually derived from. Created from gouache and rust, their colors are more like stains and remind us of the idiosyncrasies that may only be visible from street level: the trash, decaying structures, or the subterranean subways and sewers which rarely find their way into the sterile world of navigation.

As part of an ongoing project, Irina Danilova includes a couple of prints from her “City Drawings” series. Utilizing the most contemporary of maps – those provided by Google – she aims to visit 59

cities across the globe and travel their streets with an online, open-source tracking system. The result is a series of consecutive markers along her path which draw out the number '59.' Certainly a good way to familiarize oneself with new places, the project also doubles as an intriguing conceptual art exploration of the internet and the physical world.

There are many more maps and map-like creations in the AIGA Philadelphia Space for "MAPnificent," so be sure to orient yourself toward Old City and check them out this month. The exhibit will be on view through March 31.

*AIGA Philadelphia Space is located at 72 N. 2nd St., Philadelphia;
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