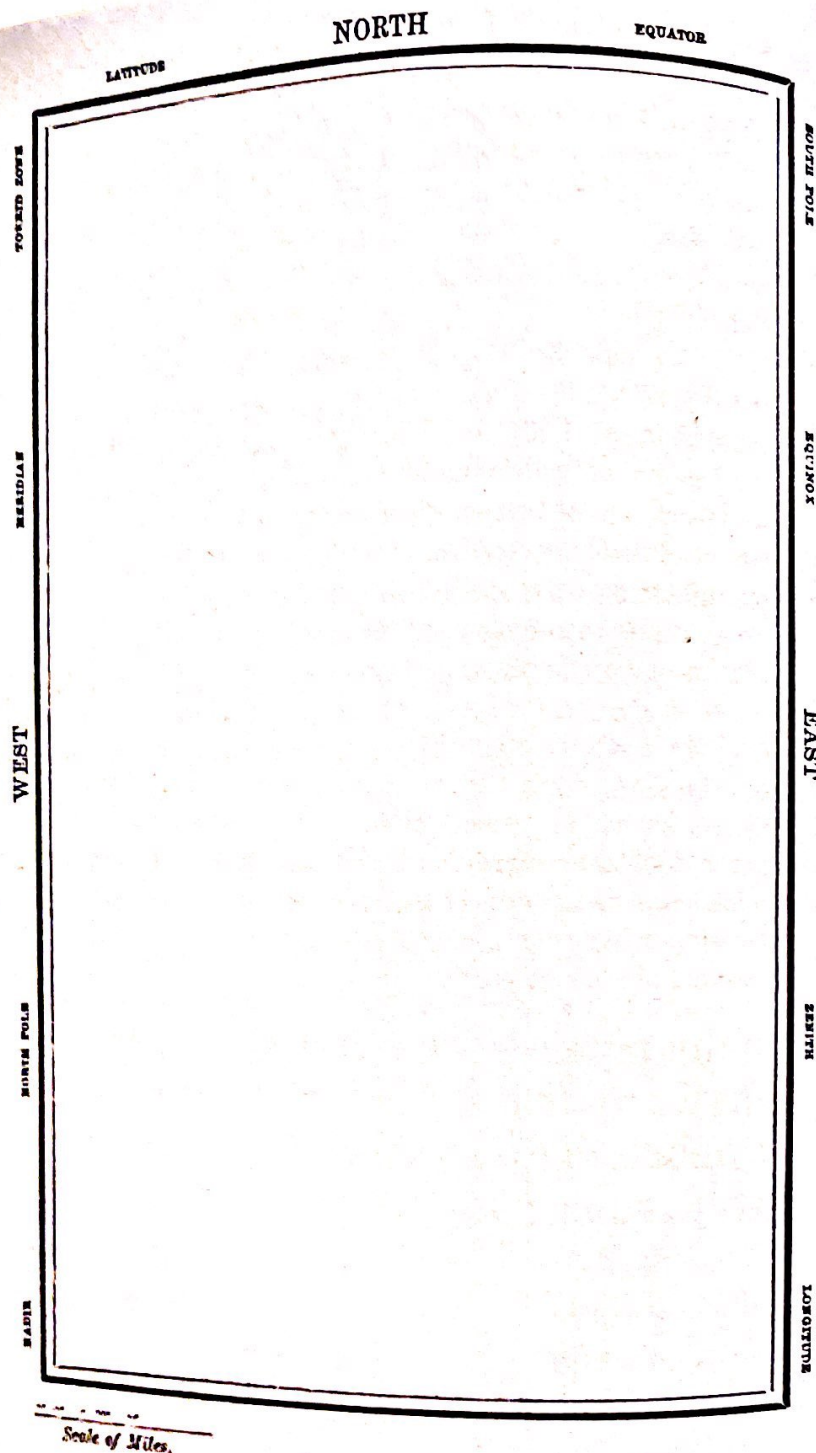




OCEAN-CHART.

TO MAP IS TO CONQUER

We find maps everywhere in our media-rich environment, but their forms are not very diverse. If you look at most maps used today, we see the offspring of colonial mapping practices. If the North is 'up', this is a remnant of maps invented in Northern Europe. If the Atlantic Ocean is left-centre, this stems from European interest in the shipping routes between the Americas and Europe. This historic perspective is relevant because of the strategic role that colonial maps have played in the forceful annexation of indigenous lands, and establishing the notion of land as property around the world. Colonial mapping practices not only established a Eurocentric worldview, but also a capitalist view of land as a form of private property that can be owned, traded, and sold.

Maps are always made from a certain viewpoint and are therefore subjective by nature. While European mapping practices rely on geographical precision for navigation, many indigenous maps create relations with the forefathers, the cosmos, the future and the past, navigating through space and time. For instance, seeing a forest as a group of living beings that are hundreds of years old, creates a very different notion of land, than if you classify it as a hectare of timber for industrial use. The maps we currently use are therefore extremely useful for navigating the seas or finding the nearest restaurant, because they were made for this purpose, but they are not very well equipped to tell us about the surrounding flora and wildlife, or what our ancestors did here. Every map is a reflection of social relations of the territory it aims to represent.

Are You on Stolen Land?

The first European who set foot on the continent later known as 'America' was trained as a mapmaker himself. Before he set off in August 1492, Columbus had worked in a cartography workshop

← Henry Holiday, Ocean-Chart. From: *The Hunting of the Snark* by Lewis Carroll, 1876.

in Lisbon. The transoceanic routes he took on his voyage would have great consequences. Before 1750, Europe was economically small, and Asia played a far bigger role in the world economy. Philosopher Walter Mignolo writes that before colonialism, the world order was 'polycentric and non-capitalist'.⁴⁰ The colonial transatlantic trade became the driver of the world economy, shifting the centre of power and knowledge to Europe.

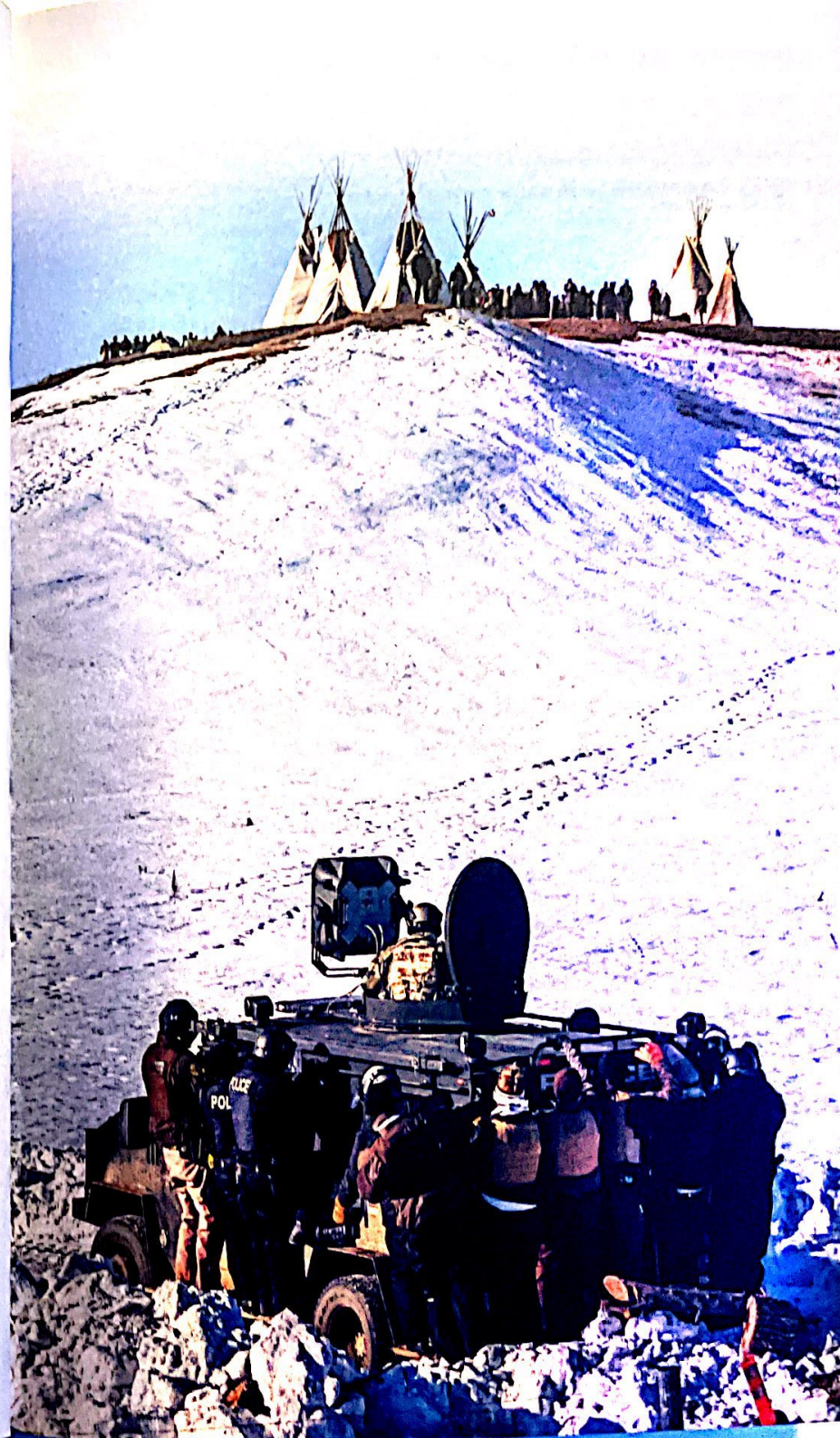
Colonial voyages were risky and only possible through the investment from bankers and merchants. The stock that was traded on the first stock markets in Amsterdam and London were almost exclusively of the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company. To safeguard their investments, investors received detailed reports with maps showing their new possessions. Documents convincing them colonial ventures were profitable.⁴¹



The printing press was essential for reproducing maps of these newly acquired lands. More than navigational aids, they represented the fruits of colonialism, convincing investors and the public that the enormous costs were justified, while demonstrating European superiority.

† Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, 1571-1584.

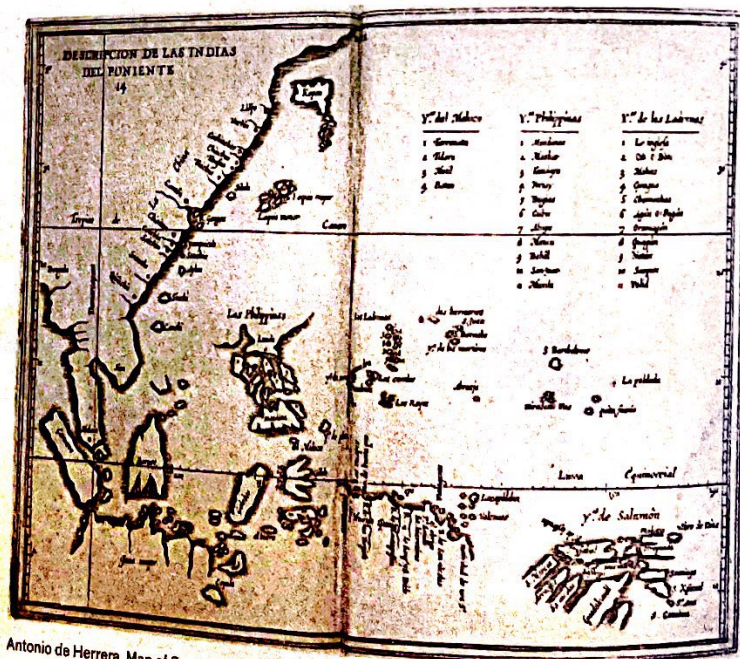
→ Ryan Vizziona, Last Child Camp Police Raid, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, 2 February 2017.



It would be very desirable that the Indians be extinguished, by miscegenation with the whites, declaring them free of tribute and other charges, and giving them private property in land.

PEDRO FERMÍN DE VARGAS, ECONOMIST

Mapping was also a tool for land grabbing. Islands and coastlines were mapped and annexed although no European had ever set foot on them. Mapping became synonymous to owning. When it turned out these lands were not uninhabited at all, the stealing of indigenous lands had to be justified. Philosopher John Locke proposed a theory that if land wasn't used efficiently enough by the owner, they could be kicked off. This theory proved its worth in the new continents where large areas of land lay idle being unproductive in the eyes of capitalism, and could therefore rightfully be occupied by settler colonists.⁴²



Antonio de Herrera, Map of Southeast Asia, 1622.

Here Be Savages

In precolonial times, European mapmakers had the habit of drawing dragons and octopuses at the edges to warn against falling off the earth's flat surface. When the first rumours of the existence of a new world spread, these monsters were replaced by natives that were thought to inhabit it.⁴³ The printing press spread stories and images of cannibals, six-armed men, centaurs, and hermaphrodites, which popularized the belief that the people inhabiting the 'new world' were of another order.⁴⁴ These wild imaginations were a precursor of how Europeans would morally defend the genocide that they unleashed on the native inhabitants.

While Adam Smith was busy writing one of the founding texts of capitalism, philosopher Immanuel Kant categorized different races according to assumed moral and physical standards, which scientifically anchored slavery as a morally just act. Colonized lands could be seized and plundered, which is exactly what Europeans did. Spanish conquerors extracted massive amounts of gold and silver from the Americas for which they used enslaved peoples and exploited the indigenous population. Mignolo writes

...the combination of capital, massive appropriation of land and resources, and massive exploitation of labour made it possible, for the first time in the history of the human species, to produce commodities for a global market.⁴⁵

Besides the influx of gold and silver, plantations in the colonies flooded Europe with cheap cotton, which would in turn spark off the first industrial textile mills in the UK, the first factories of the industrial revolution.

Turtle Island

Throughout history, mapping practices have existed that were very different to the colonial and capitalist views of mapmaking. It was the influence of European mapmaking through state administration and education that marginalized other world views. The Haudenosaunee nation refer to the North American continent as 'turtle island'. Their mapping practices were radically different from European maps. For example, the Haudenosaunee do not

Abstract

frases con una
publicación rural
de más de 10
millones de
lectores.

Principales causas de la explotación que sufre el mundo:

- Violencia armada
- Hidrocarburos
- Minerías
- Medioambiente

 Países donde se encuentran las ceras centrales de las principales empresas agroalimentarias, petroleras, mineras, siderúrgicas, de semillas transgénicas y farmacéuticas.

- Ciudades de más de 10 millones de habitantes

En un mundo donde los cuerpos y territorios creadores de vida, son considerados objetos de conquista, expoliados en actos neocoloniales y capitalistas, y amenazados por una violencia machista y patriarcal que se manifiesta en múltiples dimensiones: las mujeres resisten y organizan sus comunidades a través de economías del cuidado, protegiendo los bienes comunes y la soberanía alimentaria.

Monocéntrica: Las mujeres se enfrentan a los tratados de libre comercio, a la expansión de conflictos armados y al maltrato transnacional, y protegen la diversidad de especies existentes.

Entre 1700 millones de mujeres representen un 25% de la población mundial, y alrededor a un 70% de los habitantes del planeta. Las mujeres realizan la mitad del trabajo de subsistencia, la obtención de agua y leña y la cría de animales; realizan un trabajo pesado y no remunerado; el doméstico, el cual es el núcleo de las familias y de parientes cercanos. En la mayoría del hogar y la elaboración de alimentos. Los labores circunscriben como una actividad obligatoria con tareas de reproducción biológica.

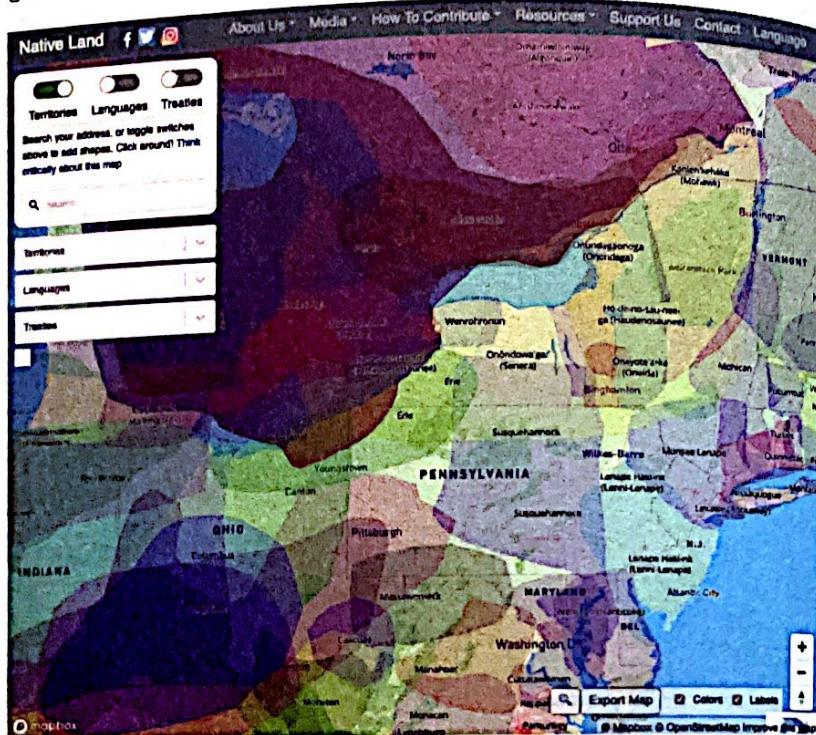
El sistema alimentario agroindustrial, basado en monocultivos y dependiente por transacciones, sitúa a un 30% de la población mundial, y espesa en condiciones miserables a una infante parte de los trabajadores rurales. Destruye el medio ambiente, empobrece y espesa a los pobladores originarios, mientras se espesa a través de la militarización y la represión, generando la pérdida de los derechos colectivos sobre los bienes naturales, y transformando lo común en propiedad privada.

Los rituales rurales, mediante prácticas de defensa de los bienes comunes, de promoción de la cultura popular y solidaria, y de respeto hacia la naturaleza, aseguran la agrodiversidad frente al avance del despojo neocolonial. Custodian, además, los más de 7 mil lenguas vivas en todo el mundo, cada una desarrollada durante siglos de costumbres y portadoras de tradiciones y prácticas riquísimas, mayormente desconocidas, lo que las convierte en guardianes de los recursos de la tierra.

Language	Number of People
Français	7000
Arabe	2148
Anglais	1060
Espagnol	285
Italien	1312

Continuité de la langue maternelle par génération.
 Note: Le 30% de plus est en raison de l'immigration.

acknowledge land ownership but see it as part of a larger ecology where they are simply stewards of the land on behalf of future generations.⁴⁶



↑ Native land, nativeland.ca.

Iconoclasistas is a design collective from Argentina that uses collective mapping as a method to critically question the oppressive and capitalist nature of mapping. Founded in 2008, they see mapping as an 'organizational process' by way of 'collaborative work'. Another mapping project is Native Land, a collective of indigenous representatives in North America, who digitally and collectively map the lands, treaties, and languages of the tribes in North America. The website allows participation and adaptation with the help of users. Both Iconoclasistas and Native Land use European mapping as a starting point, but through a collective practice they challenge the idea that the viewpoint of a map is decided by one person. Conflicting and overlapping areas occur regularly and show mapping is also an act of collective world-making.

These counter mapping practices use mapping as a social pro-

cess that is continuously questioned and subject to change in form of a graphic dialogue. This follows from the famous quote 'a map is not the territory' by engineer and mathematician Alfred Korzybski. By this he meant that people often mistake a model of reality for reality itself. In other words, it is often assumed that maps offer a complete or at least sufficient representation of reality, while in fact they only show what the person who made it wants you to see. The advantage with maps for daily navigation is that

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME
OF
YOUR OWN

EASY PAYMENTS



PERFECT TITLE

POSSESSION

WITHIN

THIRTY DAYS

FINE LANDS IN THE WEST

IRRIGATED
IRRIGABLE

GRAZING

AGRICULTURAL
DRY FARMING

IN 1910 THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR SOLD UNDER SEALED BIDS ALLOTTED INDIAN LAND AS FOLLOWS:

Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.	Location.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.
Colorado	5,211.21	\$7.27	Oklahoma	34,664.00	\$19.14
Idaho	17,013.00	24.85	Oregon	1,020.00	15.43
Kansas	1,684.50	33.45	South Dakota	120,445.00	16.53
Montana	11,034.00	9.86	Washington	4,879.00	41.37
Nebraska	5,641.00	36.65	Wisconsin	1,069.00	17.00
North Dakota	22,610.70	9.93	Wyoming	865.00	20.64

FOR THE YEAR 1911 IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 350,000 ACRES WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE

For information as to the character of the land write for booklet, "INDIAN LANDS FOR SALE," to the Superintendent U. S. Indian School at any one of the following places:

CALIFORNIA: Hope.	MINNESOTA: Oaigum.	NORTH DAKOTA: Fort Totten. Fort Yates.	OKLAHOMA: Coa. Sax and Fox Agency. Shawnee. Wandecia.	SOUTH DAKOTA: Cheyenne Agency. Crow Creek. Grenwood. Lower Brule. Pine Ridge. Rosebud. Siouxton.	WASHINGTON: Fort Simcoe. Fort Spokane. Tulalip. Wiaconish. Osnide.
COLORADO: Ignacio.	MONTANA: Crow Agency.	OKLAHOMA: Aadarko. Cantonment. Colony. Dartington. Haskell. Pawnee.	OREGON: Klamath Agency. Pendleton. Reynolds. Siletz.		
IDAHO: Layral.	NEBRASKA: Macy. Sutton. Wamegan.				
KANSAS: Horton. Hudson.					

WALTER L. FISHER,
Secretary of the Interior.

ROBERT G. VALENTINE,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Advertisements for Native American land sale, United States Department of the Interior, 1911.

they are both ubiquitous and easy to access, so a decolonial and socially motivated mapping practice would therefore not have to replace existing maps, but can propose alternative ideas about how to understand land.

An office boy could figure out the number of square feet involved in a street opening or in a sale of land: even a lawyer's clerk could write a description of the necessary deed of sale, merely by filling in with the proper dimensions the standard document.

LEWIS MUMFORD, HISTORIAN

Visual Order vs. Working Order

The designer as engineer has translated the messy reality of human existence into manageable and legible forms. By creating categories, standards, and documents, the designer as engineer serves as an extension of the bureaucracy by which the nation state and market economies are governed. Inventions such as standardized forms, maps, and data visualizations helped to advance scientific research immensely. This has produced useful and successful tools, but the triumph of the Eurocentric scientific order also meant that a lot of knowledge was lost. A loss of vernacular practices that Scott has compared to the extinction of species.⁴⁷

Capitalism has benefited greatly from standardization and simplification of the world order, which has made industrial production and trade more efficient. Professional standards within graphic design are highly uniform. Adobe, Javascript, Monotype, and Pantone are not only trademarks, they are also some of the necessary standards for efficient industrial production. As each item in industrial production needs to be identical to all the others, traces of labour, resource extraction, and human interaction are made invisible. Global industry standards have allowed global production cycles and outsourcing to take place. This has depleted the planet and alienated workers, with exploitation of labour and a climate crisis as a result. If we value the existence of our planet, our priority

should be to produce less commodities and to produce more local and in a socially more meaningful manner.

The rational and scientific world view that this has created, is not only a capitalist phenomenon. Communist states such as Russia and China constructed their socialist politics on the same principles, with disastrous outcomes. Problems occur when the messy reality of human society is forced to conform to categories and standards that only serve the needs of a few. The point is that scientific thinking and rational ordering in society are necessary, as long as they don't forcefully dominate and suppress other perspectives.

There are reasons to be hopeful. In 1993 a stone with detailed carvings was found in the Navarra region in Spain. Scientists concluded this was in fact a map made 14,000 years ago, now known as the oldest map ever found. The carvings show mountains, rivers, ponds, and even routes.⁴⁸ That would suggest that early forms of graphic design such as sign making and mapmaking were around long before anything resembling capitalism existed. A graphic design that welcomes other forms of knowledge and perspectives that do not only have efficiency and profit as their goals. A socially aware graphic design should be able to look beyond industrial pre-sets, and towards created shared social spaces of creativity and knowledge, accessible to everyone.

Digital technology has given designers more control over the production process, which opens up the possibility of bringing different forms of knowledge into graphic design. A move towards a non-capitalist practice of design will therefore have to question the very basics of how design is practiced, without going back to an eco-utopia of pre-industrial production. By starting small, in your own social circle and region, economies of reciprocity can create socially sensitive practices like the common lands did before capitalism. Searching for alternatives towards ways of working together that strengthen social bonds and relations, instead of breaking them.

Capitalism could not exist without the coins, banknotes, documents, information graphics, interfaces, branding, and advertising made by graphic designers. Even strategies such as social design and speculative design are easily appropriated to serve economic growth. It seems design is locked in a cycle of exploitation and extraction, furthering inequality and environmental collapse. *CAPSLOCK* is a reference work that uses clear language and visual examples to show how graphic design and capitalism have come to be inextricably linked. The book features designed objects, but also examines how the professional practice of designers itself supports capitalism. Six radical graphic design collectives are featured that resist capitalist thinking in their own way, inspiring a more sustainable and less exploitative practice of graphic design.

Written and designed by Ruben Pater
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CAPSLOCK

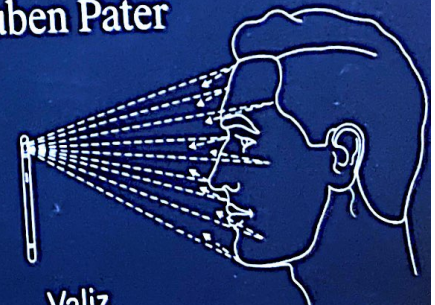
CAPSLOCK



HOW
CAPITALISM
TOOK HOLD
OF GRAPHIC
DESIGN,
AND HOW
TO ESCAPE
FROM IT



Ruben Pater



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