



WORKSHOP 3 / COGNITIVE MAPPING

CONTENT

The process of mapping extends and enriches our interaction with the specific conditions of site, therefore it allows the reader to understand and experience the unique characteristics of a specific place.

In his article “The Agency of Mapping, Speculation, Critique & Invention”, James Corner talks of the map as having the power to ‘Reformulate what already exists’. The ‘agency’ of the map, is that which exploits the research to identify, decode and create the potential of possibilities for the place. Mapping is understood, not as a process of representing geographies or ideas, but ‘effecting the way they are manipulated’.

Cartographic maps correspond to the dimensional reality of the external world. This in many ways makes them totally inappropriate for reading and representing site qualities/phenomena because of their objective qualities. Mapping is often understood as a technique for representing (predetermined), i.e. given – entities. This conception of mapping as a tool to visualize spatial concepts does not utilise the full potential that the map has to ‘reveal the specific qualities of the site’.

Cognitive mapping is an abstraction covering those cognitive or mental abilities that enable us to collect, organise, store, recall and manipulate information about the physical environment. Underlying this definition is a view of behaviour that, although variously expressed, can be reduced to the statement that human spatial behaviour is dependent upon the individual’s cognitive map of the spatial environment.

From a cognitive map, the individual can tell where certain valued things or experiences are to be found and how to reach them as required. The map assigns preferences, determines attitudes and predicts possibilities. It changes at all levels of timescale and is modified by education, experience and available resources. Cognitive maps could be simply understood as perceptual maps and cannot be merely a series of photos or measured drawings of what a place is.

AIMS

To introduce and explore the idea of mapping as a tool for reading the site.

To understand and experience the unique characteristics of a specific place.

To acquire the understanding of site to transcend the standard and often inappropriate objective analysis of just a dimensional reality.

To explore site as multiple systems and processes.

To introduce the notion that any given site may mediate between the scale of humans, of the city and the environment.

METHOD

Week 1: Students have to document a chosen site through producing a photography mapping. They will be allowed to only capture twenty frames (20 photos) and manipulate them accordingly to communicate their findings.

Important factors:

- How the specific topology (enclosures, light/shadow, introvert/extrovert, accessibility, materiality of the ground, noise/quietness, visibility) affects the ways the site is inhabited / How the inhabitation practices are related to the qualities of the site.

- Patterns of inhabitation in time (repeated actions, rhythm of activities, same location with different activities depending on the day/hour, individual activities happening rarely, permanent/temporary activities).

- Patterns of inhabitation in place (activities related to the specific topology are repeated every time you encounter the same topology, how every activity affects the others, what are the connections between different activities, how different activities overlay, what activities cannot take place at the same time with others, activities that exclude others)

Week 2: Developing cognitive mappings of the chosen site.

Cognitive mappings could deal with a spatial fragment, a sectional quality or 2D maps. The mappings should be developed as hybrid drawings incorporating a variety of media (2D+3D, collage, text, sketch, photos, maps, drawings, memories etc).

SCHEDULE /

2-Week Workshop. Weekly 4-hour class (schedule to be confirmed at a later stage)

Photography mapping / 19-23 Oct 2020

Cognitive mapping / 26-30 Oct 2020

EVALUATION /

The evaluation will be based on the following Expected Learning Outcomes:

After completion of the workshop students are expected to be able to:

- Examine and interpret site conditions in relation to the natural and built environment, materiality, boundaries, users, social issues, activities, usage of space, privacy issues, objects, ambience and immaterial qualities of space.
- Use appropriate representation and presentation tools, including mixed media techniques and mappings, for recording existing site conditions.
- To appreciate cognitive mapping as a tool that assigns preferences, determines attitudes and predicts possibilities.
- To transcend the familiarity with cartographic maps (that correspond to a dimensional reality) and explore a plurality of experiences/ cultures/sites via alternative representation techniques

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