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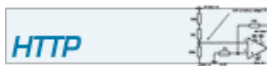
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Projects Bio Mapping - Christian Nold



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If you go to <http://www.biomapping.net>, the first (moving) image you see looks like an aerial view of a spiky fence enclosing a small area of **Greenwich (London)** implanted onto a **Google Map**. Two red dots at the opposite ends are labeled 'Yachtclub Sneaky Drink' and 'Busy Traffic Crossing'.

This is a visualization of an individual experience of **Christian Nold's Bio Mapping Project**. Christian started working on Bio Mapping in 2004 by building a Galvanic Skin Response sensor/data logger and connecting it to a commercial GPS unit.

To me, the word **Galvanic** has an echo of school days – in the 1780's, **Luigi Galvani** experimented with dead frogs and electric charges, convinced that electricity was the invisible principle of life itself. The **Galvanic Skin Response (GSR)** is one of the parameters at the bases of lie detectors – it is a reading of the conductivity of an individual's skin. Increased or decreased by changes in the activity of sweat glands, it becomes an indicator of the activity of the sympathetic nervous system. In short, it signals emotional arousal.

Christian is interested in creating situations in which quantitative data can be reconnected with the corresponding qualitative individual experiences, as well as their geographical position in the world. Once the sets of data are downloaded and processed through Visualization/Mapping software, the resulting three-dimensional maps bring together the answers to three questions: How much, Why and Where.

With this information in mind, the short digital video at <http://www.biomapping.net> reads as a map of the variations in respect of the emotional state of an individual as she/he moves along a certain path at a certain time. As external observers, we do not know if this person is or was aware of her/his emotions at the time when they were aroused. After a stroll around a designated area wearing Christian's device, the data collected is downloaded, visualized, and then participants are invited to mark the map of their walks, with their remembered corresponding experiences.

This makes me think that if awareness was not present at the moment of experience, Christian's project promotes its development. On the other hand, for those who have a good sense of their emotional state at any given time, it can be very interesting to compare it with this particular graphic representation.

Bio Mapping repositions the body as a social tool. It makes visible emotional reactions to places, other bodies and situations as physiological changes. To work at its best, it requires a balance of abandonment and awareness.

How does this practice compare to that of the historical figures who walked the streets of the city in the nineteenth and twentieth century? Bio Mapping moves the centre of the exploration from the singled out individual artist to an expanding set of relationships among a multiplicity of bodies of equal importance. The

project develops through the collection of and re-elaboration, of data from different locations and participants. As individuals often take part in groups, the discussions following the walks are a crucial stage of fusion of research and practice.

At the centre of this web of connections, Christian Nold sharpens the tools and invites others to make the work with him.

As a project, Bio Mapping lives in the moment of its happening, as well as in its representations and successive re-experiencing. Taking part in Bio Mapping does not make you into a passive tool or source of information. You are invited to contribute with your capacity to elaborate, as well as your body, becoming part of an expanded, conscious feedback loop.

To explore where Bio Mapping sits within the wider picture of Christian's practice, surf <http://www.softhook.com>.

Reviewer: Cinzia Cremona

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