

Maps & their makers at Redhouse

Panel discussion of Atlas Exhibition next Friday

By Nancy Keefe Rhodes

Remember "The Illusionist" and "The Prestige," two recent films about late 19th century magicians, and you start to grasp delicious possibilities in the ten "maps" now on view in the Joan Lukas Rothenberg Gallery at Redhouse. An exhibition that comes here from Los Angeles and Chicago, "An Atlas of Radical Cartography" uses a teasing, heady mixture of art and graphic design to engage subjects usually cloaked in theory, statistics and expert authority—globalization, urban garbage management, surveillance technology, water use, deportation centers, secret rendition flight routes. Remember that scene in "The Prestige" when Paul Giametti's police detective figures out how they did it? More than entertainment, those movies revealed the hidden wires, mirrors and pulleys that created illusions on stage and signaled the power of new science. Similarly, these maps unveil the secret social and political wires, mirrors and pulleys that orchestrate our world.

We're used to specialized maps and graphs in the pages of activist publications intent on making a case. Not so much on gallery walls. Here, the intent isn't to convince so much as to widen our perception.

"An Atlas," edited and curated by Brooklynites Alexis Bhagat and Lize Mogel, started as a special issue of "Perspectives," the journal of the Institute for Anarchist Studies that Bhagat directs. Speaking by phone, he says they put out a call for maps and essays, but quickly realized the project needed more space. And they found themselves focusing on artists' work.

"An Atlas" now comprises two tours – the more upscale "university and small museum" version that Syracuse got and a poster version for bookstores and community centers that's now in Baltimore – and a boxed set of folded maps and ten essays, the first such book about activist cartography. Available



Skye is an anti-globalization activist organizing an April 29th, 2007 anti-war protest march. Knowing that the New York Police Department increasingly relies on surveillance footage to bolster activist prosecutions, she is planning a route that avoids as many cameras as possible.

The title is "Routes of Least Surveillance" and it depicts locations of surveillance cameras (CCTV's - closed circuit TVs) in Manhattan. It was created by the Institute of Applied Autonomy.

at Redhouse, this goes into bookstores in March.

Lize Mogel, an artist and mapmaker with land use background, says, "A couple of the projects are more successful as art than others, but political art has always been interested in information and education. Art with a social conscience is the art of the 21st century."

"An Atlas" has its opening reception next Thursday, part of Th3, the city-wide monthly arts night. Then Bhagat and Mogel host a reception and discussion Friday evening about the project and its applications here.

Also on the panel, writer/artist Nadxieli Mannello teaches in SU's Writing Program and has created maps like "The New Yorker's Guide to Mili-

tary Recruitment in the Five Boroughs." Jonnell Allen, SU's "community geographer," has mapped location and density of hunger, teen pregnancy, literacy and safe routes to school. Chicago artist/organizer Daniel Tucker lives here part-time; he's also making a "People's Atlas of Syracuse" that visitors can contribute to.

With luck we'll get a map with city parking spots safe from The Boot.

"An Atlas of Radical Cartography" at Redhouse Arts Center, 201 S. West St., through 3/12. Open during Th3, Thursday, 2/21, 5-8 PM. Panel & reception the following night, Friday, 2/22, 6-8 PM. See an-atlas.com or theredhouse.org or call 425.0405.

Free

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SYRACUSE CITY EAGLE

5, Issue 4 ● February 14 2008