

Introduction

Greetings and welcome to *Hemisphere: Visual Cultures of the Americas*, volume 13. The editorial committee released this issue cognizant that the lives of our readers, contributors, and the lives of everyone in their respective communities, continue to be impacted by the compounded events related to Covid-19; state-sanctioned and extrajudicial violence against Black and Indigenous people; protracted unemployment, and exploitation of graduate student labor. These untenable conditions resulted in new and renewed calls for action, mutual aid, and unionization. This issue began to take shape a year ago prior to the onset of pandemic conditions. In continuing with the publication, we hope that it contributes to the conversation regarding the ways artists, critics, and historians work to create, recreate, or resist capitalist, colonialist, and racist infrastructures.

Digital and printed map graphics underpin current discourse among news outlets concerning many topics including public health, ecological resources, elections, immigration. Maps, as normally understood today, diagram the relative spatial relationships of locations, people, and material resources. Such informational graphics provide spatial data and inscribe the identifying features of the represented communities and ideologies of the cartographer into print and pixels. Graphics thereby reinforce the factual nature of the audio, visual or typographic narratives surrounding the map.

Interacting with maps requires the viewer to either accept the data as a transparent representation of spatial experience or to confront the multivalent relationships between the people in regions being mapped, the maker of the maps, and the users and interpreters of maps. In the past three decades, scholars have worked to understand how human cognition functions in tandem with informational graphics to produce—rather than only represent—knowledge. Design theorists such as Johanna Drucker and Sandra Rendgren have focused on the relationship between functions of contemporary mapping and European graphic models like emblem books. Similarly, recent exhibitions at Stanford University, the Library of Congress, and Blanton Museum of Art emphasize the way maps work to support and/or subvert colonial and capitalist objectives, and Ruth Pelzer-Montada has proposed to create a map or topography of printmaking in *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking: Critical Writing since 1986* (2018). Current interests in the graphic arts suggest an interest in increasing transparency between the production and consumption of graphics and envisioning graphic models and criticism of graphics in a network.

Scholarship on cartography in the Americas has largely isolated maps, atlases, and travel ephemera from the historiography of printmaking and the graphic arts. Synchronously, instances of Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism widely reported in recent years highlight the relationships between place and the work of Indigenous artists. The 60th Anniversaries of Kinngait Studios and the Tamarind Institute, along with the recent exhibition *Indelible Ink: Native Women, Printmaking, Collaboration* at the University of New Mexico Art Museum further highlight the crucial roles of Native American and First Nations printmakers in the commercial and critical prominence of print media. Acknowledging these developments and seeking to contribute to ongoing discourse regarding the production, circulation, and criticism of the graphic arts, the thirteenth volume of *Hemisphere* centers on the theme “Cartographic Infrastructures: Mapping and the Graphic Arts in the Americas.” To that end, this volume presents interdisciplinary research that considers the ways in which a spectrum of graphic media conceptually, and formally intersect across historical eras and political, ideological, and geological boundaries. In disseminating this work, *Hemisphere's* editorial board aims to provide viewers and readers a broader aesthetic and critical contexts to understand applications of prints, graphics and maps in social and political discourse.

—Laura Golobish, Andrea Quijada,
Amy Catherine Hulshoff, Eleanor Kane,
Breanna Reiss, Jeannette Martinez