



**unplace**

networked art: places-between-places

## Credits

Clement Valla

## Postcards From Google Earth · 2011

Collection of Google Earth images Website.

## Biography

Clement Valla

Born in 1979 in Paris, France. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, USA.

Clement Valla is a Brooklyn-based artist and has a BA in Architecture from Columbia University and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in Digital+Media. He is currently an assistant professor of Graphic Design at RISD. His work has been exhibited internationally, at such venues as the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis; Museum of the Moving Image, New York; Thommassen Galleri, Gothenburg; bitforms gallery, New York; Mulherin + Pollard Projects, New York; DAAP Galleries, University of Cincinnati; 319 Scholes, New York; and the Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum, Milwaukee. His solo show *Surface Survey*, 2014 at the Transfer Gallery in New York was an Artforum Critics' Pick and his work was included in the Paddles On!, 2013 auction at Phillips, organised by Lindsay Howard. His work has been cited in The Guardian, Wall Street Journal, TIME Magazine, El Pais, Huffington Post, Rhizome, Domus, Wired, The Brooklyn Rail, Liberation, and on BBC television.

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## Description

Postcards from Google Earth is a collection of Google Earth images that allows us to look at two places simultaneously: the space of a distorted picture plane and, through the same picture plane, the real space depicted in the texture.

I discovered some strange moments where the illusion of a seamless representation of the Earth's surface seems to break down. At first, I thought they were glitches, or errors in the algorithm, but looking more closely I realised that the real situation was actually more interesting - these images are not glitches. They are the absolute logical result of the system. They are an edge condition - an anomaly within the system, a non-standard, an outlier, even, but not an error. These jarring moments expose how Google Earth works, focusing our attention on the software - [The Universal Texture](#). They reveal a new model of representation: not through indexical photographs, but through automated data collection from a myriad of different sources, constantly updated and endlessly combined to create a seamless illusion; Google Earth is a database disguised as a photographic representation. These uncanny images focus our attention on that process itself, and the network of algorithms, computers, storage systems, automated cameras, maps, pilots, engineers, photographers, surveyors and map-makers that generate them. C.V.

