



"Mapping What I Feel":

Understanding Affective Geovisualization Design Through the Lens of People-Place Relationships



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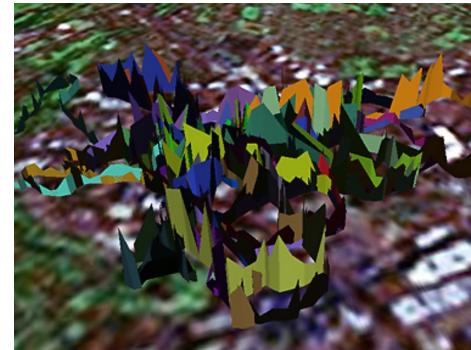
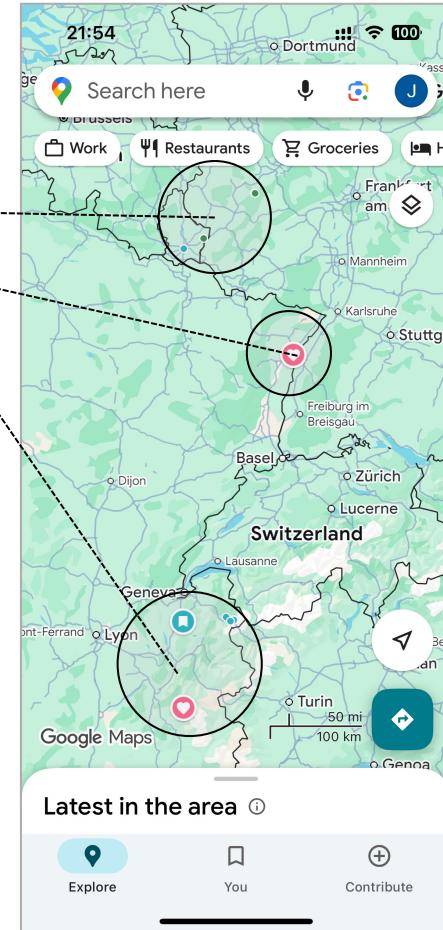
Context = (Data visualization + Geography) x Emotion



= Map!

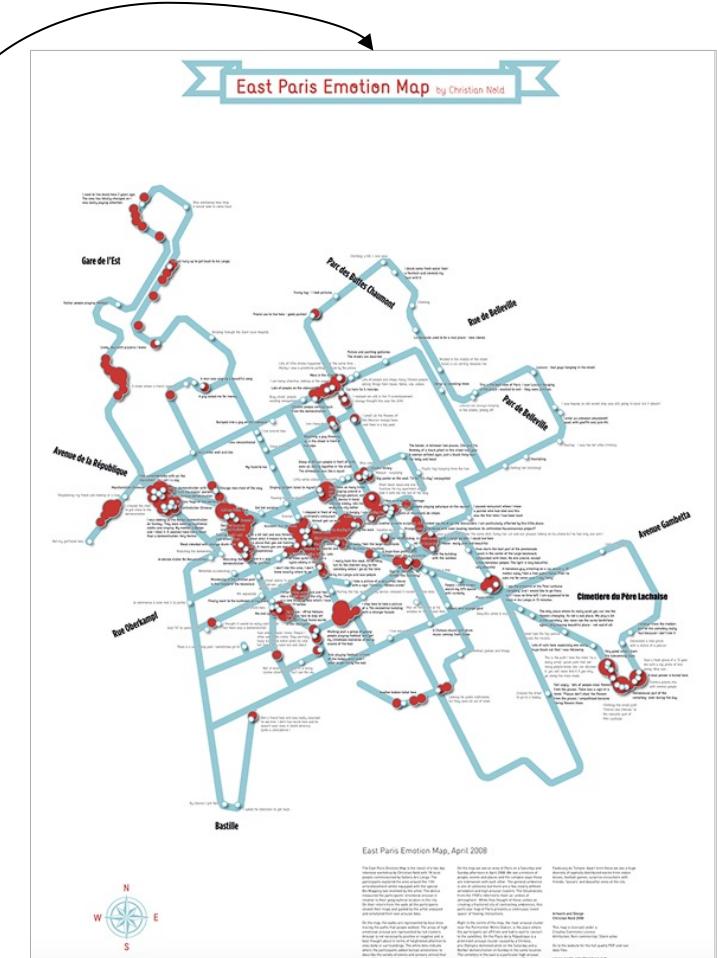
= Map with Emotion!

On this Google map,
there are marks showing
my footprints.
But what memories are
left at these places?
How can I record my
personal experiences,
emotions or feelings?



A map can be more
than just “a map”.

We use bio-sensor to automatically
record our bio emotional intensity,
then look back and annotate what
happened.



Context = (Data visualization + Geography) x Emotion

I post my emotion with location online using **Snap Map**.

We write down our stories in the **city** and pin the **notes** onto the map.

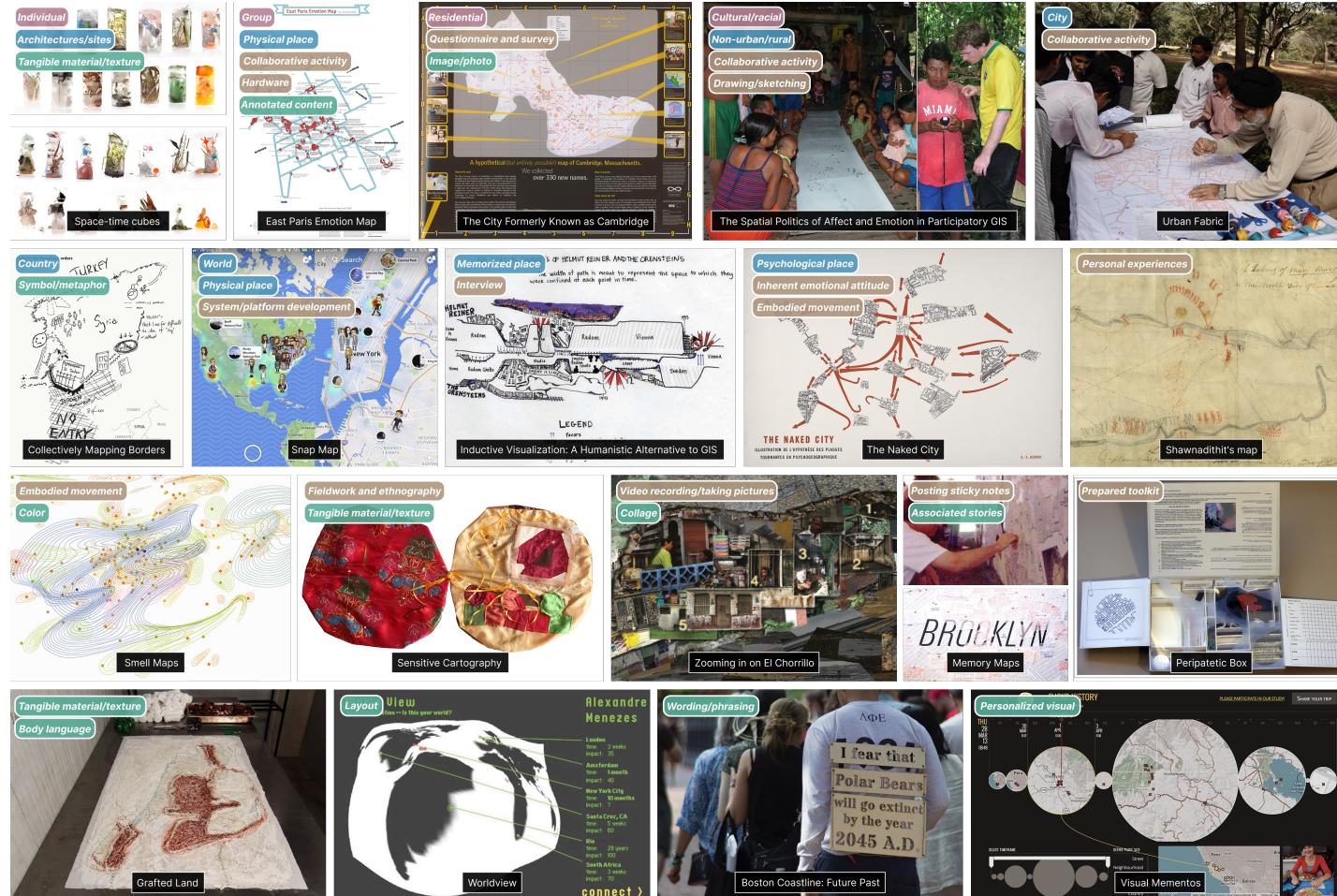
I wrap the map of my home **country** with **gauze**, symbolizing my **wish** for its wounds to heal.

I post my travel **photos** digitally onto the map, turning them into my **visual mementos**.

A map can be more than just “a map”.

= Map!

= Map with Emotion!



I record with **pictures** and my personal nickname for the places, such as "monkey park".

I record the smells using **colors** and **shapes** along the way **while walking**.

We use **bio-sensor** to automatically record our bio emotional intensity, then look back and **annotate** what happened.

I collect **leaves** and **flowers** while wandering in a **park**.

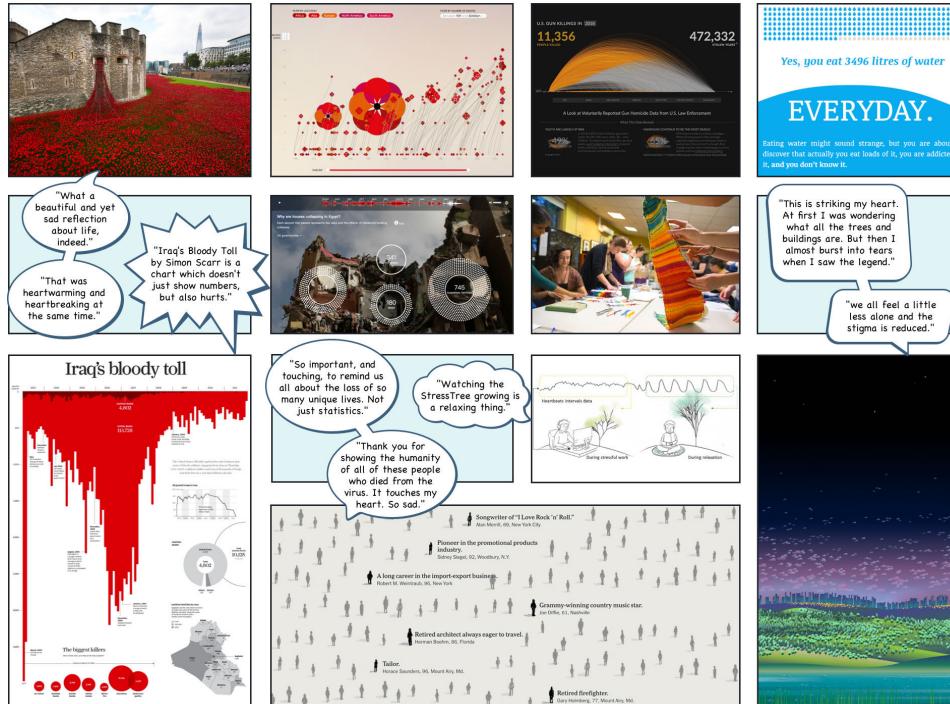
We mark the positive places in our **city** with **sewing**.



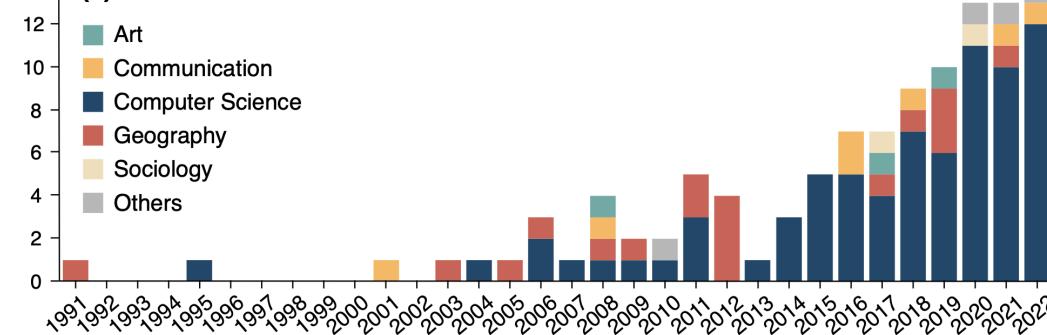
Context = (Data visualization + Geography) x Emotion

In recent years, more and more researchers have reflected on the undervaluation of emotion in data visualization and highlighted the importance of considering human emotion in visualization design.

Affective Visualization Design - data visualizations designed to communicate and influence emotion



(a) Distribution of research areas over time



Emotional Geography

"To neglect the emotions is to exclude a key set of relations through which lives are lived and societies made."

Lan, X., Wu, Y., & Cao, N. (2023). Affective visualization design: Leveraging the emotional impact of data. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 30(1), 1-11.

Anderson, K., & Smith, S. J. (2001). Emotional geographies. *Transactions of the Institute of British geographers*, 26(1), 7-10.

Methodologies = Scoping review + Corpus filtering + Coding



Scoping Review

1°



Corpus Filtering

2°

First-round Keywords

- Emotional Cartography
- Emotional Geography
- Affective Geovisualization



Second-round Keywords

- Personal Geovisualization
- Psychogeography
- Humanistic Geography
- Phenomenological Geography
- Feminist Geography



Third-round Keywords

- Affective Visualization Design
- Geographic Data Storytelling

First Criteria

The paper must include geographic data visualization(s).



Second Criteria

If geovisualization does exist, it should be geographically data-driven. *Not totally imaginary!*



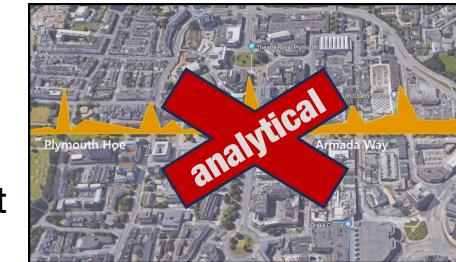
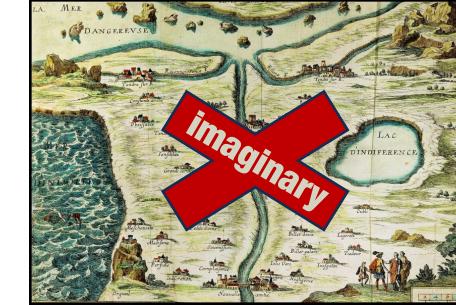
Third Criteria

There should be explicit descriptions indicating that the geovisualization was intentionally designed to communicate or influence emotion. *Not purely for analysis!*



Fourth Criteria

The visualization should be grounded in empirical spatial experiences, with real human agents. *Not solely ideologically rhetorical!*



→ A corpus of 62 designs,

containing real geographic data,

embodying authentic people-place relationships,

and being affective.

Welcome to attend:
Unveiling the Visual Rhetoric of Persuasive Cartography:
A Case Study of the Design of Octopus Maps

Methodologies = Scoping review + Corpus filtering + Coding



Modeling and Corpus Coding 3°

PPP (Person-Process-Place) model in humanistic geography

Aim: To explain people-place attachment.

Person: who is experiencing the connection with places

Place: the traits of geographic space

Process: how the person forms a connection with the place



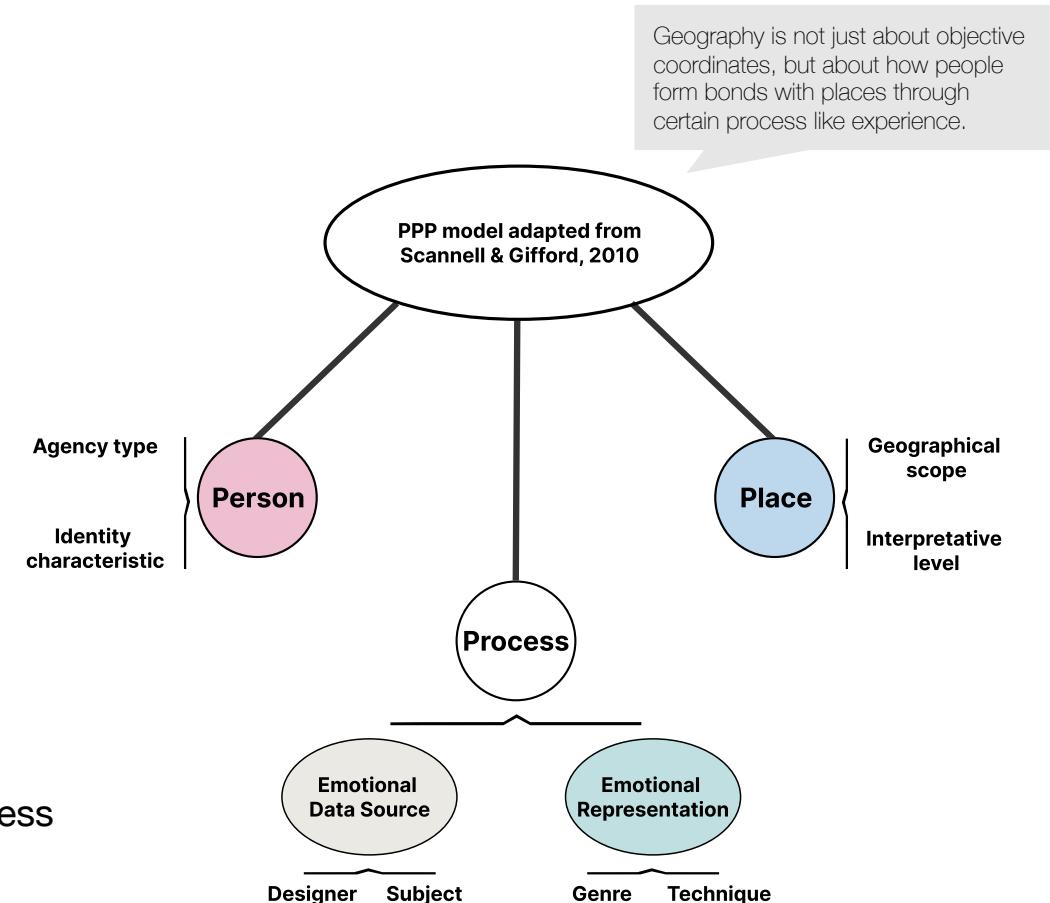
PPP model in our work

Aim: To characterize affective geovisualization design features.

Person: who is experiencing the connection with places

Place: the traits of geographic space

Process: how affective geovisualization design functions as a special process that helps construct or empower people-place relationships



Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Person - Who has emotional connection with places?

WHO

Agency type

- Individual
- Group

The designer documented her movement data and the organic materials that touched her emotionally during a walk, and then froze them into ice cubes.



Space-time cubes

Identity characteristics

- Residential
- Special statuses
- Travelers
- Cultural/racial
- Gender
- Age
- Class
- Not specified or anyone

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Person - Who has emotional connection with places?

WHO

Agency type

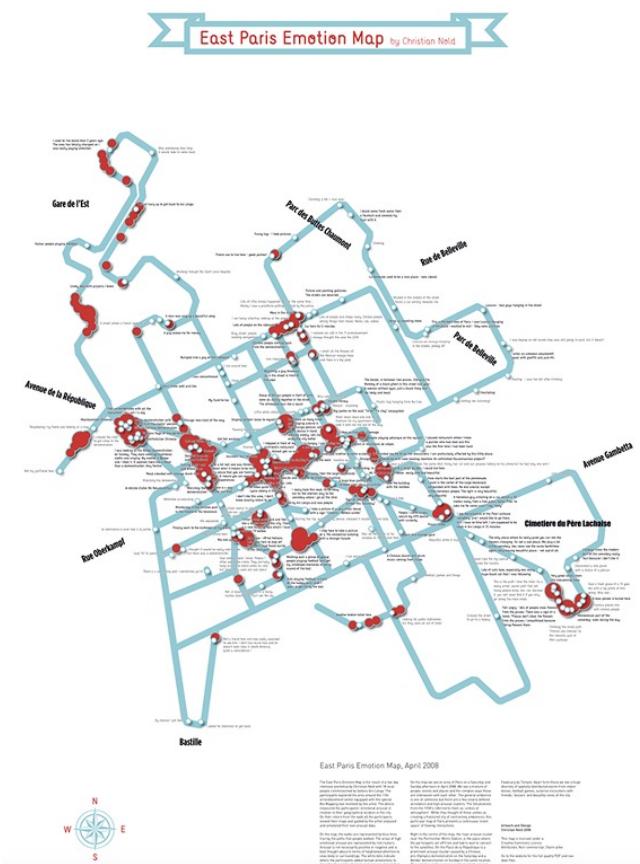
- Individual
- Group

Identity characteristics

- Residential
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The East Paris Emotion Map project invited a group of volunteers to walk around Paris together while wearing sensors, and visualized their emotional data collectively on a map.

East Paris Emotion Map by Christian Neld



East Paris Emotion Map

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Person - Who has emotional connection with places?

WHO

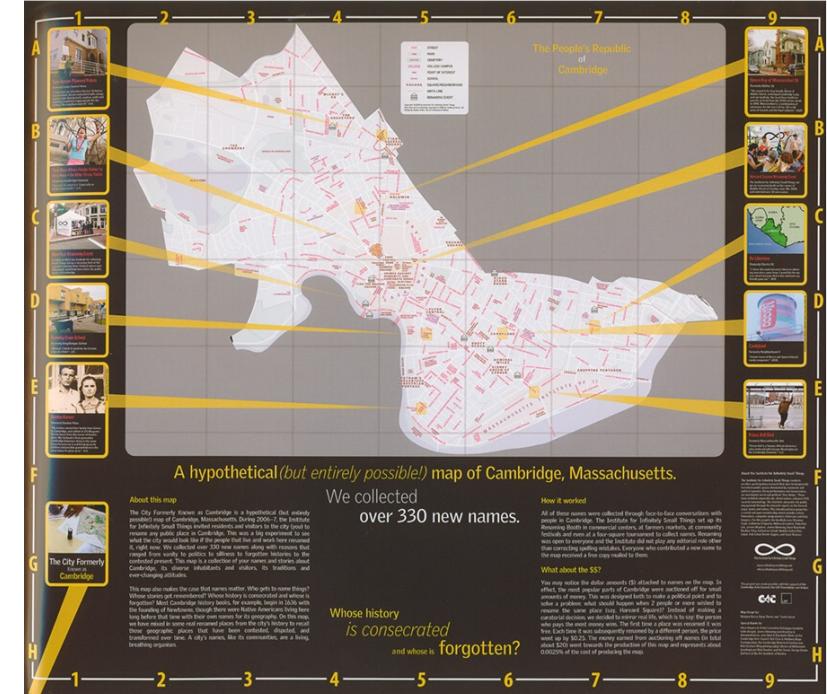
Agency type

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The City Formerly Known as Cambridge invited people to rename the sites in Cambridge based on their personal understanding and memories.



The City Formerly Known as Cambridge

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Person - Who has emotional connection with places?

WHO

Agency type

- Individual
- Group

Identity characteristics

- Residential
- Special statuses
- Travelers
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- Not specified or anyone

The Mapping Journey Project invited eight exiles to trace their secret journeys on map to narrate their story.



The Mapping Journey Project

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Person - Who has emotional connection with places?

WHO

Agency type

- Individual
- Group

Identity characteristics

- Residential
- Special statuses
- Travelers
- Cultural/racial
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The figure showed a participatory event where an indigenous community in Peru collaboratively created a map of their land, marking cultural heritages with symbols.



The Spatial Politics of Affect and Emotion in Participatory GIS

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Place - Where emotional connections are situated?

WHERE

Geographical scopes

- City
- Country
- Architectures/sites
- Non-urban/rural places
- World

Urban Fabric invited participants to stitch symbols onto a hand-embroidered city map, marking places that held positive and negative significance for them.

Interpretative levels

- Physical place
- Memorized place
- Psychological place



Urban Fabric

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Place - Where emotional connections are situated?

WHERE

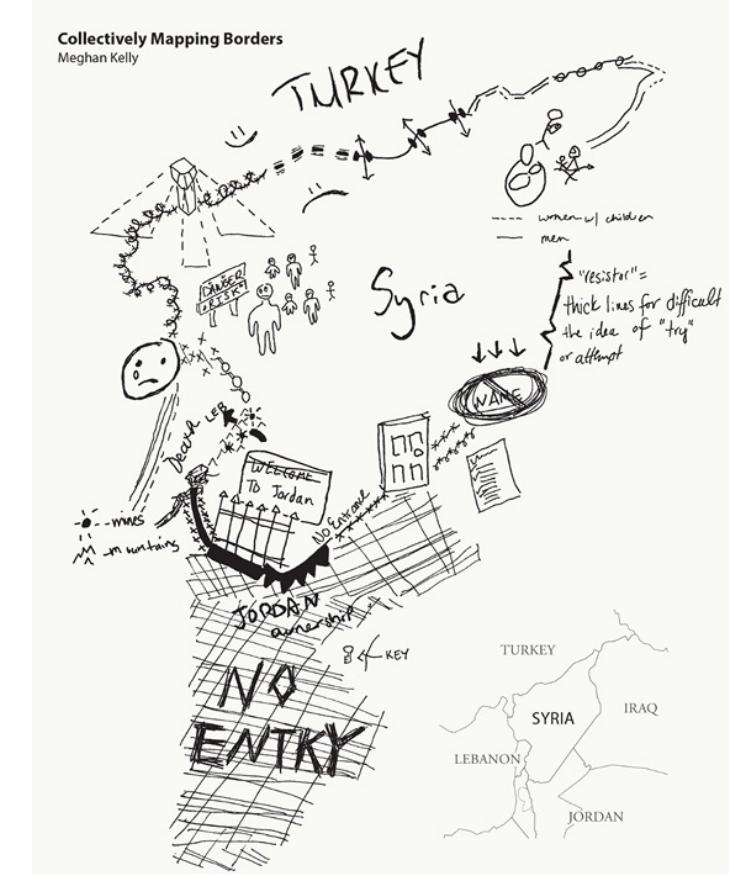
Geographical scopes

- City
- Country
- Architectures/sites
- Non-urban/rural places
- World

Collectively Mapping Borders is a collective effort to *redraw Syria's borders* based on interviews with refugees, investigating their subjective experiences towards the country and its bordering areas.

Interpretative levels

- Physical place
- Memorized place
- Psychological place



Collectively Mapping Borders

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Place - Where emotional connections are situated?

WHERE

Geographical scopes

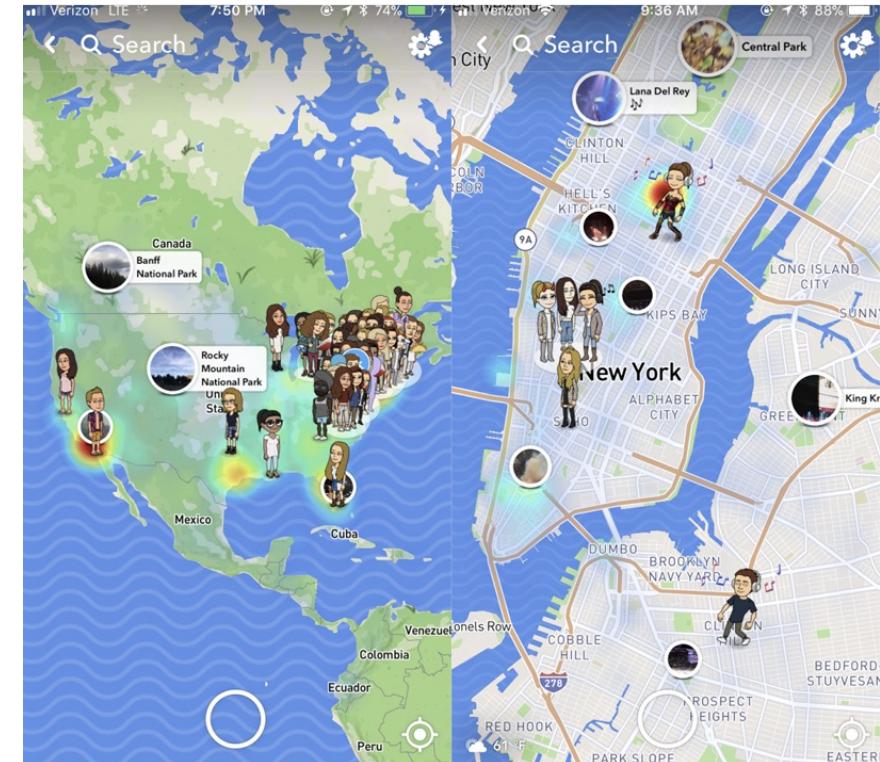
- City
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- World

Physical place is rooted in real world. It encompasses embodied experiences rooted in physical co-presence, ranging from immediate affective responses to accumulated affective imprints from long-term inhabitation.

Interpretative levels

- Physical place
- Memorized place
- Psychological place

Applications such as *Snap Map* allow users to share their locations and associated emotions *based on GPS*.



Snap Map

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Place - Where emotional connections are situated?

WHERE

Geographical scopes

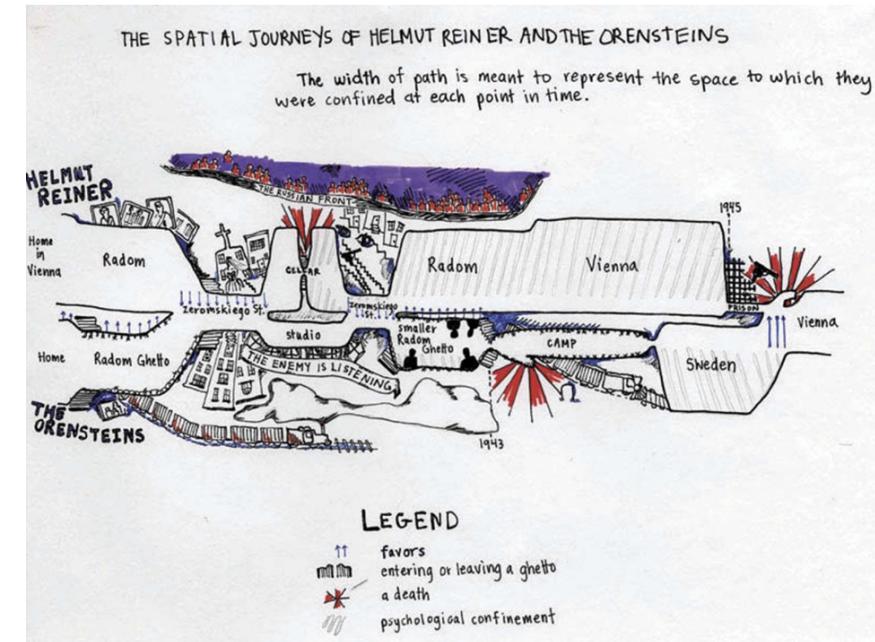
- City
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- World

Memorized places emerge through reconstruction of geographic information recalled by the involved subjects.

Interpretative levels

- Physical place
- Memorized place
- Psychological place

The map was drawn based on the testimony of Holocaust survivor. The testimony gave a **vary vague space** and **time narration**, and **all the space structure is based on personal memories**.



Inductive Visualization: A Humanistic Alternative to GIS

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Place - Where emotional connections are situated?

WHERE

Geographical scopes

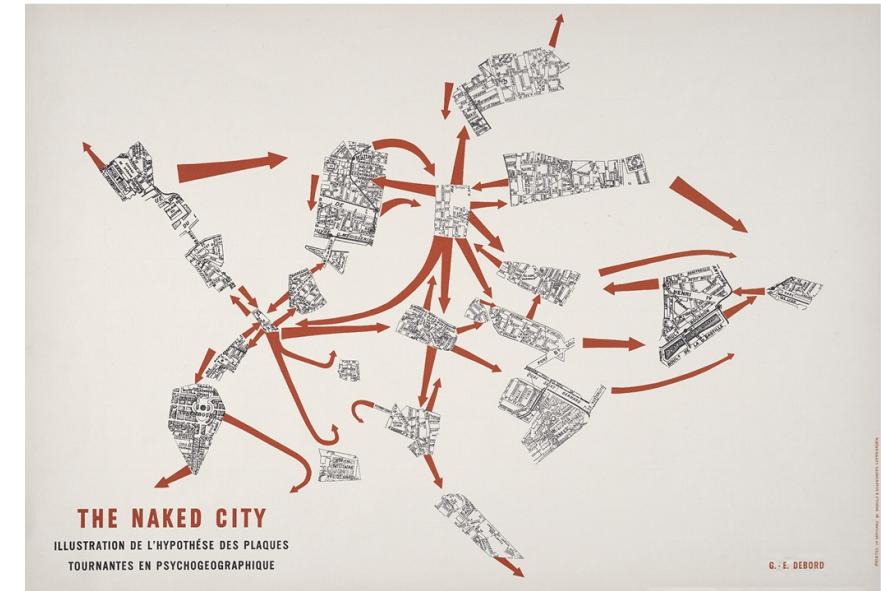
- City
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- Non-urban/rural places
- World

Interpretative levels

- Physical place
- Memorized place
- Psychological place

The psychological place is the most subjective level. The maps can be symbolic expression, such as metaphorical geometries or speculative interfaces that deviate from scientific spatial logic.

The Naked City collaged 19 separate landmarks in Paris, *connected with red arrows regardless of real location*. The author aimed to advocate exploring cities through aimless *dérive* (drifting) and discovering *subjectively meaningful urban experiences*.



The Naked City

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

HOW

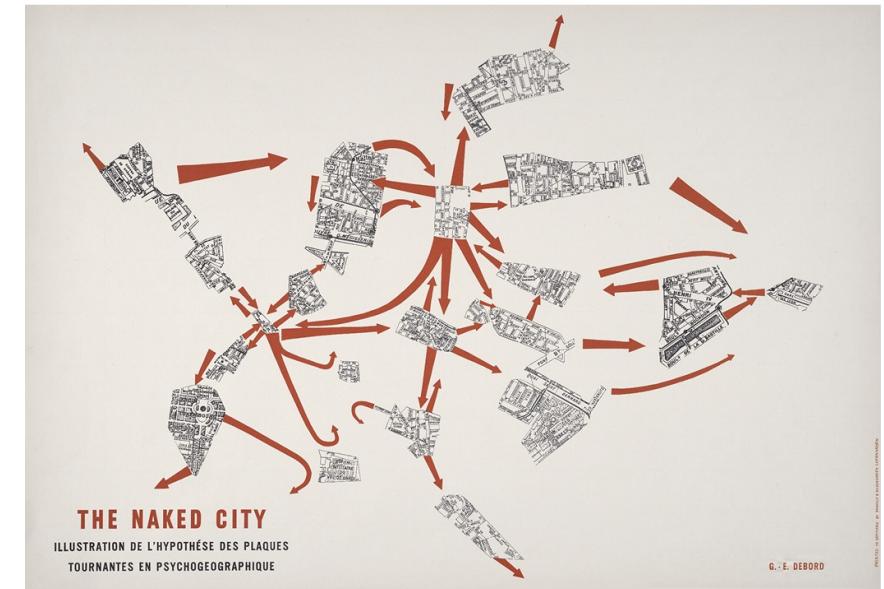
Originate from designers

- Inherent emotional attitude
- Personal experiences

The Naked City selected 19 separate landmarks in the city of Paris. They were collaged and connected with red arrows, to advocate exploring cities through aimless dérive (drifting) and discovering subjectively meaningful urban experiences. Thus challenging the economic-driven urban planning and conventional understanding of urban space.

Originate from other people

- Collaborative activity
- Embodied movement
- Interview
- Drawing/sketching
- Fieldwork and ethnography
- Video recording/taking pictures
- Posting sticky notes
- Prepared toolkit
- Hardware
- Historical material mining
- System/platform development
- Questionnaire and survey



The Naked City

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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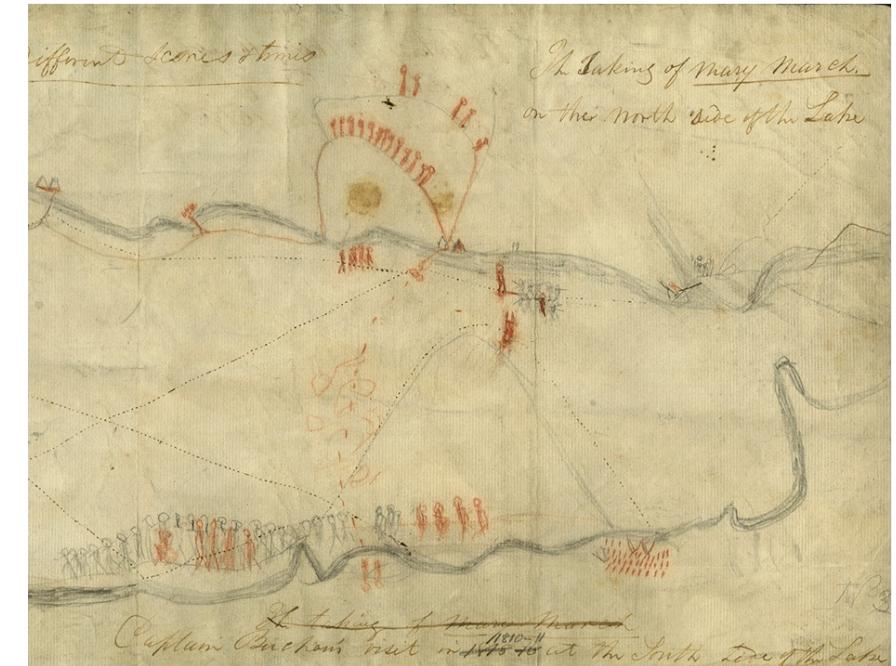
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Shawnadithit's map was drawn by the last member of the Beothuk, a group of indigenous people of Canada. The map conveys the pain and bodily interaction with space, documenting the Beothuk's experience of facing oppression and conflict in their homeland.



Shawnadithit's map

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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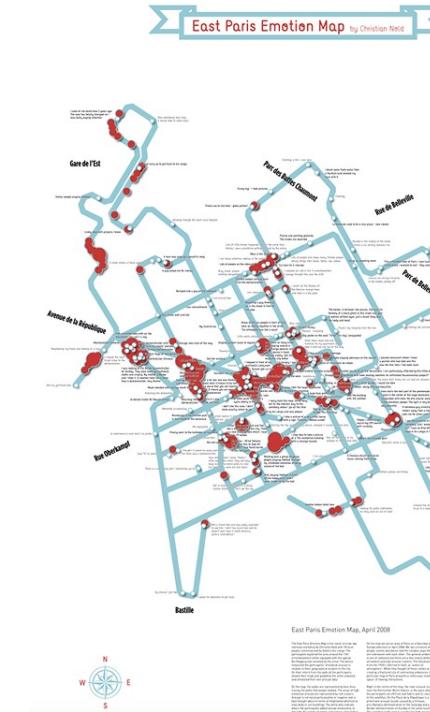
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To organize activities that involve social interaction. In this process, people are given the chance to experience or express their emotions by actively participating in events such as workshops and co-design.



Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

HOW

Originate from designers

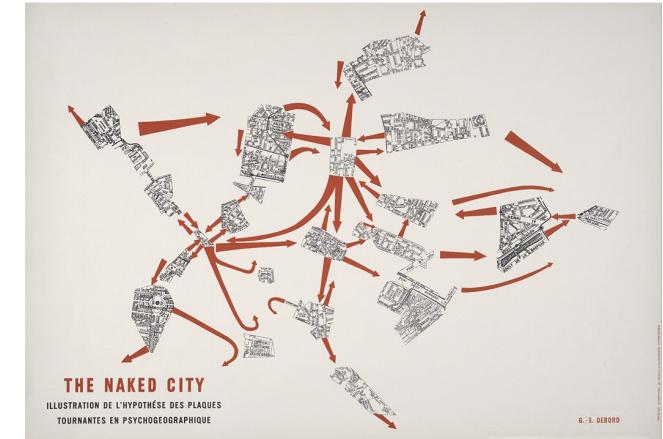
- Inherent emotional attitude
- Personal experiences

Practices related to urban drifting, encourage people to explore spaces and places with their own bodies.

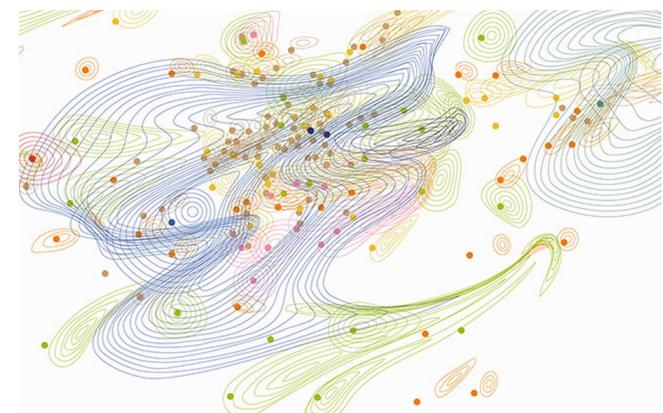
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In Smell Maps projects, participants wander through the city to perceive and document scents.



The Naked City



Smell Maps

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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Originate from designers

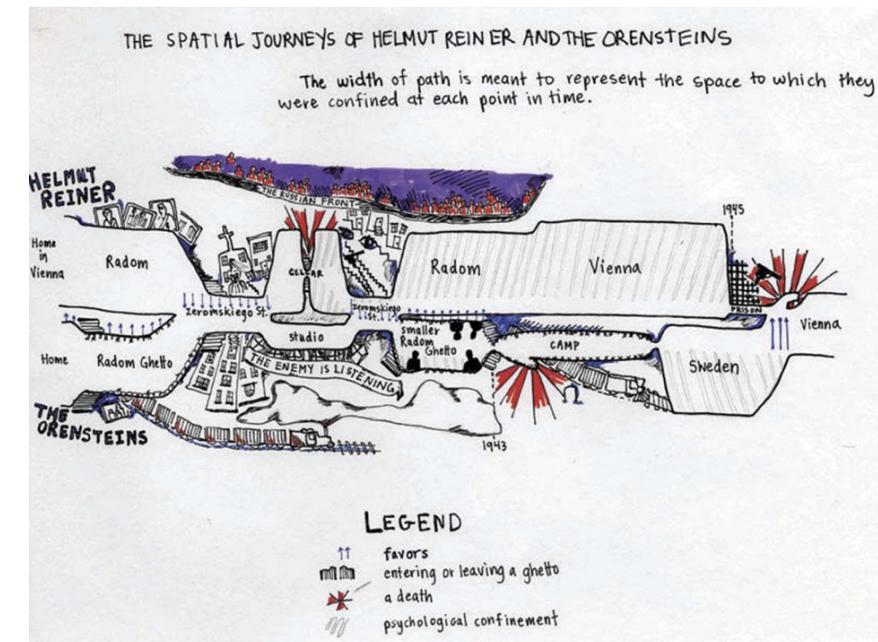
- Inherent emotional attitude
- Personal experiences

A common method for starting conversations with others and understanding interviewees' emotional experiences and opinions.

In the figure, interviews were conducted with Holocaust survivors.

Originate from other people

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Inductive Visualization: A Humanistic Alternative to GIS

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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The act of drawing and sketching is an effective method and is often used in psychology for emotional expression and self-mining.

In the figure, by drawing the map of their land and culture, the locals fostered a sense of pride.



The Spatial Politics of Affect and Emotion in Participatory GIS

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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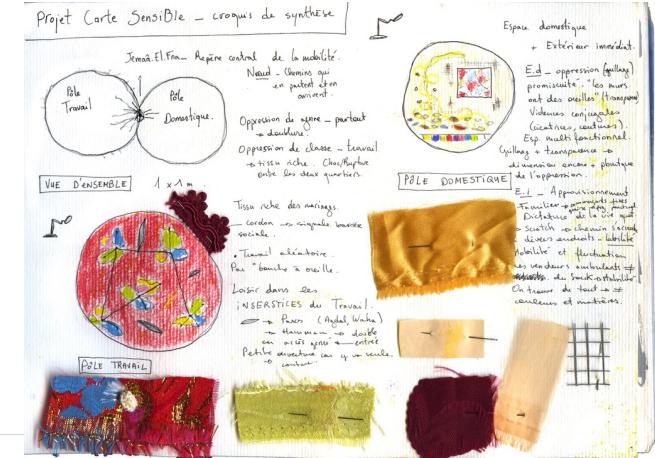
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Some researcher approach the emotion of subjects by getting involved in their lives.



To create Sensitive Cartography, the designer spent several months living with the women of a disadvantaged neighborhood in Marrakech, following them in their daily lives, both in their domestic spaces and as they moved through the city. Through this approach, the feelings and perceptions of the studied women were able to be sensed by the author and expressed through creation.



Sensitive Cartography

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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This method often involves using smartphones or cameras to capture content that holds emotional significance.

An author used photography to document the textures and architectural details of El Chorrillo, Panama City, capturing resident's perspectives of spaces, as well as her own experience with encountering the neighborhood.



Zooming in on El Chorrillo

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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To externalize their emotions through writing on or posting sticky notes.

Memory Maps invited citizens to share their stories of the city. They were asked to write these stories down and then pin them to a map.



Memory Maps

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

HOW

Originate from designers

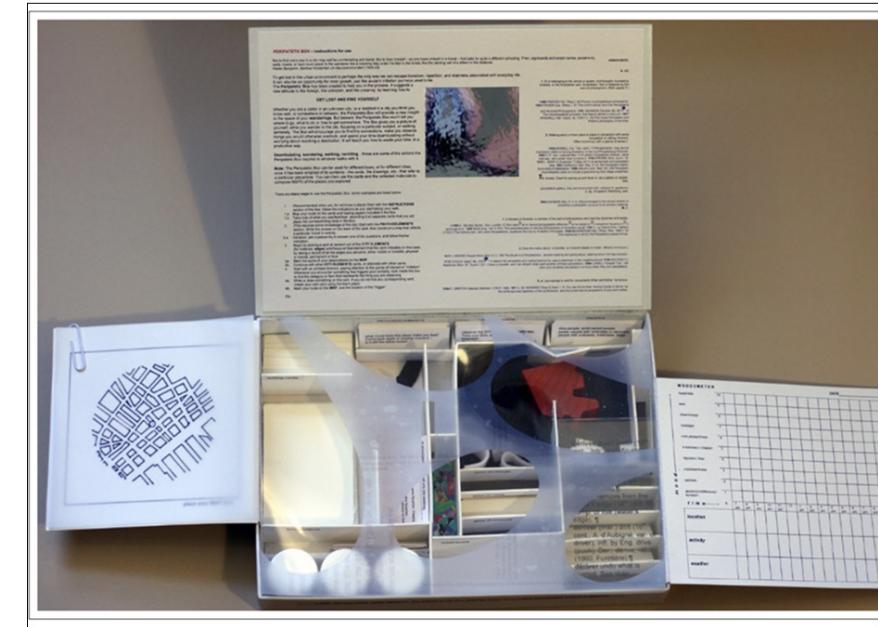
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Some projects provided participants with prepared toolkits, which often include cards, stickers, or papers, to facilitate creative expression while exploring places and constructing maps.

In the figure, users were given a Peripatetic Box to document their journeys facilitated by writing on cards, drawing maps, and collecting materials. This process allows them to add a personal, emotional layer to their experiences of cities.



Peripatetic Box

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

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Originate from other people

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Devices such as biosensors can be used to capture, record or elicit emotional responses across spatial contexts.

Bio Mapping is a technique that integrates biometric sensors with geolocation tracking to quantify participants' affective states as they navigate urban environments.



East Paris Emotion Map

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

HOW

Originate from designers

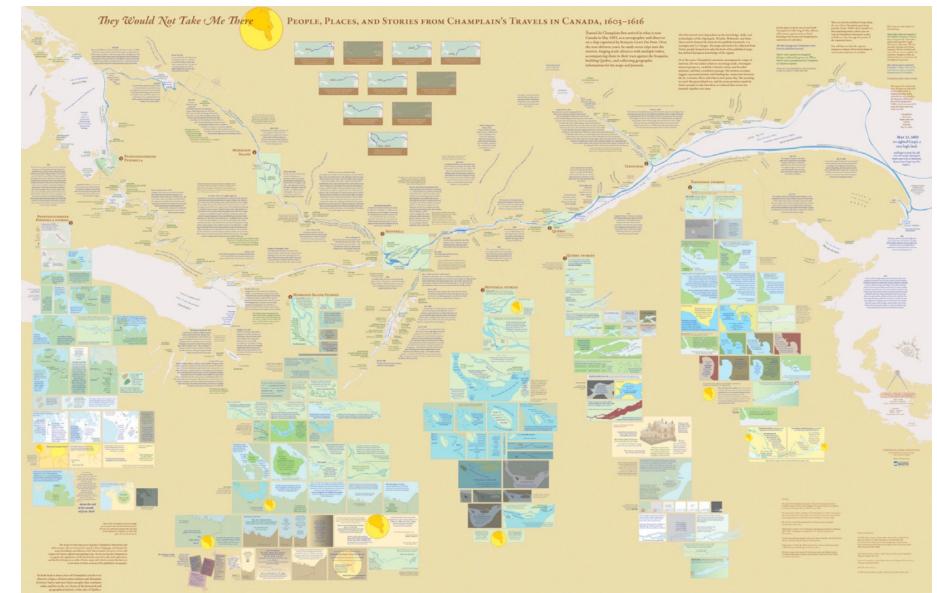
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To extract emotion from historical data, such as poems and fictions.

The emotional expressions from Champlain's travel diaries were mapped to allow readers to engage with his journey not just as a spatial record but as an emotional and experiential account.



Mapping Champlain's Travels

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

HOW

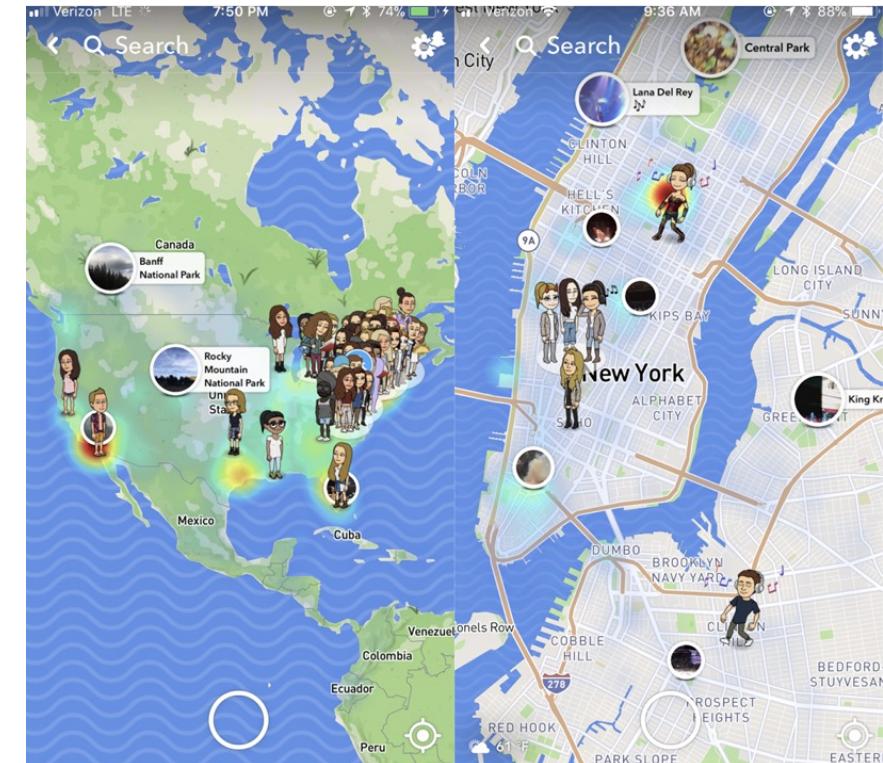
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This method is more function-oriented, enabling users to share emotions and experiences in real time by combining quantitative data processing (e.g., GPS) with qualitative inputs (e.g., comments).



Snap Map

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional data sources - How emotion can be infused into data?

HOW

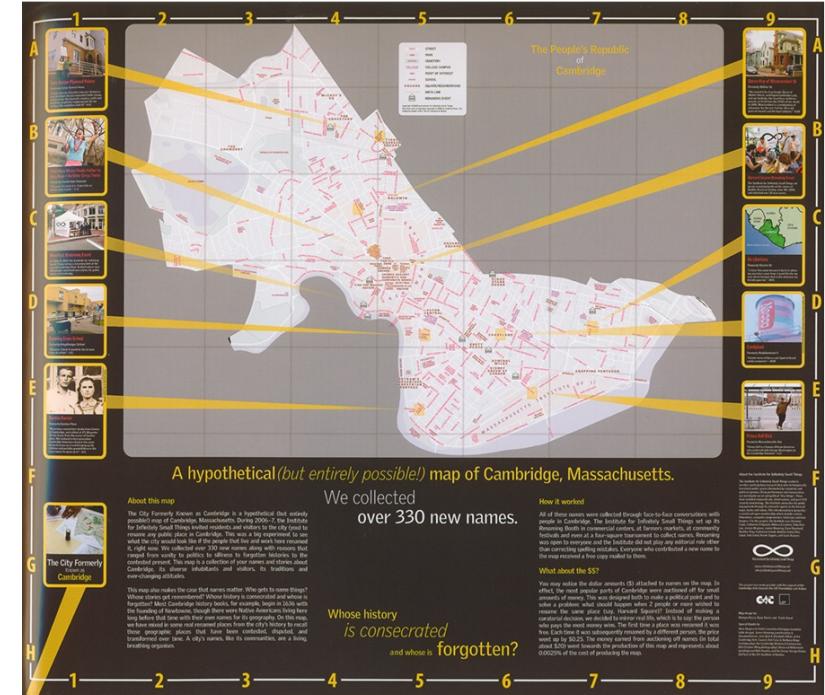
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This method can be used to collect various types of data, ranging from quantitative ratings to qualitative insights, such as feelings.



The City Formerly Known as Cambridge

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design

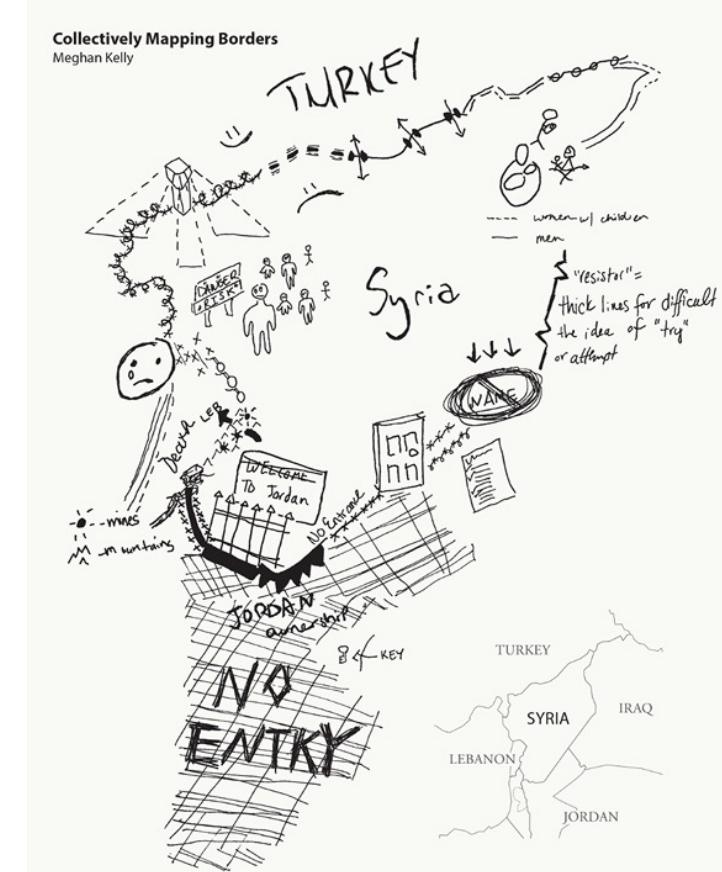


Process - Emotional representations - How emotions can be expressed and presented in visualizations?

Sensation

- Color
- Images/photos
- Symbol/metaphor
- Tangible materials
- Layout
- Shape
- Sound
- Style
- Animation/simulation
- Typeface

The figure uses *symbolic representations such as emojis and arrows* to illustrate the complexities of border crossings.



Collectively Mapping Borders

Narrative

- Annotated content/associated stories
- Collage
- Body language
- Wording/phrasing
- Personalized visual

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional representations - How emotions can be expressed and presented in visualizations?

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Sensation

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*In Imaginary Italies, participants sketched their personal versions of Italy based on their impressions. Each **layout diverged from the real geographic locations** of the country, reflecting individual feelings.*



Imaginary Italies

Taxonomy of Affective GeoVisualization Design



Process - Emotional representations - How emotions can be expressed and presented in visualizations?

HOW

Sensation

- Color
- Images/photos
- Symbol/metaphor
- Tangible materials
- Layout
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In Shredded Land, the author shredded the map of Jerusalem and reassembled it, illustrating the disappearance of borders and the fading of political geography's symbolic meaning.



Shredded Land

Narrative

- Annotated content/associated stories
- Collage
- Body language
- Wording/phrasing
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Difference with General Affective Visualization Design



Lan, X., Wu, Y., & Cao, N. (2023). Affective visualization design: Leveraging the emotional impact of data.

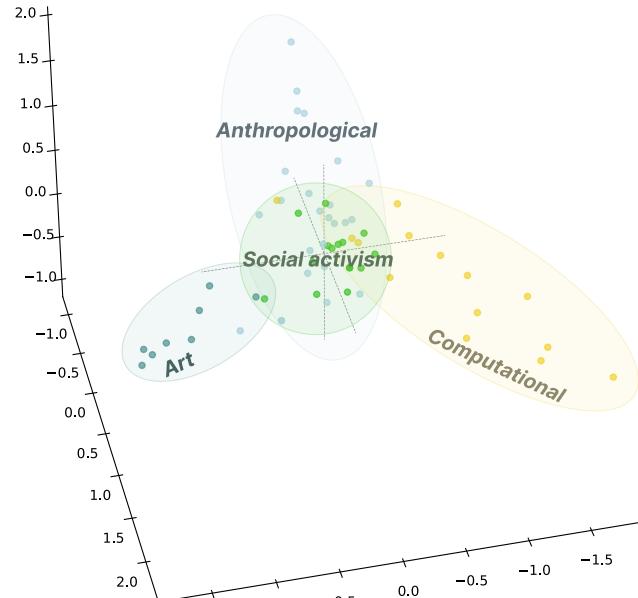
WHERE TO APPLY		WHAT TASK		HOW TO DESIGN				
				genre	sensation	narrative	behavior	context
				design genre	realistic/metaphorical imagery	kinetic movement	sound	tangible material/texture
environmental sciences & ecology					color			
social issues					smell			
health & well-being					shape			
news & media					taste			
daily life					typeface			
business						personalized setting		
urban studies						anthropomorphism		
history						narrative structure		
mixed topics / not specified						wording/phrasing		
inform	engage	explore/experiment	provoke				manipulate/operate	
heal	advocate	socialize	empower				create/build	
archive	commemorate	empower	commemorate				walk/wander	
archive								situated place
								immersive environment

Type	Person		Place		Process					Emotional Representation							
	Characteristic	Geographical	Interpretative	Emotional Data Source													
Individual				Inherent emotional attitude	Personal experience	Collaborative activity	Embody movement	Interview	Drawing/sketching	Fieldwork and ethnography	Video recording/taking pictures	Posting sticky notes	Prepared toolkit	Hardware			
Group	Residential	Special status	Traveler	World	Country	City	Non-urban/rural	Architecture/site	Historical material mining	System/platform development	Questionnaire and survey	Static image/painting	Event	Interactive interface	Artifact		
	Not specified or anyone								Performance				Performance	Video	Installation	Color	
													Image/photo	Symbol/metaphor	Tangible material/texture	Shape	
													Sound	Style	Animation/simulation	Layout	Typeface
													Body/language	Wording/phrasing	Annotated content/associated stories	Collage	Personalized visual

Lan, X., Yang, Y., & Wang, Y. (2025). "Mapping What I Feel": Understanding Affective Geovisualization Design Through the Lens of People-Place Relationships.

Pattern Analysis

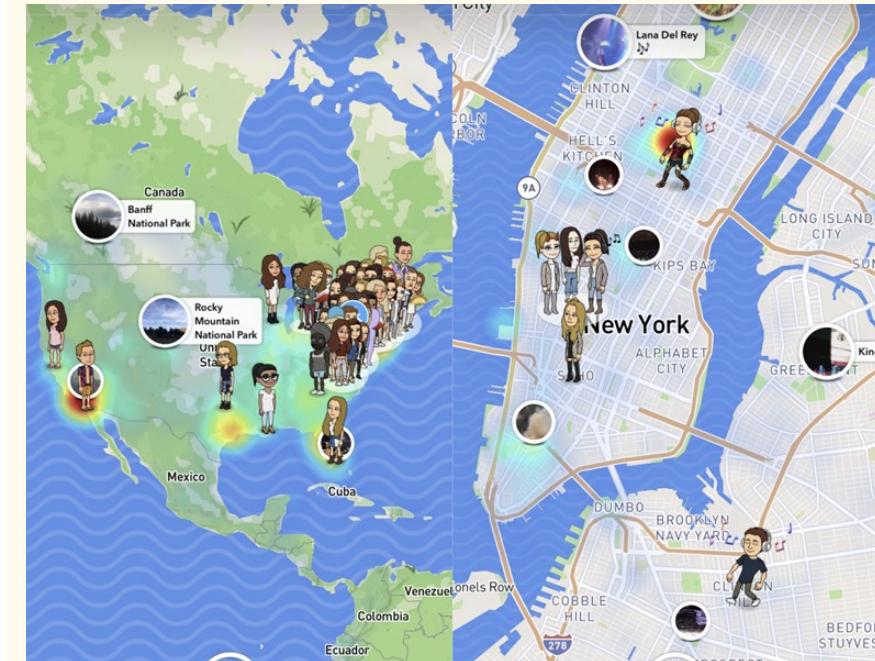
We identified four different design paradigms, distinguished by their methodology, target users, author roles, and visualization functions.



Paradigms	Computational	Anthropological	Social activism	Art
Subject	Anyone	Specific/special group	Specific group	Self
Author	Developer	Documenter	Coordinator	Experiencer
Method	Tool development	Fieldwork, interview	Activity, event	Artistic expression
Role of VIS	Medium	Amplifier	Catalyst	Poetry

Computational

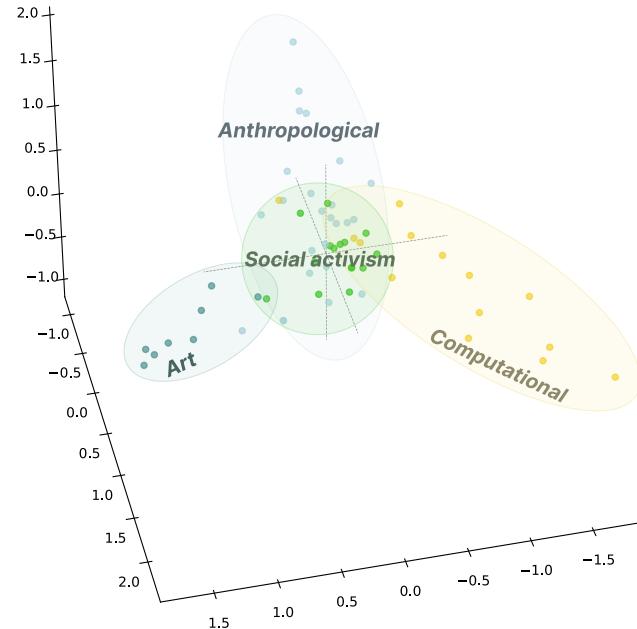
Authors act as developers who create tools for the public.



Vis as Medium for subjective communication

Pattern Analysis

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Role of VIS	Medium	Amplifier	Catalyst	Poetry

Anthropological

Authors act as documenters, giving voice to specific groups.

THE SPATIAL JOURNEYS OF HELMUT REINER AND THE ORENSTEINS

The width of path is meant to represent the space to which they were confined at each point in time.

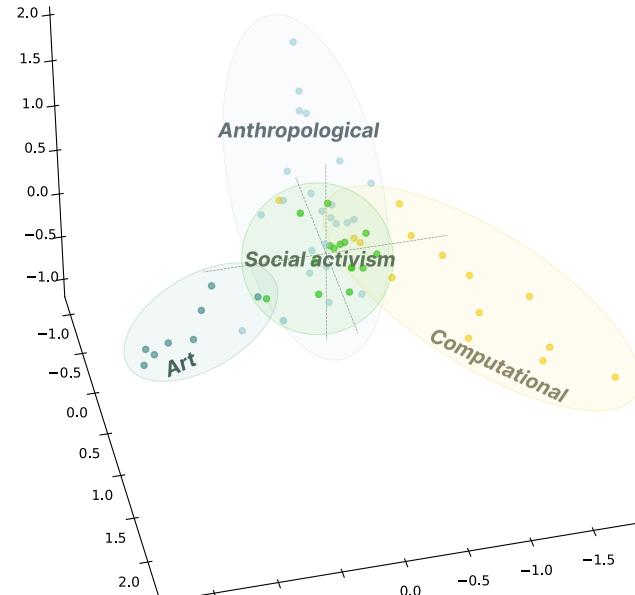
LEGEND

↑↑ favors entering or leaving a ghetto
↓↓ a death

Vis as Amplifier that captures emotions and translates them into visual narratives

Pattern Analysis

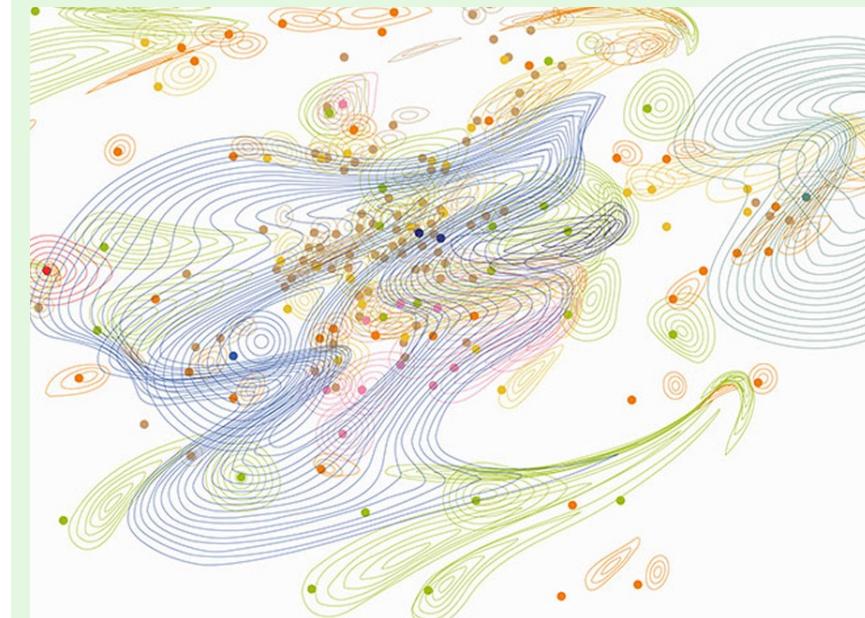
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Social activism

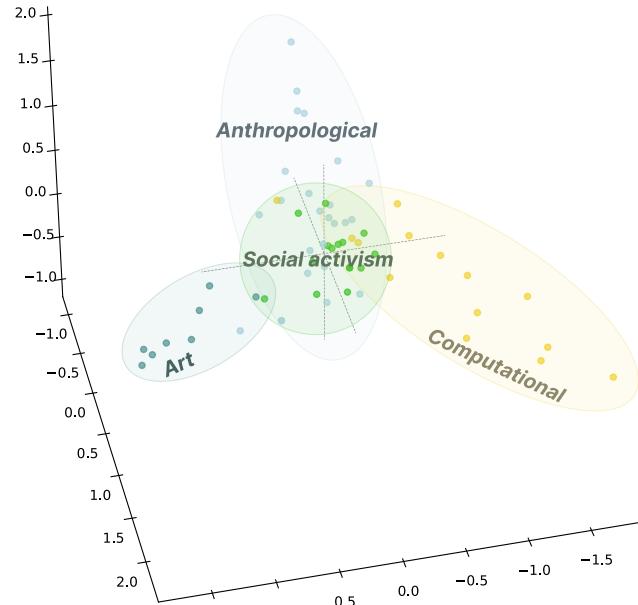
Authors act as coordinators and participants are involved.



Vis as Catalyst with emotions emerging as a result of the interaction

Pattern Analysis

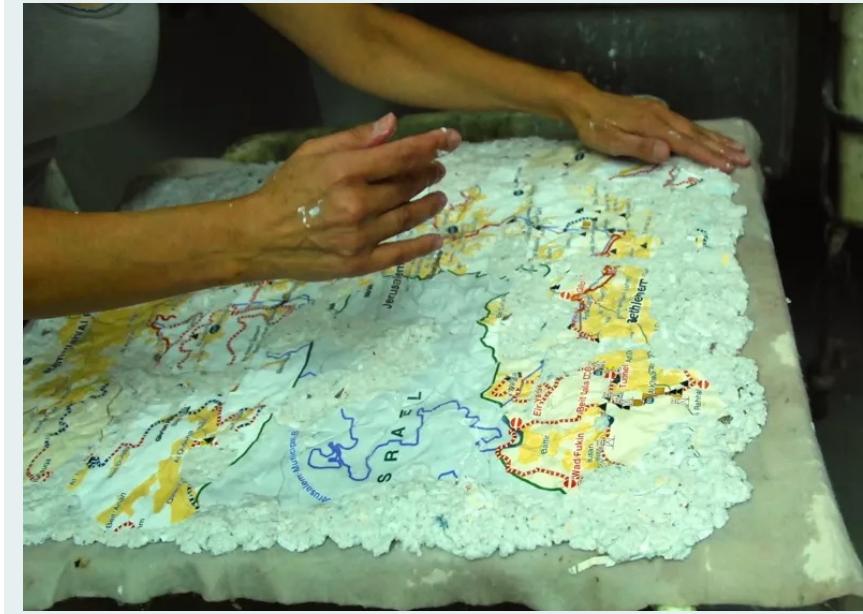
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Role of VIS	Medium	Amplifier	Catalyst	Poetry

Art

Authors act as **experiencers** who convey their own emotion.



Vis as **Poetry expressing sympathy, care, hope or other emotion in an aesthetical way.**

Discussion



Visualization can be very powerful in empathetic task, empowering the expression and communication of emotions, feelings or subjectivities with real humanistic data.

The derived design space reveals a dual mechanism of **emotional data** and **affective representation**. By leveraging this duality, visualization can transcend its traditional role as an objective tool and instead serve as a medium of communication, an amplifier of voices, a catalyst for evoking emotion, or a form of poetic expression.

Designing for fine-grained contexts.

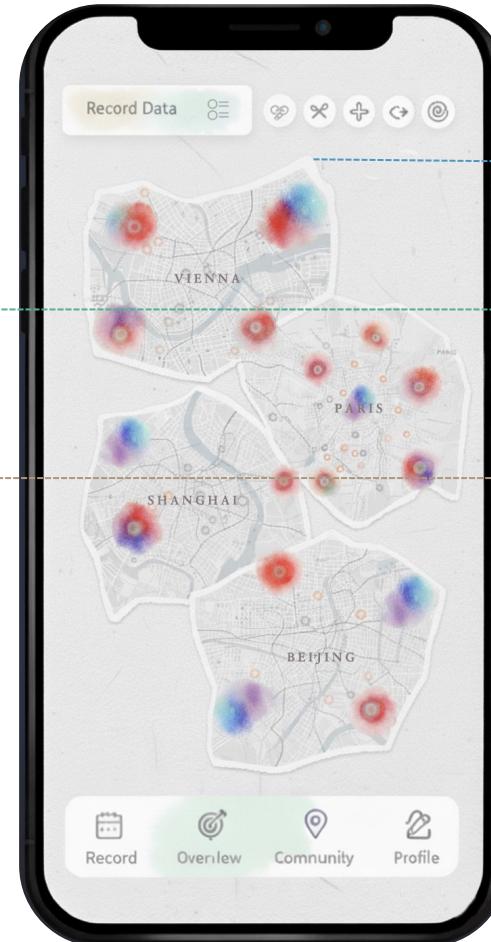
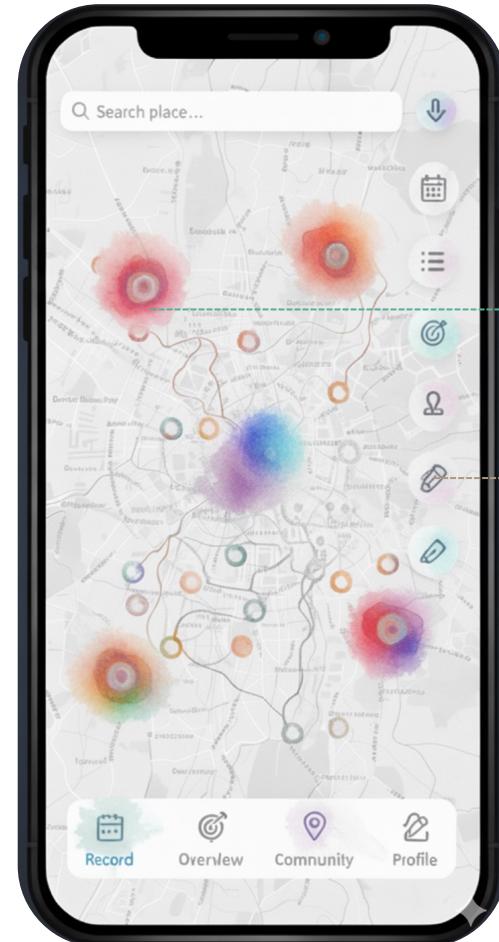
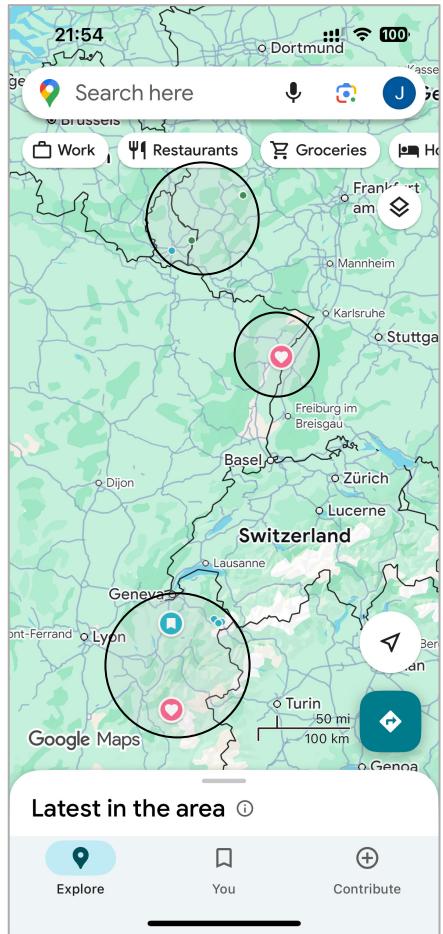
Our analysis of the **person** and **place** dimensions shows that in affective geovisualization design, there is a particularly strong focus on concrete rather than abstract individuals. These individuals have diverse identities, group sizes, and living spaces, and geographic applications serving them can vary in functions and features.

The value of qualitative and mixed methods.

In exploring the interdisciplinary field, we identified multiple methods in generating **emotional data**. Qualitative methods, in particular, dominate this field. For example, the embodied approach makes individuals an active part of visualization, allowing them to experience the environment physically. These methods can be referred to produce warm data thus humanistic visualization.

Our Ongoing Application

Affective GeoVisualization Design in Practice



3. Rearrange your nodes and places to organize your *psychological map*.

2. Each record will become a *visual node* to construct your personal emotional map.

1. Record your emotional experiences based on location, through emojis, photos, text, or colors.

SCAN ME



Join us at Discord

Or contact us at flora20@sjtu.edu.cn

Mapping What I Feel



"MAPPING WHAT I FEEL": UNDERSTANDING AFFECTIONATE GEOVISUALIZATION DESIGN
THROUGH THE LENS OF PEOPLE-PLACE RELATIONSHIPS

Xingyu Lan*, Yutong Yang*, Yifan Wang

Thank You!

Visit our website: <https://affectivegeovis.github.io/>

