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Co-Curated by Logan Holmes

http://vism.ag/fbook

@visualthinkmap
Jack-O-Latern


Inspired by Bill Bunge’s radical cartography in the 1960s and 1970s, the atlas contains diverse examples of creative, place-inspired maps, including maps of night, crime, fences, graffiti, textures, autumn leaves, routes, the underground, lines overhead, stars, and jack-o-lanterns.

The atlas was going to be three sections, corresponding to what we’d decided neighborhoods did. This was to transform universal stuff – things in general – into particular things, into the ding an sich. And vice versa.

Text From: http://makingmaps.net/2008/01/10/denis-wood-a-narrative-atlas-of-boylan-heights/

indicates a porch with one or more pumpkins
“The map as poem: this is something maps have laboured to deny from the beginning.”

Why have these apparently disparate elements been combined with such informality and what context has the word ‘narrative’ in the stolid world of objective data and facts? But open the cover, step inside and within a few minutes of consulting the contents your perceptions of what an atlas is, or can be are changed forever. The wonderful world of Dennis Wood comes to life and before you know it, the apparent contradictions become clear.

“To deny any continuity with painting and printmaking, stress “scientific” measurement, stress ever greater ‘accuracy,” “when gathering maps into atlases, stress systematic order - the alphabetical, the gridded - to deny any continuity with narrative. This renders the atlas nothing more than a way of keeping the maps piled on the table from slipping on the floor.”
I had never heard of Boylan Heights, a town in Raleigh, North Carolina, which is not surprising really! If I had opportunity to pass through it, I suspect, unless there was good reason, I probably wouldn’t stay long that is until I had read, ‘Everything Sings’.

‘Through the use of beautiful, simple, informal illustrations you discover the personality and character of the place.

I now feel intimately connected to the place; I know the paper round for the Raleigh Times, the network of telephone posts (squirrel highway), the route the mailman takes, the predominant colour that fills each Autumn street, the sounds that fill the air and of course the houses that displayed a pumpkin at Halloween.

All routine, (in most cases) everyday activities, events or simple observations that in isolation may not cause the mildest curiosity but presented as a sequence of maps with the “inessential, the map crap” removed. Through the use of beautiful, simple, informal illustrations you discover the personality and character of the place. This may be a fairly unremarkable town but with the inquisitiveness of Denis Wood it has been brought to life in the most exquisite way, t Woods has demonstrated quite beautifully how we can involve ourselves in the wonder of the ordinary, allow everything to sing to better understand and connect with the world around us.

“Why not an atlas of a neighbourhood that you could read as if it were, say, a novel by Balzac, an atlas rooted in a profound sense of place, larded with moral ambiguity, stuffed with richly human characters....”

Review by Logan Holmes.
Stars Map


'I knew I wanted to situate Boylan Heights in everything, that is, in the universe. But it wasn't simple to figure out how to pull this off. When it came to us to map the stars as they spread themselves over the neighborhood we knew it was right – the stars in the neighborhood – but it sounds easier to do than it was.
Armed with a magnetic compass we lay down in the middle of the intersection of Boylan Avenue and Dupont Circle and looked up at the sky. We did a rough sketch of the horizon – fumbling flashlights – and the stars.

A couple of days later we lay down in the intersection in the middle of the afternoon to get the horizon in finer detail. What we were trying to do was a kind of fish-eye view, splashing up out of the neighborhood into the night sky. Using an atlas of star positions we improved our plotting of the night sky. This was not easy either because the projection we were making and the projection the star atlas used were very different. We pulled the rest of the stars from Galileo's Sidereus Nuncius both because they are so beautiful and because I liked the way Galileo integrated text and image. Crawford did the drawing, laid out the spread, and did the photomechanical work.

The stars in Boylan Heights, Boylan Height in the stars. For me this was really important, not only because the sky is the natural wonder we always forget to include on our lists (and the night sky its most sublime face),

“we are just stardust”

but because, since we are stardust, the stars seem to be the place where every geography has to start

Text by: Denis Wood

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