

## Traveling Skin: A Cartography of the Body

Stacy Holman Jones and Anne Harris

**Abstract:** *Maps are visual and affective representations that materially produce territories—not only multiple spaces and entryways,<sup>1</sup> but also expanses of time and embodiments.<sup>2</sup> This essay, a cartography of the body, writes the shifting, temporary relationship between experience (a doing), the corporeal (embodiment), and the known (knowledge), and offers one example of how we might chart territories of material and affective connection in and through such landscapes. It remembers the map as a making that attempts to mark intensities, “layers of being”—of bodies, of times, places, and actions—in their “many versions.”<sup>3</sup>*



*A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self—it’s no metaphor.*  
(Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* 14)

*Maps are deeply selective.* (Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* 162)

*Every map is a fiction. Every map offers choices. It is even possible to choose something beautiful.* (D.J. Waldie, *Holy Land* 47)

### Encompassed: A Beginning

Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 disappeared on 8 March 2014 carrying 227 passengers and 12 crew...Two vessels, one Chinese and one from Dutch engineering company Fugro are currently mapping the seafloor along the arc, where depths exceed 5,000 metres in parts...headed south into one of the remotest areas of the planet. The next phase of the search mission is expected to take a year, covering some 60,000 sq. kilometres of ocean at a cost of \$56 million or more.<sup>4</sup>

What is the cost of a map?

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari 13.

<sup>2</sup> Rosalyn Diprose and Robyn Ferrell ix.

<sup>3</sup> Rebecca Solnit 162.

<sup>4</sup> Jessica Best.

The human cost, in this sense, is a fluid proposition, enmeshed in historicity, sociality, and materiality. It is always dependent, in a sense, on its affective role in the lives of those for whom it is constructed. Can the cost of a map also be dependent upon its affective role for those who construct it? The intensities<sup>5</sup> it marks are doings and artefacts, feelings and possibilities. Those intensities vary according to the map's emplacement in ocean, land, body, air, time. In words. For in the end, maps are narrative and temporal artefacts and not only visual objects that mark off the limits of knowledge, a "known world surrounded by water."<sup>6</sup>

This essay confronts the loss of the "... complacency that must have gone with the sense that the world was, as the navigational term has it, encompassed ... [and our contemporary] smugness now that maps of earth are so unlikely to say, to mark 'Terra Incognita'."<sup>7</sup> The myth that terra incognita no longer exists in the age of global positioning and mapping technologies is unravelled by the nomadic subject, a "dynamic and changing entity" who uses wondering and wandering as navigational tools for collectively creating "discursive, affective and social intensities."<sup>8</sup> For creating the poem that is the map that is the territory, if only temporarily.<sup>9</sup>

We think that by mapping or using maps (what Deleuze and Guattari call "tracing," something that comes "ready-made")<sup>10</sup> we can find things, can chart a known world surrounded by "oceans of unknown."<sup>11</sup> Though as the lost plane

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<sup>5</sup> Brian Massumi, *Autonomy* writes that intensities are "embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin—at the surface of a body, at its interface with things" (85).

<sup>6</sup> Solnit 165.

<sup>7</sup> Solnit 165.

<sup>8</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* 5,18.

<sup>9</sup> Solnit 162 writes of Jorge Luis Borges' poem "Parable of the Palace," in which a poet "so perfectly describes the emperor's vast and intricate palace that the emperor becomes enraged and regards him as a thief. In another version the palace disappears when the poem replaces it. The descriptive poem is a perfect map, the map that is the territory..."

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 12.

<sup>11</sup> Solnit 163.

and the passengers of MH370 remind us, maps are “deeply selective”; they are visual and aural archives that do not encompass<sup>12</sup> the promise or probability of charting a line of flight.<sup>13</sup> It’s not so much that there are no longer any unknown places, but rather that in our relentless efforts to map and remap—to become ever more exact—we have lost the idea of getting lost. Surrendered the joy of *being* lost. What does it mean, then, to no longer have any ‘unknown’ territory? To wake up to the news of planes disappearing from contact and falling from the sky that leaves us feeling unmoored, disconnected from any mimetic sense or semblance of home or place or life? What does it mean to be dis/oriented, no longer encompassed. To be without map or territory? Lost?

**Terra Incognita: *Unknown or unexplored land, region, or subject*<sup>14</sup>**

Your body is a line of breadcrumbs, leading me back to my own. You are a landscape in which I have been drifting, and the traveling skin<sup>15</sup> I wear and wander through is my own. I wake in the middle of the night, drenched with desire and effort. The rise and fall of your breath traces a floating world, a geography for finding my way into you, into the unknown territory of myself.

Wayfinding conjures and contains the very possibility of getting lost, of losing oneself, of falling into and outside of and away from known territories. Of coming undone and untethered in relation to an other, to a territory; a conscious, “voluptuous surrender, lost in your arms, lost to the world, utterly immersed” in the search for what you most want and “need to find.”<sup>16</sup>

The plane is immersed, though whether it was ‘surrendered’ to the sea by an electrical fire or pilot suicide or US military exercise gone horribly wrong is still, nearly 2 years later, a mystery. The wreckage sinks, drifts, comes to rest, or washes ashore somewhere within the 60,000 square kilometres of uncharted ocean space along the 7<sup>th</sup> arc (Fig. 1)—the line of flight along which the plane was said to have travelled before exhausting its fuel supply and beginning its descent.<sup>17</sup>

July 2015: A piece of wing from MH370 washes up on the shore of the tiny volcanic island of *Reunion* in the Indian Ocean. No longer immersed in the push and pull of ocean currents, the fragment is found 2,300 miles from where the plane is supposed to have crashed.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Solnit 162.

<sup>13</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 9-10.

<sup>14</sup> “Terra incognita.”

<sup>15</sup> John Belluso 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Solnit 6.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

<sup>18</sup> MH370.

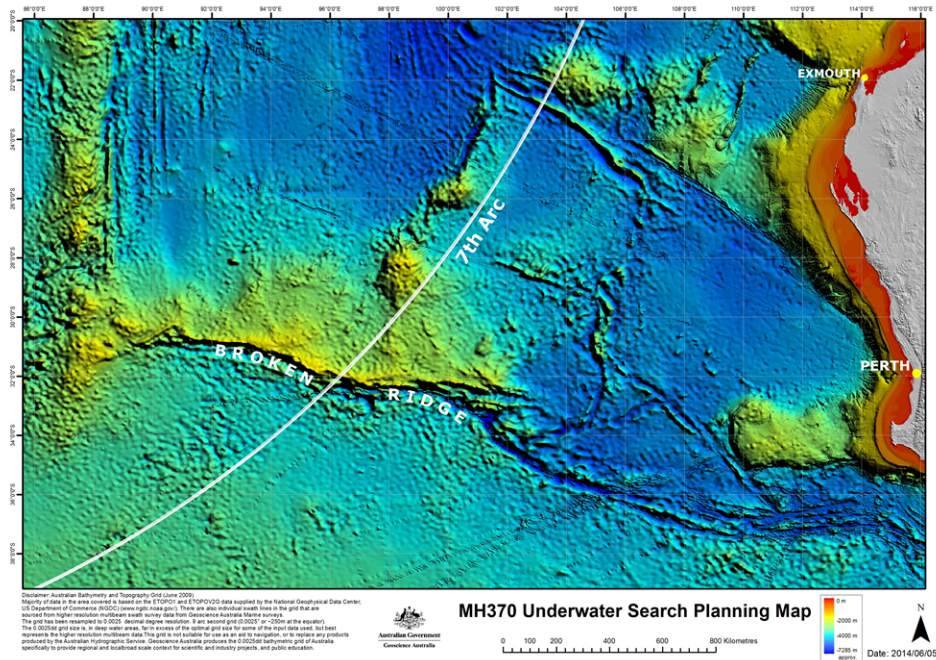


Fig. 1. Map of the 7- Arc. At the time MH370 reached this arc, the aircraft is considered to have exhausted its fuel and to have been descending."

August 2015: Small bits of MH370 are found in the Maldives, itself one of the world's most geographically dispersed territories. Authorities say it is impossible for pieces of MH370 to have travelled both northward and southward, and yet, it seems that they have.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that people now think every metal object washing ashore is from MH370 and that they are part of a global treasure hunt<sup>21</sup> for clues to the cause of destruction and dispersion, their finds multiple entry points on a map of watery graves. A line of sharp, shiny breadcrumbs that will lead us to a metal body fallen from the heavens now locatable somewhere along the broken ridge at the bottom of the ocean. The machine-body occupies/falls into the space between, an assemblage of fragments that returns us to the complex and emergent singularity of our own maps—the known world as it crashes into and against the unfolding vastness of the ocean. Rosi Braidotti speaks of the “need to draw maps” in terms of texts, each of which is a fragment, a “‘camp site’: it traces places where I have been in the shifting landscape of my singularity.”<sup>22</sup> Mapping is a doing made up of words,

<sup>19</sup> Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

<sup>20</sup> Suman Varandani.

<sup>21</sup> MH370, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* 46.

or lights, or fragments, or indeed of memories, of zones of contact, of touching interfaces, or of stories; each, still, tracking/forming living landscapes, geographies of encounter.

Maps and bodies and landscapes and desire enactments and planes are visual and affective representations that materially produce a territory—not only multiple spaces and multiple entryways,<sup>23</sup> but also space and time and embodiments.<sup>24</sup> This essay, a cartography of the body, writes the shifting, temporary relationship between experience (a doing), the corporeal (embodiment), and the known (knowledge) and offers one example of how we might chart territories of material and affective connection in and through such landscapes. It remembers the map as a making that attempts to mark intensities, “layers of being”—of bodies, of times, places and actions—in their “many versions.”<sup>25</sup> The movement of such intensities happens in “a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergencies.”<sup>26</sup> This cartography writes the body in flight and stillness, in the search for home and the pull of wandering, in the dance of memory and the imminent, as a matter of words and bodies and elemental, material forces, and in an effort to reckon our losses and unnamed desires with the promise of the delicious unknown.

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We move between sea-earth-body-heavens.  
and even then, they intertwine like scarred fingers  
touching reigniting beyond numbness.  
The heavens become heavenly bodies.  
The earth becomes bodily landscapes.  
Our bodies inseparable from the map,  
always singular, always subjective and  
—going further— affective.  
Always a forgotten touch.  
Lost.

### ***Carte du Pays de Tendre: The Map of the Land of Tenderness***

In 1654, aspiring writer and aristocrat Madeleine de Scudery debuted the *Carte de Pays de Tendre*, “Map of the Land of Tenderness” (Fig. 2) in her novel *Clelie*. The map became a popular board game in her 17<sup>th</sup> century French salon,

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<sup>23</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 13.

<sup>24</sup> Diprose and Ferrell ix.

<sup>25</sup> Solnit 162.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart 2.

though more than an evening's diversion, the map charted Mademoiselle de Scudery's emotional geographies, sexual imaginations, and political ambitions along the contours of a (her own) female body.<sup>27</sup> Giuliana Bruno writes that the map of tenderness "embodies a narrative voyage" that makes a "world of affects visible to us via a landscape of emotions."<sup>28</sup> In the map's design, "the exterior world conveys an interior landscape" and "emotion materializes as a moving topography."<sup>29</sup> A map of another kind of tenderness, this essay makes a world of intensities visible via a landscape of emotions, a cartography of the desirous body on an affective journey.



Fig. 2. Madeleine de Scudery's 'Carte du Pays de Tendre' (The Map of the Land of Tenderness), 1654

<sup>27</sup> Gloria Feman Orenstein

<sup>28</sup> Giuliana Bruno, 2002, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Madeline de Scudery.

**Dike:** *bank of earth or stone used to form a barrier, restraining water within an area that normally is flooded.*<sup>31</sup>

My life restrains me, in the ways in which I am ready to be flooded.  
The barriers against my floodedness are the banks which keep my life 'on track,' 'on course' and 'pushing on.'  
My mind accepts—even nurtures—the dikes I have erected, I have allowed others to erect for/around me;  
My body does not.  
My body yearns to flow, to overflow, to be flooded.

I dreamt of you all night.  
I dreamt we were in your car with me trying to navigate and getting us lost every time.  
I am no good with a map.  
I am better at meandering,  
Fleeing,  
Taking my chances,  
Navigating by instinct  
Hoping for the best  
Leaping and making it work.

But I dreamt of us all night,  
Lost  
And happy.  
I would be floating above you, mapping your body,  
tracing your beautiful contours with my fingers, painting in the language of landscapes  
drawing heat lines—cartographic memories/traces/tracks,  
the art of remembering your landbodyscape.  
Destinations.  
Arrivals and departures can happen at the same spacetime.<sup>32</sup>  
Autographic cartoethnographer, that's what I've become.

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<sup>31</sup> "Dike."

<sup>32</sup> For Erin Manning, *spacetime* represents the inextricability of place and movement, temporality and corporeality, synthesised and co-implicated; a spatial-temporal knitting that implicates the more-than-human and objects as well. As Manning challenges: "...you forgot that objects have a life, that they create space. And that how the space moves you is synonymous with the eventness of its objects...perhaps you begin to pay more attention to how the objects create space, not simply how they configure the pattern of an already existing spacetime of experience. Objects are not stable: they forecast the time of the event" (91-92).

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I dream of moving.

The relationship between stasis and movement is the tension between routine and the void. I am pulled between them—the map and the leap, the doing and the body, the known world and the surround of water. *What is*, versus *what is left*.

Every night I dream of moving, flowing, shifting, falling.

Sometimes along a road, sometimes through the air.

The map of my falling is invisible, unseen<sup>33</sup>

Etched in my body my mind

fleeting scenes of interactions touches

words moments remembered.

Moving breeds its own kind of stasis.

I dive into the cold ocean on a hot late afternoon amidst grevilleas and ancient palms and ghost gum and mango trees and my body responds; it responds automatically, even in the absence of volition.

They say the pilot of MH370 must have made a decision,  
must have chosen to turn away from the charted flight path.

He must have made two choices that even now,  
even in hindsight,

even in the absence of the plane's *body*

and the 239 bodies inside it—can be traced.

In this story, the charting off course was volitional.

But what if it wasn't?

What if it just happened?

How can some intensities take so many others with them?

My dive into the water is a sudden leap, one that precipitates other corporeal intensities:

I note its coldness, its wetness, its effect on my body, my temperature dropping, the contour between skin and water alive again like scar tissue.

I flow through the water,

rippling

my breath increases

my shadow falls

my arms thrash.

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<sup>33</sup> Solnit 173.



We move to beaches  
to coastlines to waters' 'edges' to  
watch the sun sink into the ocean into the land into the earth into the night.  
Like a primeval calling, at dusk,  
that slight hesitation  
the reverence  
the momentary fear that this may in fact be it—the last sunset.  
The last sinking of the sun.  
the diving in. The falling plane.  
It gives pause. It gives reason to stop all else and sit, stand, hold  
transfixed, beyond feeling, and words and sense.<sup>34</sup>  
Why?  
It is a map as old as being  
that something is passing  
something passes quickly  
something has passed.  
Visibly physically passed away.  
From our seeing (at least), and our feeling (on the skin).  
Whether it returns remains to be seen. Unseen.  
For now, we mark its passing.

**Meander Line:** *A line that follows an irregular course, especially one following the . . . the margin of a body of water.*<sup>35</sup>

Gravity  
    world and body, oceans and fingertips—  
    the rising and falling of waves, pulses and breaths—  
my insomnia is an ocean  
my body a buzzing, twisted boat  
pulled along in rushing want, drifting, catching, wavering;  
desire pools and eddies in ribcage and fingertips  
  
longing a flat, smooth stone along the crooked shore  
longing a stone in my fist, closed, hovering above the landscape  
of your body.

Sleep a slow leak,  
each breach a silent dream:

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<sup>34</sup> Manning writes of mapping as a living tracing that “touches us without our knowing why, a touching that occurs not through the effects of language but beyond,” where something unseen exists, “something that is ineffable but nonetheless” felt (196).

<sup>35</sup> “Meander line.”

an empty bow, hands open  
singing low and clear,  
lullaby of unspoken poems  
moon spilling overhead, silent, waiting, wanting  
        you  wanting  
you, still  
wanting.

Breath catching, mid-rise  
crest and trough of light, sail the grey distance  
hold. rest.  
tether rain, gush, thirst  
dredge down, deep, undertow low and sweet.  
        hold. rest,  
mouth, open:  
        deluge.

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It is with our faces that we face the world, from the moment of birth to the moment of death...The face, psychoanalysts consider, is the first object to acquire visual meaning and significance.<sup>36</sup>

Prosopagnosia—face blindness—  
can be felt, affectively known,  
as home-blindness.

Faces can be home to us (or not).  
Visual markers of  
the landscape of emotions,  
worry lines as latitude and longitude  
roadmaps for wayfinding connection.

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<sup>36</sup> Oliver Sacks, 2010, 82.

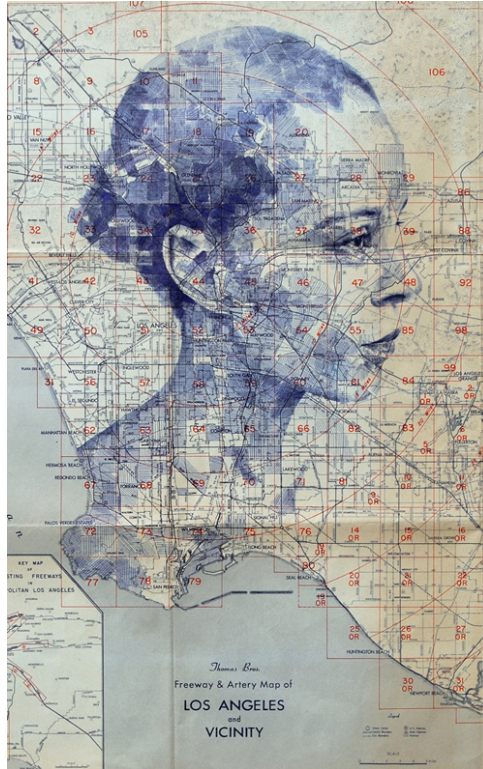


Fig. 3. Ed Fairburn, 2015, Los Angeles (Part II/Westbound)<sup>37</sup>

The earth a face etched  
through time in its countenance,  
mapping the lines we trace,  
emplacements, enfleshments.

Memories  
home-blindness that depends  
on remembering  
on facing  
the map/body (Fig. 3).

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<sup>37</sup> Ed Fairburn, 2015.

There is, however, another way of thinking of mapping, as wayfinding. This is the process of 'visiting in turn all, or most, of the positions one takes to constitute the field . . . [covering] descriptively as much of the terrain as possible exploring on foot rather than looking down at it from an airplane.'<sup>38</sup>

When I was a kid and I slept overnight away from home, I often wandered out into the night, sleepwalking. It was as if leaving home and the new and strange surroundings called me out into the unknown. Into the uncharted. Alone, unsure of my destination, the cold cutting through thin cotton pyjamas, I was dreaming of some other place, the immaterial, the not-yet discovered. I was on a walk, if not a leap, into the void. This sleepwalking alarmed others, of course—my parents, the parents of friends at whose homes I was invited to sleep over, those friends.

"Where were you going?" they'd ask.

I couldn't answer them, often didn't remember the leaving, only the walking, the night air on my traveling skin. Only the need for movement.

You are still searching for your mother's face. . . And you are still searching for your father's face, compulsively turning the present around to gaze upon the past, a blank circle of wood, the face of your dead father, the face you never saw in life.<sup>39</sup>

While most children recover their bodies and remain tucked safely into their beds when they grow up, I continued to roam well into my adulthood, sometimes waking up in unfamiliar places—awash on the floor of the bathroom, the basement, the small kitchen in my college dormitory. My body was the compass, the source of movement, and the map that took me into the unknown spaces, the wishes of my dreams.

And now, though I no longer sleepwalk, my dreams make maps, a cartography of my need for movement, the not-yet discovered, the walk or leap into the void. They are maps drawn in the curve of your back, in the movement of your body against mine, in the course charted by the words you whisper me to sleep by, constellations against my night sky. Your face is my map back—not to my familiar, to my mother's face, to the image of my father standing in the doorway, but to my home.

You are my map home.  
Body inextricable from emotion  
A city, a tangle of freeways, a desert  
or the vast dark speckled night sky

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<sup>38</sup> Jean-Phillip Mathy 15.

<sup>39</sup> Jane Jeong Trenka 135.

through which we move,  
faces pressed to the airplane window,  
even when the sea  
is rushing up too-quick toward us.  
the materiality of motion  
an affective geography  
mapped only in relationship to the  
turning, positioning, constituting  
of everyday people  
doing everyday things  
in excruciating detail.

**Contour: *Imaginary line on the ground or sea bed;*<sup>40</sup> *shape of a melody,*  
*boundary of a set; the spine of a book, a silhouette of the night.***

Could we map how we are/becoming deserts, oceans, paths, rivers and valleys, charting how these bodily contours are created in how matter makes itself felt?<sup>41</sup> In this cartography of the body, mapping is a becoming, a refiguring of our entanglements, asking how the map of matter, “feels, converses, suffers, desires, yearns, and remembers.”<sup>42</sup>

If I think about the world as a map —  
“not only the material world but the world of ideas...  
the dreams we dream and inhabit together”<sup>43</sup> —  
if I think about the world as a map rather than a story<sup>44</sup>  
just for a moment  
my space and time<sup>45</sup> (my spacetime)<sup>46</sup> meet in the cartography of my flesh  
(beat)  
then  
I begin to think of how I might ‘world’ my flesh-body differently:

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<sup>40</sup> “Contour.”

<sup>41</sup> Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity” 810.

<sup>42</sup> Barad, “Matter Feels” 69.

<sup>43</sup> Solnit 60.

<sup>44</sup> One reading of this essay is that we started out with a binarised treatment of story/map and ended up paralleled in a formulation of map/story/time as parts of the same, not different, treatments of the posthuman-body-subject.

<sup>45</sup> Braidotti, *The Posthuman* writes Cartographies aim at ... “unveiling the power locations which structure our subject-position. As such, they account for one’s locations in terms of both space (geo-political or ecological dimension) and time (historical and genealogical dimension)” (164).

<sup>46</sup> Manning 91-92.

a breaking-up between me and narrative,  
a leap into the unrecognizable  
not a where-ness  
not a thing-ness  
but a doing.

One version of my childhood can be mapped by standing near the stove  
watching my mother cook, resentfully.  
She hated cooking. She was not, truth be told, very domestic at all.  
But she loved her pans.  
Copper bottoms.  
Those pans were probably worth more than my dad made in a year.  
Their shiny well-polished copper bottoms made it bearable for mom to cook,  
they were a signpost on her journey through the *Carte de Tendre* that left her so  
far from  
satisfaction.

And when she died  
in the hot humid Evansville August  
when we got back from the banks of the Ohio river and  
thinking on what it means to be motherless  
parentless  
once again  
for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in one lifetime,  
my brother and I started dividing up her artefacts  
a cartography of memories  
the stuff-map of a lifetime  
of a house built on 11 wooded New York acres  
reduced  
reduced  
reduced.

And what I could bring back to Australia  
on that other end of the 'map'  
over that other 'body' (of water)  
had to be small  
had to be light  
had to fly easily  
or float  
Or fold.  
Clothes  
and letters  
and those copper-bottomed pots and pans.

How happy I am  
Now — after the jewellery and few pieces of furniture have been  
hocked by my brother (for another hit of high).  
After the clothes have all been given to Goodwill  
when I miss her in a simmering way  
like a slow rolling boil,  
I cook.  
The thingness of her pans tames my wilful daughterness and we  
transmute  
for a moment  
into the purposeful, resilient, useful things we were fashioned to be.  
And those pans have turned out to be more durable than my mother's love.  
And certainly more lasting than her fleshbody.

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You are here — in LA, in the same spacetime, for a sweet 36 hours, and then you  
are gone. You are here on stopover along the flight from there — the there-you  
composed in other rooms, along other coastlines, in other beds — to there — the  
there-you conjured at/in/as home in teacups and bathtubs and blankets.

After weeks — years, really — of wondering, waiting, wandering, we meet on  
the sidewalk. Your cheek brushes mine, your fingers press into the small of my  
back, then pull away. We walk a few blocks to a café and share a nervous  
breakfast during which I do not eat. Instead, I watch your mouth as you sip  
coffee and speak of your travels. Afterwards, you suggest we take a walk and  
we make our way up, up into the Hollywood hills and onto the path that follows  
the contours of the reservoir. We kick up dust and sweat and squint into the  
blue, blue sky, circling each other with stories until we are parched and panting  
and forced to climb down. We return to my car and in that tight, humid  
space — and not under trees or overlooking the water or the city that stretches  
out before us like the expanse of our desire — we finally collide.

Afternoon stretches into darkness into morning, shifts in the geography of  
the world catalogued through an open bedroom window. I can see you hovering  
just above me, not touching, just touching, the force and energy of you  
holding me in bodyspacetime, in gravity. We are flying.

I can see the beautiful recess at the base of your throat, along your clavicle,  
my finger/tongue/mouth on it. I can see your lips turning red. I can smell the  
back of your neck. I can hear you talking to me, making words for me to carry  
in my body after you have gone, inventing a language for my fingers to return  
to, mapping the topography of shoulder blades and bellies and hip bones.

I can see us, a year from now, five years from now, falling into the same time and place.<sup>47</sup> Calling out to the other room, writing together, making this map bigger, tracking land/time/space/distance/desire, finding the topography of we, the ups and downs, the hills and valleys, the vast open plains of us. An us map.

And then, as I knew it would, your plane, itself an object in the happening of our connection—a mode of attention, writing letters in the sky<sup>48</sup>—departs at midnight, flying west like the sun.

And now, here, the letters—the sentences I am gathering and assembling for you, word by word—another kind of making: a map of my affective becoming, the cartography of my routes, disjunctures, and connections to you.<sup>49</sup> A word map. It's difficult to begin, the bright expanse of the blank page rising up to embrace the shadows of my movements. How to make a poem that is the map that is the territory—to choose something beautiful in the fiction<sup>50</sup> of writing the unknown world? And still, the letters form and bear me into the distance, out over the ocean between us—animating the circuit<sup>51</sup> between you—there and me—here—for a moment, for now.

Question: What is a map?

Answer: A map is the night.<sup>52</sup>

If language is a map and not a tracing<sup>53</sup> and a map is the night, your words are in my fingers, marking this page with the pulse of your breathing, a discovery that happens on that long, long, flight. The plane charts the contours of continents and mountains, deserts and vast bodies of water, onto the surface of my skin and the expanse of the page.

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<sup>47</sup> Sara Ahmed 71.

<sup>48</sup> Ahmed 72.

<sup>49</sup> Stewart writes: “Ordinary affects, then, are an animate circuit that conducts force and maps connections, routes, and disjunctures” (3).

<sup>50</sup> Waldie 47.

<sup>51</sup> Stewart 3.

<sup>52</sup> Drawn from Matthew Goulish when he writes: “Question #3: What is a book? Answer #3: A book is the night. . . Sometimes the reader comes to the realization that all the printed the words make up only half of the book. Silence makes up the other half” (154).

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 85.



**Bathymetry - Science of measuring water depths (usually in the ocean) to determine bottom topography); uncharted territories<sup>54</sup>**

I draw in the lines of your foot. I paint in the lines of your mouth. I make watercolors in your hand. I sew images in your ear. I draw a map in your navel.<sup>55</sup>

Who's to say that home is composed anyway?  
Maybe it just falls,  
intact,  
from the sky, and dissolves, like salt—or planes—in the ocean.

My ideas on the subject have all been washed out to sea.  
Lost property in the airport—one of the airports—  
that feel increasingly like home.

Airports at the bottom of the ocean,  
the overhead announcement of departures and delays  
made on a new frequency—a different sort of sonar—  
pings memorializing, mapping  
objects of the wreckage:  
metal and glass,  
lonely Sundays and silent homecomings,  
cuts and slights and longings.  
The bodily injury of hunger and hoping.

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Another French woman artist, another map of tenderness, another charting of everyday domestic and cosmic affects, the terra incognita that is being a woman in the world: Annette Messenger's *Mes Trophées* (My Trophies) (Fig. 4). Body parts—hands, feet—are marked by the encounter with an emotional landscape, a road map that animates the “shared material qualities between bodies, territories, and landscapes.”<sup>56</sup> Messenger's cartography of body-text-image creates a photographic contact zone in which the “circulations, events, conditions, tech-

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<sup>54</sup> “Bathymetry.”

<sup>55</sup> Annette Messenger quoted in Bernard Marcade.

<sup>56</sup> Levi Barringer draws on Elizabeth Grosz's writing about qualities, which she says “can be extracted or abstracted from the objects in which they are found and taken from this excess to become pleasurable and intensifying qualities that can be used to adorn both territory and body. Territory and body only emerge as such to the extent that such qualities can be extracted” (102).

nologies and flows of power literally take place.”<sup>57</sup> The “fluid, nomadic, transversal territories” drawn from palm to finger, charting without encompassing the “transformation of utterance into flesh.”<sup>58</sup>

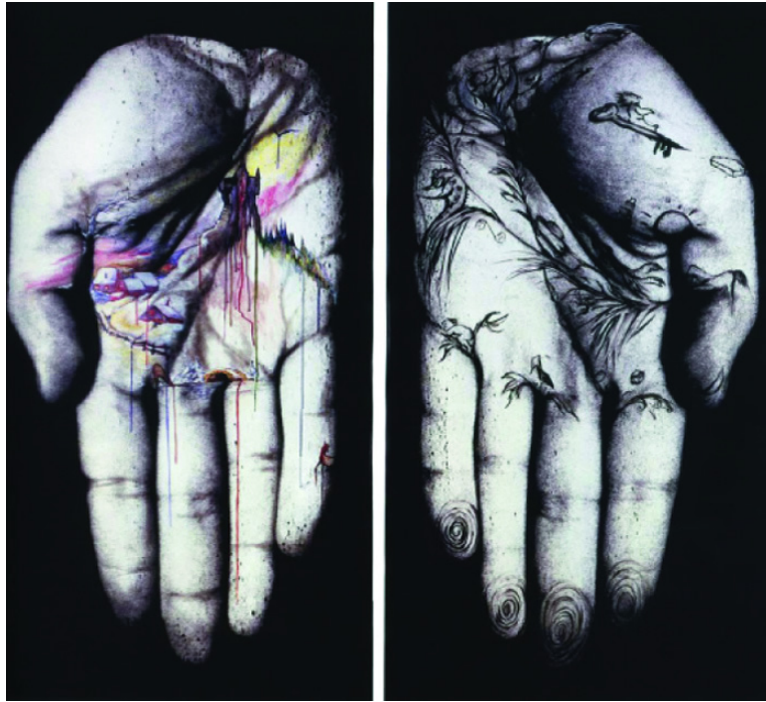


Fig. 4. Annette Messenger, 1986-88, *Mes Trophées* (My Trophies), *Fonds National d'Art*

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I push my index finger into my mouth,  
trying to stop the inevitable,  
trying to put off the pain,  
knowing it must come.

I've cut myself with the fresh blade,  
Christmas morning gift given  
by a lover. Pressed into service  
in the fading afternoon light,

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<sup>57</sup> Stewart 3.

<sup>58</sup> Barringer.

<sup>59</sup> Messenger.

an attempt to devise  
a proper holiday meal.

It is a thoughtful, useful gift for someone who loves to cook. And, along with the cookware and deep freeze of other Christmases, the blade is a technology of the ache and want of intimacy I long to have but do not feel.

As soon my hand moves I know what I've done, understand I've caused too much damage—the cut too deep, pulse coming too fast, the room spinning before me—and yet, I wait. Avoid looking.

But the blood does not stop flowing and I must give in to the emergency. The ER doctor doesn't blink, says he sees these kinds of holiday injuries all the time, work of the careless, the distracted, the cavalier. Says he can't stitch the wound, can't repair the skin severed by the glance of the blade. He staunches the bleeding with a thick binding and tells me to have it looked at in a few days.

And after that few days, the removal of the binding—the looking—opens opens the wound anew; blood flows without remittance and prompts another return to the ER. And, in a few days time, another performance of the ritual.

And again, and again, until months later, the wound finally heals. Though the cut and the looking and the opening have altered the topography of my finger, the lines of its imprint disturbed, rerouted; mountains raised in a too-sensitive desert landscape. A trophy marking the disaster. Fractured nerve endings send a jolt of electricity along my spine when pressed into the service of writing or touching. And because I cannot stop writing, cannot stop touching, my fingers learn a new pattern of travel, a way of meeting keys and flesh that leaves out the damage, that relearns the map of joining words into gestures into sentences into caresses into stories.

Though this map is temporary; it leaves out too much, avoids too much, moves too far away from what is needed, what is 'true.'

Still, I become practiced in avoiding the wounded fingertip, favouring it like a child, trying to bring it back into the whole of my body by pressing the bruised skin against my lips and waiting for the feeling to become familiar, trying to staunch the emergency. Trying to avoid the knife-edge, trying to keep from opening the wound of want, again. Though working around and missing the use of my wounded fingertip makes me clumsy, uncertain and stuttering in my words and my touch. It is as if my body has lost the ability to know, the pressure of contact is too much to bear, the frayed sensation a window or a door I am not ready to travel through.

And then, months later, more than a year, I am sitting next to you and your hand touches mine, your fingers intertwine with mine. I feel the jolt; the electric current travels all along my body, clear and sure. Without knowing or deciding, I remember the map of my familiar, trace myself back into my body with my fingers. I press myself along a different edge, an unexpected gift in the fading

afternoon light:

I am looking up at you,  
my fingers in your mouth  
the landscape of my pain  
turned inside out, pulse  
coming fast, the hope and rush  
of another kind of feast  
gathering in my fingertips.

**Relief: *Elevations and depressions of the land or sea bottom.*<sup>60</sup>**

I have compassion for stars.  
And nostalgia for copper, released in the heavens as stardust.  
Fleshbodies and landscapes are tied, irrevocably,  
to the heavens, not only through elements like copper,  
but through affect.

Even when we cannot make the map of feeling intelligible,  
or recognise this 'place' as ours, as us as home,  
it is intensity that we note,  
that we trust,  
perhaps more so with time,  
more so because, after all, we are cosmological beings;  
our intensities, our affective geographies a consequence of  
no-boundary conditions.<sup>61</sup>  
Sometimes there is an observable distance between what is 'true' and what is  
magnetic.  
Which is to be trusted; which is to be mapped?

Just like the MH370 is still there, in or on another plane of the universe.  
In or under another kind of ocean.  
In or on another kind of map (Fig. 5).  
Some people call this faith;  
I call it *terra incognita*, or my not-known,  
not-yet life.

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<sup>60</sup> "Relief."

<sup>61</sup> Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow 209.



Fig. 5. Ji Zhou, 2015, *The Map No. 4*

Both Jean Baudrillard and Rebecca Solnit use Jorge Luis Borges' essay<sup>63</sup> on the ineffability of cartographic precision in different ways: for Baudrillard, the map itself becomes the mapped; for Solnit, magical realism asks us to consider maps as living metaphors that chart the limits of knowledge. Borges himself could have created the story of Google Maps, the lost Malaysian airlines jet and those multiples of human lives *not* mapped in time, not mapped in the expanse of what we do not know, not mapped well enough to save. Representational culture is always already inadequate: our insatiable human need for the mapping of all kinds of topographies is laid bare in its continual renaming and remapping in order to prevent its closure around one dominant cartography of meaning and power.<sup>64</sup>

The speed with which modern maps are drawn and updated is its own temporal *terra incognita*—a processual and digital land continually made and re-

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<sup>62</sup> Ji Zhou.

<sup>63</sup> Borges 325. Borges satirises science's obsession with precision and its pointlessness in this paragraph-long story of the "perfect map" that is of course (in true Borges' fashion) ultimately discarded. For more on the impossibility of "mapping" as a project, Frisch's (2004, 55) discussion of Borge's poem *Los Conjurados* in which "A man spends his life drawing the world, sketching in kingdoms, mountains, ships, islands, fish and everything else. Shortly before death, he realizes that he has done nothing more than draw the lines and image of his face." Jean Baudrillard uses Borges' story as an example of the processual function of the simulacra—in which the simulacra (the image of the thing) precedes the 'real' thing (1).

<sup>64</sup> Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift 5.

made. The representation of topography “becomes a shifting ground, a spatial metaphor which frees concepts of identity and landscape from repressive fixity and solidity.”<sup>65</sup> Though as Braidotti reminds, such figurations are not only or simply metaphors, they are “living maps” of shifting subjectivities—traveling skins.<sup>66</sup>

Mapping, in the end, is about bodies in space: over, in between, and through. Or above, a leap into the unknown through which the earth becomes sky becomes ocean, through which looking down becomes looking up, an advance into the heavens.<sup>67</sup> Solnit recognised that Yves Klein, through so much of his doing and mapping “sought to transcend or annihilate representation itself, which is always about what is absent.”<sup>68</sup> In so doing, both Klein and Solnit recognise the non-representational power of the map as a temporary camp site, a map of the night, a performance of the affective intensity of an us. Like Klein’s *Dans la Vide*, and Pieter Bruegel’s *Icarus*,<sup>69</sup> the leap itself becomes the map,<sup>70</sup> and there is no need for tracing; the body is always tracking lines of flight. Only the arc of their trajectories remains.

\*

What is the cost of a map?

The map always suggests a betrayal;  
unexplored possibilities taunt the wanderer.  
The map demands fore/closure, marking the  
boundary between known/unknown worlds.  
The crash too demands fore/closure, a happening that transcends  
but can only be mapped by words;  
an event that can only be charted in relief maps that provide no  
relief.

The refusal of a resting place  
is its own performance of disappearance,<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Catherine Nash 52.

<sup>66</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* 14.

<sup>67</sup> Solnit 168-169.

<sup>68</sup> Solnit 169.

<sup>69</sup> Pieter Bruegel.

<sup>70</sup> Solnit 169.

<sup>71</sup> Jane Blocker, writing about performance artist Ana Mendieta’s work, in which her body, her identity, and her life disappear/ disintegrate/ evaporate into smoke, air, water, and earth, notes: “Her works can be thought of as performance to the extent that they invoke disappearance, movement, and indeterminacy” (24).

like Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.  
 Not only the story of it,  
 but the metal  
 the hot meals  
 the clothing  
 all the floatation devices and styrofoam  
 the overhead compartments  
 the safety locks and double doors and exit row seats.  
 And the 239 human beings with fleshbodies and map-stories of their lives and  
 map-tracings of their words and leaps and touches and zones of contact  
 so hard-won  
 in this precarious productivity-obsessed world—  
 Where did they go?

Did their skills, passions, scar tissue and histories evaporate like their flesh?  
 Do energy-tracings just cease, like flesh-maps (bodies)?  
 Or do they transmute into something else, like copper?  
 Did they all leap *dans la vide* of the Indian Ocean as a visual trick (based in fact,  
 as was Klein's),  
 no photograph to stand in for the fall, no trace or evidence of the work of art,<sup>72</sup>  
 save the shiny metal breadcrumbs washing up on distant shores?

Where do heavenly bodies as big as jets go  
 in/on this relentlessly mapped and seemingly finite globe?  
 How remote can remote really be, on this tired old planet?  
 How long, how deep, and how wide  
 can the search for such intensities, such affective geographies go?  
 What good is mapping memory,<sup>73</sup>  
 searching for something no longer material?  
 What good does charting ocean floors and debris fields do  
 when the only certainty is that they are gone?<sup>74</sup>

And what of mappings of experience,  
 autographic cartoethnographies that  
 speak between words, that drift between bodies and lines of flight,  
 that activate encounters that map time's spiral?<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Solnit 172.

<sup>73</sup> Manning understands memory as “the force of attention mobilized in an emergent spacetime. Memory not simply in and of the body, but with the bodying-in-movement of space-timing” (137).

<sup>74</sup> Blocker writes of artist Ana Mendieta's disappearance (in her work and in her life) is a “sleight of hand. . . . The only certainty is that she is gone” (103).

What of mappings that trace and attune to  
 the shifting, twisting, falling movements of a body as it disappears  
 into the unfolding spacetime of the ocean?  
 Where do they take us?

Such maps challenge the notion of ‘the’ crash as a singularity,  
 an event that can be described with the article, ‘the,’  
 an event that cannot be “thought apart from the co-implication of space and  
 time.”<sup>76</sup>

These maps “construct the unconscious.”<sup>77</sup>

Like finger-scars and plane-bodies,  
 They are word-maps torn from the sky:  
 celebrations of flight, not just crises of gravity,  
 “reversible,” and subject to “constant modification.”<sup>78</sup>

They are living maps,<sup>79</sup> elemental and durable,  
 restless and unwilling to settle  
 into one, “sovereign vision of identity.”<sup>80</sup>  
 They “dance in the territories of their making.”<sup>81</sup>

What is the cost of a map?  
 Of believing we can fly  
 up, toward, into  
*oceanum incognitum* — the unknown ocean?

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<sup>75</sup> Manning writes of a “new kind of mapping of experience,” one that does not represent movements “already lived” but instead “speaks between words” and charts “lines of drift: a tracing of an encounter with an orientation that maps time’s spiral” (196).

<sup>76</sup> Brian Massumi interprets Manning in his introduction to her volume, “...a chunk is only a chunk against the contrasting background of the field as singular-generic spacetime of experience” (xxii), which has resonance for the imaginary of the falling MH370 plane. Following Massumi, we suggest that the plane (the chunk) is only understood in the popular imagination as a plane ‘crash’ because it has come to be known against the vastness of the ocean, which makes us understand the crash differently, as both a singularity (the plane, the event) and a generic thing/experience (the ‘crash’ when and where it ‘happened’ — albeit still unknown). The plane against the field of the ocean makes us think differently about both the plane AND the ocean, through the EVENT of the crash. He writes, “‘The’ event cannot be thought apart from the co-implication of space and time: *spacetime*” (Massumi xvi).

<sup>77</sup> Deleuze and Guattari 12.

<sup>78</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* 12.

<sup>79</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory* 14.

<sup>80</sup> Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects* 14.

<sup>81</sup> Manning 196.



Perhaps, like Klein, we long to leap,  
to believe in the need to draw maps as a doing,  
a way to produce, materially, a living landscape  
of affective connections, intensities,  
layers of being in their many versions.  
Traveling skins.

Perhaps we long to enter into the ocean,  
the land, body, air, time, words  
skies we have claimed,<sup>82</sup>  
undoing the myth of *terra incognita*.  
Creating the poem  
that is the map  
that is the territory,  
if only  
for now.



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<sup>82</sup> Solnit writes that for Yves Klein and his *dans la vide*, “Flying literally meant entering the sky he had claimed” in his blue paintings (172).

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