

Fold the map of Empire

"We remain Leibnizian because it is always bend, double, fold."

Gilles Deleuze (1)

The tools we use to change the world help us think about the world. The Camera Obscura of Italian painters during the 15th century Renaissance period at first was used to record the world, then later it invented the rules of geometric perspective to better the painting, and finally it installed the individual perspective as a philosophy and as a principle for the New World (the Renaissance). The steam engine was first used to animate machines without human power, and later it has completely transformed the society by upsetting the whole organization of work (the Industrial Revolution). Similarly, the information technology tools which are designed primarily to improve the tools have already completed this task by imitating them. But soon they open to some new and unexpected usages they finally upset the entire culture world. Digital tools begin to be manipulated intuitively by borrowing familiar metaphors. Windows, desks, files, in all of the intuitive interfaces we avoid disorienting. Thus we use in Photoshop layers as we previously used a pencil for drawing on paper. We can easily understand the logic layer. But instead of using one, we can overlay without damaging the transparency. That's when the metaphor is reversed, and from the usage that we have in the digital space which transforms our perspective towards the world and offers a way of describing the reality. We can thus consider the augmented reality as a layer of information added to the reality, a layer in some sense. But why limit ourselves to a single layer? The reality lies on the first floor and meaning the second? Why not like the 88-floor Jinmao Tower in Shanghai?

"The world is a Leibnizian world which consists of two overlapping floors from the bottom to the top. But one can easily imagine a world more complex, a world of infinite floors, each with its own regime, a world where surfaces slide over each other in a constant redistribution of the levels of the building so that no definite assignation would be possible, a world where belongings and overlapping are complicated because the points of conjunction are always being the vectors, a world where the vectors are raised to have the power. In the eyes of Leibniz, this is no longer just a two layer labyrinth with freedom and continuation, but rather a layered maze. These layers are incompatible to each other. Inhabiting in this world means to develop a kind of art with intervals. "(2)

We can now see the labyrinth as a laminated stack layer. Each layer is compatible with the other while remaining relatively independent. You can display or hide the layers. We do not necessarily use all the layers. Passage from one layer to another is always possible in some areas and at certain times. It is now possible to understand art as an emergent property of the activity of an interpretive community moving on one layer. The artists participate in this exhibition are all, each in his or her own way, seeking intervals. They fold and unfold indefinitely the layer, which, as the map of the empire imagined by Jorge Luis Borges, gradually covers the whole world.

"In that Empire, the Art of Cartography was pushed to such perfection that the map of a single Province occupies an entire city and the Map of the Empire an entire Province. Over time, these excessive pictures stopped giving satisfaction and the Colleges of Cartographer raised a Map of the Empire, which described the size of the Empire and the map was coincided with the Empire point by point. "(3)

Nowadays, the 3D scanners used in mapping are able to scan the cities in the speed of 50,000 points per second. Each point is an absolute geography in longitude, latitude and altitude and the buildings are caught by the scanners with a resolution of 5cm from a truck traveling at the speed of 30km/hour.

The ability to fold and encrypt has become decisive, and this is mainly the work of artists.

Maria Wutz

(1) Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold, Leibniz and the Baroque*
Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1988

(2) Bruno Paradis, *Leibniz: a unique and relative world*, *Literary Magazine*,
September 1988

(3) Jorge Luis Borges, *The Aleph and Other Texts*, 1949

translation of the quotation from Borges:

"In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it."