

## Finding Point Nemo

This issue of the journal takes the reader on many different journeys - from Cajamarca in Columbia, to Saigon, from San Francisco to Tokyo and Milan, from the Scottish Highlands to the once more problematic Irish borderlands.

In **Navigations**, Giulia Carones looks at how political activists make sense of the city they are trying to transform, and Douglas Specht explores the limits and conditions of countermapping as a form of political intervention in land rights campaigns.



Bringing us closer to home, **Waypoints** contains a fascinating ethnographic essay on children's play by Joel Seath and Kelda Lyons supplemented by an equally interesting map. There is also a contribution from a group of activists in the fast-growing go-slow movement on how to resist the accelerating pace of urban life and the ever more hectic 24/7 clamour of digital capitalism.

In **Mapworks** we take a step back, to consider with Oscar Aldred, how the maps we use to navigate our way through our traffic with the world function as forms of situated – and situating – knowledge.

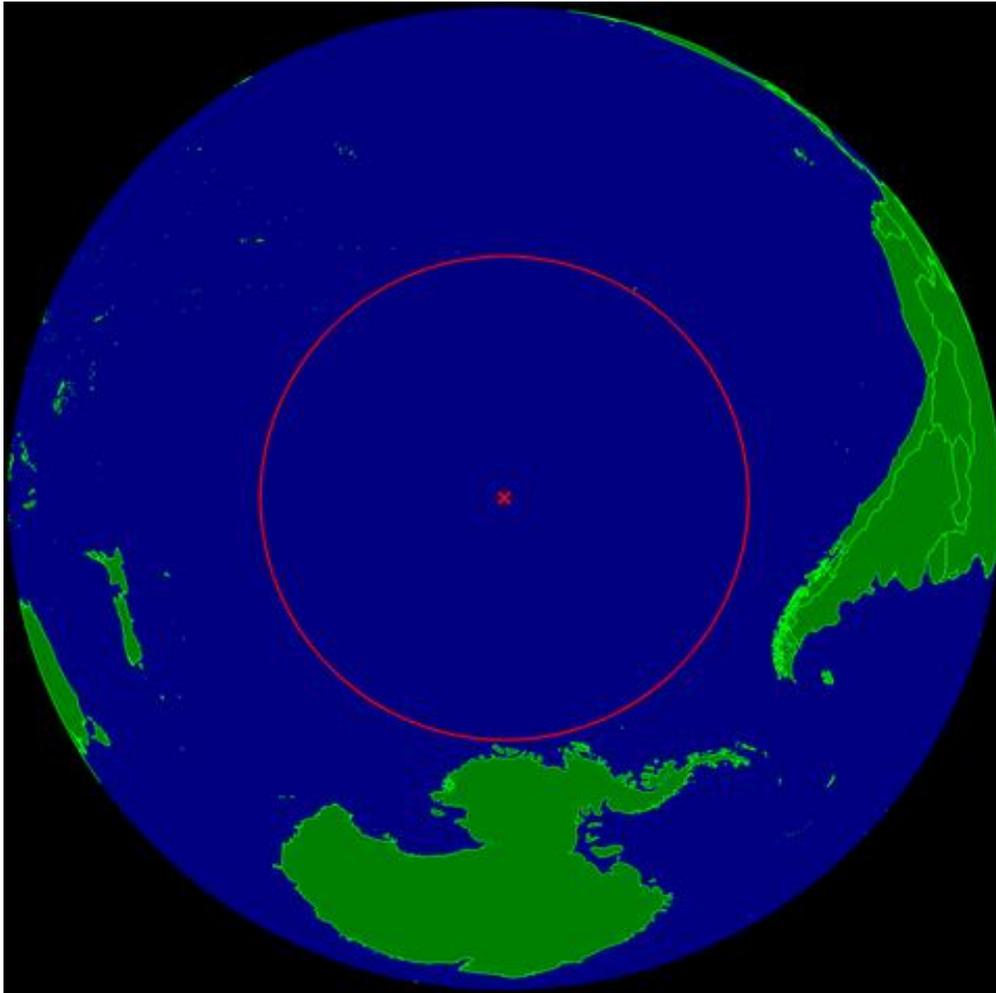
**Lines of Desire** lives up to its name and takes us on a rich diversity of walks on the wilder side of cartography. En route we learn from Gudrun Filipka and Carly Butler that the shortest distance is not always a straight line and that there is more to *tracktivism* than political rhetoric. Alec Finley explores the city's 'other scene' while Patrick Shaun Ford turns the mental map off its 'talking head' encapsulation and puts it firmly back onto its walking feet.

Our **review** section looks at recent publications with a similar breadth of scope albeit at variable scales of trans-locality. We report on an experiment in deep mapping and read an anthology of maps, and essays about maps which seeks to reinvent cartography as a platform for radical political intervention. A book about walking the Irish border is reviewed by someone who actually lives there, and there is an appreciation of a Bob Gilbert's new study, at once historical and biographical, of the social ecology of trees. Finally, there is an appraisal of a recent mapping of the concrete architecture of Tokyo.

This issue concludes with a new section, **News from Point Nemo**. What's in this name? Quite a lot, it turns out. Geographers and mapping buffs will be familiar with the notion of *points of inaccessibility*, locations which are the remotest and most difficult to reach because of an almost total lack of features that could provide spatial orientation or support strategies of navigation. Such sites signify a maximum degree of continentality or oceanity and in that sense also represent the degree zero of conventional cartography. In Antarctica, the **point of maximum inaccessibility** is marked by a bust of Lenin (see photograph above), still there after all the years in which his statues have disappeared from towns and villages across Russia. He must be musing that, courtesy of this nomination, he now survives at the Antipodes of his initial journey from the Finland Station to Moscow in 1917, a rather rough

and not entirely poetic, form of historical justice, albeit one which may yet help to stake Russia's pre-emptive bid for the oil and gas reserves under the melting ice cap.

Point Nemo is the name given to the oceanic 'degree zero' located at the farthest point from any landmass. The nearest humans are the astronauts in the international space station orbiting the earth. This appellation is, no doubt, a homage to the eponymous hero of Jules Verne's story and at least this rescues the Captain of the Nautilus from the indignity of being confused with Disneyworld's animated clownfish. But we have adopted it to give baptismal



Oceanic pole of inaccessibility  $48^{\circ}52'36''\text{S}$   $123^{\circ}23'36''\text{W}$ .  
Image [Wikimedia](#) Public domain.

name to this our new section for a different reason. In each issue, we will invite an editor at large - someone with no fixed editorial abode, but hopefully with a more or less far out, if not oceanic or extra-terrestrial, standpoint - to contribute an essay mapping their recent adventures into what is, for them, terra incognita. This could be a place, an event, an idea or a situation which is unfamiliar, perhaps unmapped, and in any case out of their comfort zone. Phil Cohen kicks off the series with a deliberately rambling account of his recent field trip to San Francisco.

*The editors are always keen to consider proposals for articles.*  
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