



Horrible surfaces: an MA student in graphic design & illustration was shown the above diagrams. He said that he couldn't relate to the content because he didn't find the drawings interesting. Though these diagrams of [Bruno Latour's](#) do a job—if our framework is applied geometry—they define a problem of drawings that are *not* assigned to a surface, and to some extent, make claims to define and substitute the surface. The student thereby had raised the problem of unassignable accuracy. The drawings may be accurate, but this accuracy is not assignable to a 3D surface (1/7).

The images on the front page [*recto*] aim at instructing a process outside of each diagram, and thereby become unreadable as drawings. Given that the assignment of accuracy to a surface is precisely what defines a drawing. If not looped with a time-dimension—where precision can be assigned to accuracy—such line-work define at the opposite end of the photogravure.

That is, there are surfaces more horrible than baryta paper, from the vantage point of photogravure. This is no small affair in a contemporary society where Microsoft Office is *default*, and the visual culture of most work-spaces are seeped in PowerPoint. If it were enough to critique [PowerPoint as a cognitive style](#), we wouldn't be in trouble. But the trouble isn't the style but the *surface*.

In *Civilisation and its discontents*, Freud critiques a society in which religion is default but faith is ailing. It doesn't obliterate the grip, but reconfigures and redefines it. The same may be said of the *office*. It's present grip does it reflect our faith in it. On the contrary, as we are loosing faith the grip tightens: somewhere down the line research is expected to result in a *white-paper*.

*Artistic research*—from what has ensued so far—is no exception. And we are thereby challenged to search how *fine arts*, that doesn't accept this default, could be repurposed/re-functioned as an alternative and critical framework. And what it would *require* for university-academia (science and philosophy) to get on board, and what it would take to make it *want* to. Both things jointly.

Insofar Bruno Latour directs an *invitation* to the art-world—by proposing a topological groundwork to redraw the terrestrial in a new cartography—what would it take for him to accept an *artistic* invitation in return? Likely, if our artistic proposition is to claim a status for the surface, based on its real potential, in the cartography of the real, photogravure *defines* this problem.

That is, if we accept that photogravure is real photography based on a *cartographic* relation between photogravure (*map*) and photography (*territory*). A truthfulness in excess of representations, that adds to the real rather than mimicking, replacing and substituting it. It should be duly underscored, however, that this way of understanding photogravure reflects design-thinking.

Just as the fine arts horizon established by Jan Pettersson does not come from the craft/trade of photogravure per se, but hatches from the archaeological venture he shares with Marcel Duchamp and David Hockney, in the study of *painting*, and the optics of *perspective*. It is an initiative to constitute artistic creations as a sustainable realm: partaking of an international culture.

That is, how modern art is deeply international (in the same way as the mode of reception on national/local arenas has often been incomprehension). If modern art had not existed, international society would not have had a *res publica*: a public matter. This is true of international society/OCA—in both diplomacy and business—just as it is true of *Documenta* and the biennales.

How is it that this uneasy and ambivalent coexistence no longer can be taken for granted? Well, one factor certainly is the logic of *emulation*, *substitution* and *erasure* that has successfully laid its hand on both human relations and on history. Which is why scoping the cartographic event in the photography/photogravure relation is of essence: whether real, whole or simply *readable*.