

# Potent Cartography: Illuminating the Field of Potential

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## Abstract

Expressed as a series of digital interactive works that illuminate flows and possibilities that might otherwise remain invisible, *Potent Cartography: Illuminating the Field of Potential* asks the questions: what if we were to map that which could be, rather than that which is? Moreover, how might such visualizations help pull or crystalize the latent potential it visualizes into manifest form? The project focuses on possibilities lying dormant in Southeastern CT with Spark Makerspace at the inquiry center.

## Keywords

cartography, potential, latent systems, economic performance art, betweenness

## Illuminating the Field of Potential

Objects and their relationships. Systems maps and network analysis tools give us visual experience and language for understanding and describing how things relate to one another. When applied to spheres of business or community organizing, these maps reveal how various entities are connected based on membership organizations they share constituency in, causes they align with, or common sources of funding. A network analysis might reveal which entities are "influencers" because of the number of different connections that they possess.

Potent Cartography asks the question: what if we were to map that which could be, rather than that which is? Moreover, how might such visualizations help pull or crystalize the latent potential it visualizes into manifest form?

Mapping the field of potential represents the convergence of social experimentation and economic performance art. This work involves the explicit development of visual conventions and pattern languages for revealing what is possible in a place, person, or span of time. It requires hacking tools designed to facilitate mapping and analysis of what currently exists, repurposing them to hold the much larger body of what might be.

## Betweenness

The key lies in the betweenness which speaks to the Symposium theme of Open All Ports. While "what is" systems maps key much of their data to the "objects" in the

systems (people, organizations, ideas, etc.), mapping the field of potential requires giving attention to all of the flows between those objects. In this reframing of systems mapping, the conceptualization of each object as a port is apt. We hold a curiosity about what passes through, when, why, how, with what effect...and the visual display of this curiosity is illuminating and beautiful.

*Potent Cartography: Illuminating the Field of Potential* focuses on the possibilities lying dormant in Southeastern CT with Spark Makerspace at the center of inquiry conducted by Imaginal Fellows.

## Place-Sourcing

In downtown New London, a social experiment is taking place. Spark is designed to light a fire in the people and place of Southeastern CT. This project is being activated to help New London and the greater region grow into its identity as a center for arts, culture, manufacturing, and all things maritime in ways that foster growth for all involved.

Spark is a creative, collaborative, civic community that invites a broad base of people into shared ownership of the infrastructure of a makerspace, coworking space, and retail space. Adjacent spaces are opening in Spring 2016 in downtown New London anchored by a culture that inspires curiosity, sharing, and civic-engagement to direct the flow of what happens to serve the greater place its members call home. Some of this flow will become ongoing cooperative business development with unconventional money sharing and robust bartering of goods and services.

Potent Cartography is an illuminating tool to help the community discern where and in what sequence to flow attention and resources.

*Potent Cartography: Illuminating the Field of Potential* is expressed as a series of interactive digital systems maps that are hosted online.

## Authors Biographies

Hannah Gant and Kyra Kristof are anchored as Imaginal Fellows within Metamorphosis, a collective of artists and entrepreneurs throughout the US prototyping social innovations that unlock synergy and regeneration by developing organizations explicitly designed to cultivate the essence of individuals, groups, and places.

As Imaginals, Hannah and Kyra live in a world of potential, channeling a way of understanding reality that unearths synergistic flows. Equal parts pragmatist, visionary, and lover, they see the trees, the forest, and the surrounding ecosystem with a sense of how to move large groups forward unlocking alignment and latent potential as the crow flies.

Hannah and Kyra are collaborating as artists, producers and curators of a series of economic performance art works to be shared as *The Emperor Has No Clothes*, with installations and other showings beginning in 2016. Hannah is based in CT, Kyra in MA.