

WORLD

**SUSANNA
CASTLEDEN**

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*TRACKING SUSANNA
CASTLEDEN'S WORLD*

'I wonder if I shall fall right through the earth! How funny it'll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think--' (she was rather glad there was no one listening, this time, as it didn't sound at all the right word) '--but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know. Please, Ma'am, is this New Zealand or Australia?'"¹

Susanna Castleden's *World* is curiouser and curiouser... at first glance it is as it may seem, but "*contrary wise, what is, it wouldn't be. And what it wouldn't be, it would. You see?*"² Castleden offers us an expedition into a *World* that never was yet for all possibility might be. But from what or where do Castleden's worlds appear? Like Alice tumbling down the rabbit hole, Castleden takes us on a journey where that which is familiar is reconstructed to fit a slightly different lexicon.

Our dreams offer us a different world – albeit one built on our conscious life, and as Carroll cleverly weaved Alice's friends and family through her imagined world, so too does Castleden infiltrate our automatic modalities only to renovate their boundaries. In Castleden's post-Darwinian *World* the arbitrary nature of existence is given an evolutionary turn by skewing the known cartographic signifiers that have built our trust and fueling these through a new lexicon of information connection. In Castleden's work the world is mapped through tracking – objects, events, information – and responding to the natural flow of these – as if the world responds to the movement of things and not the other way around.

Castleden maps the choreographic rhythms of trade, the market place, media flow, weather and time – new worlds built on obscure, even obtuse linkages. Today the very act of tracking constructs, like a 3D laser cutter, models which create infinitely interesting over layering depth to our world.

Satellites abound in space whose sole mission is to track goods across the globe, others orientate our own position to fixed points while still others, along with an impossible amount of cabling under the oceans, generate infinite amounts of information which allows us to constantly position ourselves against world news, current trends and celebrity fixations. We seemingly always need to know who and where we are – and these two points are no longer distinct.

Castleden builds new worlds which respond to this constant act of mapping – lines in her work provide contours of tracked landscapes, gesso and ink build a topography of linkages – often in an unexpected fashion, through ash flows, or via holes that (like Alice falling) go straight through the world. In a world more rhizomatic than anything Deleuze and Guattari could have imagined – there is limitless potential in “tracking tracking” – as search engines tirelessly profile everything’s place in relation to everything else the very desire to track, place and trace intersection points has become a new life consciousness in itself.

The world has become interconnected like a massive tumultuous sea of cross-pollination and within this sea if you have the time to look, are some incredibly interesting if not bizarre connections. Susanna Castleden’s maps offer us a glimpse into these idiosyncratic pathways by adopting a type of psycho-geography, emulating if not capturing this spirit of cross-pollination, reminding us that everything moves, everything moves together, everything moves everything else, everything is consumed and produced – this is a mapping of a new, heaving global consciousness which creates tectonic shifts of its own.

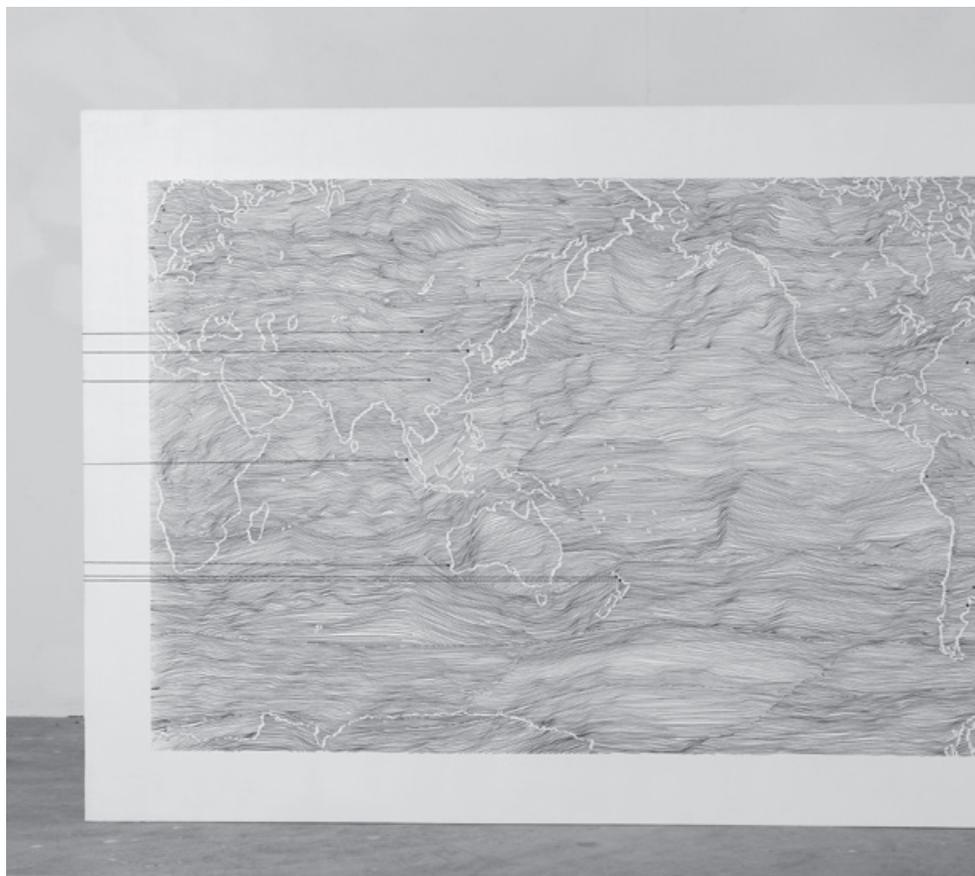
“Since we do not observe our own states of consciousness, nor those of others, we do not apprehend

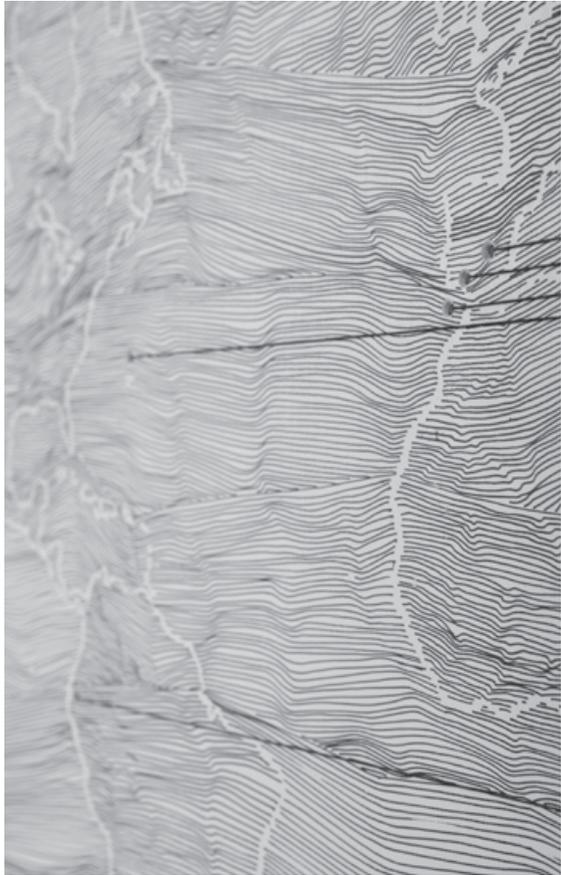
these states as spatial... How do we actually make the locational judgements about consciousness that we do? Not, clearly, by perceiving that conscious events occupy particular places; rather, by trading upon certain causal considerations. I suspect that the very depth of embeddedness of space in our cognitive system produces in us the illusion that we understand it much better than we do. After all, we see it whenever we open our eyes and we feel it in our bodies as we move.”³

How do we locate this new global consciousness – both within our bodies and more broadly within society itself – and how do we map its movements? Castleden offers us one approach – through this type of imaginative lexical mapping our understanding of who we are and how we got here is shifted, this attunes us to a shift in our sense of being. Playful and imaginative, Castleden maps a conscious shift – no longer do we want to know who or where we are but rather our spatial awareness is more and more being based on potential, particularly the latent potential in any information intersection we may find ourselves at. Our ability to track is being refined to satiate our desire to become a point of connection; this is now how we orientate ourselves through space.

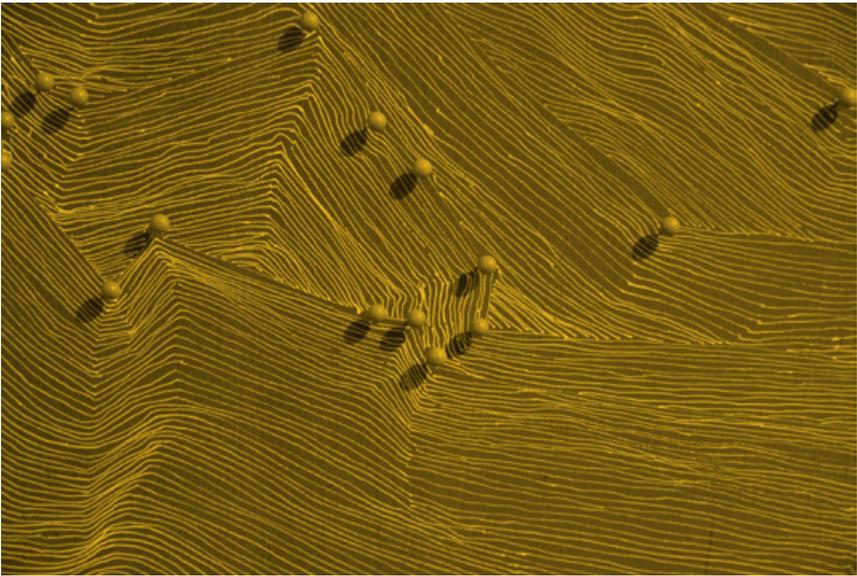
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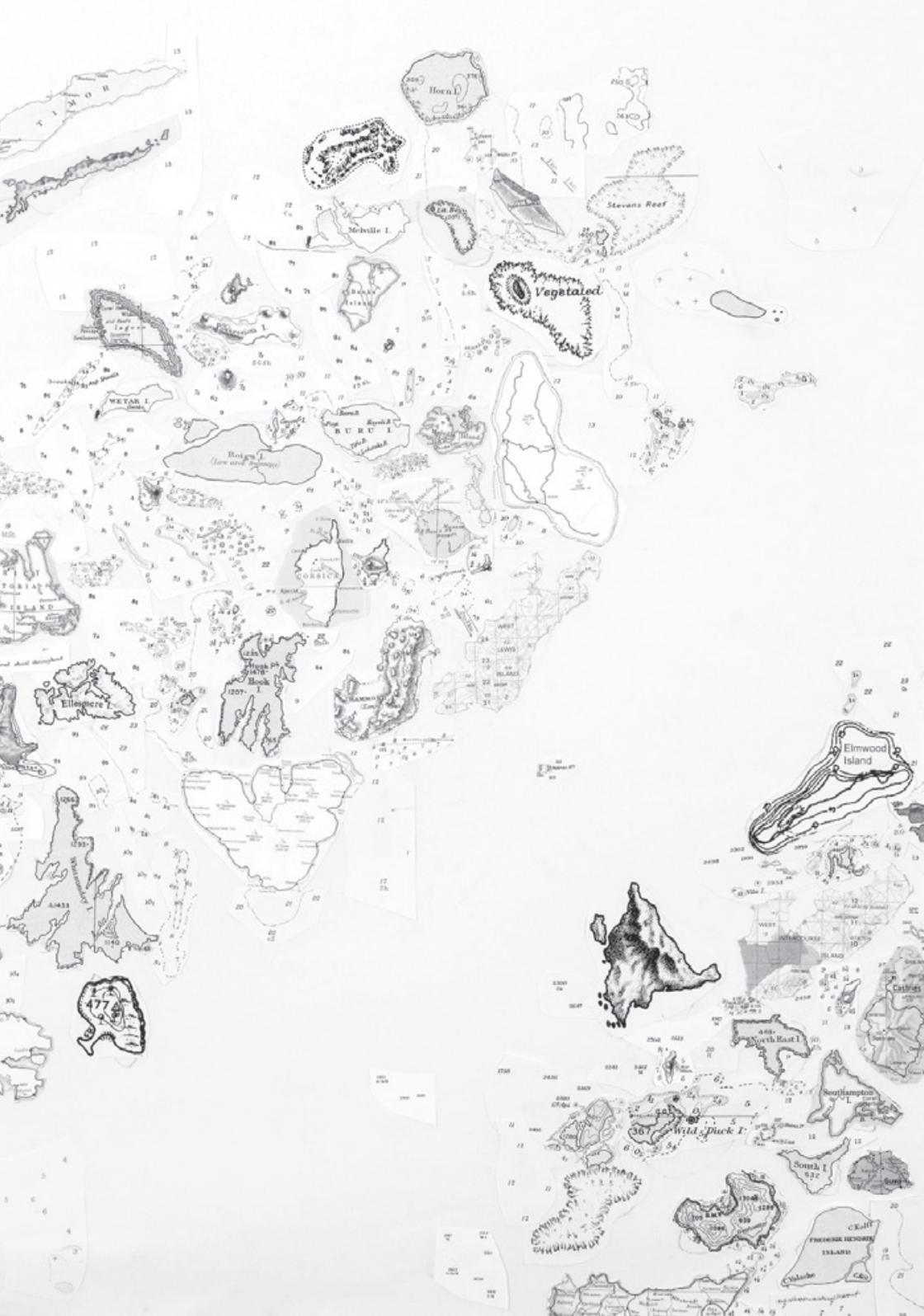
1. Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, eBooks@Adelaide, 2009; chapter 1
2. *Alice in Wonderland*, 1951, Walt Disney, released by RKO Radio Pictures
3. Colin McGinn, *Consciousness and Space*, Rutgers University (www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/courses/consciousness97/papers/ConsciousnessSpace.html)











IMAGES

- 1** *Circumnavigation Scramble*, 2010. Double-sided screen print on rag paper, 75 x 105 cm.
- 6 - 7** *Icelandic Volcano Cloud Causes European Air Chaos 1*, 2010. Ink on rag paper, 56 x 76 cm.
- 8** *The Other Side of the World (Digging and Flying)*, 2010. Screen print, thread and gesso on ply, 73 x 120 x 2.5 cm.
- 9** *Ibid.* (Detail)
- 10** *I Must Learn More About The World (Antipodes and Circumnavigations)* (Detail), 2010. Paint marker and gesso on rag paper, 150 x 160 cm.
- 11** *Punctuations* (Detail), 2011. Gesso, mapping pins and ink on board, 50 x 50 cm.
- 12** *Cut and Paste (World Islands, Dubai)* (Progress), 2011. Screen print on rag paper, 150 x 210 cm. Edition of 4.

