

# **DID SOMEONE SAY PARTICIPATE? AN ATLAS OF SPATIAL PRACTICE**

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## EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION

### **Flatness?**

Today, the need to identify and instrumentalise “spatial practices” becomes significant due to the unprecedented visibility of what one might call “globalization at work”: from Iraq to Nepal, Dubai to Mumbai, a new atlas is being re-drawn for the 21st century, one that Thomas Friedman describes as a new “flatness”. *Did Someone Say Participate?* re-draws the map of participatory, spatial practice that is a function of such shifts.

### **Control?**

What was once seen as the defensive preserve of architects – mapping, making, or manipulating spaces – has become a new “culture of space” produced and shaped by an ever increasing number of disciplines. *Did Someone Say Participate?* showcases a range of forward-thinking practitioners and theorists who actively trespass – or “participate” – in neighbouring or alien knowledge-spaces. They share an essential interest: the understanding, production and altering of spatial conditions as a prerequisite of identifying the broader reaches of political reality.

### **Consensus?**

The future spatial practitioner could arguably be understood as an outsider who, instead of trying to set up or sustain common denominators of consensus, enters existing situations or projects by deliberately instigating conflicts between often-delineated fields of knowledge. In this context, the spatial practitioner is presented as an enabler, a facilitator of interaction that stimulates alternative debates and speculations.

### **Atlas?**

Rather than understanding this book as the next “atlas” of practice that presents an incontrovertible world-picture, it represents an early mapping exercise. In this sense, the shape of the contents – designed and interpreted by the innovative graphic designers Åbåke – chart emerging knowledge-continent.

### **Participants?**

There is no intention to “map” a particular generation here. It is the case that the “spatial practitioner” may well be in their early 20s or indeed in their 50s, sharing common discoveries through entirely unrelated contexts. The disciplinary territories include art, curation, architecture, photography, geography, humanitarianism, politics, philosophy, urbanism, information technology, pedagogy and futurology.

### **Tactics?**

Empowerment sometimes emerges in conditions that theoretically ought to thwart it. Knowledge is often generated at the edges or the gaps of ignorance. Participation is simply a tactic of complicit curiosity scaled to the space you’re currently in. We hope that the continents of knowledge in *Did Someone Say Participate?* will be welcome not only for those involved in the future of architectural research and practice, but for anyone interested in navigating through current forms of cultural inquiry and debate.