



Aesthetic Cartography

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Art theorists, Carole Gray and Heather Delday (2010) pose the question, “What might be known through creative practice that could not be known by any other means?” As a visual artist with a doctorate degree in environmental planning from the TU-Berlin’s Department of Soil Protection, I have long considered this question in my work and over the years contributed an active voice to discussions on research, education, and public engagement with soil and art and soil and culture in Germany and around the world. After presenting many other examples of artists’ work at international scientific symposia, I would like to present examples of some of my own artistic practice with soil mapping and soil protection issues at the 2017 EGU.

In combining methods of visual art, landscape analysis, and soil mapping, I have developed a practice called Aesthetic Cartography that employs sculptural techniques, object-making, installation and performance, printing and graphic design, as well as site analysis, data mining, and map reading and interpretation. Given my background in participatory planning practices, I also integrate small-group dialogic processes in the creation and implementation of my works. The projects making up the body of works in Aesthetic Cartography are mainly focused on urban issues, including: soil sealing, inner-city watershed management, creative brownfield use, rubble substrates and leachates, foraging and urban agriculture, and envisioning sustainable cities of the future.

In the session SSS1.4 - Soil, Art, and Culture I will summarize project goals, materials and methods, venues and public contexts, elements of collaboration and participation, as well as target audiences involved in several projects of the Aesthetic Cartography series. The aim of the presentation is not to give a comprehensive answer to Gray and Delday’s question above, but rather to share personal insights from a professional practice that merges artistic and scientific approaches to soil protection and soil communication.