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The Imaginary of Borders: From a Coloring Book to Cézanne's Paintings

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Abstract

Metaphoric descriptions of the world offer simple cognitive schemes to put things in their place, thereby offering keys to make reality easily interpretable. For centuries, the prevailing understanding of the political relied on an imaginary where borders were conceived like the lines of a

coloring book, cutting political space into distinct state boxes, where citizens were defined congruously with the box of their state. The spatial knowledge inherent in this metaphor defined the *dispositif* of modernity—how to “map the world”—both in the socio-political and artistic domains. In the late nineteenth century, however, painting took a different understanding of spatiality and its representation. This article suggests that today—when the coloring book's imaginary is increasingly ill-fitted to describe socio-political realities—we could turn to art for a metaphor that would better capture late-modernity's understanding of borders and socio-political spaces. In sum, the article suggests turning to the *paintings of Cézanne* for inspiration.

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Grounds in Rembrandt's workshop and in paintings by his contemporaries, Kaczynski's pipette is oxidized.

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