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Approximate Translation

Media, Narrative, and Experience in Urban Design

Jonathan Jae-an Crisman

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- ***Approximate Translation*** is a poetic and practical rumination on how to incorporate what makes a city a city — stories about place, an unexpected encounter, the immediacy of experience — into practices of urban design
- A practical primer on novel urban design practices and a lush design book that explores media theory, urban studies, and pop culture
- For anyone interested in art, design, architecture, cities, and culture
- This book is critical reading for students of urban design, providing new insights on the role of media, narrative, and translation in the process of urban design, and could be used as a text for studios, seminars, and classes about the practice of designing urban spaces

Cities are infinite cultural hyper-objects that contain layers of history, of contemporary life, of material, capital, infrastructure, of future dreams of what may come. We sometimes call these dreams "urban design plans" — two-dimensional drawings that are meant to capture our aspirations for the future of a place. Yet these plans are often static images — or, worse, building masses without people, narratives, or even nods to contextual histories.

Approximate Translation is a poetic and practical rumination on how to incorporate what makes a city a city — stories about place, an unexpected encounter, the immediacy of experience — into practices of urban design. Using a speculative transformation of the Boston neighbourhood of Allston as a demonstration, this book proposes that we think seriously about topics as disparate as science fiction, pop art, theme parks, and DJing if we want to better design the cities in which we live.

Dr. Jonathan Jae-an Crisman is an artist, teacher, and researcher. He lives in Los Angeles, California.







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