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Cartographic Design

Thematic Reference Map

**The Underground Railroad for Refugees**

Purpose: This map narrates the *New Yorker* article published in the March 13th 2017 issue. The map will be put on a website as part of my portfolio.

1. Scales of Thought

The spatial narrative of the story covers a wide range of scales. Asylum seekers travel from all over the world to Vive where they prepare to make the 6-mile journey across the border to Canada. In order to show both scales, I made a large scale map and a small scale map.

2. Visual Hierarchy/Saturation Pops

Buffalo is a busy urban area. In order to draw attention to the important pieces of the story (Vive, the border, and the journey across), I made the streets, railroads and labels transparent. The spatial narrative sits in the forefront in full color.

3. Visual Association of Lettering

In order to associate water body features, I used italicized blue font to show rivers and lakes. Buffalo and Fort Erie lie in large capital letters and spaced out type to emphasize that they are both cities. Buffalo is slightly bigger. Secondly, I used the closest font I could find to *The New Yorker* style.

4. Simplify the World

I chose to only represent the large body of water separating the U.S. and Canada. Because the narrative focuses on transportation routes, I only included streets and railroad tracks on the map. I didn’t include neighborhoods, hospitals, or buildings. The border crossing routes are also simplified, as the exact route taken varies by individuals.

5. Munsell’s color principles

In order to show the difference between each route I selected complimentary colors. I chose orange and blue because they are somewhat neutral. If I had chosen red and green, I would have shown the illegal route across in red and the legal route green—however, these associations are not the point of the story. Secondly, I chose yellow to show each country. Canada is depicted in a slightly higher chroma in order to show that Canada is more welcoming than the United States to asylum seekers.

6. Labeling

I show the river and each crossing with a label that mirrors the curve and bend of the line. Vive is labeled in accordance with proper point labeling, and areal labels follow Imhof’s principles.