

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

## THINKING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Katharine Harmon loves artistry of maps

By Diane Daniel  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**K**atharine Harmon is an expert on the topic of creative maps. Her just-published book “You Are Here NYC: Mapping the Soul of the City” features more than 200 maps spanning four centuries. Harmon, who lives in Seattle, also has written “You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination” and “The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography.” Unrelated to maps, her great-grandfather was state Senator Edward C. Stone, who represented Cape Cod and the Islands for many years.

**Q** How did you become interested in map art?

**A** I used to spend all my summers on Cape Cod — my grandparents had a house in Osterville. I love how when people ask you where something is on the Cape, your arm becomes the map, with the tip of your finger Provincetown, and you point to where you are. It would be cool to do that photographically. Anyway, on those rainy summer days, I would explore all the bookshelves, and one year I discovered John Held Jr., an illustrator especially famous for flapper girl imagery. He also did these fantastic maps, like “Map of Americana” and “A Dog’s Idea of the Ideal Country Estate.” That kind of humor and irreverence from what a map is “supposed” to be completely opened my mind up to maps and how they could be so creative.

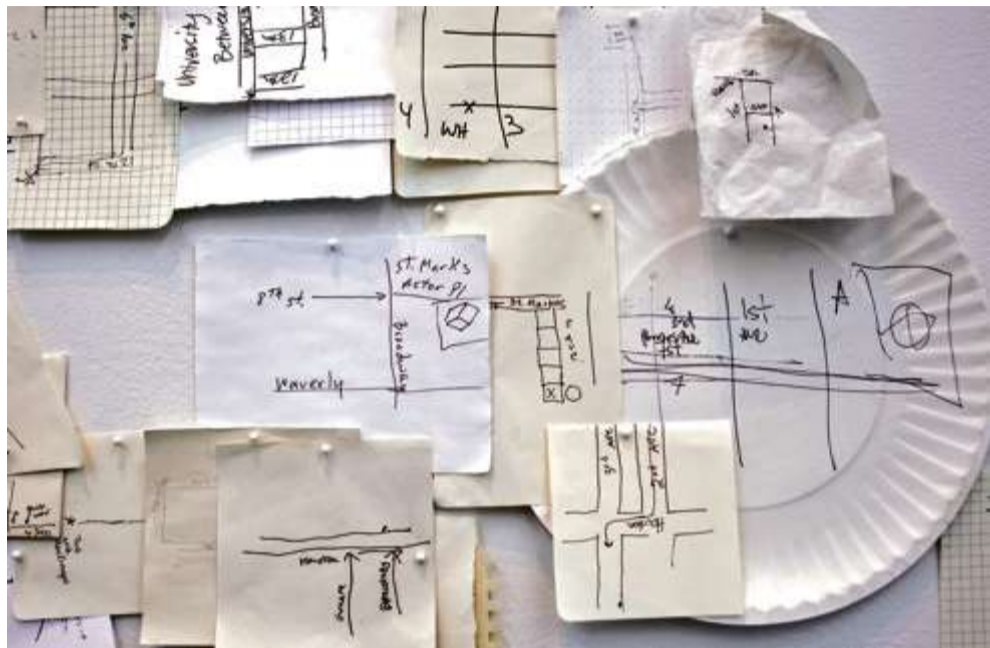
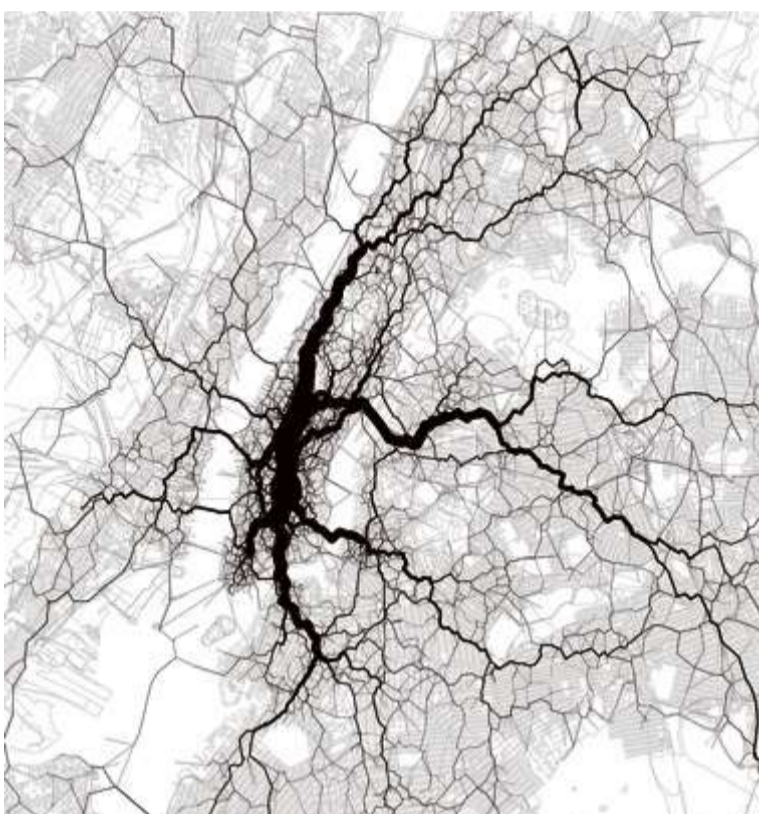
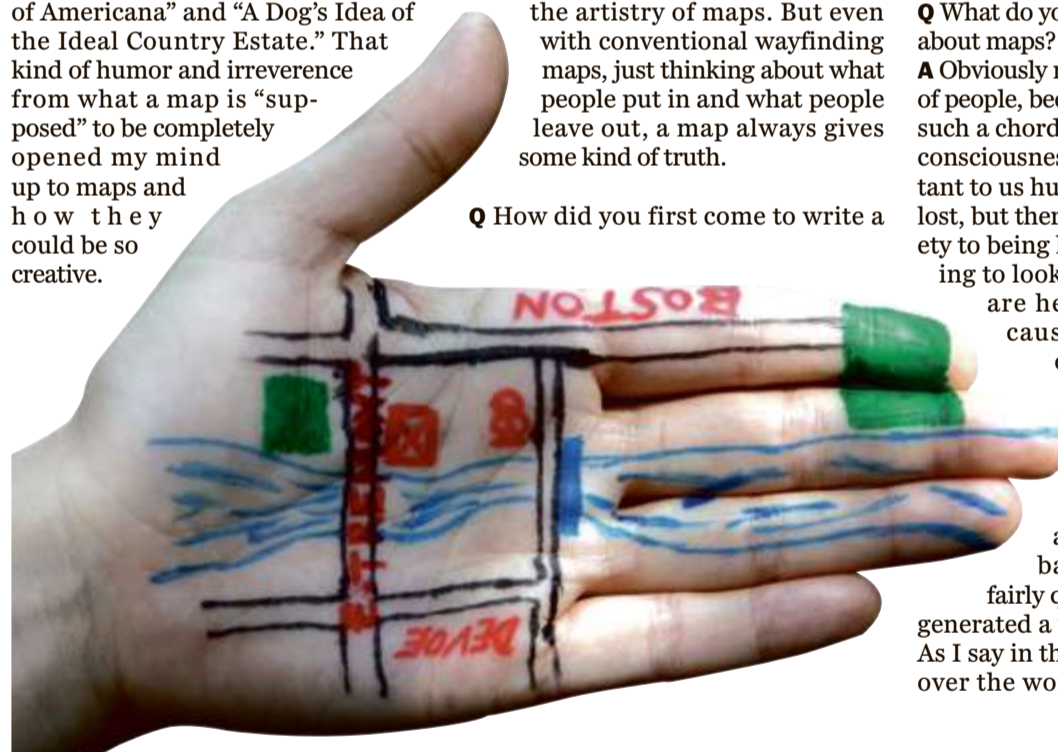


PHOTO OF AUTHOR BY AVERY FULFORD; PHOTO OF SKETCHES BY YURIKO KATORI; MAP AT LEFT COURTESY OF ERIC FISCHER; MAP AT RIGHT COURTESY OF VINCENT MEERTENS

Katharine Harmon (top left) is the author of “You Are Here NYC: Mapping the Soul of the City.” Shown are some of the maps mentioned in the book.

**Q** Are you also fond of traditional maps?

**A** I appreciate them and need them, because I’m really directionally challenged, but I’m not necessarily good at reading them. What I really love is the artistry of maps. But even with conventional wayfinding maps, just thinking about what people put in and what people leave out, a map always gives some kind of truth.

**Q** How did you first come to write a

book about map art?

**A** I started to collect creative maps from when I was young. When I had a file that was starting to bulge, I started a book on it.

**Q** What do you think appeals to people about maps?

**A** Obviously maps are very dear to a lot of people, because my first book struck such a chord. I think on some level of consciousness, self-location is important to us humans. It can be fun to be lost, but there’s a certain level of anxiety to being lost for long. It’s reassuring to look at a map that says “you are here,” while dislocation causes discomfort. I think contemporary artists play with that idea a lot.

**Q** Why did you focus on New York?

**A** In doing my research and going through databases, it became obvious fairly quickly that New York has generated a very rich world of maps. As I say in the book’s intro, people all over the world know and even take

pride in New York even if they’ve never been.

**Q** How has technology changed artistic maps?

**A** The availability of data has given creative mappers a lot to play with. I especially notice that with New Yorkers. Like Eric Fischer, who traced routes using Twitter geotags or Vincent Meertens, who with his girlfriend tracked everywhere they went for 10 months. He mapped that with colored data points and the image is really beautiful.

**Q** What are your favorite types of maps?

**A** I really love conceptual maps. I love that someone walked around and collected trash and made a giant map of found paper and that becomes a city block on a map. I love the map “I Found Your Mitten.” Summer Bedard started it and people send her pictures of lost mittens with their location. I also love the ones where people are out on the streets, using the map as artifact of an experience they created around a map. Like Yumi Roth, who

asks people on the street to suggest places to go and has them draw maps on her hand, which she then uses to ask directions from others. Or Nobutaka Aozaki, who asks for directions from people to a city landmark. They pull out their phones, but he has them put it on a piece of paper. He’s making a map assemblage using the scraps of paper, and also communicating about smartphones.

**Q** How do you feel about the decline of the paper map?

**A** When I go to a new city, I like to look at a paper map and get an overall view, so I know the sense of the city and can visualize the different areas. But my daughter, for example, now that she’s driving, she’ll rely on her phone for getting from place to place and even if it’s somewhere she goes all the time, she doesn’t know how without her phone. The human interaction is missing too. You used to stop and ask people for directions. Now you just ask the phone.

Diane Daniel can be reached at [diane@bydianedaniel.com](mailto:diane@bydianedaniel.com).

## HERE

### FAMILY HOLIDAY EVENTS AT THE RITZ

Embrace the holiday spirit with a series of family-friendly events at The Ritz-Carlton, Boston. At the Sugar Plum Fairy Tea, mingle with costumed characters from Boston Ballet’s production of The Nutcracker while enjoying singalongs, crafts, and buffet of desserts and tea sandwiches (Dec. 10, 17; \$60 adult, \$42 child). The Nutcracker Breakfast with Mrs. Claus features an elegant breakfast buffet with live musical entertainment, storytelling, and interactive holiday activities (Dec. 11, 18. \$72 adult, \$44 child). In the Avery Bar, sit by the fireplace and sip hot cocoa served table-side and then sample the sumptuous pastry buffet. Pastry chefs will assist children to decorate their own gingerbread cookies (Dec. 10, 17, 24; \$39 adult, \$28 child). Make a night of it with the Nutcracker Package featuring deluxe accommodations, teddy bear tuck-in, sugar plum bubble bath, overnight parking, and more. (Through Dec. 30; rates from \$550.) Reservations required for all events. 617-574-7184, [www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/boston](http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/boston)



### PHOTO BOOKS FEATURE NEW ENGLAND

Travel through New England from the comfort of your couch with new photography books by Arthur P. Richmond. The five keepsake editions feature historical and contemporary attractions, beaches and harbors as well as other iconic sites that make the region notable. Relive your vacations to Boston, Oak Bluffs, Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard, and Cape Cod with images of sunrises, beach plums and bearberries, the daily routines of hering gulls and osprey, whales in the waves, and more. \$9.99. 610-593-1777, [www.schifferbooks.com/cape-cod-along-the-shore-a-keepsake-6069.html](http://www.schifferbooks.com/cape-cod-along-the-shore-a-keepsake-6069.html)

## THERE

### SNOW BIKING AND BREWS IN COLORADO

Looking for a fun alternative to winter alpine activities? Combine adventure and luxury with the Hotel Telluride’s new Snow Bike & Brew package. Nestled in a canyon in the Rocky Mountains, the 59-room boutique hotel offers a package that includes a three-night stay in an elite-view king or double room; daily breakfast for two; private, guided winter Fat Bike tour to the Telluride Brewing Co.; and five-course wine pairing dinner at The Hotel Telluride Chef’s Table. Available through March 31; from \$1,579, double occupancy. Package is only bookable by

calling the hotel directly (866-468-3501, [thehoteltelluride.com](http://thehoteltelluride.com)). In addition, travel to Telluride just got easier. Beginning Dec. 17, Great Lakes Airlines is reinstating commercial service to Telluride Airport from Denver International Airport, averaging 10 flights per week. [www.FlyGreatLakes.com](http://www.FlyGreatLakes.com)

### GLAM MAKEOVER FOR HISTORIC HOTEL

Flemings Mayfair Hotel in central London, newly spiffed up and polished from top to bottom, has unveiled its complete \$20 million refurbishment of all of its bedrooms and public spaces. The jewel in its crown, so to speak, is its new restaurant Ormer Mayfair. Guests can enjoy a quintessentially British dining experience in an elegant Art Deco-inspired setting helmed by Michelin star chef Shaun Rankin. For traditionalists, the newly designed Drawing Room is a perfect

spot to indulge in afternoon tea in the heart of Mayfair. Room rates from \$275. [www.flemings-mayfair.co.uk/](http://www.flemings-mayfair.co.uk/)

## EVERYWHERE

### NEW MAG FOR SENIOR HIKERS

Baby boomers are more active than ever, and now there’s a new publication by and for avid hikers over the age of 50. Senior Hiker Magazine aims to bring alive the experience of the wilderness through original writing, photography and artwork. The first issue features articles on backcountry hiking on and off the trail; photography of wilderness environments; and wood engravings of mountainous landscapes by Siri Beckman. The next issue will focus on wildlife, with stories of bear, moose, and rattlesnake

encounters, wildlife photography, and scientific studies in the field. Regular columns include practical guidelines on hiking, descriptions of hikes in international locales, and hiking group profiles. One-year subscription (three issues) \$25. [www.seniorhikermagazine.com/](http://www.seniorhikermagazine.com/)

### FASHION BAG HELPS SAVE RHINOS

Wildlife tour company &Beyond’s safari shopping website has joined forces with fashion brand Figue to create a limited edition Rhino Pouch. To help raise awareness of illegal poaching in Africa, 30 percent of the proceeds from each pouch sold will be donated to Rhinos Without Borders, a conservation program committed to the relocation of 100 at-risk rhinos. Each natural cotton canvas, digitally printed zip pouch features a rhinoceros under gold heart on front and baby rhino on back; waterproof lining; and attached purple tassel accent at zipper. 8 by 10.5 inches, \$95. [andbeyondsafari-shop.com/](http://andbeyondsafari-shop.com/)

NECEE REGIS

