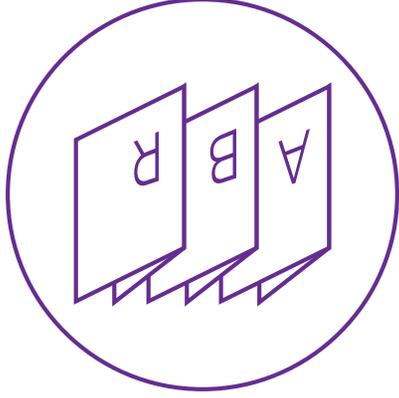


*Attenti al Cane: Twentysix  
Dogs Found on Street View*  
Lele Buonerba and Laurel Hauge  
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## ***Attenti al Cane: Twentysix Dogs***

### ***Found on Street View***

Lele Buonerba and Laurel Hauge

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**D**espite the Ruscha-inflected title, *Attenti al Cane* has more in common with works by Mishka Henner and Penelope Umbrico. The titular twenty-six dogs are indeed found on Google Street View, situating this book within the growing body of art using found images from the internet. Buonerba and Hauge put their own twist on the genre with their collaborative approach and thoughtful layout decisions. The artists, from their respective computers on different continents, virtually walked the streets of Italy and collected the dogs they discovered. If *flânerie* characterized urban wandering at the dawn of photography, then *Attenti al Cane* represents a different walking tradition: *la passeggiata*. Buonerba and Hauge are out for a stroll, to see and be seen – or read, in this case. The artists are absent, but the reader is able to vicariously join their walk.

The book begins with an introductory statement, reflecting on how Google Street View helped bridge the distance between Buonerba and Hauge as they maintained their relationship from Milan and Brooklyn. Emphasizing the collaborative, performative aspect of the book is especially important since the process of trawling Street View for dogs might otherwise seem quite isolating compared to other studio practices. The book is as much about documenting this collaborative performance

as the final product. After the foreword, the distorted snippets of street names embedded in the images are the only text.

The layouts of each spread are varied. In some, single images cross the gutter and bleed off all four edges. Others compose panels like a comic book or simply present single photos with white borders. This flexibility sets the book apart from projects that aggregate found images more instrumentally for conceptual effect. For Buonerba and Hauge, the found images are a generative constraint, a visual challenge to be solved by cropping, arranging and sequencing. Often, the resulting compositions (if not the resolution or focus) are strong even by conventional photographic standards. Nevertheless, the

weird artifacts and distortions familiar to any Street View user are a prominent aspect of the book's aesthetic.

The subject matter exerts a subtle, but powerful influence on the photographs' form and content. With dogs come chair legs and people legs, footwear and shopping bags. The point of view is low. There are hardly any horizons. The book is an incidental inventory of paving materials and vernacular architecture. The experience is surprisingly unlike actually using Street View, in large part because the images focus on what is beside the street rather than down the middle. Furthermore, the reader isn't privy to virtual walking that invisibly connects the images that were chosen for the book.

*Attenti al Cane* cleverly uses narrative, whereas many books of this sort make meaning through mere accumulation. In one such sequence, the reader watches a dog chase the Google car as it takes the photographs. Elsewhere, characters from earlier in the book reappear, complicating the book's already-complex chronology. In what order did Google photograph these streets? And when? Does the book's sequence follow the artists' virtual walk or was it pieced together later? In this sense, the book does relate to Ruscha's gas stations, which follow neither chronology nor geography. The reader is left to puzzle out these sorts of conceptual parameters – whether, for example, there are twenty-six images

of dogs or twenty-six different dogs in some other number of images (I won't spoil this for the reader).

Thankfully, the reader is left with bigger questions as well. Buonerba and Hauge interrogate how technology mediates our relationships, simultaneously alienating us and bringing us closer together. Considered alongside the ancient relationship between dogs and people, the newness of these technological anxieties is thrown into sharp relief. Yet, even our oldest companion has been changed by the internet, from the viral popularity of Corgis to an entirely new, meme-ready vocabulary of “doggos” and “puppers.” *Attenti al Cane* seems to say that nothing is too sacred, too fundamental to be changed by the internet.

Older aspects of the human-dog relationship remain interesting as well. Of the twenty-six dogs, some are leashed, some are behind fences and still others are free. There are purebreds and scruffy mutts. What the dogs have in common is that they are the only subjects with faces. Google has blurred out the features of their owners and passersby to protect peoples' privacy. Ironically, by excluding dogs as subjects worthy of protection, Street View preserves their agency. Though some are indifferent, the dogs that return the camera's gaze leave the reader with no doubt about their status as beings.

In fact, the uncanny affect of the dogs' gaze is one of many ways that *Attenti al Cane* demonstrates the power of found photography. Buonerba and Hauge deftly shape compelling compositions from Street View, and show that artists' books are an important access point for artists engaging with the proliferation of online images. The book operates through narrative and accumulation, creating meaning within each spread and between them. The artists maximize the individual image without losing sight of the sequence. This complex synthesis of disconnected locations and timelines is a fitting expression of their transatlantic relationship.