

Dan Mills
Artist Statement

I make paintings and works on paper that visualize observations about historic and current events. I use the conceptual space of maps, combined with paint, collage, drawing, and printmaking to explore data in highly abstracted representations that vary in size from the diminutive dimensions of an atlas page to paintings over twelve feet wide.

My process begins with a question, idea, or perhaps a response to a map, followed by looking for answers, learning about the topic, and investigating ways to represent it visually. For example, one series began with the deep sorrow felt when thinking about how much war and conflict there is in the world, followed by realizing I had no idea how much there actually was. So I began to research layer upon layer of information on this grim subject, with each discovery leading me to more data. I took copious notes and began exploring ways to visualize this complex subject in notebooks and atlases, and eventually began creating the ongoing series, *Current Wars and Conflicts*, which includes dozens of works.

I started incorporating maps into my work in the early 1990s while thinking about the quincentennial of what is euphemistically referred to as The First Encounter. Since then, I have created series on many other topics including, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, contested histories of colonization, international claims on Antarctica, and the paradox between the historic marginalization of Native American culture and the ubiquity of indigenous words in the naming of geographic features throughout the US.

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