

DAN MILLS

Mappings

JANUARY 8–FEBRUARY 6, 2021



D. Mills, *What's in a Name?* (state names + the number of major geographic features named after indigenous people & words marked with red), 2018, acrylic on collaged map laid down on board, 65 x 83".

The central paradox of his map pieces is that, even as they record the woes of the world, they are stunning and seductive. The visuals engage; the numbers appall.

—Carl Little, "An Artist's Maps of Imperialism and Greed"
Hyperallergic, August 10, 2019

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.

—Dan Mills

Dan Mills has had solo exhibitions in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and at academic museums throughout the US. Institutions that have presented recent solo shows include Center for Maine Contemporary Art (2019), Museum of Art, University of New Hampshire (2020), and Herron Galleries, Herron School of Art + Design (2020). Group exhibitions include "Unsustainable: Planet in Crisis", Ewing Gallery of Art + Architecture, University of Tennessee (2020); "Ideologue", Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City (2016); and "Dissident Futures", Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2013-14). He has been speaker, panelist, or interviewee at institutions including the Chicago Cultural Center, David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora, University of Maryland, and Public Radio International. His work has been featured in publications including *Art New England*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Los Angeles Times*, and is in collections including JPMorgan Chase, Library of Congress, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Mills is the son of artists E. Andrew and Virginia Ward Mills, who lived in Upstate New York and Cape Cod. He grew up in Schenectady, earned a BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology and MFA from Northern Illinois University. After being an artist/curator in Chicago for fifteen years, he returned to the Northeast to direct academic museums. His studio is in a mill building in southern Maine; he also works on outer Cape Cod. Mills lives in Lewiston, where he directs the Bates College Museum of Art. He is represented by Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago, Howard Yezerski, Boston, and Julie Heller, Provincetown.

www.dan-mills.net