

DAN MILLS: EMPIRE

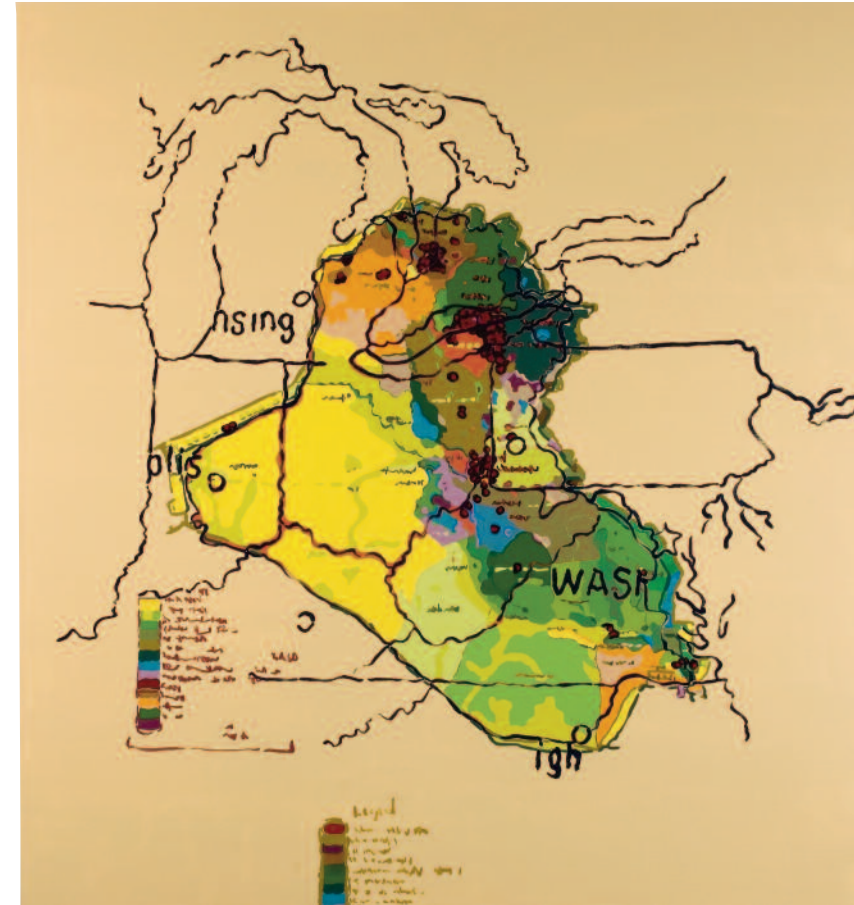
Empire: (1) a political unit, usually larger than a kingdom and often comprising a number of territories or nations, ruled by a single authority; (2) imperial rule; (3) an extensive enterprise.

[*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*]

Art, it can be claimed, reflects the fundamental nature of a given society at a given point in time. Artists have been called upon to express dominant political, religious, or social convictions — to serve as a rallying cry for acts decreed by those in authority. Some artists have fleeting concern about the political, social, or economic struggles of their time; others have been naively supportive or cynical and indifferent. And some have used art as an effective weapon with which to protest, attack, criticize, or satirize human folly in its infinite variety — to be a visual social conscience.

US Future States is a project Dan Mills began in 2003 in response to current political events. His work is overt commentary on imperialist leanings, overlaid with scraps of map from the past, and surrounded by thought-provoking discourse. These are not rambling thoughts, but rather stream-of-consciousness writings triggered by data from the news, research, observing current events, and the CIA World Factbook.

Maps are used to give direction and communicate location. We are taught to follow them, for they represent the “right” way. By using maps, Mills implies a sense of order and planning in representations of a world — its mountains, valleys, rivers, oceans, currents, volcanoes, earthquake faults, geology, weather, natural resources, agriculture, vegetation, land use, oil prospects, bird migration, politics, economy, population density, ethnolinguistic groups, indigenous populations, paramilitary groups, shifting boundaries, contested lands and artificial borders — and collective consciousness of one’s place within the world. Thus, the map becomes a metaphor for both the journey in which we are currently embroiled and for the universal human inclination to covet that which we do not have.



Superimpositions, 2007; acrylic on canvas, 56" x 22". Courtesy of the artist and Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago.

Dan Mills, through his satirical wit and riveting perception, forces the viewer to confront the very concepts of empire, global imperialism, and America’s role in the world today. Is the United States imposing its authority on others? Is the U.S. treating other nations as dependencies over which it decrees policy and law? Is the U.S. involvement overseas an extensive enterprise?

In post-9/11 America, there has been a movement to accept unquestioningly government policies and actions. America has moved away from the system of checks and balances created by the Founding Fathers that demanded our active participation in government through the rights of freedom of speech, dissent, and the vote and the responsibility to question our government. This is the path that Dan Mills questions, doubts, and challenges. In Mills pun-laden, mocking rhetoric, bombastic imperialistic machinations are bombarded with irony and absurdity. Through his art, he provokes to do likewise. In less capable hands, the result would be small-minded and mean-spirited. In the hands of Dan Mills, it is captivating.

Barbara Rothermel
Director of the Daura Gallery and Museum Studies Program
Lynchburg College



On the cover: Chosen Again Superimposed on Florida (with unknown symbols), 2007; acrylic on canvas, 57 1/2" x 55". Courtesy of the artist and Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago.

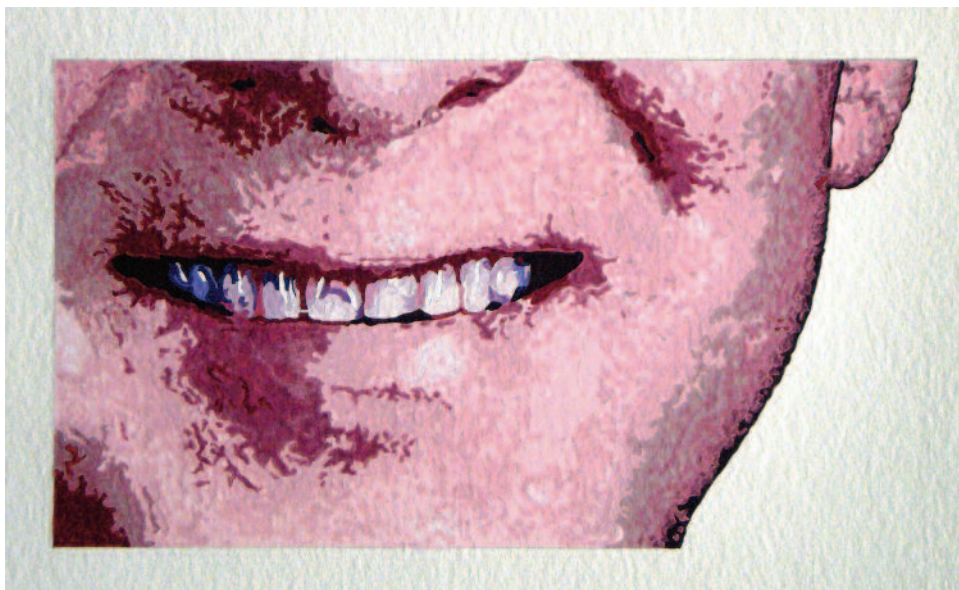


DAN MILLS: EMPIRE

October 22 – December 9, 2007
Daura Gallery, Lynchburg College, Lynchburg, Va.

Artist’s Lecture: Tuesday, November 6, 7:30 p.m.

January 14 – February 29, 2008
Ganser Gallery, Millersville University, Millersville, Pa.



Little Bush (detail), 2006; watercolor on paper. Courtesy of the artist and Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago.



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USE the World (a manifesto)



The USA is the world's lone superpower. We are the imperialists of the 21st century. Let us stop pretending. Rather than feign that our actions are benevolent, let us function openly as global imperialists whose actions are clearly defined by direct benefit to the US, and not clouded by the often half-hearted multiple missions that give US actions an ambiguity of purpose and erode international credibility.

Let us move forward with the obvious next steps in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Why not do what we did with Texas, Alaska and Hawaii? Texas republic, we annexed the republic, and won a war with Mexico (then as victors, bought the southwestern US and California from the loser for only \$15 million). Alaska became our 49th state in 1949, and established the precedent of expansion into non-contiguous lands; and Hawaii (50th, 1959) was the first state in another part of the world. Remember, the USA was comprised of only 16 states in the 18th century. Nineteenth century expansion added 29 states. In the 20th century we added five more. As we consider US history, a pattern of expanding by at least five states every fifty years exists, with the exception of the last fifty or so. We clearly have some catching up to do.

Why not take over a nation for its location, as we did with Hawaii, we did with Alaska, and to gain a location for placement of military and missile bases as we did with Guam. And from now on, if we provide a country with military protection, it's ours. Additionally, takeover of developing countries will mean US businesses can move offshore, reduce overhead, and exploit natural and human resources — while remaining within the US. Takeover of countries with higher GDPs than the US will elevate our lackluster GDP (if we add enough of them). New states with large military bases will be added next to our adversaries, enabling US to dominate both (and allies are much easier to take over, as they assume our military will protect them).

Let us consider a few possible future states. Iraq. We have already invested a lot there, it provides a beachhead in the Middle East, and possesses considerable oil reserves. And did you know that this piece of real estate has a rich history of naming and renaming? In fact, "Iraq" may very well be the name used for the shortest duration in its history.* Therefore, renaming it USArabia will continue this long tradition. This name allows for cultural identification while making clear what country it is a part of. And it is a fine state size — about twice the size of Idaho.

Iceland has no military. Protection is provided by the Icelandic Defence League. Do you know who staffs the IDL? We do! If we protect you, you are ours. With an abundance of hydro and thermal power, significant tracts of empty land we could use for military and missile bases, along with membership to the European Union, US benefits are easy to identify. We will name it the less off-putting "Thermia." It is a nice state size, similar to Maryland.

ChosenAgain (former South Korea) will be much easier to take over than North Korea. After all they are already dependent on us militarily (we already have 37,000 troops there). The infrastructure is well developed, and the strong GDP will benefit the US. And won't it be great to have an Indiana-size state so near China and Japan?

Qatar is already accustomed to monarchic rule, and according to "CIA The World Factbook" (<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>), it controls the world's 3rd largest oil and gas reserves. However, this modest land juts into the Persian Gulf and is vulnerable from hostilities. With a new Preemptive Protection Doctrine (a natural policy developed after Preemptive War for Peace Doctrine), we take it over so we can protect it from, well, takeover. And the new state, Cutter, is larger than Connecticut.

New non-contiguous states will be known as the United States Global (USG). Together with contiguous USA states, they will be known as the United States Empire (USE). Eventually, each USA state will have a sibling state. A mission similar to the extremely useful Manifest Destiny of the 19th century will be enacted, but this time, "extending the boundaries of freedom" would be global.

"USE The World" should help you grasp the benefits (well, for us, anyway) of a world dominated by the United State Empire. As recently as the late 1990s, the ideological position represented in this manifesto would have seemed almost inconceivable. Not anymore. Now is the time to act. Isn't it great for US that things have changed so much, and in such a short period of time?

© Dan Mills, 2003

*Previous names for USArabia have included: Arabia, Turkey in Asia, Ottoman Empire, Irak, Mesopotamia, Shahrzur, Luristan, Dominion of Timur, Califate of Bagdad, ElJesreh Califate, Dominion of the Turks, Dominion of the Sassanids, Roman Empire, Greater Armenia, Babylonia, Assyria, and Media.

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Born 1956, Waterloo, New York

B.F.A., Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, N.Y.

1981M.F.A., Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Ill.

1981-94Lived and worked in Chicago, Ill.; curator, First Chicago Art Collection, 1984-94

1994-2001Director of the Gibson Gallery, SUNY Potsdam, N.Y.

2001-present..Director, Samek Art Gallery, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007*Dan Mills, American Icons & Morphs*; Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago, Ill.

2002*Viewpoints: Selected Monoprints and Collages*; Printworks Gallery, Chicago, Ill.

2002*Detector*; NIU Art Museum Gallery, Chicago, Ill.

2001*Embellishments and Subversions*, Ben Shahn Galleries, William Paterson University, Wayne, N.J.

1998*Revisions*, 76 Varick Gallery, New York, N.Y.

Selected Group Exhibitions

2007*Lines in the Earth: Maps, Power and the Imagination*

Jane Hammond, Joyce Kozloff, Nick Lamia, Dan Mills, Matthew Picton,

Lordy Rodriguez, Santiago Sierra, Sun Valley Center for the Arts, Sun Valley, Idaho,

Curated by Courtney Gilbert

2007*8-Hour Project*; Bowman and Penelec Galleries, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa.

2007*Long March: Yan'an Project Retrospective*, Long March Space, Factory 798,

Beijing, China, Curated by Lu Jie and Qiu Zhijie

2006*What War*, White Box, New York, N.Y., Curated by Eleanor Heartney, Juan Puentes and Larry Litt

2004-06*Misleading Trails: Ai Weiwei, Enrique Chagoya, Vernon Fisher, Hai Bo, Hong Hao, Dan Mills, Xiaoxe Xie*, China Art Archives and Warehouse, Beijing; NIU Art Museum, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Ill; University Art Gallery, University of North Texas, Denton, Tex; Hanes Art Gallery, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Nashville, Tenn.; Boyden Gallery, St. Mary's College of Maryland, St. Mary's City, Md.; Schick Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa. (Catalogue)

Public and Corporate Collections

Bank One, Chicago, Ill. • Lillian H. Florsheim Foundation, Chicago, Ill. • The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago, Ill. • McDonald's Corporation, Chicago, Ill. • Millikin University, Decatur, Ill. • Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Ill. • Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. • State University of New York College at Potsdam, N.Y. • University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign • University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

US Future States Atlas

US Future States No. 1: New Albany; 2003; acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States No. 3: USArabia; 2003; acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States Nos. 4-5: Bushland, North and South; 2003; acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States Nos. 6-12: A C R O N Y M; 2003, acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States Nos. 13-17: New Venice; 2003; acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States No. 18: Tunisiana; 2003; acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States No. 32: Chosen Again; 2004-06, watercolor, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States No. 47: USAntarctica; 2005; watercolor, graphite, collage and ink on paper

US Future States: Malta, DC; 2003; acrylic, graphite, collage and ink on paper

Future States Paintings

Superimpositions, 2007, acrylic on canvas

Chosen Again Superimposed on Florida (with unknown symbols); 2007; acrylic on canvas

Tunisiana; 2005; acrylic on canvas

Bushland (North and South); 2004; acrylic on canvas

Malta, DC (with Washington, DC and beltway); 2004; acrylic on canvas

Empire Art

Mine!; 2004; acrylic on paper

His World View; 2004, acrylic on paper

Cover the World; 2004; acrylic and collage on paper

Covet the World; 2004; acrylic and collage on paper

Coven the World (composite image); 2004; acrylic and collage on paper

Grins and Grimaces

Big Dick; 2006; watercolor on paper

Little Bush; 2006; watercolor on paper

Condi Lips; 2006; watercolor on paper

Future States Objects

USArabia; 2003; acrylic on wood

New Venice; 2003; acrylic on wood

New Albany; 2003; acrylic on wood

Thermia; 2003; acrylic on wood

A C R O N Y M; 2003; acrylic on wood

Courtesy of the artist and Zolla/Lieberman Gallery, Chicago.

Selected works in this exhibition are for sale by the artist; a price list is available upon request.