

## Lines in the Earth: Maps, Power and the Imagination

A surprising number of contemporary artists are making work that incorporates maps or cartography. Many use mapping to explore social, cultural and political geographies. Some use maps to rearrange the world; others use them to explore the way that maps reinforce political power. Still others use maps to create their own fictional worlds. This exhibition asks viewers to consider the ways artists have used maps as the basis for questioning the very order they impose.

**Jane Hammond** makes delicate artworks that pair startlingly lifelike three-dimensional butterflies with maps of countries in South America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia. She uses the butterflies to comment on precarious social and political situations as well as the possibility of flight and escape.

**Joyce Kozloff** considers the relationship between maps and power in her work. Her Boys' Art series uses military maps as the background for hand-drawn and collaged embellishments, some taken from her son's childhood drawings of wars. Viewers are invited to enter Targets, a 9 x 9 foot wooden globe, where Kozloff has reproduced government agency maps of parts of the world that have been U.S. military "targets."

**Dan Mills** offers an amusing set of proposals for U.S. acquisition of new territories in his US Future States series. In these drawings and paintings, Mills provides darkly humorous commentary on the role of maps in geopolitical strategy.

**Matthew Picton** reverses the paradox that maps are two-dimensional representations of the world. He translates city road maps into delicate, painted Duralar sculptures that he pairs with layered transparency sheets that depict these same streets at different historical moments.

Conceptual artist **Santiago Sierra's** performances investigate issues of race, class and politics. The video Position Exchange for Two Distinct, 30 Metre Volumes of Earth records a 2005 project in which Sierra arranged for two bulldozers to excavate holes of precisely the same size on either side of the South Korea/North Korea border, exchange the earth, and then fill the holes.

**Lordy Rodriguez** makes meticulous ink drawings that use the visual language of topographical maps. He gives them vaguely geographical titles (Salt Flat Desert Valley or Barchan Dunes) but their lack of text and deeply abstract quality frustrate our desire to use them as maps.

**Nick Lamia** also makes maps based on worlds that exist only in his mind. The intimate scale of his ink drawings (most are 7 x 6 inches) creates the sense that we are viewing new worlds either through a microscope or telescope. Lamia sees his maps as a metaphor for our desire to chart the unknown.

Courtney Gilbert, curator

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