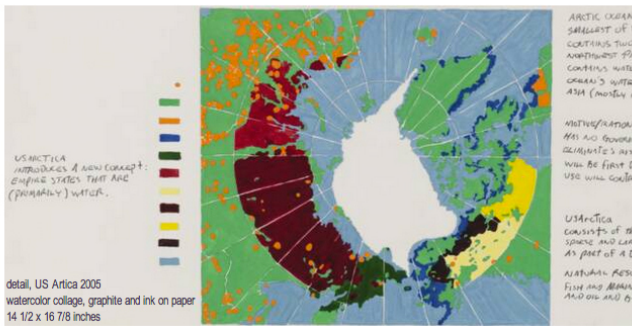


A global atlas numerically and visually marking territories of new design, US Future States Atlas is a remarkable multiyear meditation on the state of the world and what might be possible if a particular political bent were carried beyond an extreme of dominance.



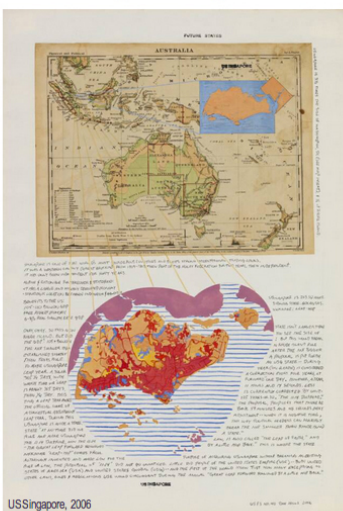
Frighteningly real in scope considering our recent leadership stance, the atlas takes a humorous often absurd look at boundaries, borders and how the viewpoint of an empowered nation can quickly dominate an entire globe with a skewed perspective of what may benefit its dominance on the world stage. An investigative study began with an affinity akin to the sheer beauty of map making and although Dan Mills had no idea where the maps would lead, they took him down a road with twists and turns that ultimately engage the viewer in a dialogue about the world in a way that pokes us into seeing things differently, uncomfortable to disengage from our taught, fixed view that maps were indeed created with an objective informational stance. Mills earlier study of cartography during the age of discovery clearly proves the opposite is in fact evident. Indeed the artists intention is to shed light on what is missing. Art making for Mills is a way of viewing the world around him, a point of discovery. No wonder then that his interest in the beauty of cartography would take him on a global journey uncovering bias in map making. Maps are usually thought of as an authority including accurate representational objective information. Mills examines how maps represent a strong bias, the bias of the maps originator empowered and motivated by self interest. Searching histories for a new reality, Mills began altering cartography utilizing collage, layered images to convey ideas concerning colonialism, imperialism and cartography.



Early attempts of looking at the world from something more true than what we learned in school Mills focused on a more inclusive view. Changing the maps is intended to reinforce the idea that maps have set points of view and that in reality they convey multiple meanings. One way is not right but simply biased according to who's point of view commissioned or created it.

US Future States Atlas is comprised of thirty five works on paper and began in 2003 as a satirical response to US foreign policy. At that time the US was at war with Afghanistan before the invasion of Iraq. By aggressively conceptually pushing US foreign policy over the edge Mills found he could justify taking over just about any country and so he did. Interested in engaging the viewer with a uniquely visual sensuous color or collage element that adds what the original map was missing, Mills intends to leave the viewer thought provoking ideas that question their concept of reliable objective information

Maps that generate opportunities for discovery of what was previously unexplored. Compiling a vast amount of information from the CIA fact book Mills became a global imperialist himself reinventing the world according to what would benefit the US in terms of resources and growing interest. Visually the maps are colorfully depicted with stripes or areas delineated by color demarcation based on a particular resource. Each addition is visually mapped or layered with collage images, presented with a key outlining the economy, resources, and rationale for takeover. States are renamed Australia for example is renamed New Singapore touted for its highly developed economy. Mills states, 'The only way for visual clarity to coexist with narrative is to conceive of the whole process with consistent clarity' Physically dislocating geographical locations, reducing them to pattern, or boldly coloring them with various narrative concepts became Mills visual language. The power in Mills depiction of map making lies in the fact that upon observing them closely we realize the empowered point of view is actually not necessarily true but made up as it goes along. What else is possible?



Artist, Dan Mills is the director of the Samek Art Gallery, Bucknell University. US Future States: An Atlas of Global Imperialism is on view now through November 7, 2009 at Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica, California. The Future States Atlas is being published by Perceval Press, 2009. www.percevalpress.com or www.dan-mills.net. Thanks Dan Mills, Viggo and Walter Mortensen