

Embellishments and Subversions

Dan Mills: Maps

Ben Shahn Galleries,
William Paterson University,

January 22, – March 2, 2001

WILLIAM
PATERSON
UNIVERSITY

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Dan Mills: Maps

The map: the magical, conceptual, fascinating representation of a geographic area, a country, a continent, a world.

The map: an unknowable human universe reduced to a two-dimensional concept in human scale.

The map: an entity, familiar since childhood, that carries an implicit sense of authority.

The map as found object is the perfect starting point for this body of work by Dan Mills. It is the ideal foundation for the examination of the larger themes Mills has in mind: themes of political systems, the power generated by these systems, and the impact of that power on all in its path.



5. *Marginalia*

In the work entitled *MARGINALIA*, for example, Mills presents a map of “The World: 1763 - 1848”, a period of rampant colonization of much of the world by European powers. Letters across the upper margin of the map are blocked or removed so as to read “Net Gross World History”. A similar strategy in *(NATIVE) AMERICAN STORY QUILT* results in the emergence of the

sentence
“Deny Prior
Histories”
across the
margin of
a map of
North America.



B. *(Native) American Story Quilt—A Patchwork Comforter*

Continuing with the map as ground, Mills twists our minds in another direction, propelling us from the macro world of mapping continents, to the micro mapping of DNA schematics and chromosomes. *COMPOSITION* gathers together images of peoples from various periods and places, superimposes them on a map, and gilds the whole with a beautifully textured, multi-colored enlargement of the artist's fingerprint. This elegant piece actually calls into question the very concept of race. The micro world floats across

the surface of

LEGEND, a map of the ancient Mediterranean

collaged with

images of period art

works and papered with transparent dress patterns.

The whole is framed with a DNA spiral adornment.

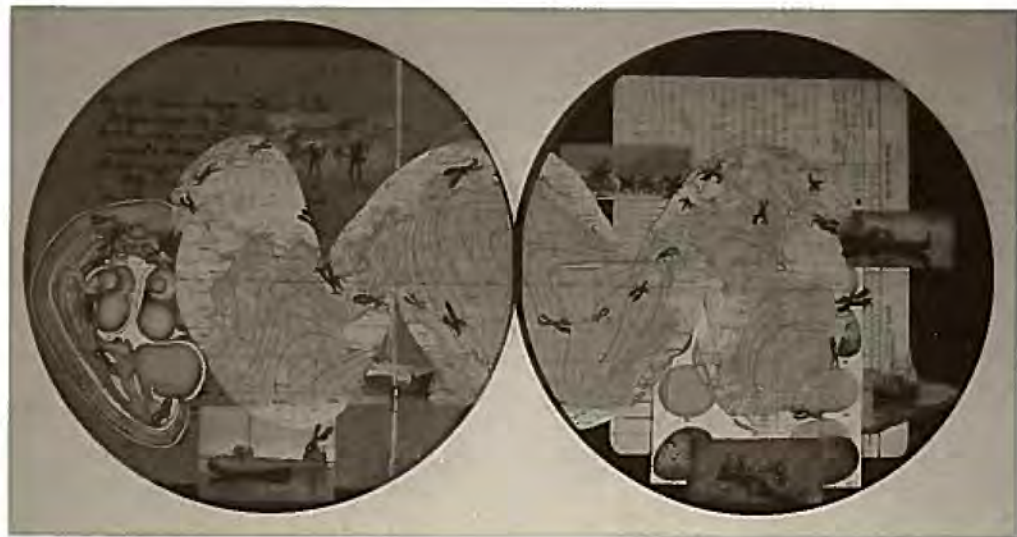


1. *Composition*

While the politically critical implications of the art of Dan Mills are central to the work, a formal reading of each object not only reconciles the aesthetic and social awareness, but succeeds in reinforcing the message. Employing devices such as repetition, juxtaposition, transparent layering, and selection, Mills weaves a host of associations that spark the intellect and ignite the imagination. Repetition and layering read as history and the passage of time, while other devices may speak for voices not heard or represented in the original narrative. The grid is used as an organizing element and yet these works maintain a whimsical edge. The materials too reinforce his themes. The use of dress makers' patterns implies multiple metaphors. With a combination of image and text, and through a filter of time and space, Mills has created a complexity of concepts for us to explore.

These evocative collages are manufactured in the editing and arrangement of ideas and images. The artist presents us with a variety of associations and questions useful in the understanding of our world. We are left to supply the answers.

Nancy Einreinhofer, Director
Ben Shahn Galleries



2. *Flow*

DAN MILLS (American, b. Waterloo, New York, 1956)

1978 BFA, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY.
1981 MFA, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL.
1981-94 Lived and worked in Chicago, IL.
1994- Lives and works in Potsdam, New York; directs the Gibson Gallery, SUNY Potsdam.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2001 Ben Shahn Galleries, William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ.
1998 *Revisions*, 76 Varick Gallery, New York, NY.
1997 *In Formation: the Collages and Constructions*, Ewing Gallery, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
1994 *Ephemera*, Desona-Saunders Gallery, Chicago.
1991 Desona-Saunders Gallery, Chicago.
1989 *Urban Building: Facades, Figures & Markers*, Millikin University, Decatur, IL.
Urban Building Facades, Sybil Larney Gallery, Chicago.
1986 *Relief Sculptures*, Prairie State College, Chicago Heights, IL.
1984 Illinois Center, Chicago.
1981 MoMing Gallery, Chicago.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2001 *Invitational Exhibition of Upstate New York Artists*, Tyler Art Gallery, SUNY Oswego, NY.
2000 *Superimpositions: Dan Mills, Gail Skudera, Randy Williams*, Auburn University, AL.
20: Woodcuts by International Artists, Holland Tunnel, Paroika, Paros, Greece.
Exquisite Corpse, Printworks Gallery, Chicago, IL.
1999 *Sleight of Hand: an exhibition of painters' woodblock prints*, 76 Varick Gallery, New York, NY; Studio 38, Utrecht, Netherlands.
Moris Sohlenda, 76 Varick Gallery, New York, NY.
1998 *30th Anniversary Alumni Invitational Exhibition*, Bevier Gallery, Rochester Institute of Technology, NY.
un Coup de Dés, 76 Varick Gallery, New York, NY.
1998 *Everson Biennial*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY.
Juror: Bill Arning.
Gutwirth, Layne, Leuthold, Mills: Art by SUNY Potsdam Faculty, Gibson Gallery, SUNY Potsdam, NY.
1997-98 *Vinyl Resting Place*, Alaska State Museum, Juneau AK.
1997 *57th Exhibition of Central New York Artists*, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, NY. Juror: Judith Shea.
1996 *Utilitarianism*, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, NY. Curator: Janis Dorgan.
The 1996 Everson Biennial, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY.
Curator: Thomas Piché, Jr.
NIU Collected, NIU Art Museum, Northern Illinois University, Chicago.
1994 *Art on the Map*, Chicago Cultural Center.
Curator: Gregory Knight
1993 *Influx*, University of Illinois at Chicago.
Curator: Karen Indeck.
Rough Stuff, Inside/Outside Gallery, Chicago.
The Republic Reconsidered, University of Illinois at Chicago.
Material, Dan Mills, Gary Passanese, Tom Stanchffe, Desona-Saunders Gallery, Chicago.
1992 *Ars Nova Judges Show*, Northern Illinois University Art Museum, DeKalb.
Curator: Jack Olson.



6. *Continent*

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

1. *Composition*, 1999-00, acrylic and collage on map, 51 1/2" x 67 1/2" x 1 1/2"
2. *Flow*, 2000, acrylic and collage on records, 12" x 24"
3. *Legend*, 2000, acrylic and collage on map, 33 3/4" x 47" x 1"
4. *Beacon*, 1998, acrylic and collage on map, 51 1/2" x 65" x 2"
5. *Marginalia*, 1998, acrylic and collage on map, 52 1/2" x 66" x 2"
6. *Continent*, 1998, collage on dressmaker's mannequin, 29" x 14" x 14 1/2" (figure); 53" x 20 1/2" x 16 1/2" (overall)
7. *Atlas Grated*, 1997, collage/mixed media on grate, 11 5/8" dia. x 2 1/4"
8. *(Native) American Story Quilt—A Patchwork Comforter*, 1996-97, acrylic and collage on map, 67" x 47" x 3"
9. *Theater of the World*, 1993-97, collage/mixed media on control panel, 41" x 29" x 5"

All works courtesy of the artist.

- 1991 *A Chicago Sampler: Recent Work by 22 Artists*, Kansas State University, Manhattan.
- 1990 *Altered States*, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago.
- 1988 *Inaugural Exhibition*, Sybil Larney Gallery, Chicago.
- 1987 *The Object Transformed, Three Artists from Chicago*: David Kargl, Dan Mills, Elizabeth Newman, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, MN. Curator: Julie Yanson
- Sculpture - Structures on the Wall*, N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago.
- Chicago Inner View*, Esther Saks Gallery, Chicago.
- 1986-87 *Extended Boundaries*, Chicago Cultural Center. Curator: Deven Golden.
- 1986 *Randolph Street Gallery Outdoor Installations 1986*, Chicago. Dan Mills, Gail Skudera, SUNY Brockport, NY.
- Alumni Exhibition*, Northern Illinois University Art Gallery in Chicago.
- 1985 *Unscene*, ARC Gallery, Chicago. Curators: Deven Golden and Sue Taylor.
- Fabrications*, Rock Valley College, Rockford, IL (two person).
- 1983 *Randolph St. Gallery Outdoor Installations 1983*, Chicago. *One, One, One + One*, Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington (two person).
- The Additive Process*, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago.
- Chicago International Art Exposition 1983*, Navy Pier.
- 1981 *Converse/Transect*, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN (two person).



7. *Atlas Grated*

SELECTED EXHIBITION PUBLICATIONS

- 2000 Pascale, Mark, *Exquisite Corpse*, catalog, Printworks Gallery, Chicago, IL; color reproduction.
- 1998 Arning, Bill, *1998 Everson Biennial*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY; reproduction.
- Gutwirth, Loyne, Leuthold, Mills: Art by SUNY Potsdam Faculty*, SUNY Potsdam, NY, color reproduction.
- 1997 *57th Exhibition of Central New York Artists* catalog, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, NY; reproduction.
- 1996 Piché, Thomas, jr., *The 1996 Everson Biennial*, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY; reproduction.
- Meyer, Jerry, *NIU Collected* catalog, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, color reproduction.
- 1994 Knight, Gregory K. "Artists' Maps and Devices," *Art on the Map*, Chicago, IL, color reproduction.
- 1990 Bulka, Michael, *Altered States* catalog, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL, reproduction.
- 1989 Sherlock, Maureen, *Urban Building Facades*, self-published artist's book, Chicago, IL, reproductions.
- 1987 Yanson, Julie, "Proud Objects," *The Object Transformed: Three Artists from Chicago*, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, MN; reproduction.
- 1986 *Alumni Exhibition*, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL, reproduction.
- 1983 Hutchison, Robert, *The Additive Process*, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL, reproduction.



Dan Mills: *Revisions*, 76 Varick, New York, NY. Fall 1998, left: 4. *Beacon*

SELECTED REVIEWS/PRESS

- 1998 Chayat, Sherry, *Social Conscience and Art*, *Syracuse Herald American*, June 28.
1997 Joyner, Heather, *The Future of the Past: In Form Alton: Constructions and Collages by Dan Mills*, *Metropol*, (Knoxville, TN) October 23; reproduction.
1995 Abell, Jeff, *The Image of the Artist*, *Chicago Artists' News*, December.
1994 Krantz, Claire Woll, *Art On the Map*, *New Art Examiner*, September; reproduction.
Flash Art News, *Flash Art International*, Summer; reproduction.
Cassidy, Victor M., *How Artists Get By*, *Chicago Artists' News*, July/August.
Artner, Alan G., *Dan Mills Maps Out New Territory*, *Chicago Tribune*, June 30; reproduction.
Artner, Alan G., *Mapping Things Out*, *Chicago Tribune*, May 29.
1993 Artner, Alan G., *Making Something From Nothing*, *Chicago Tribune*, November 14.
1991 Artner, Alan G., *Art*, *Chicago Tribune*, June 28; reproduction.
1989 Holg, Garrett, *Dan Mills*, *New Art Examiner*, Summer; reproduction.
McCracken, David, *Art: Gallery 2000*, *Chicago Tribune*, May 26.
1987 Martin, Mary Abbe, *Collage Choice*, *Midwest Star*, August 21.
Silberman, Rob, *Exhibiting the Object Transformed*, *City Pages*, September 16.
Holg, Garrett, *Extended Boundaries*, *New Art Examiner*, February, Chicago 1989, *A Critic's Pick*, *New Art Examiner*, May.
1986 Yood, James, *An Eclectic Approach*, *New Talent Exhibitions Preview*, *Chicago New Art Examiner*, December.
1985 Alford, Bethie, *The Artistic Process*, *New Art Examiner*, July.
1983 Hayden, Harold, *Collages*, *Chicago Sun Times*, May 20.

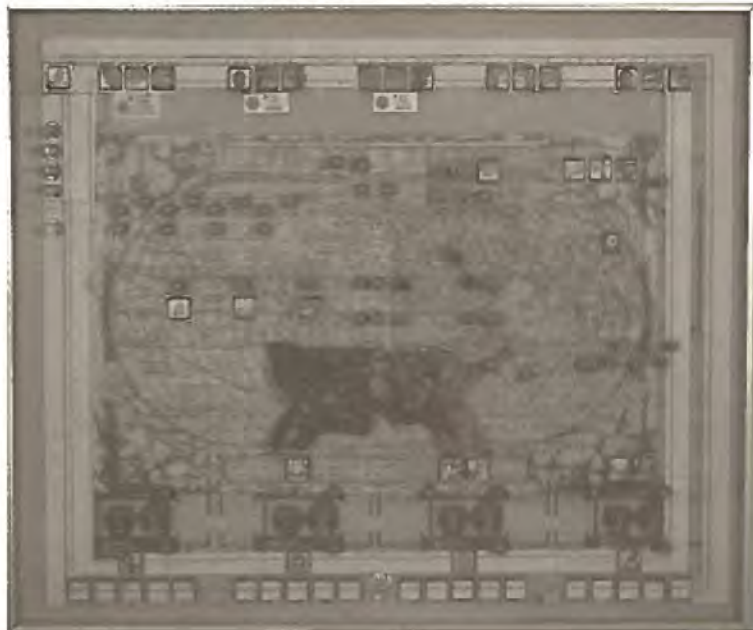
GRANTS AND AWARDS

- 1999 S.O.S. Grant, New York Foundation for the Arts, New York, NY.
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1989 Special Assistant Grant, Illinois Arts Council, Chicago.

PUBLIC, CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

- Bank One, Chicago.
Lillian H. Blumenthal Foundation, Chicago.
The John W. and Jeanne T. MacArthur Foundation, Chicago.
McDonald's Corporation, Chicago.
William L. Graybill, Decatur, IL.
Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL.
Phelan, Pope & Johnson, Chicago.
State University of New York College at Potsdam.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

3. Legend: cover and detail



9. Theater of the World



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Design: Suzanne Langelier-Lebeda