

"MAPS ARE NEITHER MIRRORS OF NATURE NOR NEUTRAL TRANSMITTERS OF UNIVERSAL TRUTHS. THEY ARE NARRATIVES WITH A PURPOSE, STORIES WITH AN AGENDA. THEY CONTAIN SILENCES AS WELL AS ARTICULATIONS, SECRETS AS WELL AS KNOWLEDGE, LIES AS WELL AS TRUTH. THEY ARE BIASED, PARTIAL AND SELECTIVE."

- THE WORLD THROUGH MAPS:
A HISTORY OF CARTOGRAPHY BY JOHN RENNIE SHORT

Maps are unique constructs -- at once inanimate tools as well as visual manifestations of human thought and perception. Traditionally, these tools serve a relatively straight-forward purpose, to provide the user with an overview of a chosen area. Using this visual information, an individual can orient themselves in their surroundings, chart a course of travel or avoid places of danger.

Like dictionaries and encyclopedias, maps often seem like authoritative documents, containing an absolute truth. Contrary to this perception, they are not unbiased. Whether drawn or digital, maps cannot shake the influence of the human hand. Imbued in the lines are the beliefs and attitudes of their creators and the places in which they are created.

Some of the earliest iterations of maps were painted on the walls of the Paleolithic caves at Lascaux -- dots representing the celestial landscape seen in the night sky nearly 17,000 years ago. Beyond early celestial mapping, examples of cartographic imagery that illustrate a particular landscape can be seen in the painted wall map at Çatal Hüyük, modern day Turkey, depicting a Neolithic town from 6200 BC, and the Bedolina map, a petroglyph representing the Valcamonica Valley in northern Italy dating back to the Iron Age. As one of the earliest forms of communication, maps have evolved parallel to the development of civilization.

Maps mark borders -- whether they are natural, cultural, ethnic, national, religious or otherwise, and within each of these societal pockets are people who equate different meanings with the land. As conscious, physical beings continuously interacting with our environment, it becomes almost impossible to divorce events in our lives from where they have taken place. As a result, place becomes memory.

The six artists participating in "Marking Territory" have repurposed existing maps in their artworks to communicate themes that continually surface in their own memories. Among these themes are colonialism, identity politics, biology and social interaction. By bringing this collection of artworks together, the exhibition initiates a dialogue speaking to the significance of superimposing lines on land.

- ERIN HEALY & ALCIA PIAZZA

SPECIAL THANKS

ABDULAI BAH-JALLOH
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JILLIAN LOPE
LAURIE PINE
LISBETH MURRAY
DARREN SWEEPER
BRITTANY VENTURELLA
KATI VILIM
MICHAEL VILLANUEVA

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition "Marking Territory" on view at the Walsh Gallery
November 11 - December 13, 2013

All measurements are in inches, height by width.

All images contained in this catalogue are courtesy of the artists unless otherwise noted.

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MARKING TERRITORY

NOVEMBER 11 - DECEMBER 13, 2013

THE WALSH GALLERY
AT SETON HALL UNIVERSITY



AILEEN BASSIS

"Balkan Palimpsest" by Aileen Bassis was first inspired by a trip taken through the Balkan territories of Eastern Europe last spring.

"Palimpsest" is derived from the Ancient Greek term palimpsēstos; palin meaning 'again' and psēstos meaning 'rubbed smooth'. It is defined as a manuscript, or piece of writing material, which has been effaced to accommodate later writing yet still contains traces of the original text.

Bassis employed a technique of blotting out the text on the maps and later adding photographs taken from her trip to provide viewers with insight into the tumultuous history and centuries of conflict the Balkan region has endured.



"Balkan Palimpsest #1"
10" x 8"
photograph with pencil, marker
2013

ZANNAH MARSH

"Awkward NYC/Everywhere" is a collaborative online map created by Zannah Marsh. Commissioned by New Radio and Performing Arts for its *Turbulence* website, the piece records social interactions in relation to the user's location.

Marsh's "Awkward NYC/Everywhere" is completely online and participatory, allowing the user to report various, spontaneous social occurrences that take place in public spaces around the world.

The map identifies locations where events such as breakups, arguments, emotional outbursts, physical altercations, overheard comments and romantic encounters have taken place.



"Awkward NYC/Everywhere"
web-based work
© Zannah Marsh 2013

NYUGEN SMITH

Nyugen Smith describes "Sun of the Soil" as "a work that combines sections of various maps of Africa and the Caribbean with hand-painted maps of imagined locations, to present a cluster of details of a fictional colonized territory."

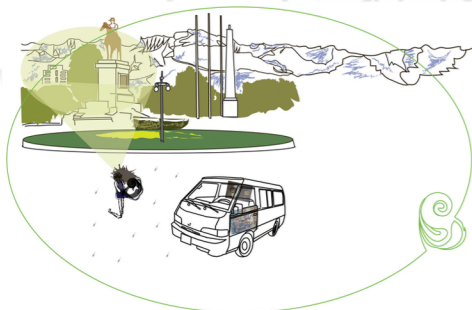
The artist brings Carl Jung's theory of racial memory into question, as it correlates to the creation of map details. Jung's theory suggests that thoughts, feelings and inferences are believed to be inherited from previous generations, influencing the behavior of the individual.

Employing the multi-media technique of assemblage in his artistic process, Smith investigates the psychological, cultural and social implications of colonialism in Africa and the West Indies.



Study for "Sun of the Soil"
12" x 12"
acrylic, graphite, watercolor,
canvas, wood and found objects
2013

DISNARDA PINILLA



"Unfinished Conquest"
Series 8, Santiago #8 (detail)
10 1/4" x 7 1/2"
inkjet print on acetate, clear and
mirror acrylic and cell-cast
acrylic sheet
2013

"Unfinished Conquest" by Disnarda Pinilla is a series of multimedia drawings that fuse visual and sonic aesthetics, creating an installation piece that investigates issues of memory, individual psychology and social psychology.

In doing so, "Unfinished Conquest" combines Pinilla's personal experiences from growing up in Chile with dramatic life events to create a dreamlike world.

Pinilla presents viewers with an intimate setting that encourages exploration to convey the importance of storytelling, transcending the classification and boundaries that define any individual nation.

MIMI WEINBERG



"Silene Colorata"
20" x 17" x 2"
paper, wood, paint, styrofoam
2013
Image: © 2005 Mimi Weinberg

Mimi Weinberg's work incorporates photographs taken by the artist in 2005, of vegetation native to the Holy Land.

Each piece is labeled according to the accepted botanical nomenclature of the Vienna Code of 2005.

The "Silente Colorata," or Pink Catchfly, for example, can typically be found throughout the Mediterranean region. Weinberg documents it from the vantage point of a valley in Israel.

The resulting imagery demonstrates the dichotomy of politically-imposed borders -- often clearly demarcated -- and plants, which find their own territories in which to flourish and survive.

WENYE FANG



"Rooster 1"
10.5" x 4" x 4.5"
paper (map), plastic, wire,
metal pins
2013

"Rooster 1" by Wenye Fang reflects personal experiences from a recent trip to the artist's hometown in China.

Fang's work investigates themes of memory, identity and personal interpretations of the past.

This sculpture speaks to the impact of deformed memories -- memories that cast a misinformed light on past events, creating aggrandized impressions of places and experiences of a culture that did not exist.

The result is a reimagined portrayal of the reality the artist has come to know.