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# On Coming Home

James D. Vanderpool  
*Georgia State University*

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# ON COMING HOME

by

JAMES D. VANDERPOOL

Under the direction of Michael Wsol

## ABSTRACT

In today's society, more of the population is finding itself with multiple points of reference to what they consider as home. Anyone who finds they have more than one place that they feel tied to for one reason or another, considers the impact of these places on their identity. The scale of experience with the places where we live, visit and grow up influences the scale of impact upon our identity. Even a vacation or a visit to a certain place influences us, and thus also changes the place because we interact with it. I am showing, through sculptural and creative media, the layering effect of locational identity and the journeys we make to physically and conceptually link those identities.

INDEX WORDS: Identity, Location, Journey, Craft, Construction, Mark, Record



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by

JAMES D. VANDERPOOL

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2012

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2012

ON COMING HOME

by

JAMES D. VANDERPOOL

Committee Chair: Michael Wsol

Committee: George Beasley

Ruth Stanford

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2012

**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my friends, colleagues, and family. Also to my wife Emily, whose love and support are requirements for my success.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support and guidance of all the artists, professors and peers who have encouraged and challenged me along the way. I would especially like to thank my committee for their criticism and time.

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1

#### ARTIST STATEMENT

My current work started as an issue dealing with identity and transiency. By moving to Georgia, I have uprooted myself as an individual. Having never lived outside of the state and city where I was born has caused me to question the aesthetic and identity of home. The act of moving has initiated questions about identity and what home means. Home, in this case, being an identity latched precariously to the rural and now urban. Although my own experience isn't tied exclusively to the rural, the urban sections of my past become overwhelmed by their minor distinction. The surroundings of Atlanta offer a stark change to the norm of my experiences. Issues explored in my work range from the distinct aesthetic identity of rough and rural environments, to a more spatial awareness between the two areas that are now part of a conglomerate identity.

Landscape and dichotomies of rural and urban experience continue to be at the forefront of my thoughts. I have also become aware of a transient lifestyle when trying to tie together two places considered home. As an individual travels between two locations on repetitive journeys, the points of the journey itself become part of that identity. The labor of toting your identity from place to place takes a psychological and physical toll. Comedian George Carlin offers a humorous reflection on the subject of "stuff" and how it becomes our identity. We have houses of stuff, rooms of stuff, desks full of stuff and when we move, we take that stuff with us. "Sometimes you gotta move, gotta get (another) house. Why? No room for your stuff anymore. Did you ever notice when you go to somebody else's house, you never quite feel a hundred



percent at home? You know why? No room for your stuff.”<sup>1</sup> Along with that stuff is our own sense of identity and reality. Our reality consists of surroundings and interactions facilitated by the places we are and the scale of our experience within those places. I make this connection in punctuating the effect of two places of identity. The effect becomes repetition and layering, linked with our conglomerate of locational identities regarding multiple landscapes and the journeys that join them together. When we go from one to the other, the journey becomes the process of importance.

## 1.2

### INTRODUCTION

I hope to connect with an audience that is acquainted with the notion of multiple anchor points in life and see their conglomerate of identity. I want my work to coincide with those that have specific journeys in their lives that have become ingrained into their idea of themselves as a person. As a society, we have become more transient and less permanent with respect to our idea of home. We may be raised in one place, settle in another, and feel a strong attachment to many more. With this, the idea of a hometown becomes slightly skewed. Where is home? Is home the place where you were born, the location most family resides, or is home the place you yourself “hang your hat.” They are all true, which paradoxically make them all not true. It becomes a layering of the true self; a conglomerate of multitudes of places mixed with the scale of those associations and experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> 1986 Carlin, George. *A Place for All My Stuff*. Web. 12 April 2012. [www.writers-free-reference.com/funny/story085.htm](http://www.writers-free-reference.com/funny/story085.htm).

Tied to those places is the connection that links them both conceptually and physically. We are a sum of the product of our environments. We too are shaped by the journey in between those places. Whether travelled by plane, train or automobile, we are inexplicably shaped by our familiarity with our specific journey. The mix of “helter skelter” production of planning and execution, combined with the relative monotony of the action of movement. At first I perceived the journey as a type of limbo; a place between places. After careful reflection I realize that the journey makes me who I am as well. In a piece called *Nomadic Notions* (Figure 8), I examine the way in which we make our idea of home transportable. More than that, it is our sense of identity. The notion of home is represented very simply inside of a childlike wagon. It is used as a “pacifier” of sorts in the way it evokes an infancy-like curiosity. Transportable, this object speaks to carting ones identity around.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1

#### PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I was born and raised in central Kentucky, and grew up wanting to go to the local state university and settle my roots close to home. Being from a certain place can create a one-dimensional perspective. Although I have always considered myself worldly, I now realize that I identify with few places, mostly a region within Kentucky limited to about 150 square miles. It was not until I uprooted myself and moved to Georgia that I started to fervently question my identity as an individual.

Upon arrival at graduate school, I found myself exploring my default identity. I began, as I imagine most students do, with utter confusion. My thoughts often returned to home; the place I left, where I was not anymore. At first, my art addressed the culture and ideas of Kentucky and my “home” through rose-colored glasses. I searched for what the aesthetic of Kentucky meant to me. Using rough wood and processes derived in rural craft, I created forms that were comforting to me. These works reflected a sense of understanding that I was “home” (meaning back where I was before and not where I was presently). These works helped me to explore my previous identity, which was one rooted in my upbringing. I began to enjoy craftsmanship and the aesthetics of rough or raw material.

I was also drawn to landscape and mapping. When thinking about place, cartographic referencing becomes a pragmatic source of inspiration. I began to think of landmarks’ physicality contributing to understanding of place and connection to an area. These landscapes had personal meanings to me, which triggered all the references pertaining to my home.

My nostalgia for Kentucky and its relationship to my identity was brought about by my surroundings and the history attached to those places. Viewers had trouble connecting. I love the aesthetics of where I grew up and yet overlooked its specifics by proximity. This resulted in my audience not being able to relate to my work. I realized that the words “missing” and “homesick” were aspects that I was feeling but hiding away from others. I was making cryptic work that helped me to understand many aspects of myself, but remained closed off from outside viewers. Precious boxes contained unidentifiable landscapes which could only be understood by a library tag; only allowing the viewer to explore for a finite amount of time, and then only with white cotton gloves. These things were too precious to me and became more of an art therapy as opposed to fine art.

Many of the objects I was making were transportable; they had their own boxes and ways of packaging and identification. The physical move perhaps made an impact upon my understanding of portability. Within the course of a few months, my life was packed neatly and marked, all for the process of the move to Georgia. Everything I held dear and could apparently not get on without was transported and relocated. My understanding of a transient nature within myself began to come to the forefront of my thoughts. I have two home bases: one in Kentucky, and one in Atlanta. The journey between my old home and my new one is an ever-growing repetitive aspect of my life now.

As I drew from notions of proximity and cartography, I mapped the distance in between the two states. The shape of each became arbitrary. We associate shapes with ever-changing national lines and political boundaries, which often come from rivers and mountain ranges. Although arbitrary, we associate many things according to place, in that we can relate to the certain locations’ cartographic and aesthetic symbolism. In drawing and studies, I became

involved with the line represented by the journey in between Atlanta and Kentucky. The only part I saw was the interstate and highway. The distance was represented not by miles or cultural difference, but by the line that I traveled from one base to the other. The image of I-75 was the only road I had from the time I would leave the city of my birth until the moment I was in the adopted city of my present. The shape and contour of that line became my symbol. This repetitive journey was a confusing addition to my evolving understanding of my identity. At first, I thought of it as a sort of limbo. It was a state of being which was not permanent or influential but temporary and transient. It couldn't affect my sense of mental make-up because it was a tool; a transitory characteristic, which came from the necessity of carrying on a conglomerate of identities and associations (with respect to location).

In *Benchmarks on the Dashboard* (Figure 9), I utilize this repetitive nature to form tally marks on the wall. Represented by the highway line travelled, each trip is catalogued. The mark making utilized is that of a brand. This is an important aspect because each panel becomes slightly different and unique. It cannot be planned entirely; like the journey itself, the mark can only be generalized during the process. With the act of forcing a hot brand into wood, the physical labor can be reflected upon in the viewers mind.

I came to feel this line was not a benign element of my identity. Along with my new adoptive city and address, this journey of repetition was shaping my understanding of identity. Now I have three aspects I consider to be the make-up of who I am as an individual; Kentucky, Atlanta and the journey in between. I can't help but think of them also as merely the top tier of influence. Everywhere I have gone has shaped my understanding. The places that I have only visited, even briefly, have shaped me. The smaller instances may only be thought of as experience instead of influence. When visiting a place, we distinctly either think of it as part of

ourselves or as the outside world to which we are tourist. It is the places that we feel are part of ourselves that have the greatest impact on how we identify.

I used to think that the norm was to have one distinct place that you had “roots.” Upon moving to another city, I find quite the opposite. Atlanta is a place where almost nobody is actually native. Even those who say they grew up in Atlanta, most times they are really talking about satellite cities (Tucker, Stone Mountain, etc.) This makes the population of the city (as I have come to experience it) one of the many migrated identities contributing to the collection. Everyone exhibits a notion of multi-centeredness or an existing hybridity. Multiple places of meaningful experiences are combined. This is ingrained into the cultural history of Atlanta. It was first founded as a railway center and now is known as an airline hub. There are few natives and many people “passing through”. I now form opinions of many places and things based on ancillary experiences that are taken as “scripture”. An interaction with neighbors and friends provides a “cliff notes” version of any place that I have not yet experienced.

## 2.2

### PRAGMATIC DECISIONS

My own art making process has cultivated a pragmatic way of working. In understanding the way of country craft, I have found that many times, the maker will use whatever is available that best suits their situation. It is a form of aesthetic that speaks to practicality. In *Rest Stop* (Figure 7), I executed the creation in such a manner. It is an outhouse at its core of assembly. The materials used are pieces of previous objects (siding in palette wood). The frame is built sturdy out of 2x4 pieces, and the roof is repurposed metal scrap. Its construction is informed by a way of working that continually searches for the most pragmatic of solutions.

While working in the studio, the artist must continually search for the best solution to any problem. That solution is not cut and dry. The artist must first decide the intended meaning. The conceptual weight of materials should always be understood and considered. It is beaten into countless academic heads and warrants attention. Wood can appear warm, while metal often feels cold. An object made of marble carries a visual (actual perceived) weight that is not the same as fabric.

Also, the history of object making must be taken into account. The historical context that sculptural bronze carries with it is not equal to a material of contemporary use. By this, the viewer begins to understand the difference between a reference to ancient ways of making, and modern methods. All these things become the visual language of making. The material becomes rooted in conceptual or aesthetic design. A rough, weathered wood piece speaks to age and value, while a shiny fabricated steel work shows strength and weight. These are rules which must be learned, but once learned should be a footnote within consideration. Much like we learned as children in literature, you must know the rules before you can bend or break them.

One must also consider the practicality of each design. Material choice can become necessity when a less ephemeral piece is desired. Public sculpture demands different requirements than that of gallery work. An outdoor piece may be anchored in concrete for stability, while the gallery piece would stand on its own. The weathering elements of nature would need to be considered when placing an object outside; these considerations not necessarily needed when displayed indoors.

The most seldom discussed condition when considering material is practicality of execution. If we all had unlimited resources and money, the shopping list could be endless. In the realm of the student, however, this is not the reality. Beyond that, for most artists, money is a

dramatic factor in the formation of a piece. The question then arises to either adapt the idea to the conditions present, or to scrap the notion all together. Most sculptors strive to get the desired work realized, by any means necessary, as my former professor would say. Beg, borrow or steal (not that I would morally condone theft...at least not on paper). This is the pragmatic decision that most form in their head. Find the best solution possible given the present parameters and conditions.

Finding a solution, executing and realizing is the most fulfilling part of the making process; doing the best that one can possibly do. This shows the importance of ability. Ability, in these circumstances, applies to skill as a maker with available materials. By these qualities, I do not wish to discount the control and choice that an artist continually possesses; it is a choice to alter concept for the sake of getting the piece now. The flip side of that choice is to change the situation and parameters in order to realize the original idea. The danger in this is putting a project on the back burner while funding or other issues are sorted out. A similar situation would be the student who graduates with a new degree. The best option is to obtain a job, which fits the skill set and value of the newly acquired degree. However, consider the job market for a specific niche being depleted. The choice presented is to either continue actively searching for the degree-oriented job, or to begin applying to non-related occupations. While the job right now may not be the best fit, it comes with immediate compensation. The decision to actively look for the best fit for the degree, while it continually moves forward, sees no revenue. So too, the artist who alters the idea to address the parameters, sacrifices initial intent but is still making. Actively searching for the means to fund and create will eventually (hopefully) produce the realization of the original idea, however in the mean time it is not getting made. The personal mark of success in the future of my career will, for me, be determined upon the actuality of if I am still creating



or not. It is only when an artist is making (on whatever level) that they are actually being an artist.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1

#### CONSTRUCTION INFLUENCES CONCEPT

In an interview, Martin Puryear talked about the importance of construction when approaching sculpture. He states that often you can read very much about an object of art by the way it was made.<sup>2</sup> By taking ideas of construction that are embedded in the utilitarian world, one may be able to inform artistic creation. In the piece *Journey of Labor* (Figure 1), I strive to express a utilitarian ideal and history within the context of fine art. It's a sawhorse, and is built like a sawhorse; an object of labor. The markings of the production process remain on the sculpture. The rough pine 2x4 pieces stay unfinished. Every tool from the pencil to brad nails are left visible. There is no reason to erase them or cover them up. Covering up and finishing the object would bring an unauthentic aesthetic to the work. There is nothing left that is unneeded. It is as true to the construction of work at its core. Moreover, it distinguishes itself by containing eighty-one distinct and numbered miter cuts. It travels the floor awkwardly, yet concretely meandering across a twelve-foot span. The meandering shape refers to the path taken between anchor points in life, and its construction is a utilitarian reference to work and laborious endeavors.

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<sup>2</sup> Puryear, Martin. "Segment: Martin Puryear In "Time"". 17 Sep. 2003. PBS.org. PBS, n.d. Web. 24 Dec. 2011. <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/martin-puryear>

## 3.2

## CRAFT AND FINE ART

The argument of art versus craft is a very touchy and debated topic within the fine arts community. The goal usually being to define a clear-cut separation between what is to be considered fine art and what should be considered merely craft. Parameters set up around the two only indicate that some craft drifts toward fine art, while inevitably, some fine art relies heavily on craft. Still, there is curiosity when considering the Arts and Crafts Movement. This movement sneaks past the critics and is considered a true aesthetic, and therefore, fine art movement. This commitment can be seen in much of Gustav Stickley's work that was at the forefront of the movement in America. Here too, however, I feel like the judgmental and compartmentalizing efforts of those who would separate arts and crafts could be argued against his work. Certainly, an argument of design could be introduced. By this, I mean that objects that are too design-based are not fine arts. The argument of function could also come into play. I believe that while many arguments could be made about associations with objects and their inclusion or exclusion in the high art society, more often than not, the two worlds have more in common than they differ.

By attempting to define fine art from craft, there must parameters and boundaries set. If there are rules of what constitutes fine art, inevitably there will be the same doctrine to define what is not art. When this debate and conversation take place, the objects and imagery that some would say is not fine art, get written off as craft or design. Some are left thinking how or why this can be. Craft and design are concepts that come up quite often when discussing fine art. The question of how something is crafted may arise. Arguments are made as to whether something is crafted well or poorly. Craftsmanship, however used, is a form of visual context

that provides depth to a thought or idea. The design of the object or art piece may also be brought up in a fine art critique.

Craft is a profession that has existed for thousands of years. It encompasses everything that would be considered hand-made. Craft cultures maintain distinct rhythms and aesthetic similarities depending on the region, people and purpose. Traditionally, craft is an occupation concerned with skilled work; the act of making something well with regard to the techniques historically associated with that trade. A craft should be fairly reproducible with regard to the commodity aspect of the field. Crafts are to be purchased by any and all walks of life. Crafts are somewhat removed from the rhetoric of heavy concept or narrative, which is ever present in fine art. The content placed on a craft is drenched in historical and cultural relevance. In a world so reliant on the production of machines and exacting standards, crafts are a rebirth of individual presence. Creativity is a problem-solving game for each handcrafted item in the form of practicality and traditional methods. Crafts are decorative items that have been designed as pleasing to form and function. Many crafts are created for specific functions and not concept. The design of them and the processes used is what make them unique. A craft usually denies notions of today's production world like cost effective materials, which are replaced with quality.

These two doctrines of high art and craft seem to be rigid and immovable. Initially, one can begin to understand some type of divide. The problem lies in the grey area of the two, where a craft pulls from high art and likewise, when fine art finds necessity in referencing craft. An artistic movement at the turn of the twentieth century that challenged this notion was the American Arts and Crafts Movement. The crossover between fine arts and the craft world would

be one of the craftsman or artisan that thought conceptually about the objects they made and why they were being created in a specific aesthetic.

The American Arts and Craft Movement derive from a similar aesthetic style in Britain. The British movement was pioneered by William Morris around the mid-1800s. It was highly reactionary to the industrial revolution as well as the Victorian period. While the massive accomplishments of industrial applications were experienced and utilized by many, there was a push to move away from the machine. The artist's hand and eye was becoming absent in the new mechanized world. Reproduced on massive scale were objects and utilitarian items previously made with care and skill. The British movement was also reactionary to the end of the Victorian aesthetic. It moved away from over-decoration and looked back to sturdy and well-made objects. Much of the British movement seems to have been steeped in notes of socialist ideals. This likeness can be seen when referencing the communist manifesto of 1847:

“The lower middle class, the small manufacturer the shopkeeper, the artisan, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they roll back the wheel of history.”<sup>3</sup>

This move toward the individual produced a need for aesthetic that was once again revolved around the individual. Artists, such as William Morris, would refer to examples from as far back as medieval furniture making techniques, houses and utilitarian items.

This idea of turning back the clock on industrialization would find its way to America where it would evolve. Gustav Stickley is a well-known figure in the American Arts and Crafts Movement. After being introduced to the work of W. Morris, Stickley created a new line of

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<sup>3</sup> 1975 Winter, Robert W. The Arts and Crafts as a Social Movement. *Record of the Art Museum* 34(2): 36-40.

handcrafted furniture based on honesty and simplicity. This meant relying on old methods of working with honest and sometimes fairly raw material<sup>4</sup>.

He also began to publish “The Craftsman” magazine. The magazine educated the public about the philosophies behind the movement, as well as showcase new work coming out of his furniture shop<sup>5</sup>. It brought the products of Stickley’s new style into the average middle class American home. His furniture was primarily plain wood in order to stay true to the materials being used. If any adornment was used upon the plain oak and local timber, it would be a colorant of some sort that would be thinned so as not to distract from the natural wood grain. Metal fastenings would be hammered or patinured in traditional styles to greater emphasize the pure and honest craftsmanship that these pieces exemplified. Joints and connections on the furniture would be left exposed and highlighted to again drive home this idea of the mechanics behind the creation and to greater show the well-made design and solid construction. Lines are simple in Stickley’s work; there are hardly “frills” or adornment involved in their production.

Stickley never made his pieces for a gallery or museum. They were simply ideals of fine craftsman furniture that were trying to rebel against a culture that had evolved in America. It was a comment against a somewhat capitalist and industrial undertone fraught with notions of socialist ideals. This craftsman quality of his furniture valued quality over quantity.

Today, art historians consider work by Gustav Stickley along the same importance of that of Frank Lloyd Wright. Stickley’s furniture resides in many prestigious museum collections and sells at high prices in many established auction houses. However, one may question why this is. Furniture by Gustav Stickley should, by all accounts, be labeled as craft and design, which has

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<sup>4</sup> 1999 Cathers, David M. and Alexander Vertikoff. *Stickley Style: Arts and Crafts Homes in the Craftsman Tradition*. Simon & Schuster: New York.

<sup>5</sup> 1999 Cathers, David M. and Alexander Vertikoff. *Stickley Style: Arts and Crafts Homes in the Craftsman Tradition*. Simon & Schuster: New York.

no place in the high art society. Perhaps by this variance, one should start rethinking this clear-cut boundary between high art and craft. What seemingly, by definition, should be craft through concept, research, and philosophy, can be changed into something of high, intrinsic value.

Perhaps it would be prudent to rethink degrading items and works of the craft culture.

Coming from Kentucky, I was introduced to craft culture very early, as well as its potential to intermingle with the arts. Much like the Shaker community of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, which influenced Gustav Stickley's work, Berea, Kentucky also exemplifies the nature of a community of craftsmen, artists, and artisans. Located in the Appalachian foothills, Berea is an artisan community which prides itself on its population of potters, weavers, instrument makers, jewelry designers, glassblowers, painters, and sculptors, and of course, furniture artisans. The community and its resident college strive to preserve the traditional Appalachian arts, which rely heavily on craft, but incorporate artistic elements as well.

I feel as though within my own art, I struggle with this idea of craft versus art. The work that I create relies heavily on the traditions, craft, and the heritage that I come from. This understanding and research has helped me to validate overt craft and the use of design elements that reference craft culture. In addition to creating my artwork, I also find outlets for using these skills and creating crafts based on the research I have been doing. When something I create is finished, it is only me who can denote whether that piece has a place in the craft world or in the realm of fine art. Most times, for me, it comes down to use and whether I want an individual to admire an object for its craftsmanship or for its message in context.

Within this delineation, I am not claiming that craft is not art. This differentiation I am using is based entirely on the world and market to which a piece is displayed and intended for. This is important because it dictates how a viewer or consumer will interact with the artist's

product. I also need to clarify that I do not discriminate between high art and folk art. Again, this is simply a question of intended viewer and display. Folk art in my mind is just as important as any piece in a New York or Los Angeles gallery. It contains a multitude of references toward history, tradition, and regional aesthetic. Folk art defines the culture from which it came, as does fine art, which defines the culture and relevance for its own place.

Gustav Stickley and Frank Lloyd Wright both hold a place among fine art. This opens up the possibility for understanding a wider range of objects and images, which are brought out from the confinement of the craft label into a more expanded fine art mentality. I agree with Howard Becker's claim that:

“Art and ‘craft’ are two contrasting kinds of aesthetic, work organization, and work ideology, differing in their emphases on the standards of utility, virtuoso skill, and beauty. Activities organized as craft can become art when members of established art worlds take over their media, techniques, and organizations. Conversely, through increased academicism or subordination of traditional art concerns to exigencies that arise outside an art world, activities organized as art can become craft”<sup>6</sup>.

The line between fine art and craft is so miniscule that only the artist can delineate whether a product is made for purposes of craft or high art. The artist is the only one who can delineate this difference because the difference of art and craft depends upon concept, research, and narrative. Any object can be well crafted, but if it represents something deeper, which refers to a more profound meaning. Fine art is not fully utilitarian; it is there for art's sake.

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<sup>6</sup> 1978 Becker, Howard S. Becker. Arts and Crafts. *The American Journal of Sociology* 83(4): 862-889.



## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1

#### MAPPING

Mapping has always been a subject of interest for me. It is a way of representing the world around us. This intrigues me as a sculptor. I deal with objects. I am most comfortable negotiating the world in the round. Two-dimensional representations often make more sense to me when taken from a utilitarian standpoint like in cartography or blueprints. I am not concerned with mark making as a means to deceptively create a realistic and receding picture plane. I enjoy the notion that since I am working on a flat surface, my mark making should also flatten the real world representations I am to convey.

Maps deal with editing and scale like humans deal with scale of experience and selective memory. Not many can remember full details about past events. Instead our minds reduce the information to the most memorable moments. Many times over, humans tend to also look toward the past when relocating to the present through “rose colored glasses.” So too, the scale of our experience is developed into the understanding of a particular reality. This is the way in which we make sense of the world around us, and all we see when looking at maps.

All of these aspects binding human experience and maps are seen very clearly in Mark Monhonier’s *How To Lie With Maps*.

“A good map tells a multitude of little white lies; it suppresses truth to help the user see what needs to be seen. Reality is three dimensional, rich in detail, and far too factual to allow a complete yet uncluttered two-dimensional graphic scale model. Indeed a map

that did not generalize would be useless. But the value of a map depends on how well its generalized...content reflect a chosen aspect of reality.”<sup>7</sup>

This notion can also be echoed in a common phrase among the art world that states that art is a lie that allows us to understand the truth.

This kind of editing and omission has been utilized by fine arts. That form of cartographic lying can be seen in a work entitled *Map to not indicate Canada, James Bay...Straights of Florida* by an unnamed artist (Figure 2). In this image the viewer is provided with a near blank sheet of paper. Only two states' shapes are represented along with bold face print of the words “Kentucky” and “Iowa.” Underneath, there is written the title, which state that this map does not indicate a multitude of locations that are clearly not represented. In this way, we can be approached with a paradox of receiving more information about materials not represented than we are provided with aesthetically.

In this we can visualize the editing procedure. We have been edited back so far that unless you can directly identify with these states, you can have no further input on the situation. In a group of drawing studies (Figures 4,5 and 6), I placed the notion of understanding my relational qualities with both Kentucky and Georgia. On the first study, many aspects were straightforward. States were represented in a semi-correct proportion to their placement. The only extraneous element was the extension of lines. I learned that as long as there are incorporated elements of geometric design, a viewer is less likely to question details. Again, this would be a form of cartographic falsehood. As the studies progressed, less representation of states shapes presented themselves. I found that more of my concerns came from the pathway that emerged in between the two fading shapes. The pathway was interesting to me as I thought

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<sup>7</sup> 1996 Monhonier, Mark. *How to Lie with Maps*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. Pp. 25.

about the journey I made between the two hubs of my life. The path became a representation of the multitude of monotonous travels I made linking the anchor points in my life. It was beautiful and torturous. A bulk of relational qualities could be revised down to a simple shape concerning only line and space. The journey along I-75 was engulfed with only the view of the path. The road and the way traveled becomes the bulk of experience when traversing the link.

## 4.2

### LOCATIONAL IDENTITY

As we move through landscape and place, the surroundings deeply effect who we are as individuals. The experience of living in a large urban setting can contrast the feeling of the small and rural. Living in a high-rise apartment brings with it a different lifestyle than living on 40 acres. It is this layering of place that intrigues me; not only landscape but also human interaction.

Lucy Lippard describes this aspect in discussing "...diversity of personal geography, lived experience grounded in nature, culture and history, forming landscape and place."<sup>8</sup> In this way we can start to understand a form of self definition rooted in place. We can understand that foothills and "hollars" provide input on our personality just as much as our upbringing. That upbringing too, however can be culturally and physically placed by that landscape. It is the burning question that I have been considering ever since the move to Atlanta. Am I the same person I always was, or am I changed by the transition and move? Furthermore, the lingering thought is of whether Atlanta has changed because of my influence. I don't speak of grandiose

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<sup>8</sup> 1997 Lippard, Lucy R. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*. The New Press: New York. Pp. 5.

scale or monumental change, but on the microbial level. Has my engrained natures affected anything about Atlanta, and has Atlanta affected my sensibilities of who I know myself to originally be?

The influence of place is an aspect that has intrigued me. It's all about one thing affecting another. In the piece *Atlanta Soil Experiment* (Figure 3), this was my chief investigation. I went to frequented places in Atlanta and chose soil representing those locations. That soil was placed into mason jars along with a measured amount of Kentucky bourbon. The jars were sealed, catalogued and stored. In a way, I was "fermenting" Georgia soil in Kentucky bourbon. It is presented in a scientific way with regards to cataloging and storage. Although it is not for a specific result, the objects themselves presented an answer I had not expected. Some jars of soil leached the amber liquor color from the bourbon while others remained tinted. I did not shake or disturb the concoction. While the two substances didn't mix, they were not the same. They could be seen as altered but not unnoticeable. In this way, I began to think about my existing hybridity. The places of influence had not altered me beyond recognition, however they were not distinctly their own either. They became part of an identifying hybrid conglomerate.

John Brinckerhoff Jackson examines thoughts on place when discussing: "I suspect no landscape, vernacular or otherwise, can be comprehended unless we perceive it as an organization of space; unless we ask ourselves who owns or uses the spaces, how they were created and how they change."<sup>9</sup> Places carry human history and baggage. Aesthetic, cultural and personal weights must be considered just as much as physical geographical elements.

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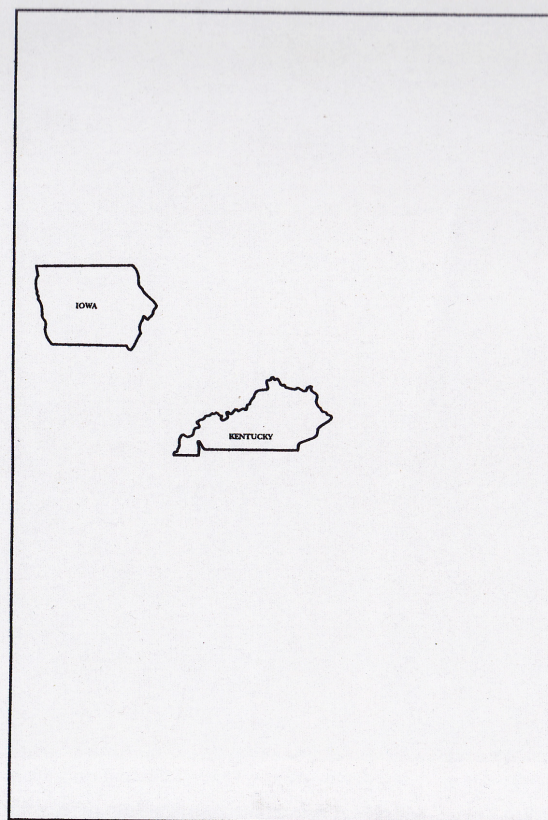
<sup>9</sup> 1997 Lippard, Lucy R. *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*. The New Press: New York. Pp. 8.

These elements are at the root of what I consider when I initially thought of myself as a transplanted identity. Places and surroundings are different, but the interactions and culture are also vastly integral to the self-prescribed thought of who I am as an individual and participant in society and culture. Without ongoing influence we become stagnant and docile. With progress and change, as individuals we thrive and evolve to be what we find ourselves to be in the end.

**APPENDIX:**  
**FIGURES**



Figure 1. *Journey of Labor*  
Pine



Map to not indicate : CANADA, JAMES BAY, ONTARIO, QUEBEC, ST. LAWRENCE RIVER, NEW BRUNSWICK, MANITOBA, AKIMISKI ISLAND, LAKE WINNIPEG, LAKE OF THE WOODS, LAKE NIPIGON, LAKE SUPERIOR, LAKE HURON, LAKE MICHIGAN, LAKE ONTARIO, LAKE ERIE, MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, MASSACHUSETTS, VERMONT, CONNECTICUT, RHODE ISLAND, NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY, PENNSYLVANIA, DELAWARE, MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA, OHIO, MICHIGAN, WISCONSIN, MINNESOTA, EASTERN BORDERS OF NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA, NEBRASKA, KANSAS, OKLAHOMA, TEXAS, MISSOURI, ILLINOIS, INDIANA, TENNESSEE, ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, GEORGIA, NORTH CAROLINA, SOUTH CAROLINA, FLORIDA, CUBA, BAHAMAS, ATLANTIC OCEAN, ANDROS ISLANDS, GULF OF MEXICO, STRAITS OF FLORIDA.

Figure 2. *Map to not indicate Canada, James Bay... Straights of Florida*  
Unnamed artist





Figure 3. *Atlanta Soil Experiment*  
Mason Jars, Wood, Soil, Bourbon, Makers Mark Wax



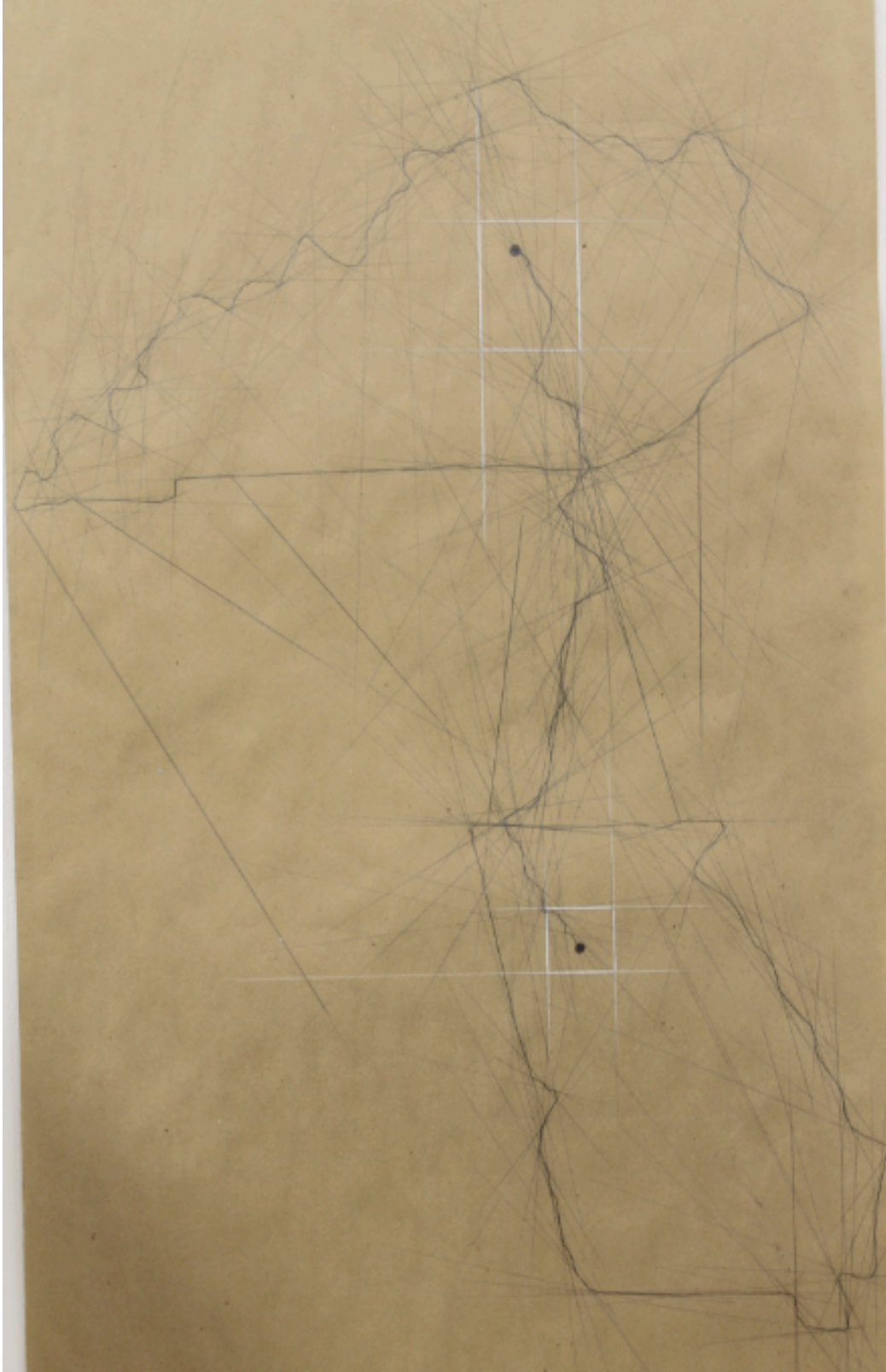


Figure 4. *Locational Study #1*  
Crate Paper, Graphite, Chalk



Figure 5. *Locational Study #2*  
Crate Paper, Charcoal, Chalk





Figure 6. *Locational Study #3*  
Crate Paper, Charcoal, Chalk



Figure 7. *Rest Stop*  
Wood, Metal



Figure 8. *Nomadic Notions*  
Wood, Packing Straw, Radio Flyer Parts





Figure 9. *Benchmarks on the Dashboard*  
Branded Wood Panels

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