

Worcester Magazine

WORCESTER COUNTY'S INDEPENDENT VOICE

## World View

### Unfolding art in maps

By Lydia Keene-Kendrick

In our everyday lives maps are used to find our way, to explore foreign places or navigate familiar ones. The makers of maps also explore, making order out of the previously unknown or disorderly. For cartographers, the map is not a purely impersonal, scientific endeavor. It becomes a subjective statement about the reality in which they live. In this sense, map-making is an art, and the maps made by artists provide a unique vision of the world. The current exhibit at Clark University's Schiltkamp Gallery explores the varied perspectives of 15 artists through mapping.

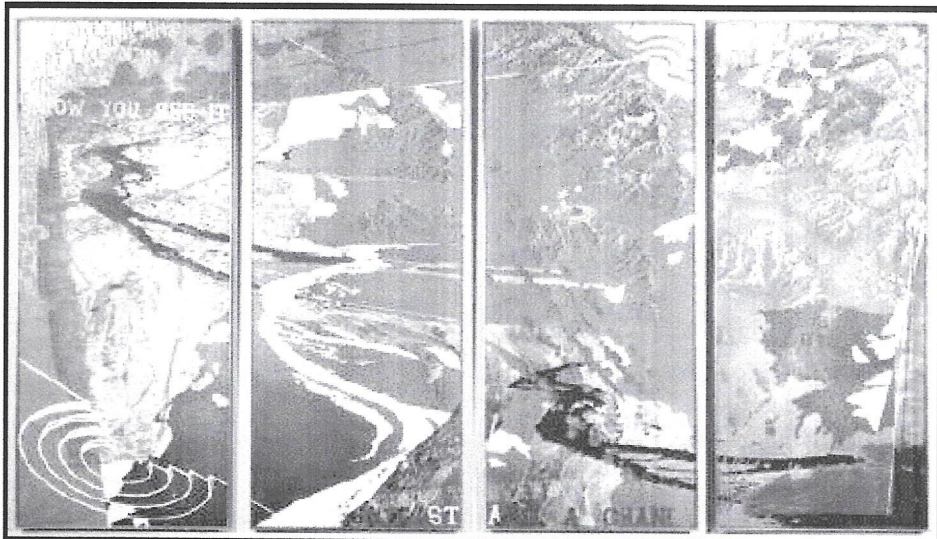
### Details

**What:** *Mapping: An exhibition*

**Where:** Clark University  
Schiltkamp Gallery, Traina  
Center, 92 Downing St.

**When:** Through April 22

**Call:** 508-793-7113



*Doesn't Stand a Chance, Leila Daw*

Upon entering the gallery, the four panels of Connecticut artist Leila Daw's *Doesn't Stand a Chance* greet the viewer with large scale and vibrant colors. The initial impression is of a Japanese print, earthy mountains rising over winding royal and pale blue rivers. Repeated in the upper left corner are the words "Desert Like A River," overlaid with "Now You See It." Perspective oscillates with these words and overlapping layers of imagery, at once natural and otherworldly, immediately recognizable yet alien, with peaks of mountains encircled by silver rings like planets or radiation. The imagination of the viewer is allowed to play upon these images and the vibrant colors that move the eye through the mountain background of browns and grays. The division of the panels highlights different aspects of the map: the desert terrain, the vitality of the rivers, the

difficult precipices of the mountains. Like a traveler, you must find your own route through the painting while also acknowledging the path of the artist, where you are supposed to arrive and how you choose to get there.

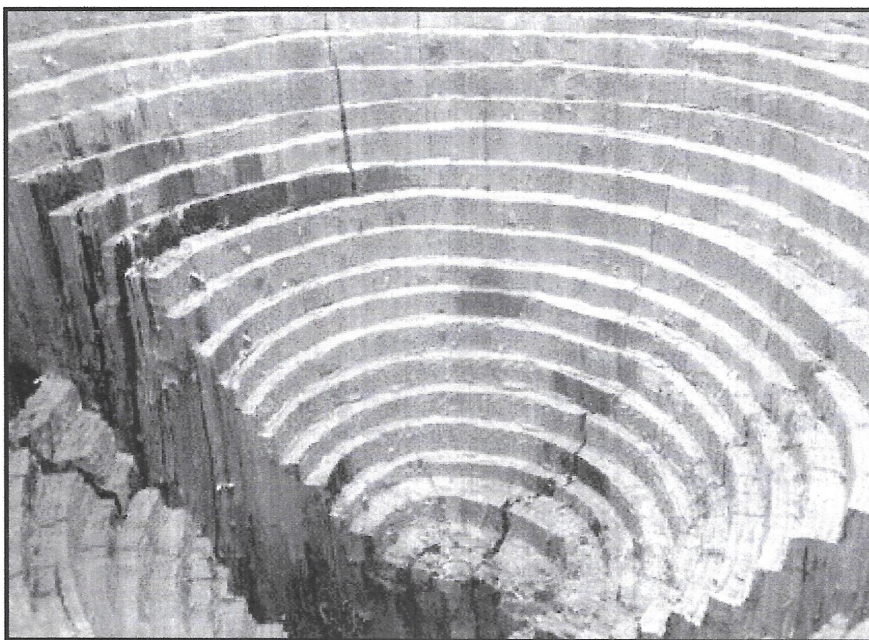
In the next space of the gallery maps are expressed in a variety of forms, including two dimensional, three dimensional, and video. The two installations, *Large Interior Ring Trace* and *Double Ring Trace* by Mathew Weber, also from Connecticut, enter the space of the viewer. Using large maple and pine tree trunks, these two works demonstrate careful carving of tree growth rings, tracing the life of the tree. The material is entirely natural, yet of a human hand, emphasizing the relationship between artist and medium as they shape the form.

## Artists

Becca Albee • Hilda Maria  
Alhach • David Bligh • Leila  
Daw • Gary Duehr • Dan  
Mills • Barbara Milot • Lior  
Neiger • Marck Schafer •  
Rachel Schuder • Patty  
Stone • Andrea Thompson •  
Deborah Waimon • Matthew  
Webber • Heidi Whitman

The result is reminiscent of topographic maps, plotting height through concentric circles. Land itself appears to be carved out, left empty of growth by human deforestation and manipulation. Just as the long life of the tree itself is being celebrated through the carving of growth rings; the reality of human effects on the landscape and natural resources is devastatingly present.

Several works in the exhibit use existing maps to interpret the places and ideologies they represent. Massachusetts artist Lior Neiger's three-minute video *Globe* is a game of chance, connecting places and people through random juxtaposition. In the video, the screen has been divided in two, each side displaying a rapidly spinning globe. Each side stops for a brief moment, bringing distanced geographies together, before spinning once again. Although these places, such as the Caribbean and Western Europe, are far apart, the connections they do have are immediately brought to the surface when placed side-by-side. The viewer is left to consider movement between distanced lands, ancient exploration, tourism and political relations. The world is indeed becoming smaller every day; and although countries may be far apart, the links between them mean no one is really alone in the world.



*Large Interior Ring Trace, Mathew Weber*

Human effects on the landscape are seen throughout the exhibit. The workings of the mind on the spaces we inhabit are a large part of the process of map-making, controlling what we choose to see and interpret. Therefore, it seems appropriate that the human mind itself be mapped. Rather than use technology such as CAT scans, Massachusetts artist Hilda Maria Alhach used organic materials for her *Mapping the Mind* series. Three approximately two-foot spheres explore states of mind and the connections that the mind makes. The work *Untitled 2* routes wind through the sphere, outlining the paths and complex links between one state of being and another. The material itself - clay -- is very tactile, coiling like gray matter. The figures that rise out of the sphere appear to be reaching out, trying to form bonds with the outside world while at the same time unable to detach from an interior world. The human mind becomes a land that is almost impossible to fully map, a final frontier that will forever leave questions.

The maps we encounter on a day-to-day basis come in many different forms. Similarly, the maps in this exhibit represent these forms in many familiar -- and some not so familiar -- ways. Whether using existing maps or creating something wholly new, these artists effectively reexamine terrain. The exhibit encourages a closer look at the surrounding environment, and the ways in which we place our own interpretation on the land every day.

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