

MAPPING: MEMORY AND MOTION IN CONTEMPORARY ART

at the Katonah Museum of Art October 3, 2010 – January 9, 2011

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for scheduling a class visit for your students to the exhibition **MAPPING: Memory and Motion in Contemporary Art**. Maps help us find our way and chart our place in the world, yet in the hands of contemporary artists they take on new dimensions. The 61 works by 38 artists utilize maps to address issues such as identity, global culture, and personal memory. The works include paintings, photographs, works on paper, sculpture, video, and a live web terminal.

Our tours are designed to engage students in active discussion, support core curriculum connections, and foster a greater appreciation and understanding of art in their lives. Through open-ended questions and thoughtful observation students will analyze map-based artworks that take their cue from actual locations, discuss how memory and perceptions of place influence their understanding of the world, and consider the techniques and methods artists used to create these works of art. What is a map? What are the traditional purposes of a map? How are maps used today? How have contemporary artists transformed, deconstructed, manipulated, and responded to mapping? In the Learning Center, students will explore a hands-on map-based art activity. ★★**Ask students to make careful observations on their journey from school to the Museum to use in this project!**

Enclosed you will find the following pre-visit materials and activities to help prepare students for their tour. Please share these materials with all classroom teachers whose students will be visiting the exhibition. Additional copies can be printed from www.katonahmuseum.org under "Teacher Resources."

- Curator's Introduction
- *Glossary* of mapping and art terms and *Conversation Starters*
- 3 images from the exhibition with discussion questions
- Pre-visit activities: *Word Storm!*, *A Sense of Place*, and *Create a Personal Map*
- Name Tag Sheet – Please have each student arrive wearing a name tag with **his/her first name clearly written**. You can use your own nametags or the enclosed sheet.

The KMA education department welcomes collaborative planning for class visits to ensure the value, relevance, and enjoyment of your students. Let us know how you will be using your visit so that we may best serve you. We look forward to sharing this dynamic exhibition with you and your students.



Karen R. Stein
Director of Education
Katonah Museum of Art

UPCOMING PROGRAMS TO NOTE ON YOUR CALENDAR:

- **Educators' Open House:** Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 4-6pm – Tour *Mapping: Memory and Motion in Contemporary Art*, receive exhibition materials, and preview future education programs and exhibitions.
- **Mapping a Sense of Place:** Tuesday, November 9, 2010, 4-6pm – Teachers share their map-related lessons.
- **Young Artists 2011** and **Younger Artists: Make your Mark**, May 15 – May 22, 2011



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Introduction to the Exhibition

Sarah Tanguy, Guest Curator

In this exhibition, thirty-eight artists employ a broad array of approaches to making maps. None are trained cartographers, but all are wanderers and guides. Lured by the thrill of the unknown and the beauty of maps, they answer an inner call to explore. Their mappings bear the imprint of personal memories and thoughts, as well as actual sites. Engaging both intellect and feeling, their subjects range from the celestial and the terrestrial to the subatomic.

For some of the artists, mapping is a kind of road trip or record of an action, while for others it is a metaphoric touchstone that interweaves fact and fiction. It can be a way to revisit past events, critique the status quo, or project future developments. A map can also become a form of elemental portraiture. All the artists mine the need of cartography itself: to organize and control the seeming chaos and complexity of our lived experience.

Just as our understanding of the world is in flux, so are our maps. In an era of information overload and virtual reality, new technologies have superseded the compass and the beacon. Several artists make use of GPS, Google Earth and remote sensing in addition to physical maps; yet, no matter the departure point, their goal is not how fast you can get to your destination but what you encounter along the way.

Each of the works in *Mapping: Memory and Motion in Contemporary Art* is a journey into itself that jars our well-worn habits of thinking about place and time. Together, they chart fresh ways of finding ourselves and locating our place in the world. A new realm opens up and beckons, one that is full of passion, possibility, and unexpected connections. From the pinnacle of the present, they reveal the passage of time and remind us of our shared humanity.

MAPPING: MEMORY AND MOTION IN CONTEMPORARY ART**GLOSSARY****ART-RELATED TERMS**

Collage – A work of art created by adhering elements such as newspaper, wallpaper, printed text and illustrations, photographs, cloth, string, etc., to a flat surface.

Composition – The plan, placement or arrangement of the elements of art in a work.

Contemporary art – Works created by artists who are living and working right now.

Conceptual art – Art that is intended to convey an idea or a concept to the viewer.

Installation – Art that uses sculptural materials and other media to change the way a particular space is experienced.

Mixed Media – A technique involving the use of two or more materials, such as clay and found objects.

Symbol – A design or an object that represents something else.

MAP-RELATED TERMS

Astronomer – A scientist who studies the universe, stars, planets, and galaxies, including their composition, history, location, and motion.

Borders – The line or frontier area separating political divisions or geographic regions; a boundary.

Cartography – The art of making maps.

Chart – (noun) 1. A list, drawing, or graph showing information clearly. 2. A map showing coastlines, water depths, or other information used for planning a ship or aircraft's course

(verb) 1. To record how something develops and changes. 2. To make a map of an area. 3. To plan a trip or course of action



Compass rose – A symbol typically found on maps; it indicates the direction of north, south, east, and west.

Coordinates – Two or more numbers used to determine the position of a point, line, or plane in a space.

Globe – A spherical model of the earth with illustrated continents and bodies of water.

Geography – The study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere and human activity.

GPS – Global Positioning System. A system for finding exactly where you are located using satellites.

Legend – An explanatory table or list of the symbols appearing on a map or chart.

Map – A visual representation of an area – a symbolic depiction of a place that shows relationships between elements of that space such as objects, regions, and borders. A map can help a person find their way.

Navigation – The skill of choosing a path so that a ship, airplane, or car can go in a particular direction.

Road map – A map, especially one for motorists, showing and designating the roads of a region.

Scale – A ratio which compares a measurement on a map to the actual distance between locations.

Topography – The detailed description of the physical features of an area, including hills, valleys, mountains, plains, and rivers.

Conversation Starters

Use these questions to help your student begin to think about maps, how maps are used, and their personal relationship to maps.

- When did you or your family last use a map?

What did you use it for?

- What different kinds of maps can you think of? (road maps, hiking trails, blueprints, globe, googlemap)

- What do maps tell us? What can we understand from a map?

- How is a map different from real life?



Susan Stockwell

Highland Dress, 2008

Ordnance Survey maps of the Highlands of Scotland, glue

Life size

Material Choices

Artists can choose many kinds of materials to create works of art. We often see paint, pencil, clay, etc. Some artists in this exhibition have chosen particularly intriguing materials. Why?

Look carefully at *Highland Dress*

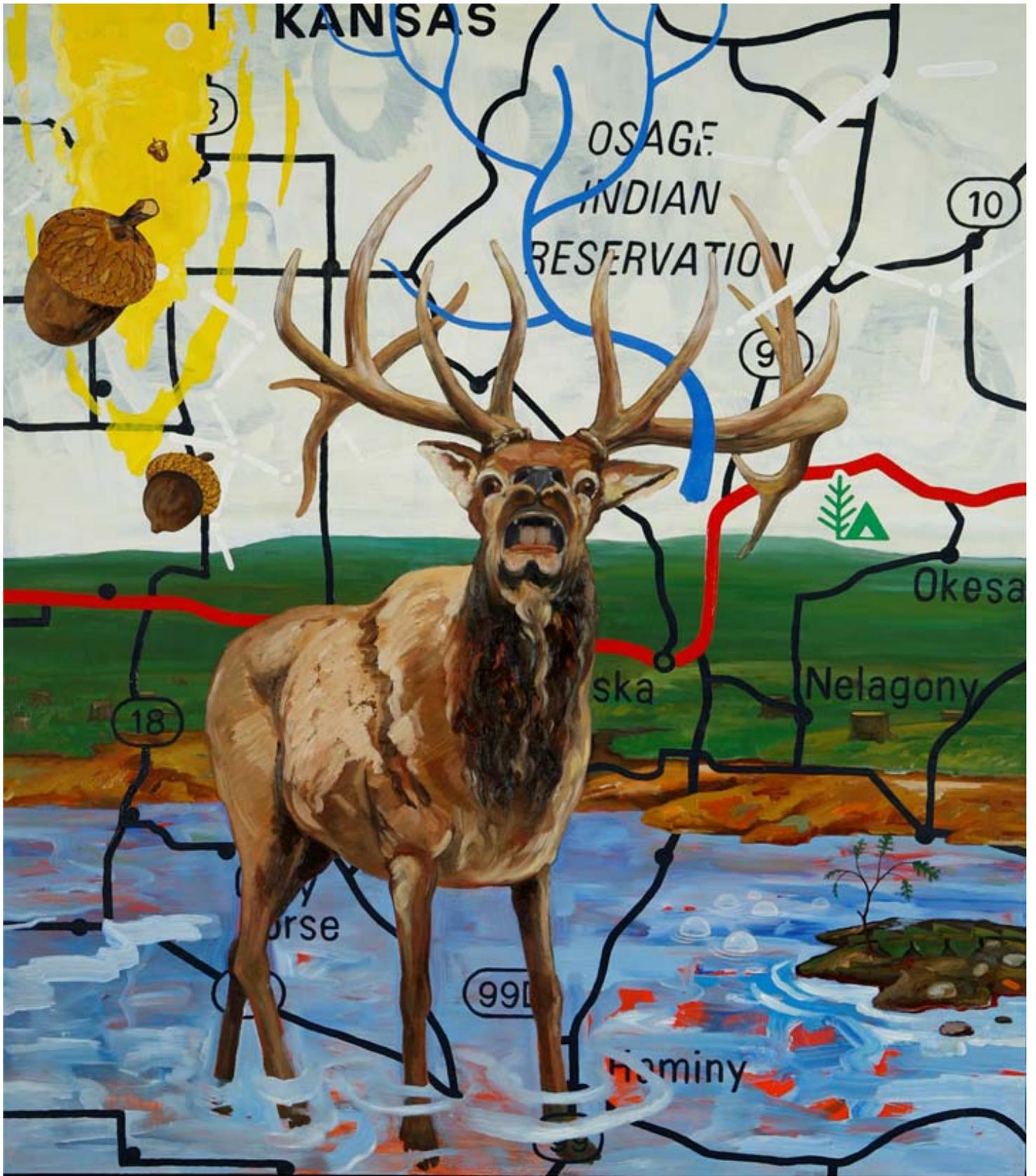
- Describe this work of art.
- How is it different than a dress you might see today?
- What is it made of?
- Why did the artist use maps to create this dress?
- If you had lots of old maps, what would you build?

About the artist:

Susan Stockwell uses craft processes to manipulate and transform everyday, disposable products into extraordinary objects. Discarded materials and papers heavily inscribed with their intended use – maps, dress-making patterns, toilet tissue, and books – act as “ready-made signifiers” that can be sculpted and combined to delicately reveal their hidden beauty and meaning.

The *Highland Dress* is hand stitched from ordinance survey maps of the Scottish Highlands at the height of the British Empire forming a Victorian-style dress. The process of cutting up and seaming the maps alludes to issues such as territories and colonies, the ownership of land, and its constantly shifting boundaries.

Stockwell’s life-size dresses are beautiful, detailed, and complex, providing a new twist to an art historical theme that connects maps, costume, power, and femininity



Norman Akers, *Okesa*, 2010
Oil on panel
48" x 42"

Layers of Meaning

The artist Norman Akers chose to blend two kinds of visual art – a map and a landscape painting. He included map symbols and symbols taken from nature. He used words and bright colors. All those elements add layers of meaning to his painting.

Look carefully. Name everything you see.

What things are part of the landscape painting?

What is the map part?

What is in front?

What is behind?

Each style tells the viewer something different.

What does the landscape tell us about Okesa and life there?

What does the map tell us that the landscape does not?

About the artist:

Norman Akers was born and raised on the Osage reservation in northeastern Oklahoma and at an early age showed a talent for drawing, painting, and modeling clay. A High School counselor took a personal interest in his work and introduced him to a well known local artist Brummett Echohawk. It was this encounter that gave Akers the courage to pursue a painting degree. He traveled to Europe and became a self described “sponge,” spending endless hours at the library, absorbing everything he could – from the masters to contemporary artists.

Akers creates layered paintings that feel a bit unstable. In any given piece you will see both natural and material elements, surrealist realism and flat symbolism, mythic and contemporary worlds, and conflicts between Native and Western world views. He challenges us to choose a single reality to dwell in. In *Okesa*, “The Elk and road map are ‘primary symbols’ that represent a sense of place,” says Akers. “Both symbols assist us in defining that place where we belong.” He adds, “For many Native Americans, the experience of modern life creates a kaleidoscope of differing realities...where the boundaries of self and culture can be clearly defined or not so clear; where the past and present, tribal and western cultures coexist. My art mediates this experience for me: an experience that many Native people deal with.”



Karey Ellen Kessler, *Other Country*, 2009
Gouache on rice paper
8"x 8"

Real or Imaginary

Most people think maps are useful guides for travel, but many of the maps in this exhibit could not be used that way. Instead, they are maps of personal journeys of the imagination.

Look closely at Karey Kessler's *Other Country*.

- **Describe the colors that you see. What could they represent?**
- **Look for the lines, dots, and symbols. What could they represent?**
- **What words do you notice?**
- **Compare this to other maps you have seen. What is similar or different?**
- **Can you think of a story to go with this map?**

About the artist:

Karey Ellen Kessler makes small and intimate drawings using ink on handmade paper or gouache on rice paper. She thinks of the drawings as both maps and poems. Two streams of inspiration feed off one another – a mark inspires associations with literary, philosophical, even current news, and words in turn suggest a set of marks.

The artist explains, "I am interested in how adding words to random marks in my work can change what the marks represent. A cluster of dots can be birds, angels, or sand depending on the label put next to them. Empty spaces can be things barely glimpsed, the realm of angels, or nothing but silence."

Kessler's maps weave together both the mundane and the mystical. They contain both celestial and terrestrial locations, as well as places in her mind such as time, the infinite, truth, and nostalgia. The grid of the map allows her to link memories and thoughts to suggestions of a landscape or a physical place. Kessler says, "One of the questions I am always trying to answer with my maps is: what does it mean to say 'You are here'? For me, my experience of HERE is both an external experience of the physical environment and at the same time, an internal experience of the emotions, memories, and thoughts that a place, space, or time evokes."

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Pre-visit activity: WORD STORM!

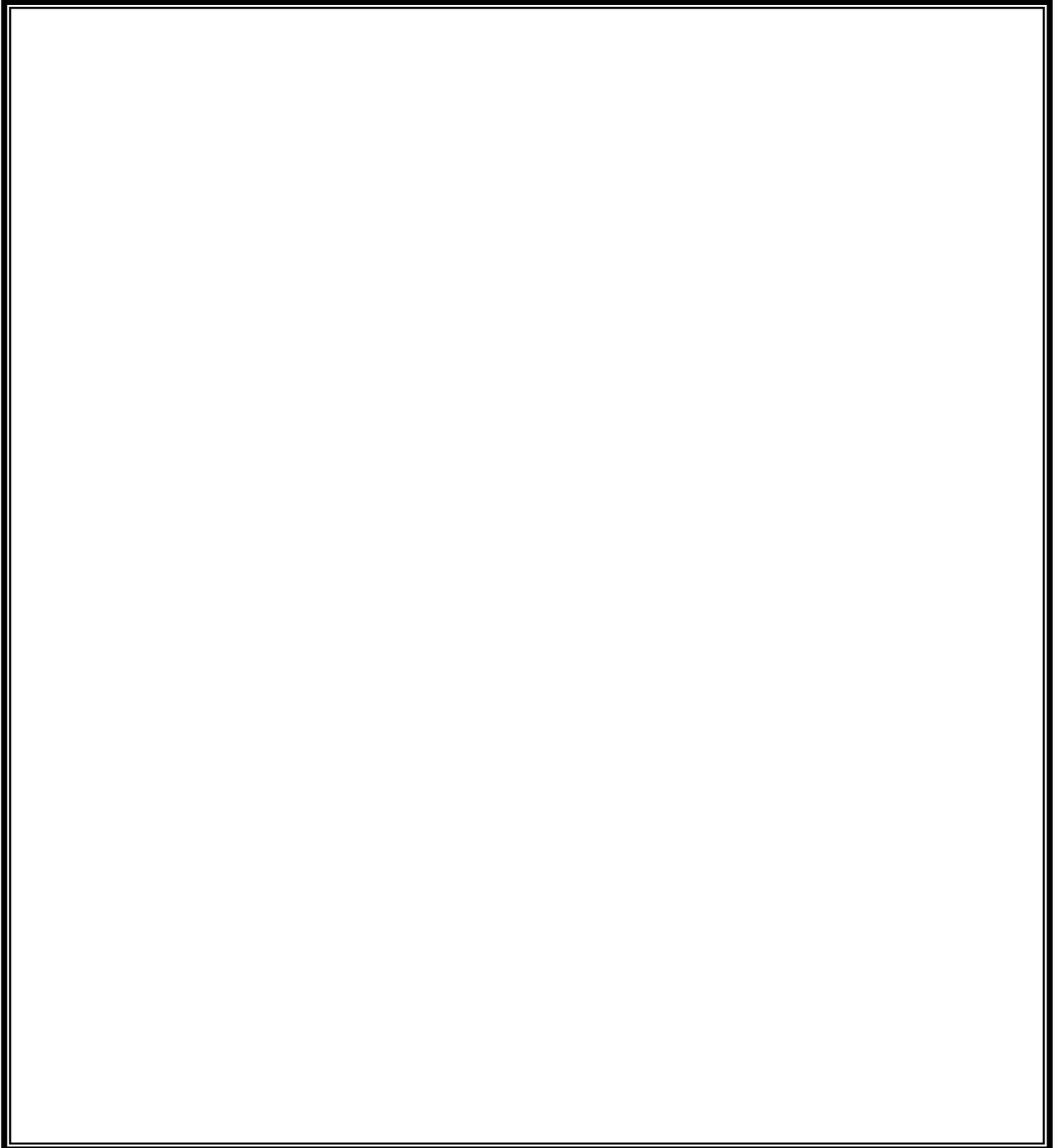
An individual or group project

Close your eyes. Think of a **MAP**. What words come to your mind?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

When you come to the Museum,
find out which words match the art that you see.

In the space below, draw a picture of what you think of when you hear the word **MAP**.



Pre-Visit Activity: A Sense of Place

Many artists in our exhibition capture the essence of a place through words and images.

What specific places do the words below make you think of? Write the name of the place in one box and a small drawing of that place, or a detail from that place in the next box.

Mysterious		
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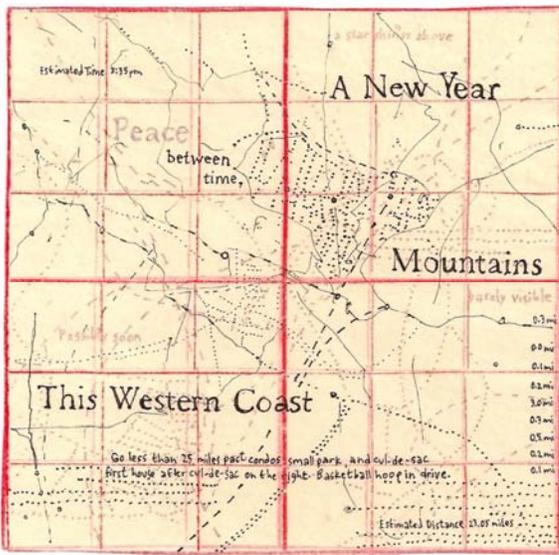
<i>beautiful</i>		
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DIRTY		
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<i>fun</i>		
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<i>quiet</i>		
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Smells good		
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Is it real or imaginary? Artists often use real mapping techniques to create a work of art from their imaginations.

This map seems real at first but in fact it is imaginary. Notice that the artist put time and ideas in her map as well as geography. This map tells us a little bit about what is on her mind.

CREATE A PERSONAL MAP

- Choose four words from the back of this sheet and create an area (or shape) for each place on the map below.
- Put yourself in the map. Use a symbol for yourself (a bird, a star, the sun...)
- Add symbols for other people and objects that are important to you.
- Use lines, dots, dashes, and arrows to connect yourself to the things and places in your map.

Symbol Key: _____
me _____ an important person _____ a favorite object _____ my favorite _____

Nametag Activity Sheet

MAPPING: MEMORY AND MOTION IN CONTEMPORARY ART

On your visit to the Katonah Museum of Art you will see amazing works of art that feature maps in various ways. Use the outline below to create a map-inspired nametag to wear on your visit. Please make sure your name is clearly written.

