

L (A) T T I T U D E S

35° 10' W 31° 71' N

February 21–June 2, 2008

Ann Loeb Bronfman Gallery at the Washington DCJCC

CURATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Mapping is inherently political. I would not have made this claim six months ago. Now, after curating this exhibition, I am beginning to feel like a seasoned cartographer, or at least a curator with cartographic experience under her belt. This exhibition has provided me with a new lens with which to look through— a lens which allows me to closely examine every minute symbol, every dotted line, every change of font, and especially every border in flux. This lens shows me that maps are actually not to scale; each slight change on a map represents a massive impact in reality.

Mapping in contemporary art is rooted in history. Although this sounds like an oxymoron, our current exhibition **L (A) T T I T U D E S** is reminiscent of how maps of long ago were created. Mapping the “Holy Land” has been perfected over the centuries with precise scientific methods, but the very first maps of the region were created by true artists. The artists were expressing their emotions and attachments to the land, colorfully representing their fears of sea-monsters in the Mediterranean, and vividly depicting the divisions of land based on the twelve tribes of Israel. Maps of this type were often based on memory and personal experience— historic maps of this *terra sancta* were not necessarily reflections of reality but perceptions of an individual's reality, or realities.

One of the artists represented in **L (A) T T I T U D E S** is a wonderful example of such a perception. Artist **Joyce Kozloff** reexamines historic maps and breathes new life into them. Kozloff's pieces measure only eight inches by ten inches, but are masterfully completed using the fresco technique on wood panels. The two pieces force us to remember this region not individually, but in our collective memory. While looking at the works, I find myself constantly trying to locate my own perspective which is simply *not* there. I try tilting my head one way, or attempt to pin-point where Jerusalem would be— these are all useless attempts to ground myself in the *map*.

Many people, when they look at historic maps, laugh and think that modern scientific methods have made us so much smarter and more aware of our surroundings. “Now we know what the region *really* looks like!” However, maps are only a perception of reality— and that particular reality depicted on that historic map did in fact exist at one time. I ask you, is a map “wrong” if it merely conflicts with my own perception of reality?

What if we make a map that doesn't even attempt to reflect reality, but imagination? Artists **Anna Fine Foer** and **Simonetta Moro** have taken this leap in their mapping works. We seldom look at a map of any given country in isolation, but rather in the context of its neighbors in a specific time and place. Foer elevates the Land of Israel and shows us the implications this has on the surrounding land. Moro has rooted her mapping installation in a similar history, but this is only part of the work's trajectory into the future. In this three-part installation, Moro encourages us to think about the past, present and future of mapping the region by asking, how maps can make real an imagined place.

Doug Beube, **Mel Watkin**, and **Nikolas Schiller** have taken existing maps and manipulated them to create new and distinct boundaries. It is with the help of these three artists in **L (A) T T I T U D E S** that we begin to ground ourselves in the maps we are accustomed to. I can read the names of cities I have been to, I can make out bodies of water I swam in, and I can see roads on which I have driven. However, in Beube's work, I am still not familiar with my surroundings. With neighbors who can be “zipped” on or off, and holes in layered maps that reveal the possibilities of new neighbors. Watkin's work hints at the corporal essence of mapping work. Although it is a familiar map, on second glance it is reminiscent of the curious maps of history. As the Red Sea overflows and takes over the region, it also acts as a heart, pumping life-giving blood through its vein-like borders. The skeleton of Schiller's work is a CIA source map, which is assumed to be among the elite of maps, and creates a much more tangible tapestry with which to show us a better, more beautiful, picture of the region.

- 50 Road 348 towards Tene 'Omarim settlement, passed its junction with road 60 (Israel / West Bank – South)
- 51 Jordan river, North of the Sea of Galilee (Golan – North)
- 52 Dead hyena, road 918 (Golan – North)
- 53 Belal in his vegetable garden, Battir (Israel / West Bank – Centre)
- 54 Har Homa, with Bethlehem in the background (Israel / West Bank – Centre)
- 55 Salam, the shepherd from Qatane (Israel / West Bank – Centre)
- 56 Between Qatane and what is now Har Adar, a 200 meter large “hole” was created in the Green Line when joining the two maps of different scales used to draw the armistice line; a mistake corrected by the Fence (Israel / West Bank – Centre)
- 57 Judean desert (Israel / West Bank – South East)
- 58 Mont Gilboa (Israel / West Bank – North)
- 59 Building the Wall, near Rantis (Israel / West Bank – North West)
- 60 Wadi Fukin, with Beitar Ilit in the background (Israel / West Bank – Center)
- 61 Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem central (Israel / West Bank – Centre)
- 62 Abandoned Syrian military base, junction of roads 888–91 (Golan – North)
- 63 Boy in Beit Awa, before he ran away with one of the green balls, laughing... (Israel / West Bank – South West)
- 64 Abandoned military base north of the Dead Sea (West Bank – Centre East)
- 65 Field near the junction of roads 977–918 (Golan – North)
- 66 Under highway 6, opposite Qalqilya (Israel / West Bank – North West)
- 67 The Green Line on the Fence, Um El Fahm (Israel / West Bank – North West)

Simonetta Moro, Italian, b. 1970

About the artist:

Simonetta Moro was born in Italy, and began to draw and paint at an early age. Moro received her BFA in Painting at the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Bologna; her MA in European Fine Arts, Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton (UK), followed by her PhD in Visual Arts, University of Central Lancashire, Preston (UK). Moro's research interests revolve around drawing, painting, architecture, mapping, psychogeography, printmaking, art history and art theory, myths, and urban culture. Many of these issues have been developed into courses she teaches as an Assistant Professor in Visual Arts at Eugene Lang College, The New School for Liberal Arts, in New York City. Her recent exhibitions include *Mapping The Self*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2007–2008; *The Gallery* at the Marmara Hotel, New York, 2005, (solo exhibition); *Conflux*, The Participant, Inc., 2004, (course exhibition); and *Outside-In*, Wooster Arts Space, 2003.

About the work:

68 **Transhumances**

Collection of the artist
Mixed media on mylar, pigment, collage
72" x 40" (\$2,000)

Moro's work is often concerned with maps and the representation of cities from high vantage points. In this new set of drawings, specifically created for

L (A) TTITUDES, the artist faced the dilemma of finding a way to convey something about a place of which she had no direct experience, but whose symbolic presence was deeply ingrained in her imagination. In search of an answer, Moro started tracing maps from old atlases of biblical places, illustrating the ancient land of Palestine together with the wanderings of the prophets of the Old Testament and the migrations of the tribes of Israel. She then combined them with maps from recent texts about the birth and development of the State of Israel and its relationship with the Palestinian territories. Finally, she channeled all this information through utopian visions of a promised land and recent design projects expressing an ideal of peaceful cohabitation between conflicting parties. The result is "Transhumances:" three separate drawings and a mural piece that speak of isolation and unity at the same time, while the dense layers of accumulated signs reveal the inextricable destiny of different peoples and lands.

Joyce Kozloff, American, b. 1942

About the artist:

Throughout her career, Kozloff has tried to fuse a love for widespread artistic traditions with an activist temperament. Beginning in 1970, she was energized by participating in the feminist art movement in Los Angeles and New York. Kozloff became a founding member of the Heresies publishing collective and an originating figure of the Pattern and Decoration movement. During the 1980s, she concentrated on grand, ambitious public commissions, many in transportation centers, executed in ceramic tile and/or glass and marble mosaic. She has completed 16 since 1979. By the 1990s, maps had become the foundation for her private work, structures into which she could insert a range of issues, particularly the role of cartography in human knowledge and as an imposition of imperial will.

About the work:

69 **#31. Knowledge: The Holy Land, 1584,**

1998
Private collection
Fresco on wood panel
8" x 10"

70 **#32. Knowledge: The Holy Land, 1584,**

1998
Collection of The Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, NY
Fresco on wood panel
8" x 10"

71 **#33. Knowledge: Arabia, 1492, 1998**

Collection of Max Kozloff
Fresco on wood panel
8" x 10"

Part of Kozloff's "Knowledge" series is exhibited in **L (A) TTITUDES**. The series, which began in the summer of 1998, consists of 8" x 10" frescoes inspired by the inaccuracies found by the artist on early maps. Kozloff began by concentrating on the work of 16th Century European cartographers during what is sometimes called the Age of Discovery. She has also expanded the scope of the series to include the work of Arabic, Chinese and Korean cartographers, as well as maps dating back to 150 CE.

The series roughly breaks down into several geographic areas: the New World, the Holy Land, Asia and Europe. The maps represent the societies, biases, and knowledge of their time. Kozloff painted many of these miniatures and revealed errors that were repeated for centuries. Her work raises questions of the validity of any