

## CREATIVE RESEARCH

The current subject of my creative research draws upon the history of cartographic rendering: mapping a physical landscape in order to investigate constructed systems of belief, sublimity, and the distinct identities of spaces. My work draws heavily from community histories, the landscape, and architectural research in Israel (2004) and India (2008). Traveling has made me interested in the interaction between people and places, as well as how personal experiences, geography, architecture, history, and culture shape our perception.

The process of research began with my interest in landscapes both natural and man-made. I am deeply influenced by the landscape of experiences, observations and literature around me. To explore these ideas, I began to familiarize myself with the history of maps within the broad contexts of art history, social sciences, and cross-disciplinary studies, as well as current trends in specialized areas of study such as the land art movement, environmental studies, Byzantine and Islamic architecture, and experimental or radical cartography projects (writing on the subject can be found in Nato Thompson's recent book [Experimental Geography](#)). Henri Lefebvre's research in his 1974 book [La Production de l'Espace](#) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's book [Phenomenology of Space](#) both discuss the profound influence that the production of space has on our lives. Peter Turchi's [Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer](#), reveals just how subjective our mental processes can be, and thus our mental maps are based upon our perception, ignorance, and sense of place. In researching these subjects, I adopted architectural imagery and map iconography into sketches, aiming to integrate these into maps depicting travel through space and time, memory, and experience. Building upon these sketches, I created large scale mixed media maps using relief printmaking as the first layer for the maps. Besides my interest in content, I hoped to challenge myself by pushing beyond the constraints of the traditional printmaking press bed size, and thus created multiple matrixes to create panelled maps that were non-traditional and larger than the body. The final mixed media prints were as large as eight by twenty-four feet.

Historically, maps have been used as tools to represent space: to make large things smaller or abstract things more concrete, as well as to consult for travel. They document not only literal representations of land—the distinct identities of spaces, imperialistic expressions of power, and scientific understanding, but also abstract organizational systems—historical development models, states of mind, and world views. While diverse in form,

most people are able to understand how to read a map. This existing knowledge base is to my advantage as cartographer, as maps already have a prescribed reading. Further research and analysis led me to consider that maps may be, in a sense, the largest portraits of communities that we have. If true, this realization then meant that maps could also have the potential to be communal in nature, speaking individually and globally simultaneously.

### HAIR MAPS

The hope of this on-going project is to create more than just maps; the works become memorials to experiences and places. The first *Hair Maps* in the series were designed to document the Albuquerque and Jerusalem horizons based upon memories regarding their sense of place.

While researching for the *Hair Maps* project, I explored the history of hair wreaths created during the nineteenth century. They became a popular form of decorative work by which to honor and remember the deceased. In this project, hair was used to create relics. For me, drawing with hair is an attempt to memorialize experiences in the places depicted and to convey the humanity, fragility and sentiment that sites can hold.

### EXCAVATIONS

I'm currently working on a new series titled *Excavations*. The first project involves documenting, through photographs, sketches and notes, the site of an abandoned house. From these findings, I am archiving objects found within the house by drawing them onto an aerial map of the house's floor plan. One concept I am exploring through this project is the momentariness of time and memory that is suggested by the forgotten and ruined nature of the house. Due to the gradual destruction of the house over time, the space has a history which unfolds from past to present, and on to its precarious survival in the future. In this way, I feel the project aims to better understand how the production and destruction of spaces affects people collectively.

It is to this rich history of mapping that I contribute my most recently completed body of maps and current projects. Familiar imagery and architectural references encourage viewers to imaginatively inhabit the landscape. These maps re-evaluate the archaic notion of sublimity, and explore map-making beyond the physical world and into a more epic landscape of history, space, imagination and scripture.