

31 AUGUST TO 7 OCTOBER

Place Markers: Mapping Locations and Probing Boundaries

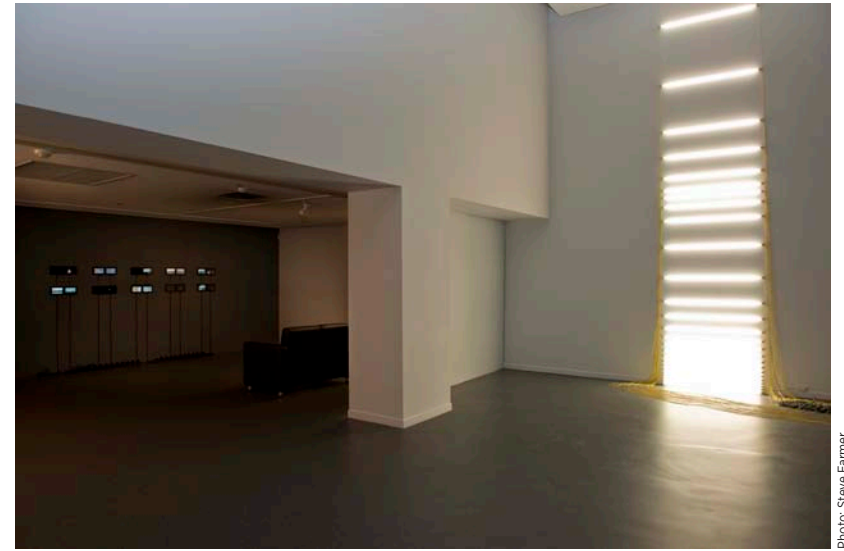
Curated by Peter Dykhuis

Many critical theorists have investigated how artists make or define places of cultural significance through the production of fine art objects that inhabit, or images that frame, the landscape. *Place Markers* brings together works in which the artists use the landscape—or locations—to frame the art, by marking precise PLACES and geographic coordinates on the earth through photographic means or with multimedia tools such as Global Positioning Satellites (GPS), Google Earth and other digital mapping systems. In pinpointing specific locations or mapping travels through territory with video documentation, these artists document and probe multiple boundaries inherent in each site to generate new and expanded visual representations of physical, social and geo-political space.

In his photo-based installation, Ron Benner (London, Ontario) records the temporal life and death of a rural barn that was a highlight—a place marker of sorts—while on childhood drives in the countryside with his father. James Geurts (Melbourne, Australia), has created two new works in Halifax in the weeks

leading up to the exhibition: durational contour drawings at specific sites on both sides of Halifax Harbour as the tide drew in and then drew out, and a fluorescent light sculpture that quotes tide markers while also alluding to the pulsing energy of tidal forces. Through photographs of specific locations in the Ontario landscape, Jeff Thomas (Ottawa, Ontario) traces his ancestral aboriginal roots in relationship to the monuments of 19th and 20th century colonial forces that superimposed their own political place markers otop of sacred or contested lands. Using GPS, Evamaria Trischak (Vienna, Austria) and 225 collaborators continue to build a photographic inventory of her 'urban' territory from the precise point of view of the major longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates that intersect Vienna. Also featuring GPS locations in her work, Andrea Wollensak (New London, Connecticut) presents stories by residents of Iceland—through photography and text, audio and video—about sites special to them in their landscapes.

In one of two collaborative video-based projects in this exhibition, Gwen



installation view of Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico's *Rejoinders* (left) and James Geurts's *Drawing: Tidal Continuum #10* (right)

Photo: Steve Farmer

MacGregor and Sandra Rechico (Toronto, Ontario) have created ten pairs of 'call and response' video works that span the globe in a focused challenge of marking and representing both familiar places and those that are newly encountered. In contrast, Ellen Moffat (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) and Kim Morgan (Halifax, Nova Scotia) used Android cell phone video cameras to track their simultaneous exploration of Parisian urban spaces but each from a slightly different perspective and their own point of view.

It is fitting that *Place Markers* was initiated by Peter Dykhuis after meeting James Geurts and Evamaria Trischak in 2008 at a conference in Vienna, Austria (titled *Art and Cartography – Cartography and Art*), and is the culmination of multiple conversations with many artists over the years, including participants of a panel session at the 2009 annual conference of the College Art Association in Los Angeles. In the rapidly evolving

landscape of geo-telemetry, the Gallery will revisit this field of art practice in 2014 in a related exhibition co-curated with Halifax based artist, curator and educator Robert Bean; it will present locative work by artists whose projects (will) exist solely in the digital realm.



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installation view of Ron Benner's *WH...? Where will you be in Eternity?* Photo: Steve Farmer

Ron Benner (London, Ontario)

WH...? Where will you be in Eternity? 2010

photographic installation with aluminum letter fragments, open-pollinated corn from Mexico, Peru and Canada, commercial hybrid corn seed, plastic Pioneer Seed bag

ARTIST'S NOTES

I photographed the barn adorned with the text "Where will you be in eternity?" in 1995 on a farm located on Highway Number 4 south of my home-town of London, Ontario. Throughout my childhood, while on drives to Port Stanley on Lake Erie with my father, this barn in the agricultural landscape was a highlight of the trips and a place marker of sorts.

The two images of the collapsed barn were taken in 1997 after it was blown down in a storm. At that time, I ventured onto the property and collected the aluminum letters and fragments. Rather than leaving them to disappear into the overgrown farm site, the salvaged fragments making up the letters of the questioning text are now incorporated into my photographic installation. There were other signs of a religious

nature on Highway Number 4 – for example, "Beware Your Sins Will Find You Out." The text on the barn in the photographs, however, attracted me because of its philosophical nature rather than its religious intent—and the fact that it was a question. The ancient Egyptians were the first culture to question whether the soul was immortal—the current concept of immortality now has expanded to include scientific affiliations with the Human Genome Project and genetic engineering and modification. Indeed, a person whose genes have been isolated and patented is considered to have been "immortalized".

The first plant to be patented was a 'hybrid' rose in the United States. This required the passing of the Townsend-Purcell Plant Patent Act of May 23, 1930 in the US Congress. At that point

in time legislators stated that no food crops would ever be patented. Within a decade, however, the former Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace, had patented the first F1 Hybrid corn plant and founded Pioneer Hybrid Seed Company.

My images of the barn and its text fragments are juxtaposed with varieties of open-pollinated heritage corn—which are being transformed into patented commodities by the Pioneer Hybrid Seed Company, represented in the installation by a plastic Pioneer Seed bag. My project also questions religious and ideological terms—such as 'hybrid' and 'immortalized'—that are used by scientists and, similarly, by post-modernist thinkers. The appropriation of these words to legitimate their respective ideologies is now an unfortunate cultural reality.



details of Ron Benner's *WH...? Where will you be in Eternity?* Photos: Wes Johnston

James Geurts (Melbourne, Australia)

Drawing in 2012

site/time-specific durational drawing
Halifax, Halifax Harbour: 11 August 2012,
(Low Tide) 12:50, 1.76m - (High Tide)
20:00, 0.31m

Drawing out 2012

site/time-specific durational drawing
Dartmouth, Halifax Harbour: 23 August
2012, (High Tide) 12:26, 1.62m -
(Low Tide) 07:05, 0.33m

Drawing: Fathoming 2012

sculptural installation, measured on tidal
flux of Halifax Harbour
yellow monochrome acrylic sheet panels

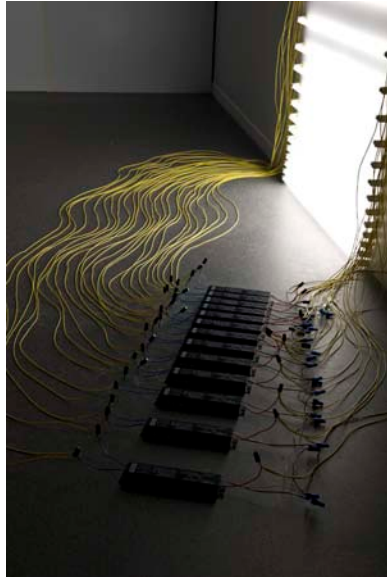
Drawing: Tidal Continuum #10 2012

site-specific, light installation with
fluorescent tubes, yellow wire,
electronic ballasts

ARTIST'S NOTES

"To create a means of measurement does more than provide means for gauging a phenomenon, it institutes a way of seeing and relating to the world." - Dr. Julie Louise Bacon

Drawing: Tidal Continuum explores the relationship between tidal forces, changing light conditions and subtle states of perception. The light installation in the gallery creates alignments between the dynamics of tidal expansion and contraction in the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia. The Bay's tidal range is the highest on the earth, marking a peak in the pulsation of water around the earth's surface. The works on paper mark the duration of the tide drawing in, and the tide drawing out of Halifax Harbour, made at sites on each side of the Harbour.



top, left to right: installation view and detail of James Geurts's *Drawing: Tidal Continuum #10*. Photos: Steve Farmer
 bottom: installation view of James Geurts's *Drawing in and Drawing out* (left) and *Drawing Fathoming* (right). Photo: James Geurts

Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico (Toronto, Ontario)

Rejoinders 2012

multimedia installation with 10 pairs of PlayBooks

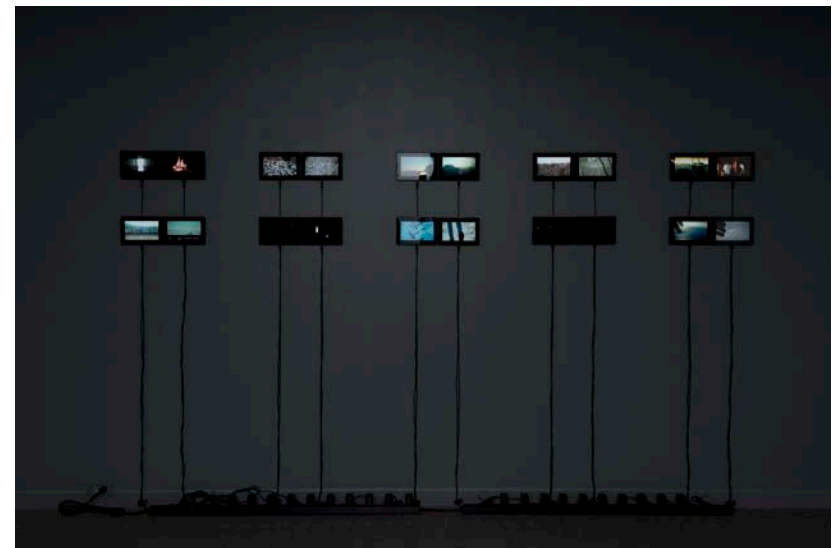
Top row, left to right

- Portbou, Spain, and Annan, Ontario
- Cherai Beach, India, and Annan, Ontario
- Highway 401, Ontario, and Salem, India
- Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, Wales, and Toronto, Ontario
- Ottawa, Ontario, and Fort Kochi, India

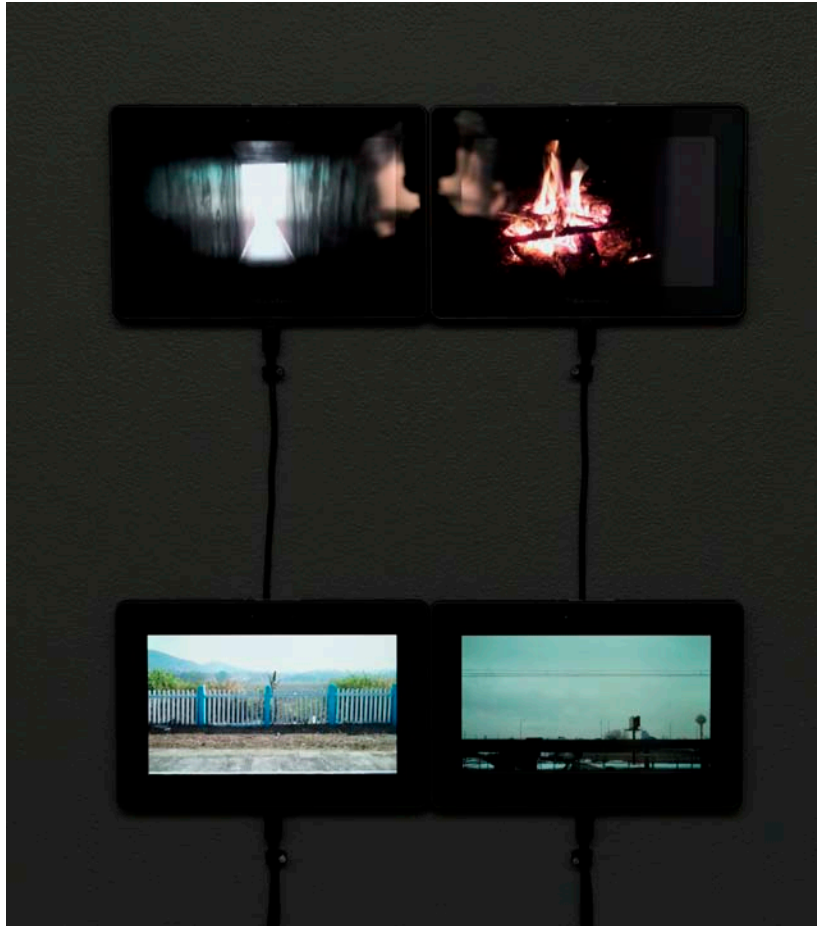
Bottom row, left to right

- Canacoma, India, and New Jersey Transit, USA
- New York City and Udaipur, India
- Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, Wales, and Ottawa, Ontario
- Toronto, Ontario, and Varanasi, India
- Over lake Ontario, Ontario, and Carretera de Barcelona, Spain

Thank you to Annie Onyi Cheung, Lewis Nicholson, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, Dr. Joshua Leon and the Faculty of Engineering at Dalhousie University for the generous loan of 16 PlayBooks for the duration of this exhibition.



installation view of Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico's *Rejoinders*. Photo: Steve Farmer



detail view of Gwen MacGregor and Sandra Rechico's *Rejoinders*. Photo: Steve Farmer

ARTIST'S NOTES

In 2010 and 2011, MacGregor spent a substantial amount of time in Wales and India while Rechico remained in Ontario punctuated only by a trip to New York City. The artists decided to use their distance apart as subject matter for a project and developed a collaborative call and response format to create a new multimedia work. They agreed to each independently kick-start the process by video recording a segment that was particular to their location and experience of site. This primary footage was then sent to the other seeking a response.

No further comment or direction was included in the process so that each artist could respond however they saw fit. While primary visual connections developed between the two halves of each pair, an accumulative relationship is also evident when including all of the pairings together on a presentation wall.

This work, therefore, creates a wall of moving images that investigate the challenges of marking and representing familiar places with those that are newly encountered.

Ellen Moffat (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) and **Kim Morgan** (Halifax, Nova Scotia)
in pulse 2012
 audio and video installation

The artists would like to acknowledge the technical support of the following people: Dr. Ahn Dinh, Dept of Electrical and Computer Engineering, U of Saskatchewan; Dr. Craig Gelowitz, Dept of Software Systems Engineering, U of Regina; Jared Cechanowicz, Saskatoon; Lukas Pearse, Halifax; Lukas Steinman, Halifax.

This research project is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canada Council for the Arts.



top: installation view of Ellen Moffat and Kim Morgan's *in pulse*. Photos: Wes Johnston
 bottom: installation view of Ellen Moffat and Kim Morgan's *in pulse* and Jeff Thomas's *Cold City Frieze (Mapping Iroquoia)*. Photo: Steve Farmer

ARTIST'S NOTES

in pulse is a research-driven project as an inquiry into questions around the relationship of affective spaces and the body in urban space using locative mobile technologies. The first stage of our research was the development of prototypes for the data capture and transmission coordinated to GPS for the video data. Our first site is Paris in the following locations:

- Arcades / The Passages
- Bastille Market
- Galerie Lafayette
- La Défense
- La Gare du Nord
- Le Forum Des Halles – Commercial Centre

We approached these locations and situations as arteries of the city to explore, respond to and to collect data using the dérivian structure of the Situationists Internationale to incorporate chance encounters and play. Our interest was in places, events, or interactions that

affect the experience of space taking into account the different ways individuals—ourselves and other people—react to and experience people, places and things. Our devices were android smart phones to capture video footage and data controllers with sensors for heartbeat/pulse.

As artist-researchers and collaborators, we are based in different regions of Canada, where we are developing distinct technological devices. In Saskatoon, Ellen Moffat constructed controller-driven low-level operation systems with physical sensors; in Halifax, Kim Morgan developed apps for an android smart phone. The next stage of the project entails integrating the controller and android as a hybrid unit as well as capturing data of footsteps and breath.

The context of our work is part of a three-year SSHRC Research-Creation Grant in Fine Arts *Tracing the City: Interventions of Art in Public Space*. (no. 848-2010-0019).

Jeff Thomas (Ottawa, Ontario)
Cold City Frieze (Mapping Iroquoia) 2010
giclée print

Home/land & Security 2012
giclée print

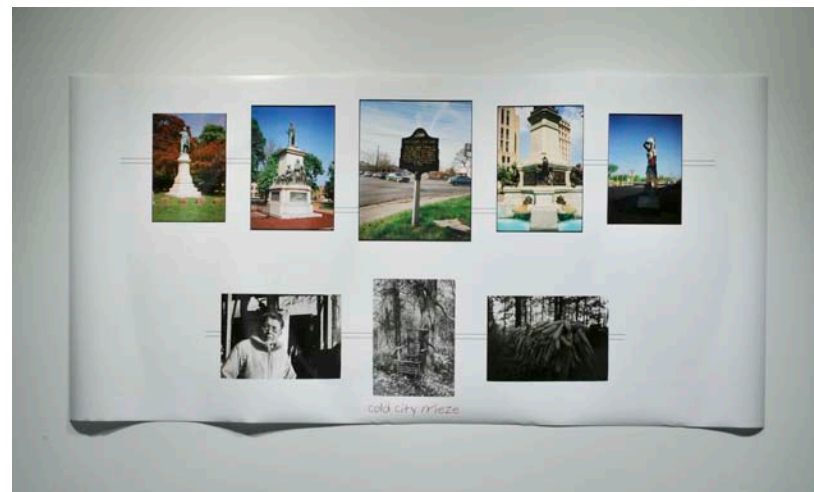
ARTIST'S NOTES Mapping Iroquoia

As a teenager, an Indian once asked where I was from. I replied, "Buffalo," but the look on his face told me that it was the wrong answer—he expected to hear what reserve I came from. I was not from Six Nations, my parents and grandparents were. I was born and raised in Buffalo,

New York. Although I am an enrolled member of the Six Nations reserve, my family had moved to the city to find work. I went to the reserve only on weekends and summer vacations.

What kind of Iroquois did that make me? This question was coupled with the larger question of how to define Indianness and how to separate that from how it has been framed by stereotypes and academics.

When I began working in the visual arts in 1979 I decided to use the camera as a means to make my invisible self, visible.



Jeff Thomas, *Cold City Frieze (Mapping Iroquoia)*. Photos: Wes Johnston

My two works in this exhibit—*Cold City Frieze* and *Home/land & Security*—represent the in-roads I have made in attempting to define and map my Iroquoia.

My mapping of Iroquoia is based on a story that my elder and great-aunt, Emily General, told me about the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy and its architect, a man called the Peacemaker. His vision of peace and unity brought an end to the blood feuds among the Iroquois tribes living in present-day New York State.

The Peacemaker's vision is commemorated on a wampum belt known as the Hiawatha wampum belt. The belt is made of a background of purple wampum beads and symbols depicted with white wampum beads. At the centre of the belt is a stylized tree, the Great White Pine, representing the Confederacy. It also stands for the Onondaga—one of the five Iroquois nations that accepted the Peacemaker's plan. On either side of the tree are two squares, representing the other four

nations—the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, and Mohawk. The five symbols are linked to one another by a white line that that stops short of the end of the belt and, in my mind, represents a map of the journey Peacemaker took—which has not yet ended.

The Hiawatha wampum belt is the prototype for *Cold City Frieze* and *Home/land & Security*. As a prototype, I have superimposed my photographs on the symbols of the original belt. I have chosen to focus on the belt as a roadmap with the ends of the white lines acting as my points of departure.

Cold City Frieze

The title *Cold City Frieze* is based on a combination of three elements. The first is the word "cold," which refers not to Buffalo's cold and snowy climate but to Onondaga wampum keeper Caption Cold. Cold moved to the Buffalo Creek Reservation in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War and was given a special tract of land based on his status as wampum keeper of the Confederacy.

The second word—“city”—refers to my personal challenge to redefine “city Indian” to “urban Iroquois.” The last element—the word “frieze”—points to the way that the wampum belt, like a Greek architectural frieze, uses a linear sequence of symbols and images to tell a story about important historical events.

Top row, left to right:

1. Buffalo, New York, 1997, Chief Red Jacket monument, Forest Lawn Cemetery. Longitude N42 55.389 & Latitude W78 51.978

I learned about chief Red Jacket during a school trip to the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society. On the gift shop wall was a black and white photograph showing a monument commemorating Red Jacket in the Forest Lawn Cemetery. After school, I decided to ride my bike to the cemetery and see the monument for myself. I arrived at the large, iron gate and after some thought, I was reluctant to go in because I was afraid I would get lost, so I returned home.

I returned to Buffalo in 1997 and was determined to complete my childhood journey to see the Chief Red Jacket monument for myself. I made my photographs and reflected on my childhood attempt to uncover Iroquois history of and what it meant that the city of Buffalo was built on land that had once been known as the Buffalo Creek Reservation.

2. Brantford, Ontario, 1997, Mohawk leader Joseph Brant monument. Longitude N45 25.458 & Latitude W75 41.695

Mohawk leader Joseph Brant and Seneca chief Red Jacket were contemporaries, Brant supported the British during the American Revolutionary War and Red Jacket and the Seneca chose to remain neutral. But the real battle for these two

men was at the end of the war when Brant wanted the Confederacy to relocate to the Grand River in Canada and Red Jacket wanted to remain in their ancestral homeland in New York State.

In the end Brant departed for the Grand River with roughly half the confederacy population and Red Jacket remained with the other half. This fissure had a direct effect on my life—my ancestors left for Canada just as the Buffalo Creek Reservation was being established in the 1790s and by the time my grandparents returned to Buffalo in the mid-1930s, the Buffalo Creek Reservation had long been replaced by the city of Buffalo.

3. Buffalo, New York, 1997, Onondaga Chief Big Sky plaque. Longitude N42 49.786 & Latitude W78 46.405

During a return trip to Buffalo in 1997, I wanted to find the boundaries of the former Buffalo Creek Reservation. I was intrigued by the notion of being able to say that I was born at the Buffalo Creek Reservation instead of saying I was born in the city of Buffalo. My search began at the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, where I found a book describing the reservation boundaries by current street names. The information would lead me to several sites, including a historical marker for Onondaga chief Big Sky and his village. I am Onondaga so I wondered if my ancestors had lived here as well.

4. Montreal, Quebec, 1998, IROQUOIS, Place d'Armes monument. Longitude N45 30.291 & Latitude W73 33.460

This monument sits at the birthplace of present-day Montreal, where Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve—considered the founder of Montreal—fought and defended his settlement against hundreds of Iroquois warriors in 1643. Several bas-relief panels are spaced

around the monument's foundation. One particularly violent panel depicts Maisonneuve shooting an Iroquois chief in the neck with his pistol.

During the summer, the square is filled with tourists from around the world and I wonder what they think about Indians after looking at these panels and the sculpture of the lurking Iroquois warrior protruding into their space. Ironically, not far from Place d'Armes is the Mercier Bridge that ends at the edge of the Kahnawake reserve, the bridge that was blockaded by Mohawk people during the 1990 Oka Crisis.

5. Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, near Belleville Ontario, 1997, giant cigar store Indian. Longitude N44 11.582 & Latitude W77 05.472

I had passed the 401 highway exit to Tyendinaga many times since moving to Ottawa, but never thought about stopping until my mother revealed that my paternal grandfather was from Tyendinaga. She also said that she did not know him and he had passed away many years before. I decided to stop there on my next trip and see what it looked like. While driving through the reserve I photographed one of the largest cigar store Indians I had ever seen.

Bottom row, left to right:

6. Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, 1985, Emily General, photographed at the “old homestead.” Longitude N43 02.048 & Latitude W80 05.281

Emily General is my great-aunt and sister to my step-grandfather Bert General. Emily was instrumental in helping me define my sense of place as an Iroquoian. When I entered university in 1975 she gave me her copy of the handwritten story of the Peacemaker and his journey to bring peace to the warring Iroquois tribes in present-day New York State. Emily told me I could not use a copy

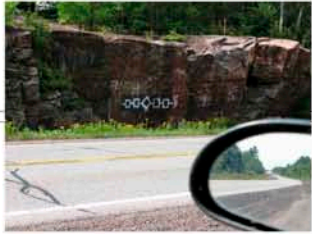
machine and had to make my own handwritten copy of the 1900 document. I did and have my copy to this day. It has been instrumental in the development of my work as a visual artist and curator.

7. Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, 1980, old chair outside Emily General's kitchen door. Longitude N43 02.048 & Latitude W80 05.281

While I last saw Emily in 1985, she continues to have an influence on my life. As a teenager we had talks about being Iroquois and what my life was like living in the city. Emily had never lived in a city, so when I began making photographs in Buffalo I imagined going back to the reserve and sitting at the kitchen table and showing Emily what the place I called “home” looked like.

8. Six Nations Reserve, Ontario, 1983, drying white corn braided by Bert General. Longitude N43 01.705 & Latitude W80 04.876

In the end I realized that Bert and Emily had provided me with enough information to begin my own journey of discovery to define urban Iroquois. The wampum belt commemorating the Peacemaker's journey through ancient Iroquoia would become the prototype for this journey.



Jeff Thomas, *Home/Land & Security*

Home/Land & Security

Left to right:

1. Highway 17, north of Arnprior, Ontario, 2006, Hiawatha Wampum Belt graffiti.
Longitude N45 26.811 & Latitude W 76 33.324

Not long after passing the exit for Arnprior on my way to North Bay, I caught a glimpse of what looked like a graffiti version of the Hiawatha wampum belt. The original Hiawatha Wampum Belt commemorates the creation of League of the Haudenosaunee—known also as the Six Nations or Iroquois Confederacy. The belt also represents the guiding principles of the Haudenosaunee as described by the Peacemaker, who brought a message of peace and unity to the warring Iroquois tribes.

It was a busy and rainy morning so I could not pull over to check, but on my way back to Ottawa I did pull over and saw that nestled in the shadow of the rock-cut was a painted version of the Hiawatha wampum belt. As I sat on the

shoulder of the road and looked at it through the car door window, I wondered why it had been placed there.

2. Highway 17, north of Arnprior, Ontario, 2006, Hiawatha Wampum Belt graffiti detail.
Longitude N45 26.811 & Latitude W 76 33.324

I returned to the rock-cut wampum site several times over the following two years in order to get a good photograph of it, but it turned out to be just as difficult as trying to find out why it was placed there—both the image and the reason for it being there were locked in shadows. A break came while reading the newspaper; an article in the travel section mentioned that there was a stand of rare old-growth white pine trees in Arnprior.

3. Arnprior, Ontario, Arnprior cemetery, 2007, white pine trees.
Longitude N45 26.456 & Latitude W76 21.047

At the centre of the belt is a stylized tree, the Great White Pine—the symbol of the Confederacy—also known as the Tree of Peace, where weapons of war were to be

buried. The tree also represents one of the Six Nations—the Onondaga Nation—where the central council fire resides and all decisions regarding the confederacy are decided.

With this new information I made another trip to Arnprior to search for the white pines. While driving past the cemetery I noticed white pine trees inside the gate. One majestic tree stood out from the rest. It was clear to me why the Peacemaker chose the white pine as a symbol of the confederacy.

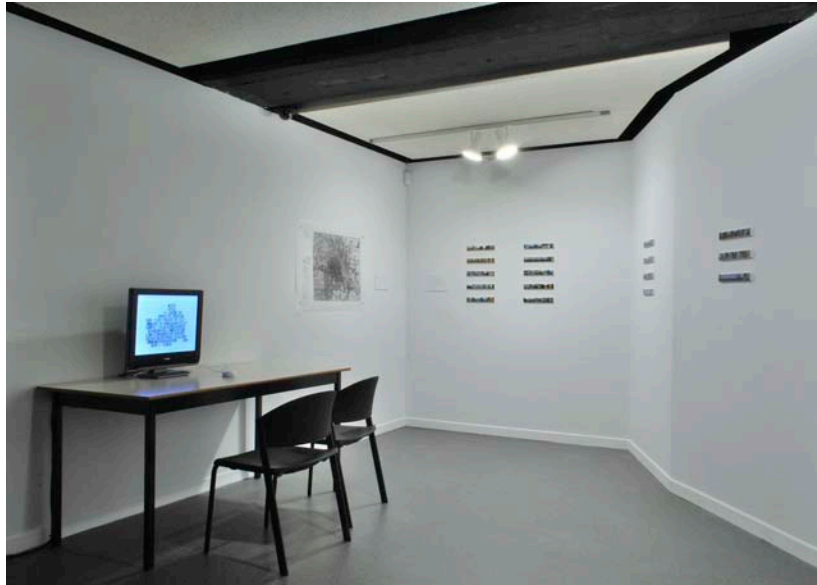
4. Caledonia, Ontario, Welcome to Caledonia, 2010.
Longitude N43 04.530 & Latitude W79 57.675

My white pine discovery coincided with an offer from Render Gallery (University of Waterloo) to curate an exhibition based on the volatile land issues taking place in the town of Caledonia, which is adjacent to the Six Nations Reserve. The issue revolves around a 40-acre plot of land that is part of the 385,000-hectare plot originally known

as the Haldimand Tract, which was granted to the Six Nations in 1784. A residential housing development planned and begun on the plot is based on the developer's argument that the Six Nations surrendered their rights to the plot in 1841. The Six Nations maintained that they never relinquished their title. The federal government's inability or lack of will to resolve the issue eventually escalated into a bitter conflict between the people of Six Nations at the blockade and white residents in Caledonia.

5. Caledonia, Ontario, drive-by view of the contested Douglas Creek Estates, 2008, Argyle Street S.
Longitude N43 03.428 & Latitude W79 57.949

The mystery of who painted the wampum belt graffiti on the highway 17 rock-cut may never be revealed but, then again, maybe it has. As I sat in my car and studied the graffiti one thing became clear—a provocative relation between the white line that joined the icons on the wampum belt, and the white lines on the highway.



installation view of Evamaria Trischak's *4816*. Photo: Wes Johnston

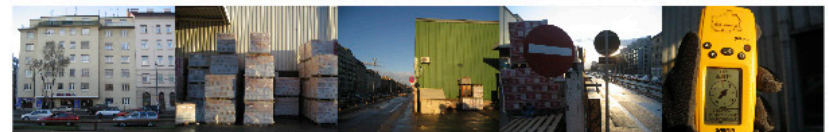
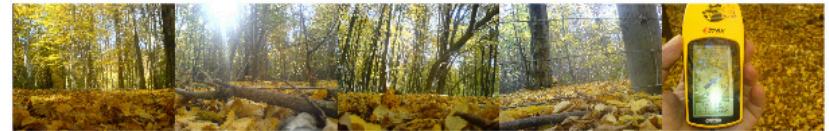
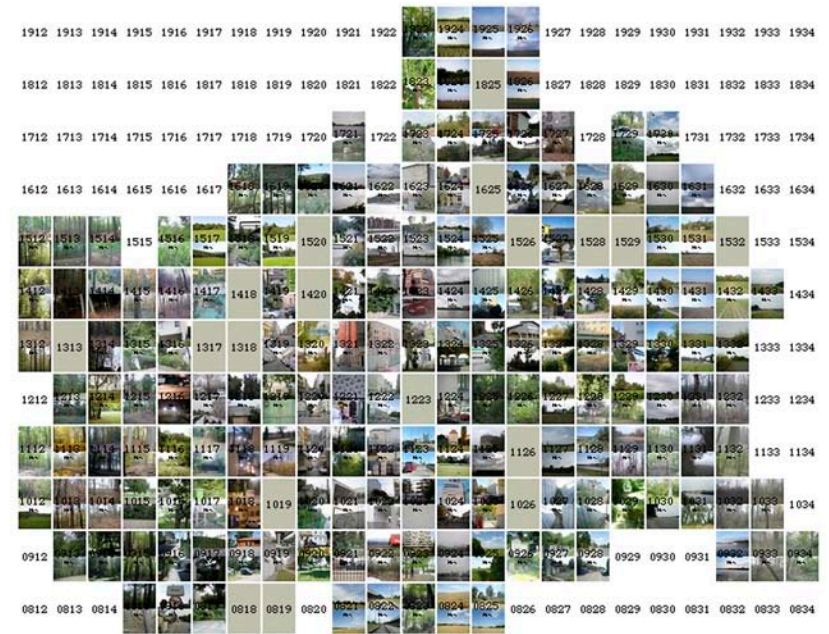
Evamaria Trischak (Vienna, Austria)
4816 2005 – present
 GPS + computer project

With the grateful support of the Austrian Cultural Forum.

Trischak's project titled *4816* refers to Vienna's general longitudinal and latitudinal location of 48° north from the equator and 16° east from Greenwich. Using GPS, Trischak searched for the next layer of detail—the 185 intersections of longitudinal and latitudinal minutes, each 1.9 km apart on the north-south axis and 1.25 km apart on the east-west axis, within the city limits of Vienna. At each intercept point, she took photographs in the four compass directions, building over time an inventory of images predicated solely on a matrix of satellite-accessed coordinates. Consequently, the images collected have little to do with personal choice and professional taste—Trischak is merely executing her conceptual system

to the best of her ability with a photo-based project that has little affinity with fine art photography in terms of the choice of subject matter and beautiful framing of the landscape.

Trischak initiated *4816* in 2005 but has opened it up for others to contribute as well. Following her system of GPS-based image gathering, 225 other collaborators have gathered directional images with photographic depictions as varied as the historic buildings of bustling downtown Vienna to the leafy suburbs to the middle of the Danube River. Unexpected challenges have arisen along the way; many of the GPS intersection points are on inaccessible private property. Consequently, gaps are in her project that cannot be filled. In other cases, negotiations are required to gain access to the invisible matrix, a condition that truly underscores the premise of this exhibition in terms of “mapping locations and probing boundaries.”



top and bottom: details from Evamaria Trischak's *4816*



installation view of Andrea Wollensak's *within and always moving from the Land/site/voice: Iceland series*. Photo: Steve Farmer

Andrea Wollensak (New London, Connecticut)

within and always moving

from the Land/site/voice: Iceland series 2012

etched aluminum plates, blown glass, audio, silent video

This project was funded through a 2010-2011 New Media Artist Fellowship from The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Connecticut Office of the Arts; Research Matters Grant and R. F. Johnson Grant from Connecticut College, and an Artist Residency at the Hafnarborg Museum, Hafnarfjörður, Iceland.

Project participants in Iceland include: Olafur Tryggvi Magnússon, Vilhjálmur Ólafsson, Borghildur Oskarsdóttir, Steinunn Gestsdóttir, Guðrún Magnúsdóttir, Guðrún Þorkelsdóttir, Ósk Vilhjálmsdóttir, Egill Másson. Project collaborators include glass artist, Jeffrey P'an, and sound artist Brett Terry.

ARTIST'S NOTES

Exploration of place through voices of Icelandic residents

Objective means: satellite imagery, GPS coordinates

Subjective means: place and content determined by residents

Continuing a body of work that explores the social and artistic divisions between private narratives and public vocabularies

of site and place, this new work focuses on memories connected to the Icelandic landscape.

Emerging from those narrative interviews (which were recorded in both English as well as Icelandic) were several themes: shared childhood experiences unique to prior generations (i.e., being sent to work on country farms for the summer); the fundamental transience of the Icelandic

landscape; concerns about the multinational corporate exploitation of natural resources, such as damming rivers and aluminum smelting.

As part of my process of making site-specific art with no preordained medium of expression, I then embarked on visiting each site to collect audiovisual materials and to mark GPS coordinates.

This travel suggested another common metaphor—the role of ice. Iceland is in fact not named after ice, it is just a phonetic rendering of “Island”. Yet ice, including the ice caps that lie atop volcanoes and the glacial ice floating out to sea, is as fundamental to the landscape as the geothermal forces beneath the island.

The resultant medium of the work includes:

- Aluminum etched plates showing

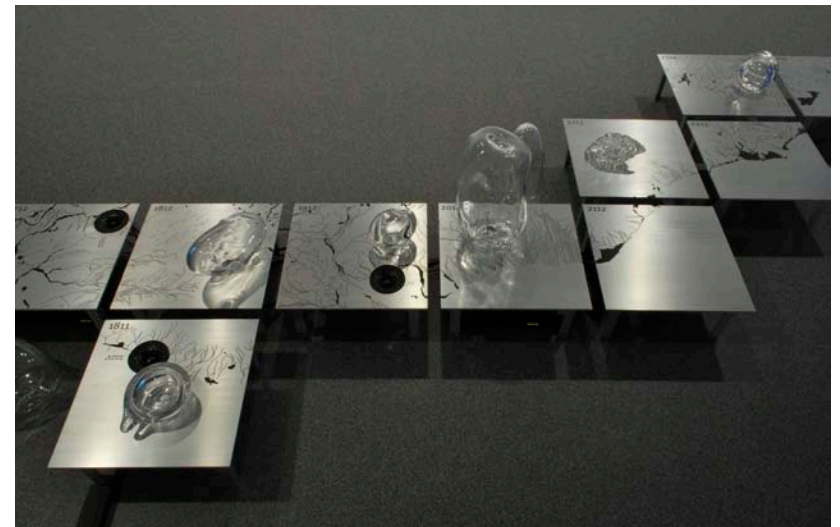
water systems of Southern Iceland and a numbering system based on associated satellite imagery grid system;

- Organic hand-blown glass pieces that are suggestive of the ice forms;

- Speakers mark out spatial locations of the narratives and include samples of narration amidst background recordings of nearby geothermal noises;

- Prints featuring imagery of each selected site and text excerpts, identifying each speaker;

- A video that uses video processing to abstract material captured on site (e.g., moss covered lava rocks, black sands, floating icebergs) into bands of color juxtaposed with imagery of the glass blowing process. The distortions of the video were based on analysis of seismic data.



detail of Andrea Wollensak's *within and always moving from the Land/site/voice: Iceland series*. Photo: Wes Johnston