1999

MAPS TO PLACES YOU COULDN'T FIND

Michael J. Strand
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/artstudents

Part of the Art and Design Commons

Strand, Michael J., 'MAPS TO PLACES YOU COULDN'T FIND' (1999). Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design. 94.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/artstudents/94

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Art, Art History and Design, School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
MAPS TO PLACES YOU COULDN'T FIND

by

Michael J. Strand

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Gail Kendall

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 1999
I have been searching for a common ground. A place where my ideas, in all their diversity exist in harmony. I am compelled by memory and its relation to history. In Minnesota there is a group of rune-stones that are said to bear the inscription of ancient people from Northern Europe. They exist in a wonderful state. Part mythical and part historical, their authenticity is uncertain. With these rune-stones as inspiration my work acts as a transmitter of information lost, or memories forgotten.

Over the past 18 months I have made work that exists outside of categories, merging image and object while remaining autonomous as an evocative statement. Initially I worked with clay canvases. Small tiles, with imagery inspired by the drawings of Leonardo, pay homage to commonplace objects. The use of fired clay brought a sense of archival permanence, conceptually, creating my own Lascaux cave paintings.

Continuing with this investigation, I have expanded the three-dimensionally of the tiles. The forms, inspired by rock formations, are pounded and sliced into shape. I then respond to this mass with subtle color variation and tight geometric abstractions.

Currently I am investigating the integration of fragmented form with a highly articulated surface. Composed of two or more parts the forms refer to puzzles, plate tectonics and architecture. The form is then etched into with images relating to astronomy and maps. After building up the surface I excavate back through the layers, revealing old marks and buried color. This process is imperative, giving the surface a sense of history and time passed. Recently I have integrated the use of glaze and intense color. This
selective use of color is used strategically to create small hidden areas of intrigue. The colors seep up through etched lines or between forms, seducing the viewer to look further.

I continue to work towards the union of object and image. Through this search I intend to make work that operates on many levels, asking many questions while giving a few well placed answers. Ultimately the work, like the rune-stones of Minnesota, is completed by the viewer. I provide the map, and if willing, he or she completes the journey.