

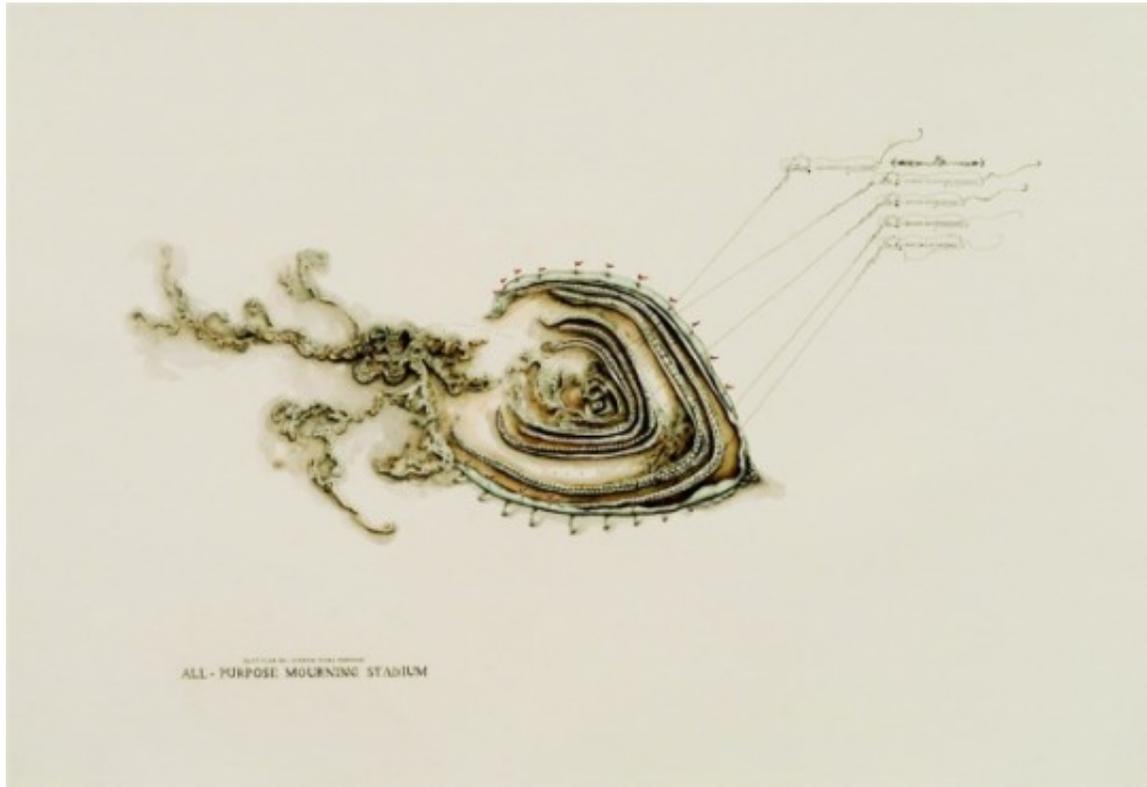
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Mapping the Imagination

Art Review

By Peggy Sue Dunigan



Traveling the terrain pictured on maps, whether geographical, geological, historical or fantastical, engages the viewer in journeys to uncommon destinations. In the exhibit "All Over the Map" at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center (through May 10), the imagination wanders through more than 50 images that explore artifacts acquired from the American Geographical Society Library at UW- Milwaukee and avant-garde pieces from more than 23 contemporary artists. All of the pieces have been inspired by the art of cartography.

The exhibition's historical element presents intricately illustrated maps, atlases and globes dating from as far back as 1488, many by famous cartographers. This includes a hand-colored page created by cartographer royal to the king of France, Louis Brion de la Tour (1756-1823), and the wall-length *Synchronological Chart or Map of History*, which covers the entire narrative of significant world events since the beginning of time, as seen through the eyes of Sebastian Adams in 1871.

On another wall of the gallery, New York's Patricia Smith maps conceptual journeys into human emotions with her ink and watercolor on paper, *All-Purpose Mourning Stadium* (2008). In a delicate drawing shaped like a region of the brain, her invented stadium (referencing architectural and medical illustrations) invites the viewer into "A Level of Inconsolable Grief" as well as the "Tier 4" seats for "Spectacle Gazers"-a fragile reminder that grief and loss traverse the heights of human pain. A complementary exhibit in a smaller gallery, "Walter Martin and Paloma Muñoz: Wayward Bound" (through May 31), creates frosty vistas constructed in oversized snow globes. Displaying the cracks, crevices, cliffs and overhangs in these minute frozen worlds, miniature travelers trapped inside try to elude destiny, similar to humanity escaping tragedy in everyday life. Also on exhibit, large C-print photographs on Plexiglas exaggerate the scenes depicted in the globes with surreal and unsettling clarity.

Both of these intriguing exhibitions bridge art, history and the imagination, transporting the mind to a place that artist Kerry Kessler envisions on her tiny rice-paper map, "to the east, where beyond the ocean is paradise."