A Map of One's Own: Cartographic Subversion in the work of Shuvinai Ashoona, Firelei Báez, and Sandy Rodriguez

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Abstract

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A long-standing relationship between the map and visual art is continued today by a number of contemporary artists whose work uses a variety of cartographic concepts and strategies. This thesis focuses on three artists, Sandy Rodriguez, Firelei Báez, and Shuvinai Ashoona, who address and undermine the map as a technology of colonial power. Brought together for the first time here, these three artists accomplish a decolonial subversion of the map–as an object complicit in past and present processes of colonization. Drawing on the work of scholars from geography, Black studies, decolonial studies, and art history, this thesis addresses, in detail, how each artist's work pushes back against the assumed authority of the map.

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Introduction

In *A Map to the Door of No Return* Dionne Brand writes, "cartography is description, not journey,"[1] as she reflects on the possibility of visiting the very place in Ghana where future slaves spent their last moments on their home continent before being forced onto ships to cross the Atlantic Ocean. Brand's book considers the positionality of Black diasporic communities on both sides of the Atlantic, and her emphasis on "journey" aspires to encompass the overlapping and interlocking aspects of space, rather than merely identifying cartographic location.[2] Brand's understanding of journey is what this thesis seeks to acknowledge. It with this in mind that I write about maps and art because together they begin to embody a journey, a set of experiences, a full life. Maps are complex objects, simultaneously understood as a technology, a tool of power, a mode of communication, and an object of study. Maps have also had a close relationship to art and visual culture, dating back centuries. What, then, can be gained or indeed gleaned by thinking about the present-day intersection of maps and art? Sandy Rodriguez, Firelei Báez, and Shuvinai Ashoona are amongst the numerous contemporary artists who have brought maps, mapping, and mapmaking with them in their practice and artworks. The interdisciplinary potential of maps is certainly present when one considers how each artist takes into account not only colour, line, shape, and texture, but indeed power, politics, and history as well.

To understand why maps are so ripe for appropriation by artists, the map itself must first be recognized as a vessel for power and knowledge production. Mapping, at its simplest, is an act of translation, of the three-dimensional world into two-dimensional representation, and maps

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[1] Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return* (Canada: Doubleday Canada, 2001), 96.

[2] Doreen B Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1994). 168, "It is the vast complexity of the interlocking and articulating nets of social relations which is social space."

are also a mode of communication,[3] allowing information about movement between places to be shared. Mapping is a technology, a tool, and a method, but it is always an imperfect exercise wherein something must be left out and someone decides what is represented and how. This is where the question of power comes up and one must ask: whose version of the world is this? It is this question that inspires critical cartographers and, as I argue in this thesis, artists.

With the widespread exploration and conquest that arose in the late 15th century, mapping became deeply intertwined with Europe's colonial projects. While the desire to map the entirety of the knowable world had existed previously,[4] the scale at which maps were being made and the violence with which their intent was enacted was unprecedented. Two portraits of Queen Elizabeth I offer a useful marker of this phenomenon, wherein the sovereign's power is asserted through a direct connection to maps and their sinister role in colonial expansion. In the *Armada Portrait* (Fig. 1) from 1588 (artist unknown), Elizabeth's hand is placed gently but firmly atop a globe. In Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger's *Queen Elizabeth I (Ditchley Portrait)* (1592), Elizabeth stands on a mapped section of the UK and it supports her weight both literally and symbolically. Here, the globe and Elizabeth's imperial power are inherently linked; she is synonymous with Britain and her physical contact with the map acts as an indicator of her authority. Britain's overseas colonial holdings were largely non-existent when these paintings were made, but the portraits would end up being somewhat prophetic in nature. Thus, these painted portraits that use maps are representative of an imagined geography, which I note to demonstrate that the connection between mapping and art can easily cross the line from representational to imaginary.

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[3] Thomas J. McGurk and Sébastien Caquard, "To What Extent Can Online Mapping Be Decolonial? A Journey throughout Indigenous Cartography in Canada," *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien* 64, no. 1 (2020): https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12602, 52.

[4] Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

This thesis will address how contemporary artists expose the hegemonic power bound up in mapping by appropriating and transforming a range of cartographic strategies. Mapping as a strategy of self-determination and subversion is addressed in the work of three contemporary artists. Each artist appropriates mapping in a different way and their work is firmly grounded in specific geographies, which is then reflected through their artistic practice. Sandy Rodriguez is a Los Angeles-based artist-researcher, and first-generation Chicana, who describes herself as "raised along the US-Mexico border."[5] Rodriguez maps the US-Mexico borderlands and resists the abstractive qualities of the map through an emphasis on materiality in her hand-processed pigments made from plants indigenous to the region. She also pinpoints the location where migrants have died while in detention of the US Border Patrol services, highlighting how the border has become increasingly militarized and dangerous to cross. Firelei Báez is a New York-based artist with Haitian and Dominican roots, who paints over historic documents like maps to expose their colonial underpinnings and assumptions. She also often works with the motif of the ciguapa, a hairy, female-coded trickster figure, who blurs the lines between human, plant, and animal. In doing so, she undermines the quantitative knowledge symbolized by maps by emphasizing that which cannot be quantified or easily defined, such as the mysterious ciguapa. Shuvinai Ashoona is an Inuk artist based in Kinngait, Nunavut working primarily in large-scale drawings done in coloured pencil and fine-line marker on paper. Ashoona uses the blue-and-green globe in place of a two-dimensional map and integrates it into everyday life in the Arctic. She allows her human, animal, and fantastical figures to interact with the globe in a variety of ways, and some paintings include numerous globes. While these artists address different cultural and geographical situations, what unites them is their critical approach to maps and mapping. By appropriating cartographic strategies, each artist reveals the dynamic nature of the map and

[5] Sandy Rodriguez, "About," (N.d.) https://www.studiosandyrodriguez.com/about.

carves out space for their own unique form of subversion. Rather than being subtractive, taking away elements of the map in order to undermine its assumed power, each artist works in an additive way, contributing to a more robust dialectic between art and geography. The thesis intentionally begins with a regional case study of the US-Mexico border by Rodriguez, then moves to Baez's transatlantic scale before ending with Ashoona, who uses the globe as a form of large-scale map of the earth. By moving through the works in this way, each artist's unique study of scale comes into focus and acts as a guiding concept.

Artists from a variety of modern and contemporary movements have worked within, from, and against the container of the map, and my thesis builds upon previous scholarship on this topic.[6] Also, a few large-scale museum shows have been mounted on the subject of mapping and cartography in art; notable examples include *Mapping* at MoMA in New York in 1994, *Map Marathon*, a weekend-long event and collaboration between the Royal Geographical Society and the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2010, and *The Map as Art* at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri, in 2013–a show that grew out of the popularity of the book by the same name by Katherine Harmon, which marks one of the first and most comprehensive anthologies of map art.[7] Many of the artists included in these exhibitions have

[6] Texts include: Simon Ferdinand, *Mapping Beyond Measure: Art, Cartography, and the Space of Global Modernity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), Katherine Harmon, *The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Mapping It Out: An Alternative Atlas of Contemporary Cartography* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), Nato Thompson and Independent Curators International, *Experimental Geography: Radical Approaches to Landscape, Cartography, and Urbanism* (New York: Melville House, 2008).

[7] There is a corresponding text for each of these exhibitions: Robert Storr, *Mapping* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Mapping It Out: An Alternative Atlas of Contemporary Cartography* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), Katherine Harmon, *The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).

occasionally experimented with the form of the map, but few have engaged with maps in an ongoing way.[8]

Something that sets apart the artists included in this thesis is their sustained interest in the map in art. Firelei Báez's retrospective exhibition, *Trust Memory Over History* (2023-24) at the Louisiana Museum in Copenhagen, focuses primarily on her map paintings. Shuvinai Ashoona's solo show entitled *Mapping Worlds*, featured a number of her globe pieces, beginning at the Power Plant in Toronto, and subsequently touring a number of Canadian cities in 2019-20. Rodriguez too has established a reputation based on the number and ambition of her mapped landscape works.

This thesis has been developed using an interdisciplinary theoretical foundation wherein geography and critical cartography are accompanied by Black and decolonial studies. When thinking through geography as a disciplinary touchstone, I turn more specifically to scholars who have analyzed how mapping and other forms of geography were historically instruments of power, while often serving the colonial project. Denis Cosgrove is a British geographer known for his work on visual aspects of geography as a discipline. His book, *Apollo's Eye* documents the history of representations of the globes from antiquity to the turn of the twenty-first century. This text contextualizes how visual control and power are bound up in mapping processes. Neil Smith, a Scottish Marxist geographer, has written widely on cities, gentrification, capitalism, and the environment. It is his discussion of geographic scale that is most relevant to this thesis. Smith distills the concept of scale to the level of the body and in doing so, examines the space people make for themselves and occupy with their bodies. Scale becomes a question of life and death

[8] Other artworks that have served as inspiration and referential points throughout this research process include in no particular order, Jasper Johns, *Map* (1960), Frank Bowling, *Marcia H Travels* (1970), Toyin Ojih Odutola, *Sadie (Zadie Smith)* (2018-2019), Wafaa Bilal, *and Counting…* (2010), Allan deSouza, *Navigation Chart* (2016).

when one asks who is afforded the space and the scale at which to live; this is a crucial concept when studying the ongoing and historic effects of colonization.[9]

Equally important to the foundation of this thesis is the work of Katherine McKittrick, which links space and place to notions of racialized capture. A Canadian geographer and Black studies scholar, she asks, "what happens to the cartography and understanding of the world when it is continually re-imagined through and beyond the legacy of race and racism?"[10] The questions of worldbuilding, racialized geographies, and colonialism addressed in her work, are important to this thesis. Additionally, McKittrick engages with other geographers like Smith, in order to further develop the question of racialized geographies.

I also turn to Sylvia Wynter, Jamaican-American philosopher and mentor of McKittrick's, whose work examines the very foundations of humanity and race. She traces the origins of contemporary understandings of race to medieval Christianity, as well as Aristotle's conception of the slave, which informed the early colonial process that took place in the Caribbean and Americas. Using a philosophic method, she identifies the foundational assumption in Christianity that allowed the colonization and racialization processes to take place.[11] In a similarly philosophical mode, Édouard Glissant, a Martiniquais-French philosopher and writer, theorizes the concept of opacity as it relates to racial difference. In his essay, "For Opacity," Glissant proposes difference as necessary to the production of knowledge, rather than

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[9] Neil Smith, "Afterword to the Second Edition: The Beginning of Geography," in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, Third Edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 213–37.

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[10] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2006), 28.

[11] Sylvia Wynter, "1492: A New World View," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas*, ed. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 5–57; Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation-An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257–337, https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015.

something that must be overcome or understood through a process of reduction. For Glissant, reduction is always a hierarchical process wherein one is enclosed within the evaluation of difference, namely racial difference therefore, the right to opacity is the ability to remain intact and present in one's difference.[12]

To establish a decolonial lens through which to approach my case studies, it must be acknowledged, in the words of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, that "decolonization is a not a metaphor."[13] In the context of settler colonialism, decolonization is first and foremost, a practice of land repatriation. In the arts and humanities, however, decolonial approaches tend to operate more broadly, taking into account institutions, knowledge, and ways of understanding the world. For example, with the case of an artist like Shuvinai Ashoona, it is important to recognize Inuit art production as a direct result of colonization efforts within Canada, that relegated Indigenous populations, Inuit included, to small portions of land and severely limit access to Indigenous knowledge and practices. A by-product of this are the capitalist frameworks set up in places like Nunavut—whereby Inuit artists work at designated studios and are able to sell their art and generate income.[14] Inuk art historian Heather Igloliorte has addressed how new forms of art practice can be part of a decolonizing process: "It is by… Indigenous arts and cultural practices that we contradict colonial narratives of our eminent disappearance or inevitable assimilation,

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[12] Édouard Glissant, "For Opacity," in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 189.

[13] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 1–40.

[14] This is a brief summary of the history of Inuit art practice comes from a series from *Inuit Art Quarterly* tells the story of those who had direct involvement in the founding of artist cooperatives: Napatsi Folger, "How Inuit Artists Came Together to Establish Nunavik's First Co-Op: Iqqaumaviit? Remembering the Inuit Behind the Co-Ops," *Inuit Art Quarterly*, October 21, 2021, https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/iaq-online/how-inuit-artists-came-together-to-establish-nunavik-s-first-co-op, Napatsi Folger, "How Did Kananginak Pootoogook Help Open Kinngait's First Print Shop?," *Inuit Art Quarterly*, October 7, 2021, https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/iaq-online/how-did-kananginak-pootoogook-help-open-kinngait-s-first-print-shop.

otherness, stasis, and acculturation."[15] Thus, a decolonial lens is necessary to the theoretical framework of this thesis, and I also turn to scholars like Tarralik Duffy, Inuk artist and writer, and Adrienne Huard, Anishinaabe artist and writer, who write about Ashoona's work in a way that acknowledges the connection to the past, while firmly grounding their understanding of her work in the present.

As this thesis focuses on contemporary artists, the existing scholarship often takes the form of reviews, interviews, and exhibition texts. Both Báez and Ashoona have had recent monographs published on the occasion of their solo exhibitions, which provide useful context and detail about their respective artistic practices and bodies of work. While Rodriguez has not yet been included in exhibitions of the same scale as Báez and Ashoona, catalogues of her work are available and provide useful scholarship as well. Existing critical scholarship about each artist proved invaluable in the research process and often included direct references to the geographic elements present within the work.

When studying contemporary art, there is no shortage of artists who engage with questions of space, place, and geography, but what makes the three artists in this thesis stand out from their contemporaries is their willingness to work from a place of generous contributions to representational subversion. What makes their contributions notable is each artist's zeal to contend with what it means to represent space in a map. These artists bring a palpable energy to the centuries old project of translating space into image. Sandy Rodriguez takes great care to paint and map a region and a community that too often falls victim to the vicious cycle of North American media and politics. Firelei Báez grapples with a violent history by centring a joyfully unknowable creature from her home island's oral and written history. Shuvinai Ashoona

[15] Heather Igloliorte, "No History of Colonialism: Decolonizing Practices in Indigenous Arts." *Decolonize Me*. (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2012), 21.

addresses the globe as an old friend, a cousin, or a child, knocking it from its pedestal as an internationally known symbol, and instead welcoming it to the northern region of Turtle Island with open arms, allowing it to find kinship with fish, eyeballs, and, of course, other globes. I actively chose to centre my research on Turtle Island because it is the land upon which I was born and raised. Throughout my studies, I, a white settler scholar, have begun to understand the myriad of ways in which I have benefitted from the violent displacement of Indigenous peoples from their traditional, unceded land and waters. Through my research, I seek to question how the technologies of said dispossession, like maps, show up in the art made on these same lands. By positioning myself at the nexus of art and geography, I think through the use of maps in art in a way that acknowledges and engages with their colonial histories as well as their current appropriations.

Sandy Rodriguez

Sandy Rodriguez is the artist-researcher behind the ongoing project *Codex Rodriguez-Mondragón* (2017-) which consists of maps, landscapes, and portraits painted using pigments handmade by the artist.[16] Rodriguez's 2019 artwork, *You Will Not be Forgotten, Mapa for the Children Killed in Custody of the US Customs and Border Protection* (Fig. 2) is a map of Mexico according to the pre-1848 borders which included all of the current American states of California, Nevada, Utah, and Texas as well as all of current-day Mexico. Rodriguez's map is on brown, textured amate, a type of handmade paper that uses the bark of fig and mulberry trees. Bursts of white on the light brown amate refer to the detention sites in the present-day US at which seven migrant children died between 2018 and 2019. These deaths came in the aftermath

[16] Rodriguez names her codex after each of her parents and in doing so aligns herself with a tradition of artists who appropriate the codex form in their practice, see *The Chicano Codices: Encounter Art of the Americas*, held at The Mexican Museum in San Francisco from September 23 to November 29, 1992.

of President Donald Trump's 2017 so-called "zero tolerance" anti-immigration policy, which allowed border patrol agents to separate children from their parents at the border.[17] The severity of this policy marks a pinnacle of decades of US immigration policy and border policing beginning as early as 1909 when the first fence was erected along the border to stop cattle from roaming too far.[18] Although, the policy was officially repealed in 2018, the continuation of the practice of family separation was documented by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) well into 2019.[19] The borders of the present-day southern US and the northern parts of Mexico are outlined in bright colours like pink, blue, and yellow. The top of the image shows a dark blue almost black night sky dotted with shining yellow stars, and where the sky meets the border of the state of Texas, a pair of helicopters with skulls in the place of cockpits. Rodriguez introduced the most detail around the border itself, decorating it with plants, birds, animals, and mourning human figures as well as one surveillance car belonging to US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) recognizable by its distinctive green strip (Fig. 2.1 & 2.2). Towards the bottom of the artwork, Rodriguez wrote the full names of each child who died in detention, while this area of the map also includes a cartouche featuring the title of the artwork and the first half of the title (You Will Not Be Forgotten) in larger, stylized lettering.

Formally speaking, the artwork resembles a historic map, from the imperfect outlines of the regions to the warm brown colour of the paper. John Disturnell's *Mapa de los Estados Unidos de Méjico (*1847) (Fig. 3) is an apt historical comparison, showing a similar colour

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[17] Claire Blencowe, "Family Debilitation: Migrant Child Detention and the Aesthetic Regime of Neoliberal Authoritarianism," *GeoHumanities* 7, no. 2 (2021): https://doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2021.1981770, 420.

[18] Yvonne Vissing's book chapter, in particular pages 230-235 offers a brief legislative history of immigration policy and practices at the US-Mexico border: Yvonne Vissing, "Unaccompanied Children at the US-Mexico Border," in *The Rights of Unaccompanied Minors: Perspectives and Case Studies on Migrant Children* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2021), 229–67.

[19] Blencowe, "Family Debilitation," 421

choice along the state's borders and also illustrating what used to belong to Mexico before the Mexican American war of 1846-48 which established the current international border. More striking, however is the resemblance of Rodriguez's map to the imagery found in the Florentine Codex, a collection of texts and images documenting a Nahua worldview at the start of the 16th century, made by the Spanish-born Friar Bernardino de Sahagún in conjunction with Nahua scholars from Mexico (Fig. 4).[20] Book XII of the Codex is the only written documentation of the European invasion and war in Mexico from 1519-1521 from a Nahua perspective, while the Codex also contains the instructions for hand-making the pigments that Rodriguez uses in her work.[21] While the Codex is a European-led project, it offers a crucial Nahua perspective of a violent episode during the colonial period and demonstrates overlapping perspectives and a key site of interaction between the Nahua and the Spanish. Rodriguez's insistence on working from this source text, which includes not only accounts of violence, but also recipes for pigments made using land-based materials, demonstrates her interest in subversion through appropriation. I argue that it is in the materiality and the subject matter that Rodriguez activates her critique and subversion of the map.

Rodriguez includes a number of birds, fish, and plants in her map; swallows, rabbits, horned owls, and flying catfish find themselves included in this map along with some human figures, who appear hunched over, perhaps in grief or prayer. A number of scholars have taken up the task of identifying the significance of the animals that appear in the pages of the Florentine Codex and differentiating their significance from that of their medieval counterparts

[20] The Nahua are Indigenous peoples of central Mexico, sometimes referred to as Aztecs or Mexica. Nahuatl is the language that appears in the Codex and today there are over 1 million Nahuatl speakers in Mexico.

[21] Hsuan L. Hsu and Vasquez, David J., "The Materials of Art and the Legacies of Colonization: A Conversation with Beatrice Glow and Sandy Rodriguez," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 13, no. 1 (2022): https://doi.org/10.5070/T813158585, 240.

in European illuminated manuscripts.[22] Among them, Chris Valesey, working with the English language translations of the Codex, identified two animals that also happen to appear in Rodriguez's map, *You Will Not Be Forgotten,* the owl and the rabbit. There is an entire chapter in book five of the Codex devoted to the significance of owls; this species was understood by Nahua as a sign of death and sickness, embodied most acutely by the horned owl.[23] It would then seem significant that Rodriguez includes a horned owl in the map towards the top of the page, sitting just along the northern Texas border. The presence of a Nahua signifier of death is in accordance with the subject matter of the map, representing and indeed condemning the lives lost in migrant detention centres along the border. Additionally, Rodriguez includes a white rabbit in the middle of the work, towards the righthand side. According to Valesey's linguistic analysis of the text found in book five of the Codex, rabbits represented a significant threat, one that provoked fear. It is worth quoting the original text here, concerning the negative connotations of finding rabbits in one's home, "the field workers, the people of the maize fields, said that now his house would be laid waste. Or else, now someone would flee: he would follow the trail of the rabbit, or of the deer. Now he would be a rabbit or a deer."[24] In the Codex, and according to the Nahua, rabbits therefore foretold movement, migration even. In her map, Rodriguez has included two important signifiers of that which migrants face in their journey, movement and in the most extreme cases, death. Rodriguez hints at these risks in other aspects of the work, however its inclusion in the form of animals important to Nahua is significant.

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[22] Louise M. Burkhart has studied the question of Christian and Nahua influence as it relates to representations in the Codex and other aspects of early Spanish colonial rule in Mexico in a number of texts including *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989).

[23] Chris Valesey, "Animal Auguries and Evangelization in Sixteenth-Century New Spain," *Viator* 52, no. 1 (2021): 94.

[24] Valsey, "Animal Auguries and Evangelization," 93.

In addition to her use of natural materials to create the pigments used in her work, Rodriguez also paints upon handmade amate paper. The amate paper, when not handmade by Rodriguez herself, is imported from an Otomi community in Puebla, Mexico.[25] Here, the amate is made from the bark of fig and mulberry trees.[26] The amate has a texture of its own due its construction, which uses tree bark to make a pulp. Rodriguez has described this type of paper as capable of taking on a topography of its own due to the texture generated by this method of paper making.[27] The process creates a surface that is riddled with imperfect bumps, ridges, and craters, mimicking the landscape itself. The process of making amate is a Mesoamerican pre-Hispanic tradition, therefore in her use of this type of paper, Rodriguez is referencing and activating pre-Hispanic art-making practices.[28] To consider this work as part of a centuries-long tradition is notable because while Rodriguez is certainly referencing the technology of maps, with the use of the amate, she also references other forms of knowledge making, like that of making the paper itself. The paper emphasizes the haptic, appealing to the sense of touch through its texture and its method of production. The paper is not smooth like a canvas, but rather rough and imperfect, as a result of its origins in the handmade—it involves a transfer of labour at the individual level. This plays with the scale of the artwork too; Rodriguez may be mapping an entire region, but her use of this delicate paper creates a tension between the individual and the collective.

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[25] Hsu & Vasquez, "The Materials of Art," 226.

[26] Ananda Cohen-Aponte and Ella Maria Diaz, "Painting Prophecy: Mapping a Polyphonic Chicana Codex Tradition in the Twenty-First Century," *English Language Notes* 57, no. 2 (October 2019): https://doi.org/10.1215/00138282-7716125, 22.

[27] Rodriguez makes these comments in a video made for the Huntington Library in Los Angeles where she has a map of the city in their permanent collection: *YOU ARE HERE: A Multilingual Map of the Greater Los Angeles Area*, YouTube (Los Angeles: The Huntington Library, 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5z4elzJ2pQE.

[28] For a more on amate paper and its sustainable potentials see Rosaura Citlalli López Binnqüist's "The Endurance of Mexican Amate Paper: Exploring Additional Dimensions to the Sustainable Development Concept," (PhD dissertation, University of Twente, 2003).

The pigment-making process employed by Rodriguez is notably labor-intensive, involving the collection, processing, and storage of plants, insects, and minerals indigenous to the American Southwest and Northern Mexico. Before the painting can begin, Rodriguez sets about identifying and harvesting the materials, alongside her attempts to learn and in some cases recover their names in Indigenous language like Nahuatl.[29] Rodriguez's work as an artist cannot be disentangled from her role as a researcher into the ethnobotanical histories of the materials with which she works. Rodriguez's work is remarkable because its materiality is in direct contrast to the abstractive qualities of mapping. Mapping at its core is about taking the physical world and simplifying it and translating it until it becomes an abstraction of what it once was. By using materials found in the areas shown in her work, Rodriguez actively brings the materiality of the land back into the mapping process; in doing so she resists the loss of context brought about by the marking of lines upon a page. The artist's pigment-making process is reflective of the work's function as a whole; it demonstrates a desire to reconnect the land and the map. Rodriguez began the pigment making process after encountering the work of scholar and art historian Diana Magaloni Kerpel, which brings into focus the use of colour in the Florentine Codex, the same document in which Rodriguez's pigment making techniques are recorded. Simultaneously, the artist embarked on a trip through the American Southwest, specifically the states that were a part of Mexico before 1848. She also worked in collaboration with an herbalist.[30] Evident in the artist's choice of medium is a deep, underlying sense of care towards the region. Rodriguez notes that, "the source of the color—either solar realm (above ground) or underworld (from the earth, mines, pigment quarries)—has a significant conceptual tie to the

[29] Hsu & Vasquez, "The Materials of Art," 231.

[30] Hsu & Vasquez, "The Materials of Art," 230.

spiritual practice and underworld beliefs and identities."[31] In addition to her attention to the ethnobotanical histories of the region, Rodriguez's work is informed by the spiritual and otherworldly connections to colour, which is in accordance with its use in the Codex. By centring non-Eurocentric colour theory through her process and in the final product as well, Rodriguez is able to foreground Nahua understandings of colour. When Rodriguez opts to spend time with these pigments in lieu of simply buying a set of watercolours, she is in a sense resisting the very capitalist system that has spurred the mass migration with which she is concerned. The artworks that make up the artist's body of work are made up of seeds that will never grow, flower petals that will never decay, and tree bark that is never allowed to compost. The materials are suspended in time, much like the people awaiting answers in the US immigration system.[32] The ethnobotanical nature of the pigments used in Rodriguez's work are one type of response to the question of time lost or frozen at the US-Mexico border.

The use of colour in the Codex has been researched and analyzed by Kerpel in her book *Colours of the New World*, which Rodriguez cites as a key guiding text in her own work.[33] Both Kerpel and Rodriguez intervene in the painful history of the origins of the Codex by taking up the pigment-making techniques recorded within its pages, while Rodriguez uses these very methods to catalogue and to critique current forms of colonialism enacted on the very same land. Kerpel also analyzes the use of the red pigments used in the aftermath of Moctezuma's death. In an illustration showing the transfer of power resulting from the Nahua ruler's death and the Spanish conquest, two types of red pigment are used in the same image. Indeed, as Kerpel remarks, "by using *nocheztli* [originating in Mexico] and minium [originating in Europe] reds,

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[31] Hsu & Vasquez, "The Materials of Art," 228.

[32] Diana Magaloni Kerpel, *The Colours of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2014), 28.

[33] Hsu & Vasquez, "The Materials of Art," 229.

the painting displays two temporalities: the indigenous era that was coming to an end and the Spanish age that was beginning its control by killing the representative of the Mexica sun, the emperor Moctezuma."[34] The shifting of power connotes an important structural change in the region that would affect every aspect of life and is emulated in the materiality of the illustration.

Considering this interpretation of the original Codex as representative of multiple temporalities, the pre-Hispanic and early colonial eras, I return to Rodriguez and the ways in which her work also functions as a multitemporal map. While maps are generally understood to represent space and place, less obvious are its temporal associations; maps, especially historic ones like those Rodriguez references in her work, typically represent one moment in time, and so the ability of her work to address multiple temporalities in a map demands sustained attention.[35]

In one of the only critical responses to Rodriguez's work, Ananda Cohen-Aponte and Ella Maria Diaz address the question of multi-temporality through the artist's inclusion of the helicopters, within the larger context of Chicanx artists' use of the codex as form. Cohen-Aponte and Diaz argue that the helicopters symbolize disparate temporalities present in the work.[36] They write, "the juxtaposition of plants and helicopters also conveys a temporal irony, recording the passing of time through the seasons of plant life while gesturing to the detention of people whose ancestors have inhabited and cultivated the lands of the Western Hemisphere for millennia."[37] Building on their scholarship, I identify three distinct time periods within Rodriguez's map and

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[34] Diana Magaloni Kerpel, *The Colours of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2014), 42.

[35] For another inquiry into time, mapping, and art see, "Combined and Uneven Cartography: Maps and Time in Alison Hildreth's *Forthrights and Meanders*" in Simon Ferdinand's *Mapping Beyond Measure: Art Cartography, and the Space of Global Modernity* (University of Nebraska Press: 2019).

[36] Chicanx is a gender inclusive alternative to the gendered adjective of Chicano/Chicana in Spanish, similar to the terms Latinx and Filipinx.

[37] Cohen-Aponte & Diaz, "Painting Prophecy," 28.

discuss how the multitemporal aspect of the work lends itself to a condemnation of the violence that has come to a head in the region. The three temporalities addressed in Rodriguez's map are: the pre-Hispanic era, the early 19th century, and the contemporary moment.

Rodriguez's addresses the pre-Hispanic era in her pigment making process by attending to and spending time with materials found in the region long before colonization by the Spanish begun. The artist references the early 19th century with her allusions to the pre-1848 boundaries in which all of California, New Mexico, and Texas were part of Mexico.[38] Although the current international border is clearly visible in *You Will Not Be Forgotten*, the reference to the pre-1848 border is remarkable as it demonstrates a willingness to destabilize the current border and resist its authority. The early 19th century was a fraught time between Mexico and America, with a two-year war beginning in 1846 with the American annexation of Texas and culminating in the establishment of the current border between the two nations.[39] Lastly, Rodriguez anchors *You Will Not Be Forgotten* in the contemporary moment by commemorating the lives of seven children who died while being held in US Border and Customs Protection detention centres. With this type of violence in mind, the question then becomes, how best to address this reality? Indeed, Rodriguez has overtly phrased the question, asking, "how do you make visible these histories that are extraordinarily uncomfortable?"[40] Rodriguez resists the reproduction of violent imagery, such as photos of Latin American children in crisis that circulated at the time, and

[38] Carolyn Osborn, "The Changing Mexico-U.S. Border," *Library of Congress Blogs: Worlds Revealed, Geography and Maps at the Library of Congress* (blog), December 18, 2015, https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2015/12/the-changing-mexico-u-s-border/.

[39] Iván Chaar-López, "Sensing Intruders: Race and the Automation of Border Control," *American Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (June 2019): 495–518, https://doi.org/10.1353/aq.2019.0040.

[40] Hsu & Vasquez, "The Materials of Art," 240.

instead the multitemporal aspect of the work acts as her critique.[41] The multiple references to time contained in a work like *You Will Not Be Forgotten* undermine the fixity of time and place and in turn creates a space where time collides and pushes against its own linearity. Drawing attention to these histories and demonstrating the cycles of instability in the region further emphasizes Rodriguez's care of and towards the land and its inhabitants of all types—plant, insect, and human. In destabilizing the fixity of the border, Rodriguez embodies the ways in which the so-called crisis at the border is indicative of larger structures at play, stemming as far back as indeed the Florentine Codex. As migrant justice organizer and writer Harsha Walia writes, "mass migration is the *outcome* of the *actual* crises of capitalism, conquest, and climate change."[42] Rodriguez's work seeks to emphasize Walia's understanding of actual crises through its attention to multiple temporalities and its refusal to reproduce violent imagery.

Maps and codices both reflect a desire to know and capture the world through documentation. In their theorization of the decolonial possibilities of mapping, Thomas McGurk and Sébastien Caquard conclude that the practice of navigating the world by mapping can be seen as a mode of communication, but that when land is carved up and assigned value, mapping is a "powerful tool of territorial dispossession of Indigenous people in North America and throughout the entire colonized world."[43] The codex, as a form of knowledge production, reflects

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[41] One such image was later proved to be of a child who remained in the case of her parents, but remained polarizing nonetheless: Avi Selk, "'I Wanted to Stop Her Crying': The Image of a Migrant Child That Broke a Photographer's Heart," *The Washington Post*, June 18, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2018/06/18/i-wanted-to-stop-her-crying-the-image-of-a-migrant-child-that-broke-a-photographers-heart/ & Laura M. Holson and Sandra E. Garcia, "She Became a Face of Family Separation at the Border. But She's Still With Her Mother.," *The New York Times*, June 22, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/us/immigration-toddler-trump-media.html.

[42] Harsha Walia, *Border & Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (Black Point, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2021), 3 (author's emphasis).

[43] Thomas McGurk & Sébastien Caquard, "To What Extent Can Online Mapping Be Decolonial?" 51-52.

a similar set of values that relates closely to possession through documentation and containment. Rodriguez complicates the legacy of the Florentine Codex, contemplating how knowledge production and violence are bound up in each other. By using methods recorded in the same document in which this particularly violent period in colonization was recorded, Rodriguez draws a direct line between her work and that of the Codex. I understand her work as a type of balm applied to the ongoing instability in the region, through her use of techniques recorded within the very document implicit in that region's colonization.

You Will Not be Forgotten, Mapa for the Children Killed in custody of the US Customs and Border Protection is only one example of Rodriguez's body of work connected to the Florentine Codex; throughout, she shows her commitment to using hand-processed pigments and paper in her work—made from materials indigenous to the land she maps. With her larger, ongoing project *Codex Rodriguez-Mondragón,* the artist addresses the multitemporal element of violence in the borderlands without explicitly reproducing images of that violence. She approaches this subject through a sustained, research-informed use of plants, insects, and minerals found in the region, and in this way her work resists the abstractive qualities inherent to mapmaking. The form of the map is kept intact, but the subversion of its knowledge production is done through Rodriguez's use of materials; this demonstrates one powerful strategy for addressing and actively resisting their violent colonial histories.

Firelei Báez

Firelei Báez is a New York-based, Haitian-Dominican artist, working primary in oil and acrylic on canvas. Within her larger body of work, Báez has an ongoing series of paintings made using historic maps as the background. *Untitled (Terra Nova)* (2020) (Fig. 5), a part of the ongoing map series, is a large painting measuring approximately 2.6 by 3.4 metres, featuring a ciguapa, a mythic figure without a visible face, in front of a background made up of a historic

European navigation map from the early 16th century. Starting at the equator which is placed just below the middle of the canvas, numbers ranging from five to 55 line the vertical edges of the canvas, which is slightly larger than the map. The map shows the Atlantic Ocean, flanked on the left by the islands Isabella, Spagnola (currently known as Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti respectively) and a large swath of land labelled Terra Nova, and the on the right by England, Spain, and the north east section of Africa. The ocean itself is shaded and the land masses are blank, with no detail at all apart from the names. Left of the ocean is an inset drawing showing four human figures running around in a circle, naked save for grass skirts; one of the figures has another human slung over their shoulders (Fig. 5.2). Covering a large portion of the ocean Báez has painted a figure that stretches above the border of the map to the very top of the canvas, with her feet resting upon the bottom line of the map. The map and the inset drawing are done with very little depth or dimension, whereas this figure is noticeably three-dimensional, best seen in the bulbous coils of hair that emerge out of the right side of the body. It appears as if the figure crouches in front of the map, as her feet cast a visible shadow beneath the two-dimensional map. The figure's knees are bent, and she stands on the balls of her feet, which appear hairy and are delicately painted in browns, reds, and whites to emphasize the shine of the hair. To the left of her legs are a number of large, meticulously smooth coils of hair, differentiated from the hair of the legs only in texture. Emerging from these bundled coils of hair are shapes closely resembling the pistils of a flower, painted in rich magentas, purples, and blues so dark they almost look black (Fig. 5.1). The pistils, the reproductive parts of a flower, are accentuated by flecks of white, which make them appear as though they are glistening in the light. A tongue of yellow and red emerges from the top of the floral element of the ciguapa and hangs gently over the rest of the figure, as if to shade it from the sun. Finally, from this

bifurcated awning comes an array of spikey, light green leaves, painted flatly and without the dimension given to the bottom half of the figure.

Around 2018, Báez began working with architectural plans before quickly moving towards large-scale maps as the base upon which her paintings were made. An example of her architecturally-based work is *Untitled (United States Marine Hospital)* (2019).[44] The shift from intervening in municipal histories (architectural drawings) to world histories (maps) marks a shift in scale that dramatically increased the stakes of Báez's work. She is no longer dealing with the histories of a single city, but rather the histories of entire peoples and continents. Implicated in her choice of a three-continent map in *Untitled (Terra Nova)* are the beginnings of modern conceptions of race, and as such the boundaries of humanity itself. Indeed, the inset drawing depicting all inhabitants of the so-called new world as cannibals is an exercise of scale as well. Scale is important to this map both in geographical and sociological senses. The scale of the map is large, showing a large section of the earth's surface covering all of the Atlantic Ocean and then parts of two continents. My understanding of scale is informed by the work of Neil Smith who is worth quoting at length here because he aptly summarizes the human and political stakes of scale:

> Geographical scale is political precisely because it is the technology according to which events and people are, quite literally, 'contained in space.' Alternatively, scale demarcates that space or spaces people 'take up' or make for themselves. In scale, therefore, are distilled the oppressive and emancipatory possibilities of space, its deadness but also its life.[45]

Scale, then, is not a neutral geographic concept, rather it is as Smith argues, a technology that works to potentially contain and/or liberate bodies within space. In her own words Báez has

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[44] Other artworks based on architectural plans are *re-memory (to be spoken, complete*) (2018), *An open horizon (or the stillness of a wound)* (2019), *Coqueta (history composed of ruptures)* (2019).

[45] Neil Smith, "Afterword to the Second Edition: The Beginning of Geography," in *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, Third (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 230.

described the function of scale in her work as follows: "scale is about intimacy and the breaking down of preconceptions by relating directly to the body […] scale is usually sensate: it's really a way of engaging a very physical experience."[46] While the map references the early days of a global commerce network, Báez's treatment of it brings it back down to the bodily scale, creating a tension between the scale of the body and that of the map. In doing so, the work creates a dialectic relationship between questions of the individual and the global, questioning how the body is treated within a system of globalization. With the scale of the ciguapa and that of the map, Báez is approaching the conversation of life and death both at the advent of the global trade system and today.

In *Untitled (Terra Nova),* Báez paints atop of one of the first widely available maps of the Americas, which she scanned, enlarged, and printed onto the canvas. This work is part of an unofficial series of paintings in which Báez finds maps from the early colonial period in the Caribbean and appropriated them for her work.[47] Báez says that she typically uses maps that she has stumbled across in books decommissioned by the library.[48] The process of covering up the map and rendering it defunct is highly loaded and in order to understand how and why this process is so effective, the specificity of the map used in *Untitled (Terra Nova)* must be addressed. The map in question is a later version of Martin Waldseemüller's *Tabula Terre Nove* (1513) published in Lorenz Fries' 1535 edition of Ptolemy's *Geography.* Waldseemüller's map, commonly known as the Admiral's Map, is preceded only by two earlier versions published in

[46] My description of the artist's encounters with maps comes from an interview conducted by Thelma Golden in David Norr*, Firelei Báez: To Breathe Full and Free* (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2022), 31.

[47] See also, *Untitled (A Correct Chart of Hispaniola with the Windward Passage)* (2020), *Untitled (Le Jeu du Monde)* (2020), and *Untitled (Anacaona)* (2020).

[48] Carla Acevedo-Yates, "Geographic Fugitivity in the Work of Firelei Báez," in David Norr*, Firelei Báez: To Breathe Full and Free* (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2022), 197.

1511 and 1512.[49] The Fries version, which is the exact map found in Báez's work, differentiates itself from Waldseemüller's version in a few notable ways, beginning with Fries' erasure of colour (in the original the ocean is blue, which could explain the greater amount of detail and shading in the black and white version). Next, Fries includes the story of Christopher Columbus's 1492 trip to the Americas; Waldseemüller had also included Columbus in his version, but simply by name; Fries also offers more context and creates a narrative. Crucial to the discussion at hand is Fries' decision to add an inset drawing showing the racist European interpretation of Indigenous life in the Americas. The inset shows small human figures wearing grass-like skirts running in a circle; the presence of detached feet and one figure with a fully naked person thrown over one shoulder clearly suggests cannibalism is at play. Even more nefarious is the placement of a large animal next to the group of people, suggesting as Mark Godfrey points out, that, "instead of hunting the enormous creature standing beside them, they are about to cook and eat another human."[50] Altogether, the Fries map tells a specific story about this region, one that has measured, divided, and numbered the land, and declared it ripe for possession and exploitation. Although the scale of maps and accuracy at this period in history is still understood to be quite variable, the Fries map in particular pairs markers of empirical knowledge, like the numbered latitudes, with signifiers of European ideological interpretation, like the racist caricature, in order to create the presumption of assumed authority and knowledge. The last addition Fries made to the map confirms this suspicion as the version used by Báez includes a flag with two lions and two castles representing the Spanish crown implanted upon the

[49] For an extensive online collection of historic maps see the Barry Lawrence Ruderman Map Collection housed at Stanford Libraries.

[50] Mark Godfrey, "The Map Paintings" in David Norr, *Firelei Báez: To Breathe Full and Free* (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2022), 228.

island of Isabella. The inclusion of this flag shows that the parceling out of territory in the so-called New World, had already begun, and that Spain was at the forefront of the colonial project.

In a report on early depictions of cannibalism in maps, James Walker notes that Waldseemüller, in the original version of the map, lays the groundwork for mapping cannibalism in the Americas by fixing it at the top of the south American continent.[51] Written into the original version of the Waldseemüller map is the word "canibales" written along a river descending into the southern continent from the equator.[52] Formally speaking, this label does not differentiate itself from other geographic markers, like the Rio Grande river, which is in fact directly to the left of the *canibales* label. Thus, cannibalism is inscribed directly into the landscape, and this in turn binds the people and the landscape together into one morally-inferior entity, according to European morality and ideology, and thus the land is ripe for exploitation by the Europeans. According to Sylvia Wynter, Europeans conception of Otherness was founded upon a binary opposition between human and non-human, and so the Other became excluded from the category of the human in their understanding of the world.[53] The Fries map explicitly illustrates cannibalism, and thus this theme has a different relationship to the map than in the Waldseemüller version. The inset drawing offers some distance between the practice of cannibalism and the land. Not only does this map visualize early European conceptions of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, but indeed, the lines between human and inhuman are drawn as well. The very literal mapping of cannibalism onto land available for European conquest is one of the defining qualities of maps of this era. As discussed by Wynter, the

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[51] James Walker, "From Alterity to Allegory: Depictions of Cannibalism on Early European Maps of the New World," The Occasional Papers (Washington, DC: Philip Lee Phillips Map Society Publication, 2015), 9.

[52] Walker, "From Alterity to Allegory," 9.

[53] Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation-An Argument," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 257–337, https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015, 292.

discovery of the American continents changed European conceptions of the world substantially and brought into question the entire notion of humanity that had been inherent to European worldviews up until this point in history, meaning the late 15th and early 16th centuries.[54] This map is absolutely concerned with that project. Rather than depicting the land as inhabited by humans like them, which would throw into question their entire theological worldview, Europeans understood the inhabitants of the so-called "new world" to be antithetical, backwards, and uncivilized. The map finds itself at the nexus between human and inhuman and maps the two geographically. Báez takes up the question of the inhuman as well, but offers it dignity and honour, by making it the centrepiece of her work.

With this reading of the underlying map, the ciguapa's presence takes on deeper meaning. According to Báez, the ciguapa is a highly mutable folkloric trickster figure, with only two constants in how she is depicted: she has thick, lustrous, long hair and her legs are backwards, meaning if you follow her you will get lost.[55] She is also known to lure men astray with her sexuality, like mermaids, but it is notable that Báez takes a feminist approach to the ciguapa, emphasizing her independence and agency. Báez's comments offer a useful entry point into the question of the ciguapa, for indeed she is mutable to the point that the ciguapa's origins in Dominican culture are uncertain. Even amongst those reading the ciguapa through a feminist lens, there is debate amongst scholars as to whether or not the ciguapa predates colonial presence on the island of Hispaniola, shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Nancy Kang proposes the ciguapa as a pre-Columbian figure found in oral histories and written sources associated to

[54] Sylvia Wynter, "1492: A New World View," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas*, ed. Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex Nettleford (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 5–57.

[55] The artist's comments about the ciguapa appear in a video made for the Louisiana Museum in Denmark. *Firelei Báez: I Consider Myself a Filter*, Vimeo (Copenhagen: Louisiana Channel, 2023), https://vimeo.com/863900189.

the Taíno, who are indigenous to Hispaniola.[56] Kang quotes literary scholar Emilia María Durán-Almarza, who argues the ciguapa embodies, "a precapitalist legendary past," placing this figure in a nebulous, precapitalist bygone era.[57] Conversely, Ginette Candelario situates the creature's origins in the Dominican project of nation-building in the aftermath of a period of instability from 1822-1865 during which there was an attempt at unification with Haiti, the establishment of the Dominican Republic, an attempt at recolonization by the Spanish, and finally a war to expel the Spanish, which took place from 1863 to 1865.[58] Candelario credits author and journalist Francisco Javier Angulo Guridi (1816-84) with bringing the ciguapa into "Dominican life and lore."[59] Situating the ciguapa within the construction of the nation-state has its own set of connotations to the ciguapa's function within Báez's painting. However, I would argue that its debated origins and very mutability are what have inspired a wide variety of uses of the ciguapa in literature, art, and theory particularly amongst the diaspora.

In relation to space and indeed to mapping, the most distinctive aspect of the ciguapa is its backwards feet. As Candelario writes, the ciguapa possesses, "a built-in mechanism for misleading those who follow, pursue, or attempt to grasp her."[60] The ciguapa purposefully misleads. In this sense, a ciguapa is inherently against the most basic elements of a map, that of navigation and wayfinding. Additionally, the juxtaposition of the ciguapa and the Fries map, presents another set of questions. For example, does the layering of the two suggest that the map

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[56] Duran-Almarza, quoted in Nancy Kang, "'Rubbed Inflections of Litany and Myth': Ciguapismo in Rhina P. Espaillat's Feminist Poetics of Loss," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 21, no. 2 (October 2022): 374.

[57] Kang, "'Rubbed Inflections of Litany and Myth,'" 376.

[58] Ginetta E. B. Candelario, "La Ciguapa y El Ciguapeo: Dominican Myth, Metaphor, and Method," *Small Axe* 20, no. 3 (November 2016), https://doi.org/10.1215/07990537-3726890, 105.

[59] Candelario, "La Ciguapa y El Ciguapeo," 102.

[60] Candelario, "La Ciguapa y El Ciguapeo," 102.

was misleading all along? Or does their shared presence in the artwork create a hierarchy between the two, placing the ciguapa front and centre, and strategically concealing the ocean in the map, arguably the region that requires the greatest knowledge and guidance when traversing?

By concealing the ocean with her presence, part of the ciguapa's function within the artwork, then, is as a purveyor of opacity. Due to Baez's use of acrylic and oil paints, the map behind the ciguapa is completely covered. The ciguapa enacts opacity in relation to the transparent qualities of the map. It seeks to render the area illegible. Mark Godfrey identifies opacity as an important element of Báez's map paintings and argues that it functions as both an act of refusal and an invitation to imagine new worlds.[61] With this in mind, I propose the function of opacity in this work is to identify tension between opacity and transparency that is inherent to mapping. Both Godfrey and I are working with Édouard Glissant's theory of opacity, in which he identifies opacity as a right to exist in an "irreducible singularity."[62] In practice, this means the presence of difference without the need for reduction of one's self to the point of judgement or comparison. With this in mind, mapping is then always in tension with Glissant's opacity as it is a constant act of reduction and translation to the point of obliterating difference through a flattening and a uniform representation of space. In this sense, I am in agreement with Godfrey that opacity in the work presents an act of refusal, however more than just a refusal of representation, I propose to read the opacity present in the work as a refusal to succumb to the flattening and reductive technologies of the map. Where the map proposes the transparent and navigable rendering of space, the ciguapa renders the space of the Atlantic opaque once again. Purporting to render something like the Atlantic Ocean knowable, transparent, and navigable,

[61] Godfrey, "The Map Paintings," in *Firelei Báez: To Breathe Full and Free,* 235.

[62] Édouard Glissant, "For Opacity," in *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 190.

which Fries' map is decidedly concerned with, is an act of reduction, which the ciguapa negates with her presence. This is achieved not only by rendering the ocean out of view due to her placement, but also by her own inherent inability to be reduced to one, knowable thing. She is always just out of reach.

That the ciguapa can never be contained within the map, brings forth the defining and quantifying, organizing and ranking, qualities of the map. Given the time period when this map was made and its use within the artwork, questions of Early Modern conceptions of the human and who is considered human necessarily arise, and as stated above, Wynter outlines the stakes of this categorization during this same time period. Wynter argues that today's opposition of the of human and the nonhuman are based in the "degodding"[63] process that took place at the end of 15th century and start of the 16th century. Essentially, Wynter argues that a man used to be defined as someone under God's graces, but it was believed that inhabitants of the so-called new world were never reached by God's apostles and therefore could not be understood as having rejected God's word because they never encountered it.[64] This left a theological gap in the European justification of colonization. If humanity could no longer be tied to God, something else was needed to differentiate and uphold the European mission and explain why they were entitled to the land of the so-called new world. Somewhat paradoxically, the initial designation of Africans as "pagan idolaters" and "Enemies of Christ," according to Wynter, "set in motion the secularizing reinvention of [Western Europe's] own matrix Christian identity as Man" [65] because it introduced a racial and a geographic element in the designation of difference. This, in turn, allowed Western Europe to define according to its own terms who was human and who was

[63] Wynter, "Unsettling Coloniality," 281.

[64] Wynter, "Unsettling Coloniality," 293.

[65] Wynter, "Unsettling Coloniality," 291-92

subhuman, upholding the papal bulls of 1455 which provided the framework for terra nullius (lands of no one) and thus the justification for Europeans seizing the lands they found themselves on.[66] Most notable, is that facing this question of humanity and inhumanity, Báez engages with an inhuman figure and hereby aligns herself with Wynter who throughout her work argues, "there is no beginning through which firm conclusions can be made."[67] By countering questions of colonial expansion, humanness, and racial construction with a distinctly semi-human figure, one that leaves questions unanswered, Báez is resisting not only the question, but the entire framework that allowed such a question such as "who is human?" to be asked in the first place; she achieves this with the placement, size, and detail of the ciguapa in relation to the map.

The ciguapa, as a figure in Dominican lore, whether pre-Columbian or not, is slippery; she evades easy definition and indeed the beauty of the ciguapa is in its malleability and the ways in which it transforms according to the storytellers. As it relates to mapping—especially the variety of mapping found in the background image, which posits itself as the purveyor of knowledge and power—the ciguapa is adaptable and reflects the interests of its narrator or in this case the artist. It wears its liminality proudly, directly undermining the assumed, empirical objectivity of the map. Báez manages to subvert this map, one that is bound up in power and domination, number and measurement, with this incredible figure that delights in its liminality. The ciguapa is both human and plant, not black and white like the map but rather warm shades of brown, red, green, yellow, and orange. Where the map is a tool of navigation and wayfinding, among other more sinister projects, the ciguapa purposefully misleads, hinders exploration and intentionally wastes time.[68]

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[66] Wynter, "Unsettling Coloniality," 292.

[67] Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 23.

[68] This interpretation of the ciguapa resonates with Saidiya Hartman's interpretation of waywardness: "Wayward: to wonder, to be unmoored, adrift, rambling, roving, cruising, strolling, and seeking. To claim the right

Shuvinai Ashoona

Shuvinai Ashoona is an Inuk artist from Kinngait, Nunavut, who produces work through Kinngait Studios, the local branch of the community-run West Baffin Co-operative. The co-op supports artists by allowing them to make art full time and facilitates the sale of Inuit art in the Canadian and international art markets. Her work is comprised primarily of large-scale coloured pencil, and fine-line marker drawings on paper. Ashoona has been a mainstay of the Canadian art scene since her participation in group shows in the late 1990s, alongside her well-known artist grandmother Pisteolak Ashoona.[69] Beginning in the mid 2010s, her work has been displayed internationally, leading to her inclusion in the exhibition *Milk of Dreams* presented at the Venice Biennale in 2022.[70]

Though a relatively recent addition to her work, blue and green globes began appearing in her compositions in the mid-2000s and have since gone on to dominate her work, culminating in the 2019 exhibition *Mapping Worlds*, which opened at the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto and went on to tour a number of Canadian cities including Calgary, Vancouver, and Montreal. I will address how Ashoona appropriates and transforms the globe, and how her alternative mapping practice becomes a critique of empirical knowledge and scientific achievement. One of the defining ways Ashoona uses the globe in her work is its through its multiplication or abundance – rarely does she include just one globe in a drawing, but rather she will create a number of them, all with slight variations in colour and form. Nor do they

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to opacity. To strike, to riot, to refuse. To love what is not loved," *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2019), 277.

[69] See Cape Dorset Annual Graphic Collection 1997 and the exhibition *Three Women, Three Generations: Drawings by Pitseolak Ashoona, Napatchie Pootoogook and Shuvinai Ashoona* held at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection from May 14 to August 31, 1999.

[70] IAQ, "Shuvinai Ashoona Awarded Special Mention at the 59th Venice Biennale," *Inuit Art Quarterly,* April 27, 2022, https://www.inuitartfoundation.org/iaq-online/shuvinai-ashoona-awarded-special-mention-at-59th-venice-biennale.

always serve the same purpose in her work; for example, scores of globes make up the head and arms of an octopus-like figure in *Earth Transformations* (2012) while in *Happy Mother* (2013) a crown of globes decorates the head of a baby, emerging from between its mother's legs at the moment of birth. To examine how Ashoona appropriates the globe as a form of mapping, I focus on the 2010 work *Untitled (Woman Giving Birth to the World)* as a case study (Fig. 8).

The drawing, which is almost a perfect square at 121.9 x 129.5 cm, was made on white paper, and the artist has kept some of that blank whiteness as a background. In the center of the composition are two large globes, stacked one on top of the other, separated only by the elongated red arms of the titular woman giving birth, who stands in the bottom left-hand corner of the image. Both globes are depicted in varying shades of green and blue which are drawn consistently and evenly in coloured pencil. The woman wears a red parka that hits mid-thigh, and yellow pants; the hood of the parka is up, and a small sliver of the woman's face is visible (Fig. 8.1). The top globe is dotted with spoons, an axe, and a swiss army knife and encircled by a school of brightly coloured fish that seem to emerge from the spoons. The lower globe is decorated with the infrastructure typical of northern communities like Kinngait: single-storey prefab houses, a couple of apartment buildings, and tents indicative of a nomadic lifestyle on the land. The parka-clad woman has a globe emerging from her stomach, mimicking the silhouette of a pregnant body. Next to the woman is a pile of flat stones, a common motif in Ashoona's work, while a plant that resembles seaweed emerges from the top end of the selection of rocks. Three half globes, similar in shape to the one attached to the woman, float up towards the main globes, as if to imply that she has done this before and she will do this again. Perhaps the two large globes were once a part of her as well. Swirling around these centrally-positioned motifs are a variety of objects including small globes, eyes (some with globes in the place of eyeballs), and fish—all of which appear to move in a circular motion around the two main globes (Fig.

8.2). There are also easter eggs and fruits like bananas and strawberries with leaf-like tendrils emerging from the tops of them as well as a face done in a similar style with an open mouth.

In order to approach Ashoona's manipulations of the globe, it is important to consider some background on the history of the globe and its treatment within visual culture and mapping practices. Early depictions of the globe mapped the celestial landscape, instead of the earthly one we see in Ashoona's work. One of the earliest examples of this is the *Farnese Atlas,* a sculpture from the late second century C.E. showing Atlas holding a globe above his head; the globe portion of the sculpture is modelled after a celestial globe by Eudoxus (c. 408-355 B.C.E).[71] Early celestial globes were the result of the Greeks' desire and ability to document and reproduce the stars and indeed, can be seen as an important precursor to the global mapping that would follow.[72] The crucial difference being that, up until recently, the stars were not available for conquest, as were the geographic expanses of the earth. The Farnese globe, which maps the sky not the earth, was always bound up in description and knowability, reflecting a longstanding tradition in Western visuality to know by way of visualization and representation.

Denis Cosgrove, geographer and scholar, has tracked the changing representations of the earth as a whole since antiquity, in *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Historical Imagination.* One through line in Cosgrove's, comprehensive genealogy of Western globes is the consistent representation of the globe as self-contained and spherical object, reflecting the idea that the globe has long been, "a single image of order."[73] Although Cosgrove does not take an explicitly art historical approach to his subject-matter, he nonetheless

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[71] W. Dilke quoted by Denis Cosgrove in *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Historical Imagination*, 30.

[72] Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 274.

[73] Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 30.

encounters a wide variety of visual materials and examines them with careful and sustained study. Cosgrove writes: "as a globe, the planet is geometrically constructed, its contingency reduced to a surface pattern or lines and shapes. Thus, the globe is visual and graphic rather than experiential or textual."[74] The earth and its subsequent representation in globe form is, first and foremost, a process of reduction visualized through a pattern of lines and shapes that convey a geometrically constructed globe. Cosgrove forefronts the surface in his understanding of the globe and its subsequent representations; the experiential or textual as he calls it, is of lesser importance. He is interested in the treatment of line in representing and reducing three-dimensional space.

In the hands of Ashoona, the globe's visual and graphic qualities are brought to the forefront. For example, when looking at Ashoona's globe, the famous "Blue Marble" image comes to mind due to formal similarities. The Blue Marble photograph, taken in 1972 by the American astronauts aboard the Apollo 17 spacecraft, has gone on to become one of the most widely circulated images in the world (Fig. 6). It shows the earth, floating within the blackness of space, covered in white fluffy clouds, and most importantly "right side up" with north facing up as has long been the convention in mapping.[75] Given the circumstances of its creation, this particular image of the globe cannot be disentangled from the history of the Cold War and the space race. It acts as a symbol of American capitalist triumph. It is all the more intriguing, therefore, that Ashoona adapts the Blue Marble version of the globe within her work. If the globe can be seen as a symbol of American exceptionalism, Ashoona subverts this idea by allowing the globe to multiply and acquire new meanings.

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[74] Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 8.

[75] The image of the earth that most people would recognize today is an edited, colour corrected version of the original 35mm photograph. In the original, the earth is not perfectly centered and is shown Southside up (Fig. 7).

Simon Ferdinand, a British art historian, has studied maps and art in relation to modernity and modern representations of the earth. Ferdinand evaluates how artworks that use mapping or represent maps contend with questions of modernity. In his discussion of a Soviet-era painting with a focus on a globe, he writes, "the modern globe compels people and polities to recognize themselves as the only source of meaning, order, and value."[76] This idea of the globe as measurable and ultimate and *only* a conveyor of order within a world requiring order is a masculinist and normative reading of the icon. This echoes Cosgrove's theory of the globe as a singular object. The emphasis on singularity is especially notable today, as the image of the globe has become in some ways synonymous with the mounting climate crisis. When viewed through an environmentally conscious lens this often leads to a sense that there is only one earth, and so we must protect it. To others the globe is an equalizer: despite our differences we are all here. In Ashoona's artworks, the significance of the globe is more complicated, as there are literally worlds within this world. This multiplicity is distinctly absent in the globes described by Ferdinand and Cosgrove. This is precisely where the tension lies within Ashoona's work; she has not thrown out the Western image of the globe completely, and she is clearly interested in its formal representation. It means something that the blue and green globes found in her work harken to something highly recognizable.

In their respective studies of the globe, Cosgrove and Ferdinand emphasize that the globe is a singular object, unique in Western visuality, and inherently linked to a disembodied point of view. The globe can only be viewed by the human eye from a certain distance and herein lies the importance of an image like the *Blue Marble* which demonstrates the achievement of finally seeing the earth from above, confirming that humans are separate enough from the planet to be

[76] Simon Ferdinand, *Mapping Beyond Measure: Art, Cartography, and the Space of Global Modernity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), 39.

able to capture the globe in their field of vision. Donna Haraway has written extensively about the limits of disembodied and singular vision or what she calls, "the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere," in the context of offering a feminist critique of scientific objectivity; she cautions against understanding visuality in such a way. Instead, she proposes that an embodied perspective is the only way vision exists.[77] Haraway insists that all vision betrays a point of view and she argues that the eye cannot be disconnected from the body, which necessarily has a position in space and indeed a perspective.[78] Ashoona's work is certainly concerned with similar issues of embodied perspective, however, I would argue that by closely connecting the globe and the eye, she shows that even seemingly disembodied images like that of the globe in space, are in fact embodied and partial. Ashoona achieves this through the proximity and slippage of the eye and the globe in her work, especially in *Untitled (Woman Giving Birth to the World).* The fusing of the globe and the eye marks a connection between the hyper-local—indeed, the bodily—and quite literally the global. In some ways this work points to the paradox in which the globe can never been fully seen by the eye. The globe promises a three-dimensional image and yet the eye can only ever perceive one portion of it; this is in some ways the ultimate god trick, to borrow Haraway's phrase. Vision is always imperfect and while the globe purports to rectify this by allowing the eye to hold the earth within its field of vision, Ashoona's imagery proves that even this perspective will always fall short. The globe, like the eye, can never be detached from its context nor the circumstances of its visibility.

Ashoona's repetition of the recognizable blue and green globe is notable because she situates the origins of this repetition in the bodily mechanisms of birth. By showing an Inuk

[77] Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 189.

[78] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 189-191.

woman birthing the globe, the artist simultaneously renders the globe a bodily entity and makes the globe her kin, extending the idea of family relations to encompass more than just human relations. The globe here is indicative of something more organic, flexible, and fluid than is typically the case in scientific and political representations of the globe. In Ashoona's drawing, the globes appear to exist in harmony with each other, they are balanced, one atop the other and each has enough space to exist without impinging on the other, and there are more to come, floating up from the bottom of the image. The globe is a deeply relational figure in Ashoona's work, not just because of its embodied origins. The two centre globes in this piece are not separate from the worlds they contain; one has spoons, fish, and spoon-fish hybrids swimming across its surface and emanating from it and the other has houses and apartment buildings peeking out from behind it and superimposed onto it. These globes are part of the cycle of birth and rebirth, destabilizing the longstanding image of the globe as singular, a stable icon of modernity, progress, and humanity.

The repetition and the appropriation of the globe destabilizes its position as icon of scientific and capitalist achievement. However, Ashoona does not just produce and reproduce exact copies of the globe, as each of her globes varies in size, colour, shape, and form. In Ashoona's work, forms are fluid, and the globe is no exception. The eyes become globes, or the globes become eyes; or perhaps this happens simultaneously. The purple-irised eye in the top left-hand corner of the drawing demonstrates this; the eyelashes become fish or tears or other eyes. Everything is changing. A globe in Ashoona's world can be any number of things, an eye or a baby, or a friend.[79] Indeed part of Ashoona's skills lies in her ability to create, "a worldview

[79] See *Happy Mother* (2013), *Untitled (Birthing Scene)* (2013), and *Composition (People, Animals and the World Holding Hands)* (2007-08).

that concurrently integrates the galactic and the granular."[80] In this case, the galactic is made granular and the granular is allowed to be galactic. A foetus can be an entire world and worlds have to compete for space within the iris of the pupil. Her appropriation and scaling of the globe plays with its power as an icon, rendering it malleable. It brings into question the entire process through which this icon came into the global imagination. What is this globe really indicative of? In this sense, Ashoona is changing the type of power and status associated with the globe by integrating it into the world of her drawings. Rather than be subsumed by the globe, she asserts power over it through her rendering. But the work does this by emphasizing the organic qualities of the globe; the composition of *Untitled (Woman Giving Birth to the World)* has a distinctly floating quality to it. The collection of items in the composition appear to be floating in water rather than air. The tendrils of the of the fruit and the easter eggs appear to sway as though being moved gently by flows of water. Herein lies the crux of Ashoona's repetition, as she repeats imperfectly and organically, which negates the singular, incorruptible images of the globe that dominate the visual landscape.

This type of repetition is a technique Ashoona uses in other bodies of work too, where she has repeated certain images, including that of the Titanic. The image of the Titanic (as popularized by James Cameron in the highly successful 1997 movie) pops up in a few of Ashoona's works.[81] The inclusion and repetition of Titanic imagery in Ashoona's body of work is often cited by writers as indicative of the artist's keen ability to integrate pop culture in her work, which is undoubtedly one way it functions within Ashoona's work.[82] Tarralik Duffy, artist

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[80] Michelle Gay, "Shuvinai Ashoona's Perspectival Fluidity" in Gaëtane Verna, ed., *Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds* (Munich: Toronto: Hirmer; The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, 2021), 99.

[81] See *Compositions (Titanic Plus Nascopie and Noah's Ark)* (2008), *Sinking Titanic* (2012), and *Titanic* (2012).

[82] Adrienne Huard, "Review: Shuvinai Ashoona," *Canadian Art*, April 23, 2019, https://canadianart.ca/reviews/shuvinai-ashoona/.

and writer, takes a different route and looks at the Titanic for what it is: a ship. She writes, "as Inuit, ships were the alien invasion of our not-so-ancient times; their first appearance irreversibly changed out world, and we are forever entangled."[83] Ashoona, whose livelihood as an artist is a direct result of the Canadian government colonial's policies, understands the long-lasting legacy of exploration and conquest, whether it be via ship or spaceship.[84] With her globe works, she interrogates one of the products of humankind's exploration of space: the photographic evidence of the Earth. Not only is the connection to outer space notable in Duffy's writing, but the insinuation that the pinnacle of technology to some signals the threat of cultural annihilation to others is useful when thinking about the globe. The ability to photograph the earth from space may encourage hope in some, while signalling real trouble for others. It can be argued that Ashoona's work takes on an allegorical nature as its cautions against the optimism of space-travel, but in many ways her approach to the globe is ambiguous, which, when talking about an image that has taken on such heavy symbolism, is revolutionary in its own way. It isn't a symbol of scientific achievement nor the sign of a warming climate, rather it is just like us, it is birthed like we are, and we should treat it as such, as a living entity.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, I have pulled at the threads that weave cartographic strategy into the fabric of these works. In doing so, I seek to demonstrate how these works problematize the epistemological promises of maps. Sandy Rodriguez's *You Will Not Be Forgotten, Mapa for the Children Killed in Custody of the US Customs and Border Protection* (2019), Firelei Báez's *Untitled (Terra Nova)* (2020), and Shuvinai Ashoona's *Untitled (Woman Giving Birth to the*

[83] Tarralik Duffy, "According to Shuvinai" in *Shuvinai Ashoona: Mapping Worlds*, 64.

[84] This is a reference to the increasing privatization of space exploration through the work of companies like Space X and Blue Origin.

World) (2010) all employ, in a manner distinct to each artist's practice, forms of cartographic strategy. Be it through appropriation or subversion, these artists destabilize the map as a technology of colonial power through their work.

The map's use as a technology of colonial power is predicated on a few crucial functions–its ability to delineate, render navigable, and order space in the service of the colonizers. Each of these three artists disrupts (at least) one of these functions with their work, therefore engaging in a decolonial form of image making. Rodriguez uses the map to pinpoint acts of neo-colonial violence, geographically situating some of the deadly encounters between migrants and US Border Patrol agents. In doing so, the artist demonstrates the contested aspects of the Mexico/USA border—which designates not only a piece of land, but a person deemed out of place—and with this focus the map's ability to delineate space is rendered uncertain. Where does the border really end if people are dying in the custody of Border Protection in the middle of Texas? The map's process of differentiation between nations is also brought into question, as Rodriguez's work complicates the notion that the border is a straight line shown on a map. Báez address Early Modern iterations of the map in her work and undermines the assumed authority of those documents by juxtaposing the map with a figure that cannot be contained within its spatial and navigational premise. The maps that Báez works with are primarily concerned with facilitating movement and conquest across the Atlantic Ocean and so the mere existence of the ciguapa who moves through the world by way of deception and evasion thwarts the purposed navigability of the map by rendering it illegible with her presence and mysterious purpose. Another crucial function of the map is to order space through an establishment of a scale and an orientation through which space is processed; this allows space to be compared, evaluated, and ranked. Ashoona's presentation of the globe is incompatible with such methods because it refuses containment within such a scale and such a ranking. In Ashoona's work, the globe no

longer is a scientifically-scaled map of the earth, but rather an intimate part of Inuit life, and therefore the ordering function of the map is rendered ineffective. In the hands of these artists, these qualities of the map that make it a colonial tool—the delineating, the importance of navigability, and the ordering of space—are significantly diminished. This decolonial way of making images does not erase the violent history of the map, but it renders the map open to outside influence, which in this case takes the form of artistic intervention.

The purpose of this thesis is not, explicitly, to put these artists in conversation with each other, rather it is to offer a deeper study of how each artist uses mapping and maps within their work than has previously been afforded. This being said, it would be a mistake to assemble them and not ask what these works say about each other. Briefly, I'd like to outline some ways in which I understand these works to be aligned, which is primarily through their manipulation of scale and temporality. Báez and Ashoona play with scale in similar ways; both artists enlarge or shrink details to the point at which the source material takes on a new meaning. Báez takes a map made for its portability and as an aid to navigability and enlarges it to the point that it no longer functions as a guiding technology. Ashoona shrinks the globe to the point that it can no longer be understood as an accurate representation of the earth. In their respective forms of distortion, each type of map is divorced from its intended function and a new role emerges, one that makes space for contradiction, liminality, and uncertainty. Rodriguez approaches scale in a unique way, as there is a contrast between the mineral particles used in her pigments, and the bird's eye view in the perspective of her maps, thus creating a dialogue between scales. In a more structural way, bringing together these three artworks allows the thesis itself to experiment with scale by situating these artworks in a way that allows the scale to grow progressively as we move through the works. Beginning at the granular level with Rodriguez's work and ending with Ashoona's planetary level, the thesis zooms out as it progresses. However, I propose the way

scale functions within these three artworks is also non-linear. Although Ashoona's work appears to function on the largest scale of the three, it is also actively concerned with the artist's surrounding community and its small-scale components of the landscape like the rocks, the fish, and the seaweed. This disrupts a straightforward reading of scale within these three works and encourages a circular reading of them as a collection. While their strategies differ, each artist succeeds in moving through and across multiple scales, disrupting their presumed fixities and new ways of reading the works in conjunction.

In a similar way, each artwork reverberates across multiple time periods. One defining feature of the map as a practical tool is a date; all maps whether they be digital or historical must be dated in order to be used. Therefore, the very attempt to demonstrate multiple temporalities in a single work that references or uses mapping is to question the validity of the map as a form of technology, destabilizing it. Though this issue is discussed most directly as it relates to Rodriguez's map, a multitemporal reading of the work of Báez and Ashoona is possible as well. Báez necessarily addresses a specific time in her work, referencing the early colonial period, but the presence of the ciguapa suggests other time periods as well—either that of the 19th century when the modern Dominican Republic was founded, or the precolonial period, through a reference to Indigenous Taíno epistemologies. Báez mines the past to highlight ongoing modes of resistance and in doing so disrupts a linear reading of time. She carries this resistance with her, moving through and across time in doing so. Meanwhile, Ashoona, in her proliferation of worlds, offers the potential for multiple temporalities. If there's an infinite number of worlds contained in one image, there must also be a corresponding multiplicity of timelines. Not only does each artist's use of time within their work reckon with the map as a colonial technology, it also opens up pathways to new modes of knowledge retrieval

As much as the idea of presenting and embodying multiple temporalities within the works of these artists is exciting, I want to avoid flattening these works in order to make them adhere to my theoretical approach informed by the tenets of geography, time and scale. Rather I hope to have demonstrated that these respective engagements with geography's instruments like the map, show that the discipline is only as strong as the scholars, institutions, and artists that subscribe to it. What each of these artists so aptly demonstrates is that to push up against the boundaries of the disciplines of both art and geography is to bring out generative modes in both. Art historian Svetlana Alpers, in her study of seventeenth century Dutch art production, advocates for an examination of the blurry space between art and map. Alpers recommends, "what should be of interest to students of maps and of pictures is not where the line was drawn between them, but precisely the nature of their overlap, the basis of their resemblance."[85] I consider myself a student of maps and pictures and the multitudes of ways the two overlap, intersect, and interact. There is more to be studied here; for example, an inquiry into how each artist's interactions with maps has changed throughout their practices would have much to offer scholars. I have looked at how artworks represent mapping processes, but it would also be fruitful to see how mapping processes are influenced by pictorial conventions. All three artists under consideration here focus primarily on two-dimensional, flat works, but a study of video works, installation, or sculpture, that are still concerned with cartographic strategy, would be an area of further research. Regardless of what form future studies take, what is most important is the rigorous and sustained application of an interdisciplinary framework. It has been crucial to this research and can only expand how art is studied, appreciated, and made.

[85] Svetlana Alpers, "The Mapping Impulse in Dutch Art," in *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: Minneapolis: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 129.

I'd like to return to Dionne Brand and the way she distinguishes between cartographic description and journeying. For the poet, this is indicative of that which cannot be contained by the location of the door to no return, the door through which enslaved Africans passed through before boarding slave ships. The location is known, easily discernable on a map, but what it means to her and other members of the Black diaspora is not easily put into words, not easily described. As Brand puts it, "the door, or course, is not on the continent but in the mind; not a physical place—though it is—but a space in the imagination."[86] The importance of the journey lies in its ability to hold contradictory ideas, to create the spaces that are simultaneously physical and psychic; physical spaces one carries in the mind, regardless of location. This is where I situate the necessity of the work done by the three artists discussed here. Their work is concerned with the interaction between the physicality of space and its subsequent imaginative potential. Each of these three artists creates a place for the coexistence of these contradictory ideas and spaces within their work. They represent the ability and the willingness to hold multiple truths simultaneously and to offer an idea of what that may look like.

[86] Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return* (Canada: Doubleday Canada, 2001), 96-97.

Appendix I: Figures

Figure 1. Artist Unknown, *Armada Portrait (Elizabeth I)* (1588) oil paint on oak panel, 112.5 x 127 cm, London, UK, National Maritime Museum. Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armada_Portrait#/media/File:Elizabeth_I_(Armada_Portrait).jpg.

Figure 2. Sandy Rodriguez, *You Will Not Be Forgotten Mapa for the children killed in custody of the US Customs and Border Protection* (2019) hand-processed watercolour and 23k gold on amate paper, 240 x 119.4 cm, Fort Worth, Texas, Amon Carter Museum of American Art. Image source: https://www.cartermuseum.org/collection/you-will-not-be-forgotten-mapa-children-killed-custody-us-customs-and-border-protection.

Figure 2.1 Sandy Rodriguez, *You Will Not Be Forgotten Mapa for the children killed in custody of the US Customs and Border Protection* (2019) [Detail] hand-processed watercolour and 23k gold on amate paper, 240 x 119.4 cm, Fort Worth, Texas, Amon Carter Museum of American Art. Image source: author's photo.

Figure 2.2 Sandy Rodriguez, *You Will Not Be Forgotten Mapa for the children killed in custody of the US Customs and Border Protection* (2019) [Detail] hand-processed watercolour and 23k gold on amate paper, 240 x 119.4 cm, Fort Worth, Texas, Amon Carter Museum of American Art. Image source: author's photo.

Figure 3. John Disturnell, *Mapa de les Estados Unidos de Méjico* (1847) print with hand coloured detailing, 75 x 104 cm, Washington, DC, Library of Congress Geography and Map Division. Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4410.ct000127/?r=-0.196,-0.01,1.491,0.796,0.

Figure 4. Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *The Florentine Codex (Image 100 of Volume 1)* (1577), ink on paper, 31 x 21 cm, Washington DC, Library of Congress, Book/Printed Material. Image source: https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_10096_001/?sp=100.

Figure 5. Firelei Báez, *Untitled (Terra Nova)* (2020) oil and acrylic paint, laser print on canvas, 261.1. x 336.1 cm, Montreal, Quebec, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Image source: https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/collections/acquisitions/firelei-baez/.

Figure 5.1 Firelei Báez, *Untitled (Terra Nova)* (2020) [Detail 1] oil and acrylic paint, laser print on canvas, 261.1. x 336.1 cm, Montreal, Quebec, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Image source: https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/collections/acquisitions/firelei-baez/.

Figure 5.2 Firelei Báez, *Untitled (Terra Nova)* (2020) [Detail 2] oil and acrylic paint, laser print on canvas, 261.1. x 336.1 cm, Montreal, Quebec, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Image source: https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/collections/acquisitions/firelei-baez/.

Figure 6. Harrison Schmitt and Ron Evans, The Blue Marble (1972) 70mm Hasselbald photograph, Washington DC, NASA Headquarters Archives. Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Earth_seen_from_Apollo_17.jpg.

Figure 7. Harrison Schmitt and Ron Evans, AS17-148-22727 (1972) 70mm Hasselbald photograph, Washington DC, NASA Headquarters Archives. Image source: https://www.lpi.usra.edu/resources/apollo/frame/?AS17-148-22727.

Figure 8. Shuvinai Ashoona, *Untitled (woman giving birth to the world)* (2010) fine liner pen and coloured pencil on paper, 121.9 x 129.5 cm. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Image source: https://www.aci-iac.ca/online-exhibitions/shuvinai-ashoona-mapping-worlds/gallery/94662/.

Figure 8.1. Shuvinai Ashoona, *Untitled (woman giving birth to the world)* (2010) [Detail] fine liner pen and coloured pencil on paper, 121.9 x 129.5 cm. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Image source: https://www.aci-iac.ca/online-exhibitions/shuvinai-ashoona-mapping-worlds/gallery/94662/.

Figure 8.2. Shuvinai Ashoona, *Untitled (woman giving birth to the world)* (2010) [Detail] fine liner pen and coloured pencil on paper, 121.9 x 129.5 cm. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Image source: https://www.aci-iac.ca/online-exhibitions/shuvinai-ashoona-mapping-worlds/gallery/94662/.

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