

# Dan Mills

## Human Topographies



### GRADE LEVEL

Preschool - 1

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Create an altered map that expresses movement or migration using a variety of painting processes.

### GOALS

Students will understand:

- How close observation is a tool for learning and discovery
- Process of creating a work of art that represents a place
- Application of paints in a variety of ways to express movement

### ARTIST

Dan Mills | Lewiston, ME

Dan Mills is an artist based in Maine. Primarily creating works on paper and paintings incorporating maps, his artwork explores historic and current events.

<http://abacus.bates.edu/~dmills/>

### INTRODUCTION

Dan Mills makes work that is full of observations about historic and current events. He conducts extensive research on topics such as current wars and conflicts, colonialism, and life expectancy by state, and creates paintings and works on paper that visualize data and information on these subjects.

Mills frequently uses maps as the space to explore these ideas. He began incorporating maps into his work in the early 1990s while researching the quincentennial of what is euphemistically referred to as the The First Encounter. Since then, he has explored history and colonization in painting/collages on large roll-down school maps and in an atlas of future states, the loss of history through erasure and over-painting on maps, visualized data about current wars and conflicts in world maps, and data about life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness on U.S. maps.

### LESSON

Take a look at the work of Dan Mills in our Summer 2019 virtual tour found at [cmcanow.org/virtual-tours/](http://cmcanow.org/virtual-tours/). Travel throughout the Bruce Brown Gallery and identify the bright colors used in his maps and different types of paint application used. Focusing on Dan Mills' *Contest Series*, create an altered map that expresses movement or migration using a variety of painting processes.

### CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Explain the importance of viewing, what is the job of the artist versus the job of the viewer? Closely observe a work on paper from the body of works titled *Contest...* on the left side wall. Discuss what you notice, what type of medium the artist used, and how the artist applied the paint. What kind of story is the artist trying to tell? Where is this place, do you see any places you know?

### CELEBRATE YOUR WORK

Share your process and art work with us via email, Facebook or Instagram @cmcanow.

## VOCABULARY

Hue/Color: when light strike an object

Outline: area around an objects shown by a continuous free hand line

Texture: how a surface feels expressed using a variety of lines and marks

Space: distance of area between, around, and within pieces of an artwork

Bird's Eye View: seeing from a point of view that is above or from a far distance away

Geography: study of earth and its people

## MATERIALS

- Large paper surface
- Paint
- Combs - repurpose a recycled cardboard box or old utensil
- Brushes & hands for mark making
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons or other drawing tools



## INSTRUCTIONS

### STEP 1

Close your eyes and think of an outdoor space where you can play and run around. This place may be your backyard, your school playground, or a hike you take regularly. Imagine you are in the sky looking down onto this special place, what is the **geography** of this place, what **shape** does it form? Lay out a large piece of paper onto a flat surface and begin to draw the **outline** to create a map.

### STEP 2

Grab your paints and begin to create a path as if you were walking through the **space**. Use different marks for different movements (i.e. running might be a continuous brushstroke while walking might be finger prints) while adding **texture** to your map.

### STEP 3

Fill up your map, marking where you play, run and jump. Maybe you assign additional **colors** to represent the people or animals that joined in on the fun! Experiment with different types of mark making to apply to your maps.

## TIPS & TRICKS

Try making this map right after you've gone on a hike, walk, or played outdoors drawing from fresh experiences!



## Daniel Mills

Left:

*Contest - India and Surrounds (with nationalist colors and including colonial incursions and excursions since 1878), 2018*

acrylic, watercolor, and ink on map laid down on paper

13 ¾ x 10 inches

Below:

*Contest - South Africa (with nationalist colors directed towards the countries people migrated from), 2018*

acrylic, watercolor, and ink on map laid down on paper

10 ¼ x 13 ¼ inches

