



## **CHRIS HASSIG** | Artist Statement

### *On Maps*

Maps are more than mere imagery. They are an incredibly efficient system for conveying visual and narrative information in a non-linear manner. They do not have to follow one storyline, series of events or perspective, but can contain multitudes. Maps often strive to appear official, impartial, unemotional, and impersonal, but at the same time maps do have authors. As much as mapmakers may attempt to transcend human fallibility, maps reflect the biases, the tools and technology, and the worldview of their creators. They can be deliberately skewed to tell a story, but will tell one about their creator regardless.

Maps attempt to be all-encompassing, but they are inevitable simplifications. My work previously displayed at Walker Fine Art depicted grass in exhaustive detail. It was akin to a map of a tiny part of the earth. Yet, even in that work simplification and systemization was unavoidable. The famous adage “the map is not the territory” is one of my favorites. That gap between what’s visible on the page and the inferred territory is where maps catch fire in my imagination.

We should discuss imagination, for these are not maps of measurement and observation, but maps of imagination. These maps exaggerate the bias of their creator, because they spring entirely from my imagination. At the same time they are recognizable, familiar almost. This is because they lean heavily on a lifetime of enthusiasm for mapmaking, for exhaustively observing, exploring and investigating landscapes, both natural and human constructed, for investigating the making of maps and the ever evolving ways of representing the world, and for exploring utopian efforts, planning, and human attempts to do better by the world. For the purposes of this project, all of that accumulated investigation and attention to detail are just a part of the research towards a richer imagination.

These maps, no matter whether they lean more to imagery and form or maximal informational richness, thus are a shorthand for an imagined world, or part of it. Translating that vision as best I can, or better yet, giving you the tools to construct your own imagination based on the available information, is a lifetime project.