

Following the American
frontier for 3000 miles through
Native American Country

DON POLLACK

THIS LAND IS

NOT EMPTY

PAINTINGS

INSTALLATION

PERFORMANCE



DON POLLACK

THIS LAND IS NOT EMPTY

PAINTINGS

INSTALLATION

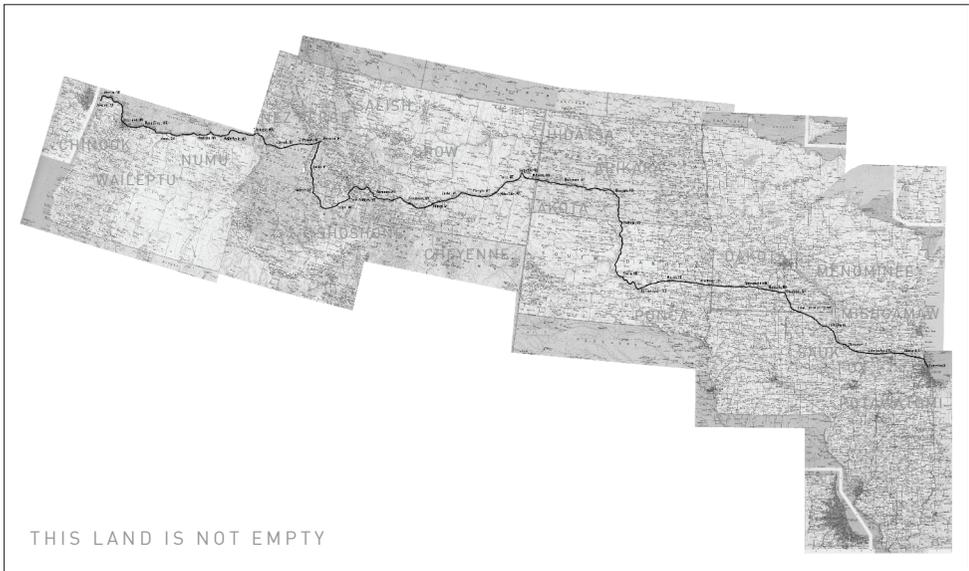
PERFORMANCE

Following the American
frontier for 3000 miles through
Native American Country

September 9 – October 22, 2016

Bridgeport Art Center
Circle Line Gallery
1200 W. 35th St. 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60609
773.843.9000

This work comes from a 3000 mile journey traveled from Lake Michigan to the Pacific coast. Moving through this landscape, the presence of history saturated the experience. In these works in oil on canvas, performance, and installation,— past traumas and revelations speak to the violent conflict on perspectives of the land, the spaces we inhabit, inextricably forget that we are a part of, we conquer, and we picture. Through a physical journey, the measures of this exhibition attempts to make a space for knowing the North American landscape.



[top]
CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE ROUTE
Lake Michigan to
Pacific Ocean
June 20- August 18

[above]
Beaverhead Co., Montana
2015

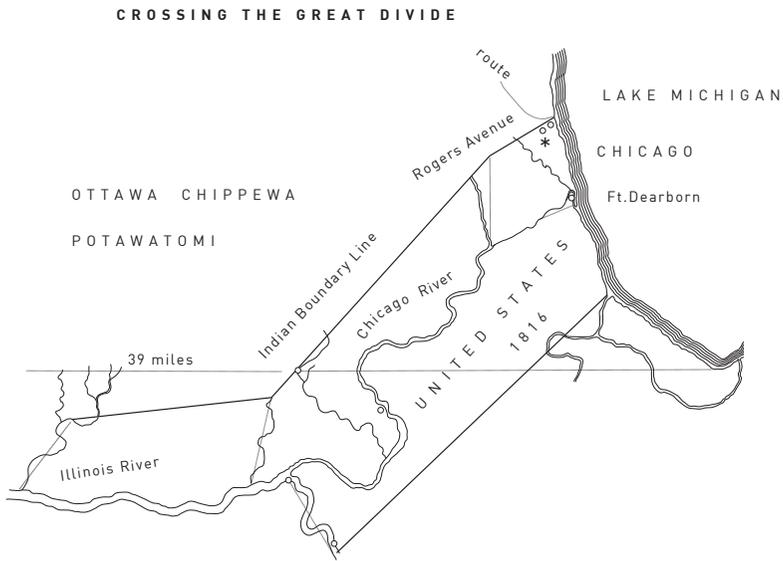
CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE, began as a North American landscape project dedicated to taking history to heart. Traveling for 2 months from Chicago at Lake Michigan to the Pacific Ocean, the journey followed the paths of Lewis and Clark and Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer among others. In order to be more connected and intimate with the landscapes, histories and local cultures, a small team and I decided to take this journey under human power,—we traveled via bicycle for over 3000 miles. Leaving from Rogers Avenue in Chicago or Indian Boundary Line (1816) at Lake Michigan, we arrived at Cape Disappointment, Washington by the Pacific Ocean 2 months later. 'CROSSING THE GREAT DIVIDE' involved both crossing the physical landmass of the Rocky Mountains and the cultural divide that stands between people and the historic trauma with Native America.

As I moved westward, I found myself confronting the violent legacy of Manifest Destiny,—the 19th century belief that U.S. expansion throughout the continent was inevitable and justified by Darwinist reasoning. It led to war with Mexico and endorsed a policy of total annihilation of Native American tribes. This imperial policy met with political dissension and internal conflict in the United States. Continental expansion meant an expansion of slavery and the vehement displacement of Native peoples. In 1824, the War Department created the Bureau of Indian Affairs which set the tone for aggressive treatment of Native people. A history of broken treaties and massacres proclaimed as honorable battles ensued. To eliminate the Native American presence on valued land, genocide of the original people became policy. **The term, 'final solution' meaning total annihilation [of the Native population] was first coined by General William Tecumseh Sherman. The ensuing tragedies and holocaust must not be forgotten.**

I set out to re write my relationship to this history by Re-Surveying the U.S. as a landscape for tolerance. Each Re-Survey marker is a benchmark mark dedicated to undoing the destructive policies and attitudes of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries treatment of Native peoples. Beginning in Chicago and moving westward, 15 locations were GPS recorded and marked at historic sites of trauma along the Missouri, Yellowstone, Tongue, Bighorn, Little Bighorn,

Powder Rivers, and the Pacific Ocean. [Places like the remote conjunction of the Powder River and the Yellowstone in eastern Montana for example is where Custer staged his assault into Lakota Sioux territory.]

In order to extend this work, I am asking people to take one of the clay survey markers as part of the global database of the people listed as allies to the of Re-Surveying project of North America. In order to 'Cross the Great Divide', I kindly ask for your participation and would be greatly honored if you would accept one of these markers. - 6.12.16 www.CrossingTheGreatDivide.net



**MENOMINEE HONORING
DANCE, TREATY ROCK
Indian Boundary Park,*
Chicago
2016**



**MEASURE OF TOLERANCE
BENCHMARK, TREATY ROCK
Survey marker
Indian Boundary Park,*
Chicago
2016**

SURVEY MARKER SITES

MEASURE OF TOLERANCE

1. Indian Boundary Line, Peterson Garden Project site, Rogers Avenue and W. Birchwood, Chicago
42.0188N, 87.6712W, 586.39' altitude

Site of Indian Boundary Line, the border between Native America and the US in 1816.

Our journey of reconciliation begins at this location of the 'Peterson Community Garden' where the seeds of the 'Three Sisters' (corn, beans squash) were planted. The planting of these three main crops important to native peoples was done as a sign of growth and a gesture of reconciliation with all peoples. Indian Boundary Line was a survey whose goal was to give Lake Michigan access to non Native people. Cutting through Potawatomi, Objibwa, and Ottawa country, it was later rescinded after Chief Black Hawk's war and Illinois' statehood. All Illinois Native peoples were then relocated west of the Mississippi. Some of these same seeds from the garden were hand carried across the country in an East-West gesture of healing along a 3000 mile path of the American frontier.

2. Indian Boundary Park, Chicago, IL
42.0091N, 87.6922W, 599.93' altitude

Site of the treaty stone that marks Indian Boundary Park in Chicago. The border on Rogers Avenue was surveyed by George Rogers Clark and his brother, William Clark. William earlier had co-captained the Corps of Discovery with Meriwether Lewis and was responsible for mapping and opening up the west to development. Unfortunately, the Native spirit of hospitality was met with antagonism and bloodshed within 50 years of their first encounter with the Corps. This site symbolically marks the beginning of our cross country journey of reconciliation.

3. Reconciliation Park, Mankato, MN
44.1674N, 94.0030W, 825.58' altitude

This site in Mankato, Minnesota is the location of the hanging of 38 Dakota people after the uprising of 1862. The Dakotas were being starved out by unscrupulous government agents managing their physical survival and internal affairs when conflict broke out on the plains and several hundred settlers were killed. Eventually captured, 38 Dakotas and later 2 more were hung and all other innocent Native tribes were forcibly removed from the state. This site of heartbreak and tragedy marks the largest US mass execution and has become a sacred place of healing for Native and non Native people. It reminds us of its mission with the inscribed words: 'forgive everyone everything'.

4. La Framboise Island, Missouri River, Pierre, SD
44.3612N, 100.3618W, 1426.13' altitude

This site marks the journey of reconciliation at the Lewis and Clark trail by Pierre, South Dakota. Pierre is situated near the mouth of the Bad and the Missouri Rivers and it is here where Lewis and Clark had their first encounter with the Lakota Sioux. That first meeting as well as a second nearly broke out into warfare due to a lack of a good interpreter on the part of the Corps.

5. Ft. Abraham Lincoln, Bismarck, ND
44.3612N, 100.3618W, 1426.13' altitude

Colonel George Armstrong Custer utilized this location as a staging area for the war against the Lakota Sioux in 1876. Lewis and Clark also passed through this area in 1804 and encountered the Mandan people on a high bluff overlooking the Missouri River. The Mandan had lived at this location for nearly four centuries but were nearly wiped out in 1781 by a Smallpox epidemic.

6. Yellowstone River, Glendive, MT
47.1082N, 104.7176W, 2060.37' altitude

In January of 2015 approximately 30,000 gallons of crude oil spilled into the Yellowstone River at this historic location of the Lewis and Clark trail due to a leaking pipeline.

7. Yellowstone and Powder River confluence, west of Terry, MT
46.7386N, 105.4283W, 2225.63' altitude

Lewis and Clark camped at this area on their return trip as well as Colonel George Armstrong Custer in his pursuit of the Lakota Sioux and their leaders, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse. This location was the staging area for the six year war against the Lakotas in the 1870's.

8. Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Crow Agency, Montana.

45.5664N, 107.4249W, 3231.63' altitude

The "Peace Through Unity" Indian Memorial honors Native Americans who fought to preserve the land and a way of life and also those who died on the sacred ground on June 25 and 26, 1876. "If this memorial is to serve its total purpose, it must not only be a tribute to the dead; it must contain a message for the living... power through unity..." – Enos Poor Bear, Sr., Oglala Lakota Elder

9. Little Bighorn River, Sarpy Creek Rd., MT

45.7353N, 107.5665W, 2732.94' altitude

The Little Bighorn Battlefield takes its name from the river by the Lakota campsite where Colonel George Armstrong Custer met his demise at the hands of the Lakota, Cheyenne and Arapaho forces led by Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Gall. Though a Native victory was realized, it marked the beginning of the end for this last generation of Native people to live freely on the Great Plains.

10. Bozeman Pass, MT

45.6671N, 110.8109W, 5630.16' altitude

Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark relied on the generosity of the Native tribes and Sacajawea (Shoshone). In 1806 on the return journey from the Pacific, Sacajawea led Clark's group over this old buffalo path frequented by the local native peoples. By 1860 gold seekers had moved onto Indian land illegally and Native objection were seen as an impediment to progress. Local tribes were classified as hostile and the Pass was eventually named after an early entrepreneur frontiersman, John Bozeman.

11. Big Hole Pass, MT

45.3292N, 113.3284W, 7402.80' altitude

Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce escaped through this Pass on the way to Canada attempting to avoid conflict with General Gibbons and the US Army. Gold was discovered on Nez Perce Reservation and the tribe was given 30 days to move onto a reservation 10% of its original size. Any Natives unaware of this policy or in direct disagreement with its tenants were considered hostile and subject to military force.

12. Nez Perce Big Hole National Battlefield, MT

45.6361N, 113.6438W, 6297.99' altitude

Chief Joseph negotiated with the US to stay in his homeland but a reversal in policy created a hostile environment for the tribe. While trying to avoid conflict with the US Army by moving to Canada, the Nez Perce encountered a predawn surprise attack on their village by General Gibbons. It didn't stop their escape but it yielded tremendous losses to the tribe however with a greater proportion of those being women and children.

13. Lolo Trail-Nez Perce Trail, MT-ID

46.7464N, 114.1710W, 3174.85' altitude

This route was passable only with the prior aid and knowledge of Native American elders who assisted Lewis and Clark on their journey west. The Nez Perce's generosity was mentioned in the journals and was critical to the explorer's survival. Late in the nineteenth century, Chief Joseph saw to it that his people vow never to make war on the incoming settlers. They never broke their promise and unfortunately 50 years after Lewis and Clark passed through this area, the Nez Perce were being hunted down in their own country. The discovery of gold on their Reservation forced the Nez Perce to evacuate their homeland while simultaneously fleeing attacks from the US Army.

14. Portland, OR

45.56227N, 122.8529W, 258.22' altitude

This is the coordinates for the west coast Geannopoulos garden that received the seeds of the 'Three Sisters' (corn, beans squash). These were hand carried from the 'Peterson Community Garden', Chicago in the spirit of unity across country as an East-West gesture of healing along a 3000mile American frontier.

15. Cape Disappointment, WA

46.2817N, 124.0571W, 58.69' altitude

This is the Pacific Ocean endpoint camp for Lewis and Clark and site of the Chinook 'Walk to the Cedars'. The Chinook Native people in this area were very friendly and hospitable to Lewis and Clark's Corps but contact with outsiders extracted a steep price. Later, an outbreak of smallpox and influenza devastated the Chinook for which they had no natural immunities.

The American frontier is a landscape historically rooted in archetypal westerns and traumatic change. These spaces still hold that memory and the historic evidence is very much alive in places such as Big Hole, Montana. Here, I was met with a magnanimous Nez Perce greeting. It beckons all by suggesting that there are no strangers in their homeland,—and states we are all here together and honoring the ancestors and listening to their stories. It is in simple places such as these and at Crow Agency where I saw that the connections between peoples must be taken care of with great patience and understanding. This is a relationship that holds a reciprocity and it is fragile. It is not only a reciprocity between ourselves but between our perspectives, each other, and our relationship to the landscape.

A PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAND TETON, WYOMING ENCOUNTERS A NATIVE AMERICAN BLANKET.

A stripe gives way to a triangle that abstracts a mountain, and I wrap myself with wool. My body is warm and I am surrounded by the beauty of a weaving and am captivated by the mountain symbols that engulf me. The blanket is a document and an article of clothing that protects me from the cold. I am somehow inside the landscape and again under the gaze of the mountain. The photograph of the Teton Range also shifts my space but my creative process moves me differently. I see the two dimensional representation and it appears similar to the outside picture. By looking, I eventually gravitate towards the dichotomies that form their own natural conclusions, such as,—how the notion of 'wilderness' contains within it the notion of 'containment' and how a reverential depiction of nature depends on technique; and how all of this reveals that I have created nature in my own image. I find that it is possible to mistake this landscape for an empty space free of original inhabitants. **This Land is not Empty.**

CHANGING SENTIMENTS AT THE LITTLE BIGHORN BATTLEFIELD where Native warriors fell are now honored alongside 7th calvary soldiers. Next

to the white marble headstones in Montana are now red marble headstones inscribed with statements such as, 'Elk Stands On Top, Sans Arc Sioux,—fell here while defending his homeland and the Sioux way of Life'. It is time to rewrite a new history and to survey a new landscape of respect, inclusion, and tolerance. Tolerance is also a survey term that I gladly accept as metaphor,—it is term used to connote an aspect of truth in the measurement of a map in order to gain a higher standard. It is here in this new map where I wish to achieve the higher standard of tolerance by extending this project beyond me. I am asking allied people locally and around the world for their participation by accepting an unfired clay survey marker.

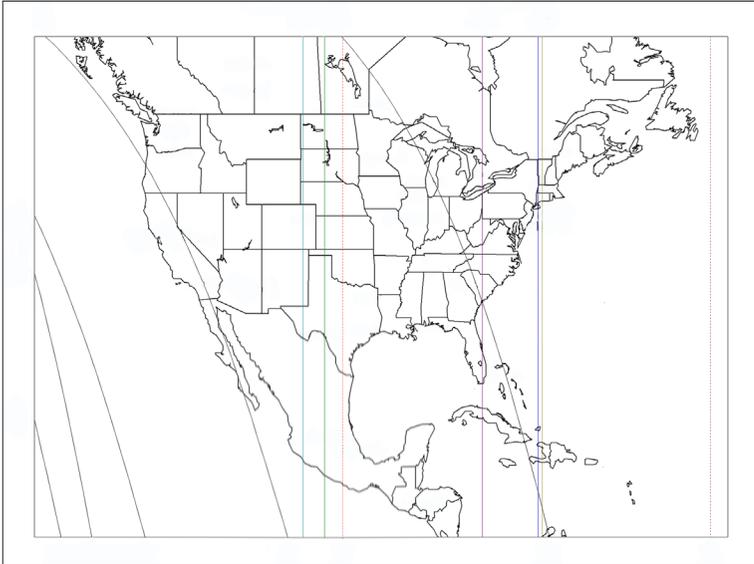


MARKERS
clay
[for distribution]
Bridgeport Art Center
2016



MARKER CASE
glass, wool, felt,
leather, clay, wood
2016

LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY
 COLONIAL DIRECTION OF TRAVEL



Native
west



stripes
landscape

August 18
Pacific Ocean



melting
landscape

July 17
Little Bighorn



image
landscape

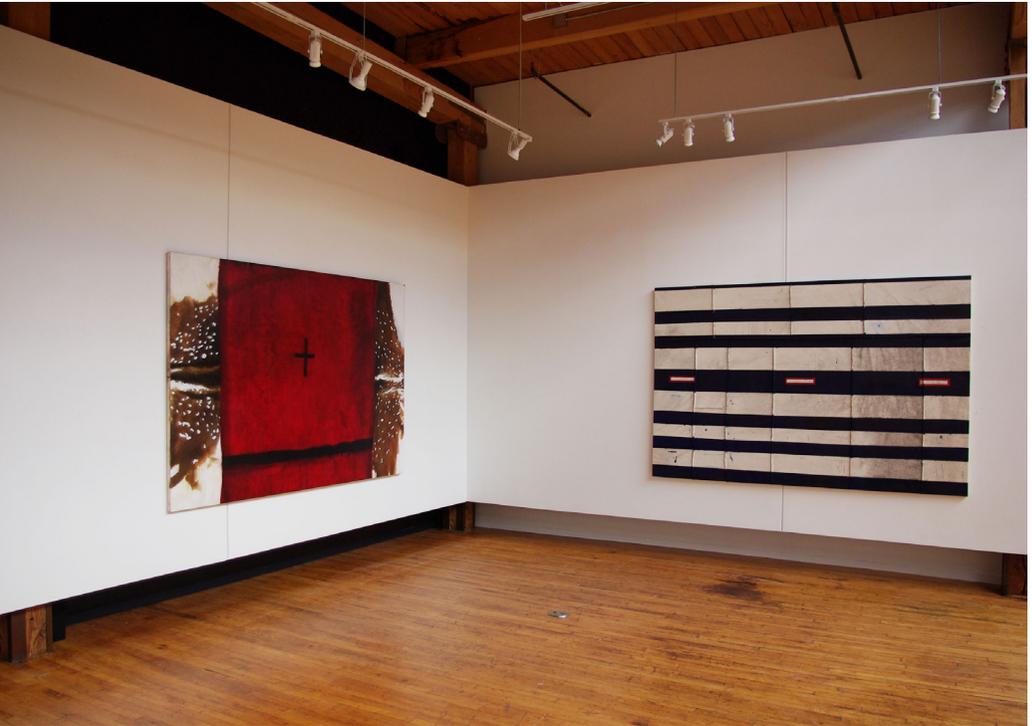
June 20
Lake Michigan

European
east

[opposite above]
 THOMAS INSTRUCTED ME TO TAKE
 COPIOUS NOTES, BERNHEIM, KY
 oil on canvas, 48x48"
 2016

[opposite below]
 I COULD BARELY SEE THE SKY ,
 BERNHEIM, KY
 oil on canvas, 48x48"
 2016





[2 months process drawing on oak]

INSTALLATION
Bridgeport Art Center
2016



OAK ROBE FIRST PHASE .
[2 months process drawing on oak]
oil, mixed media on canvas, 58x96"
2016



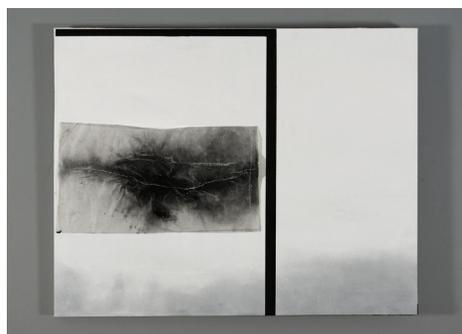
VISION QUEST
oil on canvas, 58x96"
2016



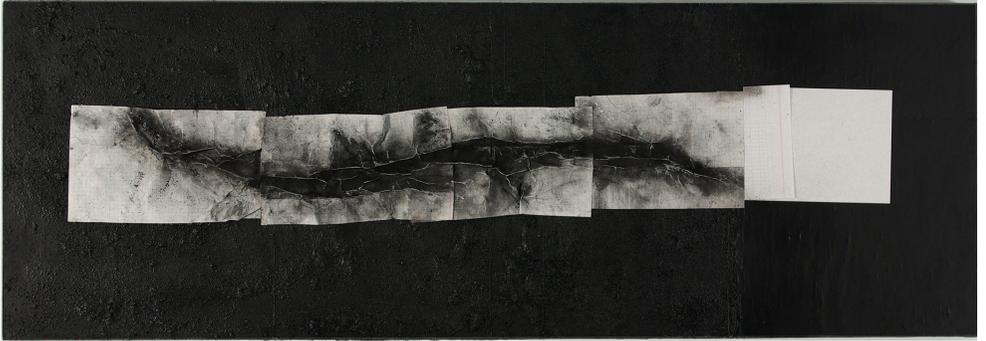
ELK DREAM UPPER MISSOURI
oil and gunpowder on canvas, 58x96"
2016



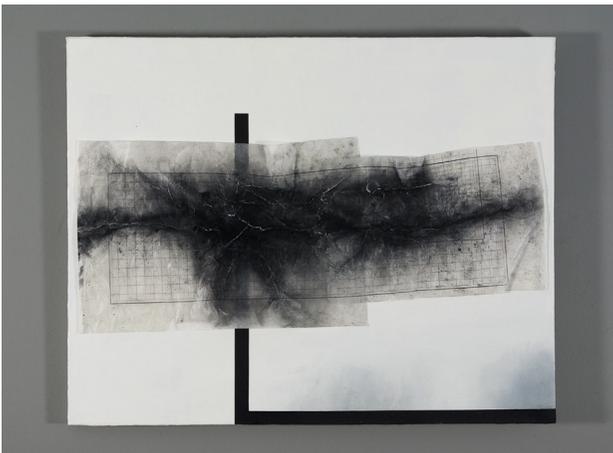
MONTANA
oil on canvas, 36x48"
2016



MAP 1
graphic, paper, on canvas, 18x24"
2016



FRONTIER MAP
graphic, paper, and mixed media
on board, 18x48"
2016



MAP 2
graphic, paper, on canvas, 18x24"
2016

SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Fidelity, Charlotte, North Carolina
Allston & Bird, Washington, D.C.
Corboy, Demetrio, and Clifford, Chicago, Illinois
Poco Petroleum, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Burnett, Duckworth, and Palmer, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Evans, Martin, and Wilson, Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, New York, New York
American Telephone and Telegraph Company, Chicago, Illinois

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Jenna Esarey, bernheim art on display at Carnegie Center, Courier-Journal, February 6, 2016
Lauren Viera, "Don Pollack, Mysterious Island, Chicago Tribune, March 5, 2010
Jason Mojica, "Don Pollack: Improvisation", Time Out Chicago, February 2-9, 2006
Edward Gomez, "Reimagining the Landscape", Art and Antiques, Atlanta, Georgia, October, 2003
Alan Artner, "Don Pollack", Chicago Tribune, March 21, 2003

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2013 "34 days to Washington", Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, catalog
2012 Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, catalog
2010 Art Chicago International Exposition, Mart Center, Chicago, Illinois, catalog
"Marquette Law Review", vol. 93, number 4, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, catalog
2009 "The Lincoln Project", Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, Springfield, Illinois, catalog
"Design School Confidential, Extraordinary Class Projects from International Design Schools,
Steven Heller & Lita Talarico, Rockport Publishers, Beverly Massachusetts

TEACHING

School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, Adjunct Associate Professor, Visual Communications
Design Department, September 2005-present

LECTURES

Northwestern University, Slivka College, Evanston, Illinois, "Crossing the Great Divide",
February 1, 2016
Bronx, City College of New York, Bronx, New York, "Crossing the Great Divide", December 10, 2015
Fluid, Society for Literature, Science, & Art Conference, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
"Crossing the Great Divide, Trying to Understand the Collage of My Landscape",
October 9, 2014 - October 12, 2014
Postnatural, Society for Literature, Science, & Art Conference, Notre Dame University, South Bend, Indiana
"34 Days to Washington", October 3, 2013 - October 6, 2013

INTERVIEWS

WCTV, Addison, Illinois, "The Lincoln Project", February 7, 2013
KYW News Radio 1060, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, "Taking Measure Across America", August 9, 2010
Fox/NBC, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, "Taking Measure Across America", August 9, 2010
WGRZ NBC Buffalo, New York, "Taking Measure Across America", July 28, 2010
WTTW, Chicago, Illinois, arts across illinois, "Looking for Lincoln", June 19 & 21, 2009
WFLD-Fox News Chicago, Springfield, Illinois, "The Lincoln Project", February 12, 2009
WAND-NBC News Decatur, Springfield, Illinois, "The Lincoln Project", February 8, 2009
WCIA-CBS News Champaign, Springfield, Illinois, "The Lincoln Project" February 7, 2009
WICS-ABC News Springfield, Springfield, Illinois, "The Lincoln Project", February 7, 2009