

Val Britton

ARTIST STATEMENT

I make immersive collaged drawings that draw on the language of maps. The impetus for this body of work was my longing to connect to my father, a truck driver who drove eighteen-wheelers across the country hauling industrial machinery. Based on road maps of the U.S., routes my father often traveled, and an invented conglomeration, mutation, and fragmentation of those passageways, my works on paper help me piece together the past and make up the parts I cannot know.

I never know how these pieces will be resolved or what the end-product will be since they are not planned. This compels me to put myself in an explorative mode, employing the abstract space of the map to create a pliable structure for intuition, improvisation and chance. Connecting paper fragments together through collage, drawing in delicate, intricately marked layers and detailed symbols, staining with salty washes of ink, printing, stitching and cutting paper have become my methods for navigating the blurry terrain of memory and imagination. I often find myself teetering on the brink of what is too much and what is not quite enough. I think about tracing and retracing paths, and how doing that makes them known and familiar. I think about how things layer and get all tangled up. Spending time constructing the small parts that accumulate to create a large work, I find a meditative possibility in working with my hands, creating a closeness and “depth of value” for me. Painting through staining, seepage, and absorption becomes a metaphor for the fluidity of remembering, mimicking the geologic layers that constitute memories.