

BOB BRAINE AND LESLIE C. REED

THE URSCAPE OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS OR AN INVERTED GOLF COURSE. 2007

The term restoration implies an UR landscape, a pure, ideal landscape. In most people's minds this existed in some nebulous past tense – did our great-grandparents live in this sublime and pristine American landscape? The first colonialists? The Native Americans? This URscape exists for us as an ecosystem that is distinct, indeed separate from human endeavors. The restored landscape only exists in our collective unconscious. Nearly 30,000 years ago humans first came to the Americas. In so doing, they forever and dramatically altered the land. In the landscape of Suffolk County one can read thousands of years of human interaction with the environment. From the spotted knapweed in Art Sites' backyard to the golf courses and sod farms to the North and even the Pine Barrens across the Peconic River, the land is marked by the footprint of man. Restoration can only be a restoration of habitat types that support a genetically diverse gene pool. This may manifest as wetlands, which are critical in so many ways, providing flood and erosion control and functioning as nursery areas for many species of marine life. Removing this type of biologically diverse ecosystem and replacing it with a monoculture like a golf course, sod farm or lawn-heavy, residential development does even more than reduce the survival prospects of the gene pool of our planet; it also creates a psychological void of sorts. This void is buffered by the interstitial spaces that don't get fully planned—the wooded border around the discarded farming machinery pile, the marshy depressions that form in the leaves of the LIE clovers.

Through doing a series of studies in real space on the grounds of Art Sites, we have decided to create an inverted golf course—a scale model built on the grounds. It will be a planted marshland in the space that would ordinarily be the fairways and greens, and it will be carefully manicured golf course turf on mounds the shape of which will be the inverse of the benthic profile of the water features. These islands are like overturned glacial kettle holes. As we survey the site from the air, the iconic importance of the actual aerial image of a golf course, highway clover leaf or housing development with its circuit board pattern becomes apparent. These are the earth works of our culture and like the Nazca Lines or Serpentine earthen mounds of the middle US, they form familiar terrestrial constellations for the myriad airborne citizens passing over them each year.

Bio

Bob Braine: Born in Queens NY 1963. University of Hartford Art School, 1987. Since 1990 Braine has been showing work in the US as well as internationally at venues such as the Queens Museum of Art (Crossing the Line), PS1 (Greater NY), as well as gallery exhibitions in NYC..

In Europe he has been extensively involved with The Gallery for Landscape Art in Hamburg, Germany. Exhibitions in Europe include HamburgerKunsthalle (Fieldwork), Kunstverien in Hamburg (Mapping a City), Al Almere, The Netherlands (From Reality to Fantasy), Kunsthalle Wien, Karlsplatz, Vienna (Get Together, Art as Teamwork), Villa Medici, Rome (La Memoire-99), as well as others..

Braine has traveled extensively in Central and South America, Europe and the US generating photographs, drawings and site specific interventions based on the fractured utopia of compromised ecosystems. Publications include “Two Waters” Published by Salon Verlag in collaboration with The Gallerie Fur Landschaftskunst in Hamburg, Concrete Jungle, Juno Books, New York, and Neotropic, Onestar Press, Paris, France. Writings appear in “Writing on Water” MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Leslie Reed: Born in Baltimore, MD, 1979 She studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, receiving her BFA in 2002. In 2006 she received a certificate in Urban Horticulture from the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, in Brooklyn, NY. In 2004 Reed was awarded an Emerging Artist Fellowship from Socrates Sculpture Park for her work Littoral Resonance, an installation of 50+ cast silicone crabs installed in the East River. Recently Reed, together with her collaborator Bob Braine, received the Generated@WaveHill grant from Wave Hill to produce new work

Illustration: Riverhead Golf Course and Housing, Infrared photograph, 2006

