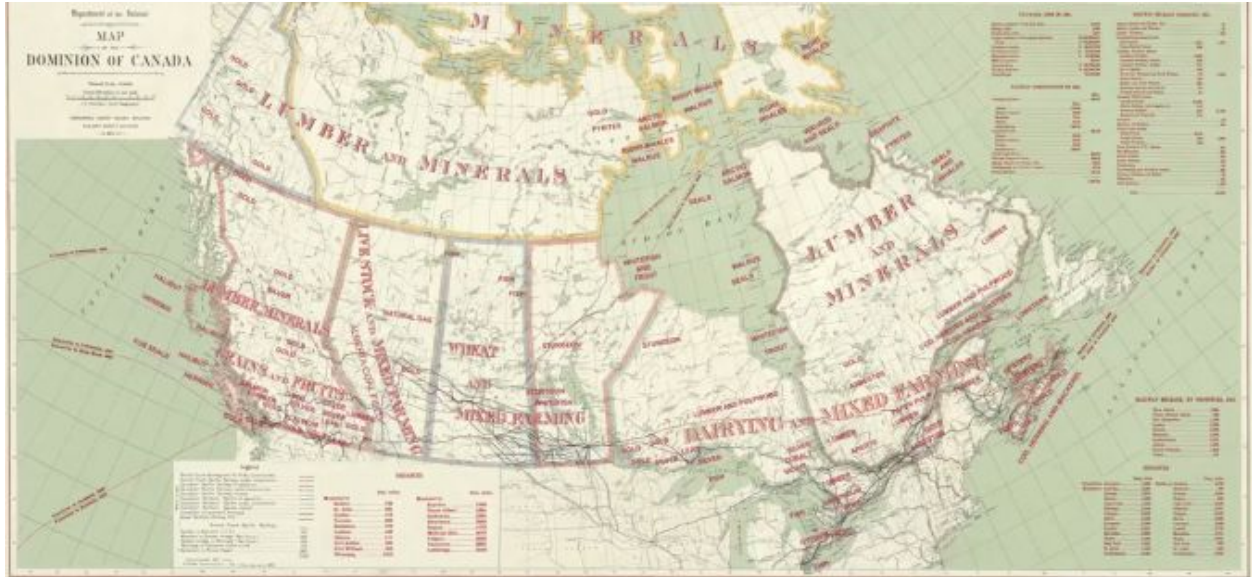


BARBARA MENELEY: UNMAPPING THE LAST BEST WEST

Saturday, January 7, 2017 to Saturday, February 18, 2017



Barbara Meneley: *Unmapping the Last Best West*

Modern Fuel is pleased to present *Unmapping the Last Best West*, an exhibition of works by Barbara Meneley in our State of Flux from January 7 to February 18, 2017.

Artist Statement

The works in *Unmapping the Last Best West* focus on cartographic representation and embodied relationships to land. Typically seen as scientific, objective, and absolute, in reality cartographic representation is anything but. A cartographer is tasked with communicating visual information, synthesizing a variety of source material to visually support the communication of a specific idea. Someone decides how some place should be represented and the cartographer makes it so. I know something about this—cartography was my profession for twenty years, and every map I drew was fiction.

A central fiction to every map is that the truth of a place—the undulating terrain, dust caught in a twist of wind, the growth of a tree, or the sound of an animal—all embodied experience, must necessarily be translated to static and two dimensional representation. My works in *Unmapping the Last Best West* investigate the tensions in conventional cartographic representation and explore the potential for wider expression in representing place. Maps taken from archival sources are abstracted, recomposed, abstracted, and erased to re-imagine, redefine, and restore colonial cartographic representations of land. The performance video shows the arduous labour of digging into colonial legacies in contemporary sites. These artworks inhabit the gap between the beautiful fictions of colonial imaginaries and historical and contemporary reality to offer alternate fictions of land.



Installation view: Barbara Meneley, *Unmapping the Last Best West*, Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre, 2017

Barbara Meneley is a prairie-based Canadian visual artist whose interdisciplinary site responsive work engages with the landscapes and foundations of contemporary society and culture. Her work evolves through theoretical inquiry and contemporary intermedia art---media, performance, installation, experimental cartographies, bookworks, and engaged practice.

This work has been produced through the generous support of the Saskatchewan Arts Board Independent Artists Program.

