

Experimental Terrain Representation

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I AM ENTHRALLED by the way maps draw readers in and shape their opinions and thoughts towards the land. The way in which the cartographer depicts terrain plays a large role in how the subject is interpreted, and I wanted to explore showing mountains in a way that would instill a sense of beauty, curiosity, and a basic understanding of the land in the reader.

I began with pen, paper, and the ambition to replicate a standard hachuring technique. However, these attempts gradually gave rise to the distinctive pattern that serves as a base for my terrain maps. Elongated triangles and V shapes flowing with the land characterize this pattern. For example, a common arrangement is to place the short faces of the triangles against each other along a ridge top while their tails run down into the valley. The end result of the pattern work is intriguing to look at, but it is impossible to gain a sense of depth from such a uniformly black and white image. I added shading using Photoshop to create the illusion of elevation.

The overall result is a simple hillshade embellished by the ink

Long Island, Washington

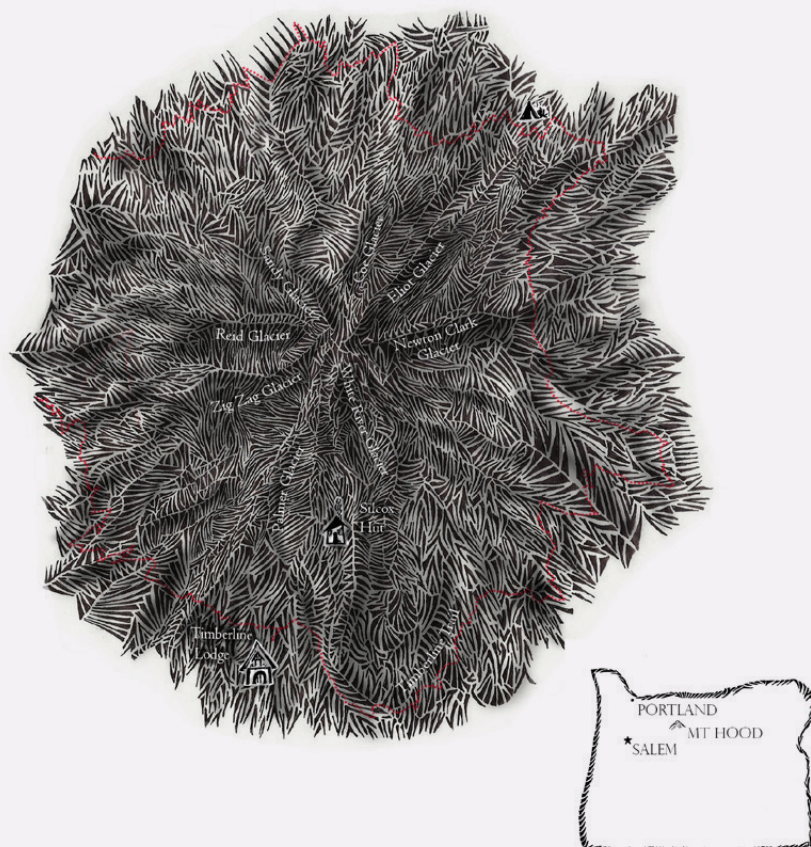


Long Island off the coast of Washington state.



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MT. HOOD, OREGON



This map of Mt. Hood incorporates labels and hand drawn symbols into the terrain depiction.

pattern. I show the land in an artistic fashion, with minimal information, for the sake of the readers' experience. I like the style to stand as a whole without labels disrupting the flow of the design. Although I have experimented with labels and additional

features, I prefer an unlabeled landscape to let the land speak for itself. Mountains and their connections to people are powerful, and I hope that my maps allow people to explore familiar terrain in a new way.

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To begin the process, I place tracing paper over a topographic map and use the topo lines to guide my drawing.



A close up of Silcox Hut, a small lodge built by the Works Progress Administration in 1939.

Visual Fields focuses on the appreciation of cartographic aesthetics and design, featuring examples of inspirational, beautiful, and intriguing work. Suggestions of works that will help enhance the appreciation and understanding of the cartographic arts are welcomed, and should be directed to the section editor, Laura McCormick: laura@xnrrproductions.com.