

Mapping Knowtopia

Alison Berry



Art Gallery

Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York

This catalog coincides with the exhibition “Mapping Knowtopia: Paintings by Alison Berry”, which has been organized by the Art Gallery of Kingsborough Community College of the City University of New York.

The exhibition was on view from March 12 — April 2, 2014.

Art Department, Kingsborough Community College, City University of New York

Chairperson: Professor John Descarfino

Gallery Director: Brian E. Hack, PhD

Exhibition curator: Peter Malone

Student Aides: Ivelise Cruz, Muhammad Abdullah, Arcel Derosena

right:

*Smart Dust*, 2013

acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas

24 x 40 inches

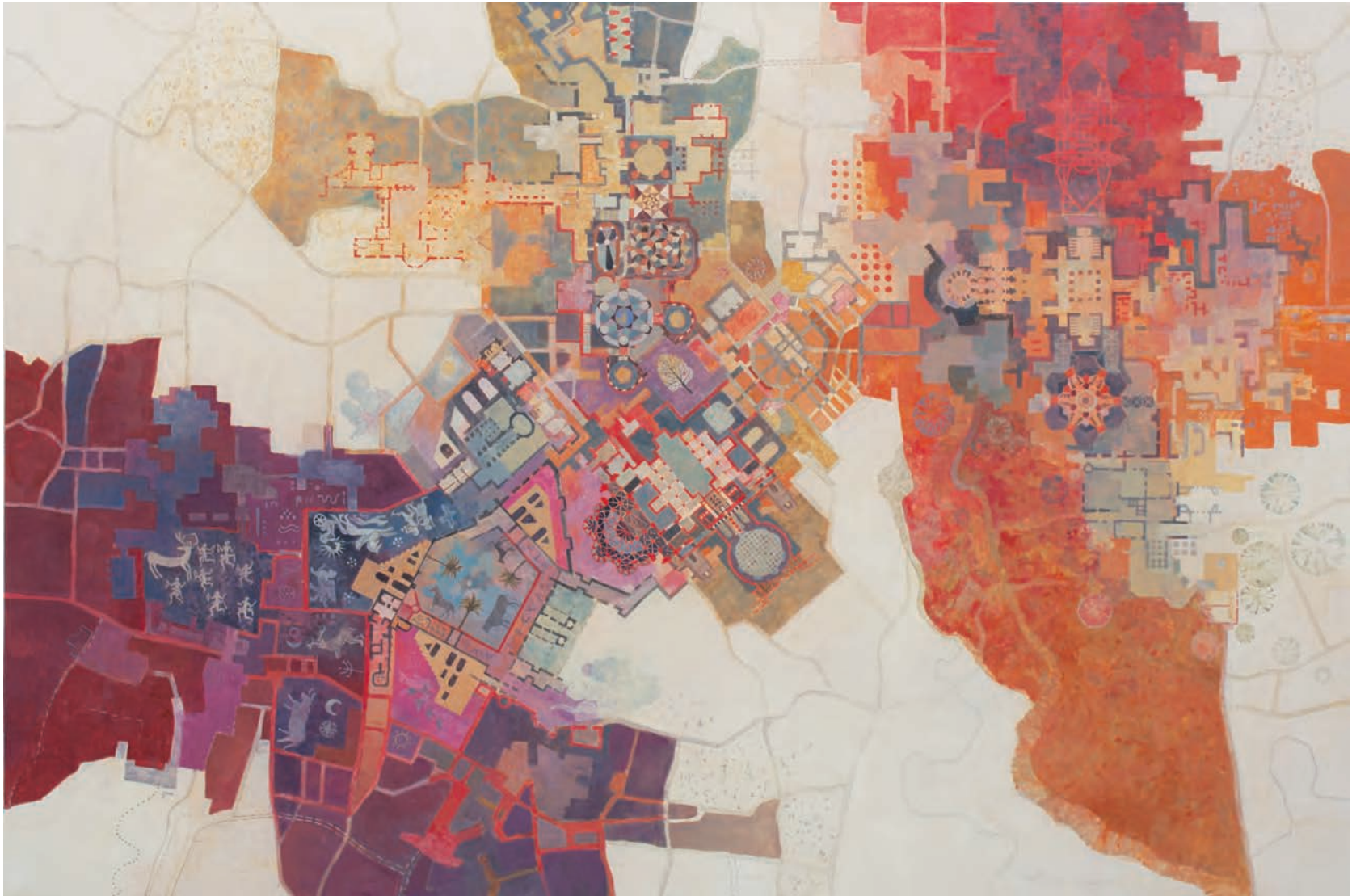
cover image: *Biosphere*, 2013 acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas 36 x 66 inches

Mapping Knowtopia

Alison Berry

March 12 - April 2, 2014





*Understory*, 2014 acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas 40 x 60 inches

# Mapping Knowtopia

## Conceptual geographies of our changing cultural landscape in the age of information

In ancient times, mapmakers charted a 'known world' of measured lands and places, bounded by unexplored realms of imaginary wonder. Today we regard these maps with a mixture of amusement and respect, charmed by the antiquated worldview they depict, and awed by the intellectual distance we have traveled to formulate our own. Surely future generations will look back on us in the same way.

What is our 'known world', our Knowtopia? The features of its abstract geography aren't roads, rivers and towns, but rather an intangible network of knowledge, beliefs, and values. Its architecture is a structure of collective understanding, its foundation a cultural archive - the trove of signs and symbols that has allowed us to record, store, and share ephemeral thoughts through space and time, building and reframing human consciousness. Like our physical bodies, the culture we inhabit is one we both inherit and modify, through feedback loops of conscious intent and genetic proclivity, desire and dread, altruism and aggression, all wiring and firing for survival or extinction.

A few generations ago, many Americans attended one-room schoolhouses and wrote on stone slates. Today much has changed regarding what we know of the world and what students must learn in order to thrive and participate in society. For members of our sapient, social species, what we know has become a major part of who we are.

The enigma of individual biological consciousness persists, but technology has been assimilated on personal as well as cultural scales. It has transformed the way we live, learn, communicate, socialize, trade, care for the sick, fight wars, enforce laws, compete, cooperate, and procreate. Gene sequencing and fMRI enable us to trace our ancestry and see our brains light up with thought. New scientific instruments, including telescopes, space probes, particle colliders and medical imaging devices, extend the capacity of our sense organs, along with prosthetics, implants and hand held devices. The ability to gather, analyze, and share data is increasing at an exponential rate. Through this analysis, we begin to transcend anecdotal experience, to "zoom out" and see the stochastic world for the first time. As technology and the power of computation grow, we are experiencing a profound change in the character of human culture on this planet.

While modern society has embraced the fruits of the scientific revolution, consuming ever-greater quantities of health care, forensic evidence, electronic devices, computers, games, entertainment and Internet airtime, the philosophical shift from a metaphysical to a scientific worldview has been slower to digest. Ironically, biologists note that many Americans will accept DNA evidence as valid juridical proof, while denying the theory of evolution. There is surely great wisdom to carry forward from ancient tradi-

tions, but we are also challenged to integrate our heritage with our new scientific insight and form a fresh vision appropriate to our time, taking responsibility for the the power of modern technology and the affects of human activity on our environment. Indeed, “where there is no vision, the people perish”.

From a contemporary perspective, we remain explorers, and the boundary of the world within our minds has gotten a lot bigger. We are awash in a flood of data and imagery, so the challenge is one of interpretation – to seek structure and pattern, to find meaning and direction. For me, maps are ideally suited to charting such a conceptual space. As part of my studio practice, I collect images as cultural artifacts, festooning my studio walls and fueling my process with ideas that arise from their juxtaposition. With a quick Google search, one can now see the chemical process of life in a microorganism, or view earth-like exoplanets, found by the Kepler probe. The unimaginable diversity of nature – terrestrial and cosmological – enriches and expands its witness. It is a fascinating journey. Who knows where it will lead.

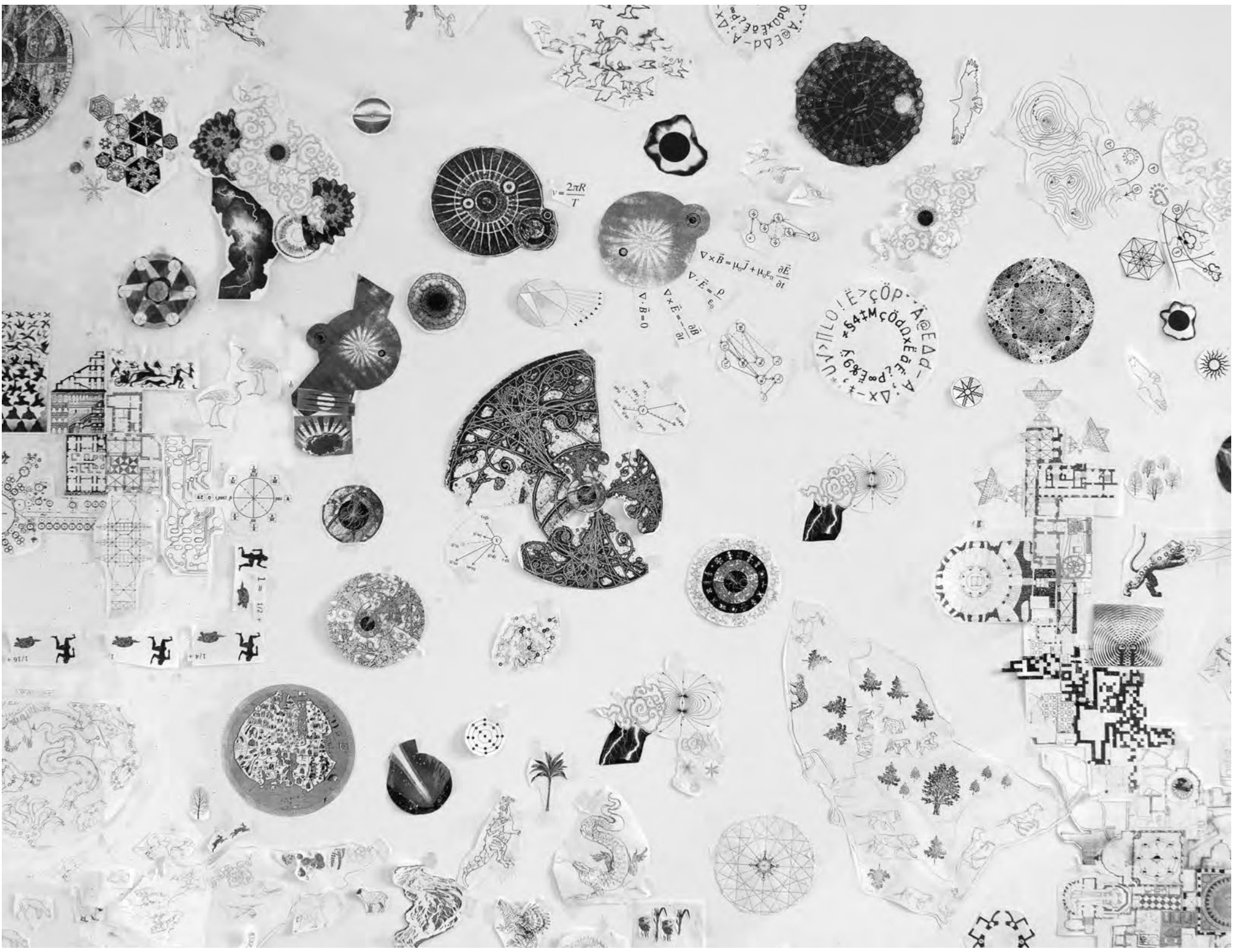
Alison Berry, 2014

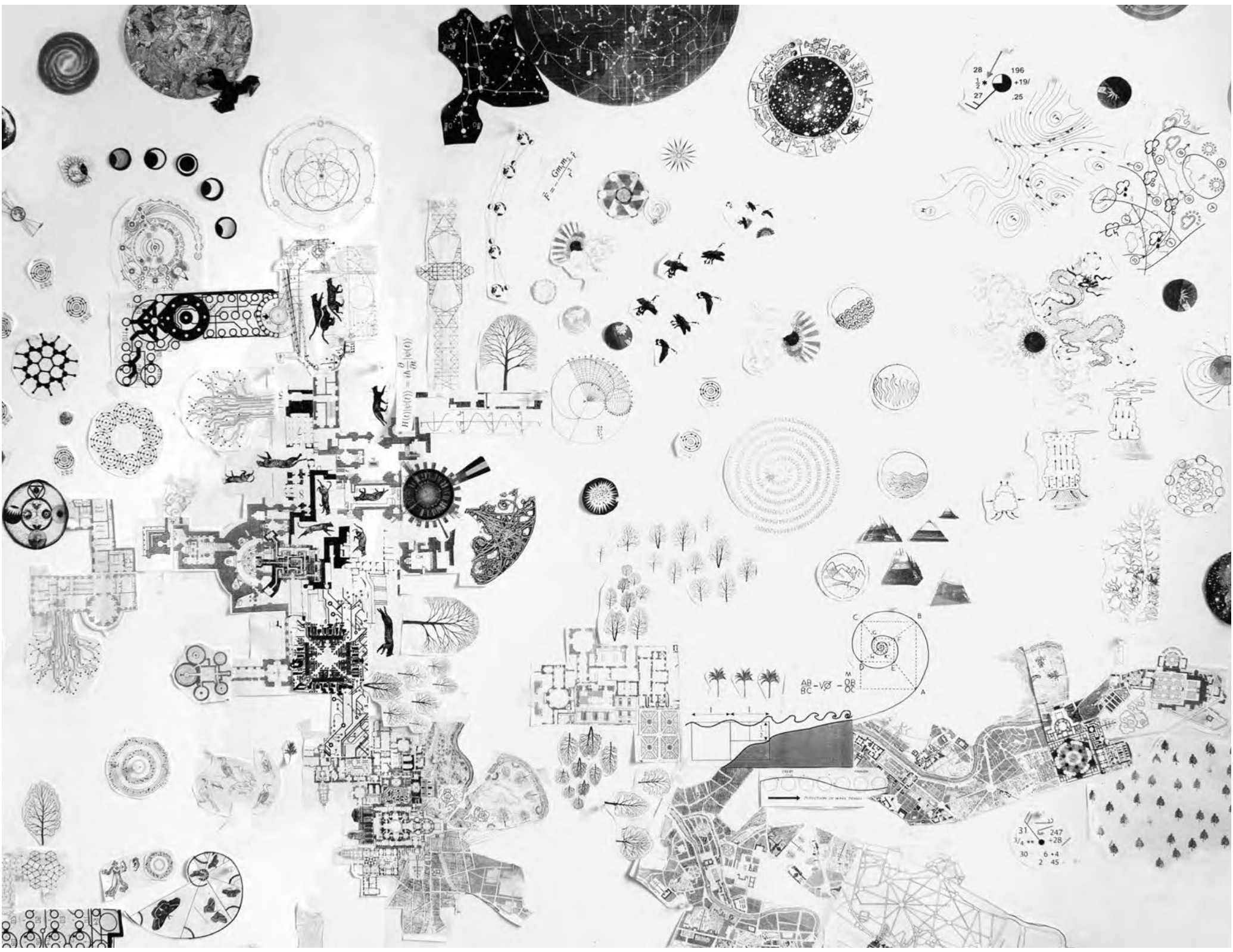
catalog centerfold:

*Image Wall*, 2014  
laser toner on paper  
approximately 7 x 14 feet



*Cosmopolitan*, 2014 acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas 40 x 60 inches





$$F = \frac{Gm_1 m_2}{r^2}$$

$$H(\omega) = \frac{d}{dt} \omega(t)$$

$$\frac{AB}{BC} = \sqrt{\frac{OC}{OC}}$$

28  
1/2  
27

196  
+19/  
.25

31  
3/4 \*\*

247  
+28

30 6.4  
2 45



*Fields and Forces*, 2013  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
18 x 24 inches



*Gathering Clouds*, 2012  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
18 x 24 inches



*Brainiac*, 2014 acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas 40 x 60 inches



Untitled Studies, 2012 - 14, each 8.5 x 14 inches, gouache and ink on paper



*From Where to When and Back Again*, 2014 acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas 24 x 40 inches

## Exhibition checklist

*Bionosphere*, 2013  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
36 x 66 inches

*Brainiac*, 2014  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
40 x 60 inches

*Cosmopolitan*, 2014  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
40 x 60 inches

*Crossroads*, 2014  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
40 x 60 inches

*Fields and Forces*, 2013  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
18 x 24 inches

*From Where to When and Back Again*, 2014  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
24 x 40 inches

*Gathering Clouds*, 2012  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
18 x 24 inches

*High Tide*, 2014  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
8 x 12 inches

*Image Wall*, 2014  
laser toner on paper  
approximately 7 x 14 feet

*Small Town 1*, 2012  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
8 x 12 inches

*Small Town 2*, 2012  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
8 x 12 inches

*Smart Dust*, 2013  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
24 x 40 inches

*Sprawl*, 2012  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel  
18 x 24 inches

*Transitional Places*, 2012  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
12 x 16 inches

*Understory*, 2014  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas  
40 x 60 inches

*Untitled*, 2012-14  
six studies, each 8.5 x 14 inches  
gouache on paper

*Untitled*, 2012-14  
four studies, each 8 x 16 inches  
acrylic, ink, and pigment on panel



Crossroads, 2014 acrylic, ink, and pigment on canvas 40 x 60 inches



## Art Gallery

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Arts & Sciences Building  
Kingsborough Community College  
City University of New York

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Brooklyn, NY 11235

Hours: 10am – 3pm, Monday through Friday  
on days when classes are in session.

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