



Bolinas Museum

Mary Daniel Hobson: *REMNANTS*

March 3 – April 29, 2007



Curator's Statement by Nora Kabat Dolan

Remnants, the word used as the title of this exhibition, can be defined as the trace of visible evidence for something that no longer exists. Each of the four series included in this exhibition, *Bottle Dreams*, *Sanctuary*, *Evocations* and *Milagros*, addresses the transient nature of place and examines the emotionally-laden relationship between a geographic landscape and its psychological counterpart.

Many of the photographs of the sea within the series *Bottle Dreams* and *Sanctuary* were taken near Mary Daniel Hobson's Muir Beach home. The images of the untamed, northern California ocean, with its rocky shores and turbulent water, strike a familiar chord to those who frequent the Marin coastline. Hobson understands her ocean not as the physically dangerous place that it actually is, but, rather, as viewed from shore--a safe, peaceful refuge, a panorama for contemplation, a haven from the push and pull of landlocked daily life.

The photographed seascapes are torn apart, layered with bits of notes and ancient maps. There are distorted reflections, broken phrases, and unreadable charts. Images that were used in one work repeat in another, like symbols of unknown significance that strangely reappear in a dream. Through the filter of a glass lens, be it camera or bottle, a new whole is

created. The final piece is smooth and complete, but within the reconfiguration lays the jagged edges of an inner geography that is filled with surprising restrictions, shallow depths, and sharp angles. The sea, a sanctuary from shore, becomes an ever-changing, unstable place to rest one's gaze.



Hobson's series *Evocations* also alludes to the multilayered complexity of place. The work recalls actual and imagined history and, in doing so, creates a fragmentary memory-laden geography without coordinates. The pieces are created from reproductions of Renaissance paintings, as well as photographs, antique charts, and found objects. The work plays with the dualities of vertigo and balance, of clarity and distortion, of perception and disorientation, of flatness and verticality.

The series *Milagros* (literally, "miracles" in Spanish) is inspired by the small metal talismans of the same name often sold outside churches in many Latin American countries. Hobson created this series by photographing the arm and hand of a subject and then asking the participant to write down a wish for a miracle. In the final image, the handwritten wish, along with other symbolic images, is collaged onto the photograph, and disparate elements are brought together into a unified meaning. Hobson's *Milagros* make physically manifest private, intangible dreams, and a layered map of the inner geography of intention and longing is placed outside the body for examination.

A remnant, be it a torn piece of cloth or a fragment of a memory, is usually rather small, often disregarded, perhaps considered irrelevant. Hobson carefully dwells on that which is overlooked and uses those pieces to create locations without coordinates, laden with ephemeral meaning.

For more information about Mary Daniel Hobson's work, please visit her web site at www.marydanielhobson.com