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Tokratni gledališki list je prvi v letu 2022, ko Ministrstvo za kulturo kljub višjemu proračunu finančno ne podpira več *Gledališča Glej* in mnogih drugih nevladnih organizacij preko štiriletnega programskega razpisa. O trenutnem stanju in načrtih za naprej Glejev umetniški svet pravi:

Ministrstvo za kulturo je *Gledališču Glej* dodelilo zadostno število točk za uvrstitev v sistem financiranja štiriletnega programa, a ga ni uvrstilo med prvih osem, ki so prejeli sredstva. Tako smo letos prvič, odkar obstaja mehanizem programskega štiriletnega programa, po skoraj dveh desetletjih ostali brez finančne podpore za nas ključnega sofinancerja. Odločitev spodbijamo na sodišču. Boleče je, da odločba kaže očitne znake neenakopravne obravnave. *Glej* je namreč odskočna deska mladim, še neujavljenim umetnikom, njegova največja ljubezen je delo s profesionalnimi umetniki, je dobitnik mnogih nagrad, njegove predstave so redno uvrščene na ključne festivale v Sloveniji

(*Teden slovenske drame* in *Borštnikovo srečanje*) ter tujini. *Glej* je kreator mednarodnih gostovanj in srečevanj za uveljavljene umetnike tako v Ljubljani kot drugod, ter nosilec štirih ključnih platform, s katerimi mislimo skupnost in razvijamo partnerstva s kolegi iz Slovenije: platforma za internacionalizacijo sodobnih uprizoritvenih praks *TRIGGER*, *Abonma Transferzala*, s katerim združujemo neodvisne odre v Ljubljani, *Tovariški Abonma*, ki je izobraževalna platforma za pedagoge, ter projekt *Kulturna četrt Soteska*, s katerim povezujemo kulturnike, turistične ponudnike in gostince na Gregorčičevi, Vegovi, Rimski in Slovenski v središču Ljubljane. Naše delo je naravnano dolgoročno, vedno artikuliramo potrebe časa ter prostora in razvijamo potenciale umetnikov. *Glej* vodi devetčlanska majhna, a vrhunska ter izkušena ekipa. Tokrat smo na križišču preživetja, a verjamemo: *Glej*, gremo dalje! (Umetniški svet *Gledališča Glej*)

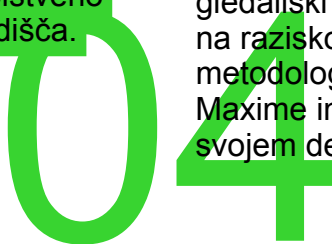
Na spletni strani gledališča lahko najdete izjavo za javnost, pisma podpore in povezavo do načinov za finančno podporo:



Naše poznavanje vode in naše dožemanje tega, kaj voda je, neposredno vplivata na to, kako ravnamo z njo. Če o vodi razmišljamo kot o viru, ki ga lahko spremenimo v tržno blago, če razmišljamo o vodi kot o nečem, kar obstaja tam zunaj, če razmišljamo o redkosti vode ali njeni onesnaženosti kot o nečem, kar se dogaja določenim skupnostim – vse to vpliva na način, kako ravnamo z vodo v svojem vsakdanu. Voda ni nekaj tam zunaj; voda smo mi. Tako kot ravnamo z vodo, ravnamo tudi sami s sabo, s svojim bližnjim, svojim več kot človeškim bližnjim. V tem smislu to postane okoljska tema, vendar iz bistveno drugačnega izhodišča. (Neimanis)

Eden od že dolgo načrtovanih projektov je predstava *SOUTHWIND* avtorjev Marka Požlepa in Maxima Berthouja, ki nastaja v sodelovanju s performerjem Davisom Freemanom. Dokumentarni performans je ena izmed iteracij istoimenske daljše umetniške raziskave, ki jo uokvirjajo obnova starega parnika, skoraj dvomesečna plovba z njim od izvira do izliva reke Misisipi in kar nekaj litrov zloglasnega *moonshina*, destilirane iz različnih sort koruze, nabrane ob obplutih nabrežjih. Poleg predstave, ki nastaja v koprodukciji *Gledališča Glej* in festivala *SPRING Utrecht* iz Nizozemske, so bili širši javnosti do zdaj predstavljeni še razstava, inštalacija, film in artist talk.

Sodelovanje Marka Požlepa in *Gledališča Glej* je eno izmed trajnejših odnosov in predstavo *SOUTHWIND* lahko beremo tudi preko trajektorija avtorjevih prejšnjih dokumentarnih performansov – *Bolj čudno od raja* in *Tloris za revolucijo*. Ker tokratne usedline izkustev in nabrani materiali v različnih asemblažih generirajo dela v različnih medijih in kontekstih, se gledališki list osredotoča na raziskovalno-umetniške metodologije, ki se jih Maxime in Mark poslužujeta v svojem delu, in na sam pojav



umetniške raziskave (*practice-based research/practice-led research*) v kulturnem polju.

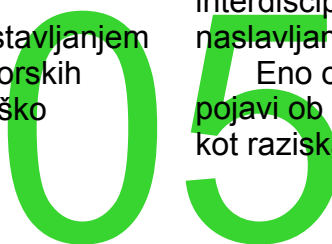
Umetniška raziskava se namreč v zadnjih letih vedno bolj uveljavlja kot samostojno področje. Estelle Barrett v prispevku »Introduction: Extending the Field: Invention, Application and Innovation in Creative Arts Enquiry« identificira značilnosti umetniške raziskave kot nove paradigme in piše, da ta omogoča:

nove objekte mišljenja, ki izhajajo iz ciklov ustvarjanja in refleksije, prepoznanje ustvarjalnega potenciala dvoumnosti in nedoločnosti estetskega objekta ter nujnosti neprestanega dekodiranja, analize in prevajanja ter, končno, priznanje, da instrumenti in objekti raziskovanja niso pasivni, temveč vzniknejo kot soustvarjalci raziskave – v primeru človeških subjektov to vodi v sodelovalne in, v primeru občinstev, v sodelovalne pristope, ki morda niso vnaprej določeni ob začetku raziskovanja. (Barrett 3)

Z odpiranjem in vzpostavljanjem tretjestopenjskih doktorskih programov za umetniško raziskavo na mnogih

izobraževalnih institucijah v tujini se odpirajo vprašanja inštitucionalizacije in sistematizacije umetniške raziskave, ki problematizirajo predvsem prilagajanje interdisciplinarnih metod in pristopov ustaljenim oblikam znanstvenih raziskav. Porajajo se tudi pomisleki ali težnje po definiciji umetniške raziskave in njenih metod zamejujejo polja in raznolikost načinov za raziskovanje sveta preko umetnosti z namenom, da bi jo uokvirili v sistem že uveljavljenih modusov znanja in predvsem v sistem uveljavljenih metod, ki zagotavljajo »znanstvenost« znanstvenim raziskavam. Če je to ena od perspektiv, izhajajočih iz problema inštitucionalizacije umetniške raziskave, pa druga perspektiva osvetljuje pomembnost uveljavljanja takšnih praks, ker to prinese priznanje in ozaveščenost o pomembnosti kulminiranega znanja, pridobljenega v umetniških procesih, omogoči možnosti za iskanje načinov za zbiranje in mapiranje teh znanj in postopkov, odpira in povečuje možnosti za financiranje ter spodbuja in kaže na pomembnost interdisciplinarnih sodelovanj v naslavljanju problemov.

Eno od vprašanj, ki se pojavi ob umetniški praksi kot raziskavi je tudi, kako



jo odpreti javnosti. Tu je projekt *Southwind* zanimiv primer – daljši raziskovalni proces priprav in nato plovba po Misisipiju se namreč zdita kot daljša raziskava in proces, ki sta zaključena, nabran material pa zdaj generira serijo različnih umetniških realizacij, ki delujejo na različnih izkušenskih sferah in, vsaka na svoj način, operirajo in intervenirajo v javnost. Ali pa so dela v različnih medijih še vedno del raziskovalnega procesa?

To je nekaj razmislekov, o katerih smo se pogovarjali na videoklicu in med tipkanjem v skupni dokument z Markom in Maximom, ki sledi takoj za tem uvodnikom. Poleg intervjuja tokratni list sestavljata še dva prispevka. Članek Zale Dobovšek premišljuje in mapira ključne elemente umetniške prakse Marka Požlepa in prepletanje različnih materialnosti (dokumentarnih, potopisnih, avtobiografskih, poetičnih ipd.), ki prečijo njegova raznolika sodelovanja in projekte. To stori preko branja filma *Southwind* in gledanja dokumentarnih performansov *Bolj čudno od raja* in *Tloris za revolucijo*. Drugi prispevek je članek Grzegorza Reskeja, umetniškega direktorja festivala *SPRING Utrecht*, ki vzporeja projekt *Southwind* in Markov in Maximov prejšnji projekt

Hogshead 733 ter definira spremembo v poziciji, ki jo umetnika zavzameta, ter analizira preobrat v njenem pristopu. Prispevek zaključuje malce špekulativno delo, ki nas ponese v takrat še nastajajočo predstavo in špekulira, kam ta obrat vodi v performativnem smislu.

Vabljeni k branju!

Čemu bi poskušali opisati tok reke v katerem koli trenutku, nato pa še v naslednjem in še naslednjem in še naslednjem ...? Iztrošili bi se. Recimo raje: veličastna reka teče skozi to deželo in poimenovali smo jo Zgodovina. (Le Guin 125)

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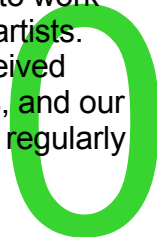
06

EDITORIAL — Tery Žeželj

This theatre programme is the first in 2022, a year in which the Ministry of Culture has withdrawn its financial support for *Glej Theatre* and many other non-governmental organisations from its four-year programme tender, even though it had a larger budget at its disposal. Glej's artistic council commented on the current conditions and future plans of *Glej Theatre*:

The Ministry of Culture awarded *Glej Theatre* sufficient points to be placed within the financing system of the four-year programme, however, we did not reach the top eight. This year was the first time we remained without the financial support of an important co-financer in the two decades since the four-year programme support mechanism has been in place. We are going to challenge this decision in court. It is painful that their decision shows obvious signs of unequal treatment. *Glej* is a stepping stone for young artists who are still trying to find their position in theatre, and *Glej's* greatest desire is to work with professional artists. We have also received numerous awards, and our performances are regularly

included at key festivals in Slovenia (*The Week of Slovenian Drama* and *Maribor Theatre Festival*) as well as abroad. *Glej* is the creator of international meetings and guest performances by established artists in Ljubljana as well as elsewhere, and the carrier of four platforms of key importance, with which we envisage the community and develop partnerships with our colleagues in Slovenia: *TRIGGER* (a platform for the internationalisation of contemporary performative practices), the *Abonma Transferzala* (a season ticket that can be used in a number of Ljubljana's independent theatres) and *Tovariški abonma* (aimed at education of teachers) as well as the project *Cultural Quarter Soteska* (which connects people working in culture, tourism and hospitality on Gregorčičeva, Vegova, Rimska and Slovenska streets in the centre of Ljubljana). Our work is focused on the long term, articulating the needs of the time and space and developing the artist's potentials. *Glej* is headed by a small, experienced and excellent nine-member team. Today we find ourselves at



the crossroads of survival, but we believe: *Glej*, we will carry on! (Artistic Council of *Glej Theatre*)

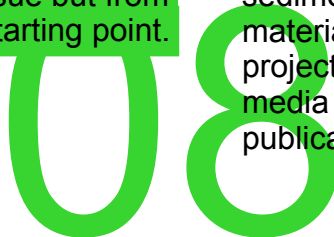
On the theatre's homepage you can find *Glej's* public statement, letters of support and links to the various ways in which you can support us:



How we know water, and what we think water is, directly influences how we treat water. If we think of water as a commodifiable resource, if we think of water as something out there, if we think of water scarcity or water contamination as something that happens to certain communities, this will affect the way we treat water in our quotidian, everyday existences. Water isn't something out there, it's us. How we treat it is how we're treating ourselves, our kin, our more-than-human kin. And in that sense, it becomes an environmental issue but from a very different starting point. (Neimanis)

One of *Glej's* long-term projects is the performance *SOUTHWIND* by Mark Požlep and Maxime Berthou, which is emerging in working with the performer Davis Freeman. This documentary performance is one of the iterations of the practice-based research with the same name, which includes the renovation of an old steamboat, an almost two-month long sailing journey from the spring to the mouth of the Mississippi River and quite a few litres of the notorious moonshine distilled from various types of corn that were collected along the embankments they sailed. Alongside the performance that is emerging in coproduction between *Glej Theatre* and the festival *SPRING Utrecht* (The Netherlands), the project has so far been presented to the public in the form of an exhibition, installation, a cinematic essay, and an artist talk.

The collaboration between Mark Požlep and *Glej* is one of the long-term relations and the *SOUTHWIND* documentary performance could also be understood through the trajectory of the artist's previous documentary performances – *Stranger than Paradise* and *Blueprint for Revolution*. As the sediments of experiences and materials gathered during this project generate works in different media and contexts, the current publication is focusing on the



methodologies employed in Maxime and Mark's practice-based research, and on the emergent phenomena of practice-based research in the field of culture in general.

Practice-based research has been establishing itself as an independent field over the past years. In the paper »Introduction: Extending the Field: Invention, Application and Innovation in Creative Arts Enquiry« Estelle Barret identifies the characteristics of practice-based research as the new paradigm and states that this enables:

new objects of thought to emerge through cycles of making and reflection; a recognition of the generative potential of the ambiguity and indeterminacy of the aesthetic object and the necessity for ongoing decoding, analysis and translation and, finally, the acknowledgement that instruments and objects of research are not passive, but emerge as co-producers of the research – in the case of human subjects, this results in collaborative and, in the case of audiences, participatory approaches that may not be predetermined at the outset of the research. (Barrett 3)

The emergence of the PhD programmes for practice-based research opens up the issues of institutionalisation and systematisation of artistic research, and problematizes the adjustment on the interdisciplinary methods and approaches to scientific research. It also triggers doubts whether defining practice-based research so that it fits the system of established modes of knowledge and meets the established methods that ensure the "scientificness" of scientific researches narrows down the diverse possibilities for researching world through art. If this is one of the perspectives that has emerged from the problem of institutionalising the practice-based research, the other perspective sheds light on why the establishment of the approach is important: it brings acknowledgement and awareness of the importance of culminated knowledge gained through artistic processes, offers the possibilities for seeking new ways of gathering and mapping these procedures and knowledge, opens and increases the possibilities for financial support and highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in dealing with various issues.

One of the questions that appears with practice-based research is how to open it to

the public, and this is where *Southwind*'s an interesting example. The long-term research process which took place in the preparation period and while sailing down the Mississippi River appears to be completed, however the gathered materials now generate a series of different artistic iterations, which operate in various spheres of experience and, each in their own way, operate and intervene in the public sphere. Or, could it be that the works in various media are still a part of the research process?

These are a few thoughts that we discussed during the video call and while typing with Mark and Maxime into the shared document that follows this editorial. Alongside the interview this theatre programme includes two additional contributions. Zala Dobovšek's text considers and maps the key elements of Mark Požlep's artistic practice and the interweaving of the various materialities (documentary, travelogue, autobiographical, poetic and similar) that can be found in his diverse projects. Her observations are based on her experience of the film *Southwind* and the documentary performances *Stranger than Paradise* and *Blueprint for Revolution*. The second text is by Grzegorz Reske, the artistic director of the *SPRING*

Utrecht festival, who compares the project *Southwind* to Mark and Maxime's previous project *Hogshead 733*. In his text he defines the change in the position of the artists, and analyses the shift in their approach. The text ends with a speculation that takes us into the performance that was only in the creation process at the time, and his speculation as to where does this shift lead to in the performative sense.

Enjoy further reading!

What is the use trying to describe the flowing of a river at any one moment, and then at the next moment, and then at the next, and the next, and the next? You wear out. You say: There is a great river, and it flows through this land, and we have named it History. (Le Guin 125)

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(Translated by Sunčan Stone)



11

INTERVJU
Z MARKOM
POŽLEPOM
IN MAXIMOM
BERTHOUEM

12

Maxime Berthou, Mark Požlep in Tery Žeželj

V tem intervjuju sem se imela priložnost pogovarjati z dvema prijateljema, sodelavcema in avtorjema projekta *Southwind*, Markom Požlepom in Maximom Berthoujem. Govorili smo o njuni umetniški praksi, njunem načinu razmišljanja o njej ter kako skoznjo vstopata v interakcijo s svetom. Ker smo bili v času nastajanja intervjuja vsak v svoji državi, je ta februarja 2022 večinoma potekal preko dokumenta na Google Drivu.

Mogoče lahko najprej povesta nekaj o tem, kako sta začela sodelovati, in o svojem odnosu.

Najino prvo sodelovanje se je začelo pred desetletjem z najinim prejšnjim projektom *Hogshead 733*. Tudi zanj velja, da je vključeval tako performans v trajanju kot bližnje srečanje s smrtjo. Tako sva se resnično povezala in nadaljevala skupno delo.

Kako bi opisala *Southwind*? Kaj opredeljuje vajino raziskovanje preko umetniške prakse?

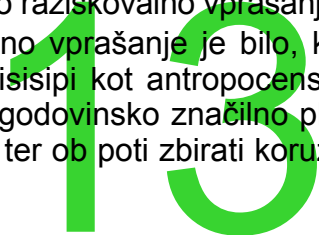
Projekt *Southwind* se je začel kot raziskovanje učinka monokulture koruze na Misisipi kot antropocensko reko. Svoje raziskovanje skozi umetniško prakso sva organizirala kot performans v trajanju, ki je dobil obliko plovbe po celotni dolžini reke na šestmetrskem parniku. Reka naju je vodila skozi deset različnih zveznih držav in tako sva nameravala pri različnih kmetovalcih ob reki nabrati različne vrste koruze ter na koncu poti iz nje skuhati žganje, imenovano *moonshine*. Parnik je dobil vlogo orodja vzpostavljanja komunikacije z raznolikimi skupnostmi ob reki, vstopnice v svetove, v katere sicer ne bi imela vstopa.

Kdo sta dva potnika na parniku? Kakšna je zgodba vajine raziskave?

Dva potnika na ladjici sva dva evropska sodobna umetnika, Katalonec in Slovenec. Svoje izhodišče sva že omenila; a dlje kot sva plula po reki, bolj so se teme, neposredno povezane s koruzo, začele umikati v ozadje. Ne, ker bi izgubila interes zanje, temveč ker je bilo to temo nemogoče ločiti od vse ostale problematike, na katero sva naletela, in ki je igrala enako pomembno vlogo v družbenopolitični in ekološki realnosti reke Misisipi. Najino potovanje se je začelo le nekaj mesecev po eni najhujših poplav v ameriški zgodovini, končalo pa se je le nekaj tednov pred izbruhom pandemije COVID-19 in koncem mandata Donalda Trumpa. Zgodba najine raziskave je postala portret reke in življenja ob njej.

Kaj je bilo prvotno raziskovalno vprašanje? Kako sta se ga lotila?

Najino začetno raziskovalno vprašanje je bilo, kakšen je vpliv monokulture koruze na reko Misisipi kot antropocensko reko. Odločila sva se kupiti majhen parnik, zgodovinsko značilno plovilo za reko Misisipi, in z njim prepluti vso reko ter ob poti zbirati koruzo od kmetov. Pot sva



nameravala financirati s prodajo *moonshina*, ki bi ga v New Orleansu skuhalo iz zbrane koruze. To je bila najina vstopna točka, da sva lahko stopila v stik s kmetovalci ob bregovih reke in neposredno izkusila reko. Na parniku sva bila sama, po kopnem pa naju je z avtomobilom spremljala snemalna ekipa s kamero.

Kateri so bili posamezni koraki vajine raziskave? Je končana ali še poteka?

Začela sva z nakupom parnika; to je bilo dve leti pred popotovanjem. Vsake štiri mesece sva šla v ZDA, kjer sva pripravljala ladjico in z avtomobilom potovala ob reki Misisipi. Tako sva se pripravljala na potovanje ter vzpostavljala stike in partnerske odnose z izdelovalci kotlov za žganjekuho in destilarno v New Orleansu. Drugi korak je bil plovba po reki, ki je trajala mesec in pol. V sodelovanju s *Centrom Pompidou* v Parizu, natančneje s *Studiem 13/16*, sva poskusila vzpostaviti poglobljeni izobraževalni program, ki je potekal med potjo. Mladi so vsak teden z nama opravili videokonferenčni pogovor neposredno s terena, v studiu pa so skupaj s specialisti obdelovali posamezne teme, ki so se odpirale med potjo po reki. Tretji korak je bil proizvodnja in prodaja *moonshina*. Četrti korak je bil kinematografski esej. Peti korak bo knjiga, v kateri bodo potopisni eseji, fotografska dokumentacija in risbe. Šesti in zadnji korak bo dokumentarni performans.

Kako sta kartirala vse znanje in izkušnje, ki sta jih nabrala med raziskovanjem in med potjo, vse nove miselne objekte?

Kartiranje ima obliko fizičnega potovanja in interakcij, pisanja, potopisnih esejev, fotografske ter kinematografske dokumentacije in risb.

Kako razmišljata o izkušnji, ki je nastala skozi ta performans v trajanju? Erin Manning neke piše, da umetniško raziskovanje generira nove načine doživljanja. Se strinjata? Kako bi opisala nove načine doživljanja, ki so izšli iz *Southwinda*?

Erin Manning piše, da umetniško raziskovanje generira nove oblike doživljanja, te pa zahtevajo nove oblike presojanja in vrednotenja dela, ki ga opravljamo. Ustvarja prostor neprestanega izpraševanja. Za naju je to eden ključnih razlogov za umetniško raziskovanje.

Kako razmišljata o nakopičenem znanju iz svoje raziskave – so različne iteracije ustvarjene za delitev tega znanja, za produkcijo novega?

Poleg znanja generira nove oblike izkustva. Namen različnih iteracij je posredovati izkušnjo oziroma jo deliti z drugimi ter iskanje novih ali primernih orodij oz. medijev za interpretacijo in predstavitev.

Ali je vajin performans v trajanju oblikoval vajino interakcijo z realnostjo? Če je, kako?

Meniva, da je. Oblikovan tako, kakor je bil, je za naju ustvaril specifične vloge, z igranjem katerih sva lahko doživela drugačne situacije, prišla do drugačnih srečanj, ki jih sicer ne bi bilo.

Kako je bilo preživljati čas na tej zelo onesnaženi reki in jo spoznavati?

Naporno. Resničnost je vse prej kot romantična. Ne da sva to pričakovala, a kot Evropejca nosiva s sabo breme belega evropskega kolonializma in vseh destrukcij, ki jih je pustil na jugu ZDA na eni in okcidentalizma na drugi strani, torej romantizirane podobe ZDA in zlasti reke Misisipi. Odraščala sva s knjigami Marka Twaina, rockom, bluzom, džezom in seveda s hollywoodskimi filmi. Ideja divjine je prej podoba izgubljenega raja.

Kaj vama pomeni raziskovanje skozi umetnost? Katere so specifične poteze umetniškega raziskovanja?

Možnost interakcije z realnostjo. Možnost neprestanega ponovnega izpraševanja metod in dejanj. Uporaba različnih pristopov za komunikacijo z javnostjo. Možnost biti pri vsem skupaj kreativen.

Projekt ima več iteracij. Kakšne so specifične poteze nastajajočega performansa? Kaj ponuja medij gledališča? Kakšen zorni kot privzame v primerjavi s filmom, instalacijo, knjigo?

S filmom *Southwind*, ki je kinematografski esej, občinstvu predstavi svoj pogled na reko Misisipi in svoj portret ZDA. V performansu pa glas prepustiva drugi strani in ji omogočiva, da odgovori. Performer Davis Freeman je namreč Američan, ki bo komentiral najina opažanja. Medij gledališča omogoča takšno izkušnjo. Omogoča usmerjeno in na času temelječo izkušnjo na stičišču resničnega in namišljenega, realnosti in fikcije.

Kaj sta se med svojo raziskavo od-učila?

Rigorozna disciplina ubije čarovnijo procesa.

(Prevod: Igor Feketija)

INTERVIEW
WITH
MARK POŽLEP
AND MAXIME
BERTHOU

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Maxime Berthou, Mark Požlep, and Tery Žeželj

In this interview, I had the opportunity to talk with two friends, collaborators, and authors of the *Southwind* project, Mark Požlep and Maxime Berthou, and ask them about their artistic practice, the way they think about it, and the way they engage with the world through it. As the three of us were located in three different countries at the time, the interview in February 2022 took place mostly through a Google Drive document.

Can you say a bit about how you started working together and about your relationship?

Our first collaboration started a decade ago with our previous project *Hogshead 733*. That project, too, involved a durational performance. It also included a near-death experience, so we became really connected and continued to work together.

How would you describe *Southwind*? What defines your practice-based research?

Southwind started as a practice-based research to explore the impact of the corn monoculture on the Mississippi as an Anthropocene river. Research was organized as a durational performance, a trip down the entire length of the river, on a six-meter-long steamboat. As we crossed ten different states, the plan was to collect various sorts of corn from farmers along the river and use it to make moonshine out of it at the end of the trip. The steamboat became a tool of establishing communication of diverse communities of the river, a ticket to places that we normally would not have had the possibility to enter.

Who are the two travelers on the steamboat? What is the story of your research?

Two travelers on the boat are two European contemporary artists, one Catalan and one Slovenian. As mentioned in the previous answer, the story of our research was to investigate the impact of corn monoculture on the Mississippi river, but as we followed the stream, the issues closely related to corn slowly started to fade away. Not because we had lost interest in them, but because it was impossible to separate this topic from all the other issues and problems that we encountered and which played an equally important role in the sociopolitical and ecological reality of the Mississippi river. Our journey began months after one of the biggest floods in American history and ended just weeks before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the end of Donald Trump's

term. The story of our research became the portrait of the river and life around it.

What was your initial research question? How did you approach it?

Our initial research question was the impact of corn monoculture on the Mississippi river as an Anthropocene River. We decided to purchase a small steamboat, a typical historical vessel of the Mississippi, travel with it the whole length of the river, and collect corn from farmers. We intended to finance the trip by selling the moonshine that we would distill in New Orleans out of collected corn. We used this as a communication tool to come in contact with farmers along the riverbanks, and to gain first-hand experience of the river. We would travel on the boat alone, accompanied by a camera crew on land, by car.

What are the steps of your research? Is it finished or is it still happening?

We started by purchasing the boat, two years before the trip. Every four months, we traveled to the US to work on the boat and to travel by car along the Mississippi to prepare for the trip and to establish partnerships with still makers and a distillery in New Orleans. The second step was boating down the river, which lasted a month and a half. Working with *Centre Pompidou* in Paris, *Studio #13/16*, we tried to establish an immersive education program during the sail. Youngsters would have a Zoom conversation with us every week directly from the field and would be working with specialists in the studio space on the given topics that were opening along the trip down the river. The third step was production and sale of the moonshine. The fourth step was the cinematographical essay. The fifth step will be a book that includes travelogue essays, photo and drawing documentation; and the sixth, last step will be a documentary performance.

How do you map all the researched and produced knowledge/experience, new objects of thought?

Mapping finds its place in physical travel and interaction, writing, travelogue essays, photographical and cinematographical documentation, and drawing.

How do you think of the experience that this durational performance created? Erin Manning writes that artistic research generates new modes of experiences. Would you agree? How would you describe new modes of experiences that emerged in the *Southwind*?

Manning writes that artistic research generates new forms of experience, which in turn requires new forms of evaluation and new ways of valuing the work that we do. It creates a space of constant interrogation. For us, this is one of the crucial reasons for engaging in artistic research.

How do you think of the accumulated knowledge of your research – are the diverse iterations created to share this knowledge, to produce a new one?

In addition to knowledge, it generates new forms of experience. Diverse iterations are created to share the experience and to search for new/suitable tools/media for interpretation and presentation.

Did your durational performance shape your engagement with reality? If yes, how?

For us, it did. Formed as it was, it created specific role plays for us that allowed us to experience different situations and encounters that we normally would not have experienced.

What was it like to spend time and to get to know this highly polluted river?

Challenging. The reality is far from romantic. Not that we had expected it, but being from Europe, we carry a burden of white European colonialism and all the destructions it brought to the south of US on one hand, and occidentalism on the other, that is a romanticized image of the US and especially the Mississippi river with us. We grew up with Mark Twain's books, Rock, Blues, Jazz, and of course Hollywood movies. The idea of wilderness is more of an image of paradise lost.

What does it mean for you to research through art? What are the specificities of artistic research?

The possibility to interact with reality. To be able to question the methods and actions all the time. To use different approaches for communication with the public. To be creative in the process.

The project has many iterations – what are the specificities of the upcoming performance? What does the medium of theater offer? What angle does it take in comparison to the movie, installation, book?

With the *Southwind* movie, cinematographical essay, we propose to the audience our view of the Mississippi river and portrait of the US; with the performance, however, we give the voice to the other side to let it reply. Performer Davis Freeman is an American, and he will deliver a comment on our observations. The medium of the theatre offers a platform for such experience. It allows a directed time-based experience on the junction between reality and fiction.

What did you un-learn during your research?

Rigorous discipline kills the magic of the process.



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UMETNIK, KI VZTRAJA, IN UMETNOST, KI TRAJA
Zala Dobovšek

V dokumentarnem filmu *Southwind*, t. i. kinematografskem eseju Marka Požlepa in Maxima Berthouja, se po principu sprotnega potopisnega (video-foto-dnevniškega) beleženja izrisuje avtentična podoba reke Misisipi. V vsako reko je zmeraj vpisana poetična, a nič manj tudi kruta dihotomija in težko je pravzaprav razbrati, ali je obstoj reke pasiven ali aktiven. Reka preprosto je in hkrati vpliva na vse. Sočasno je nenehno antropoceno izkoriščana in regulirana. Ima moč, a hkrati kot da se razdaja. V dinamiki neprestanih in nepredvidljivih (mikro)dogodkov v času plutja po njej sta v *Southwindu* dva prizora srečanja z naključnimi »avtohtonimi« prebivalci zame še posebej izstopajoča. Prvi je prizor z Američanom z nadstandardnim čolnom, ki se s popotnikoma na kratko podruži na njunem skromnem parniku, medtem ko mu razlagata, koliko dela in iznajdljivosti sta v vložila v to, da je parnik zanju obenem tudi bivališče. Ko se samozavestni japi – potem ko jima seveda poda svojo *business card* – opotekajoče vrne na svoje nadstandardno plovilo, ga Požlep in Berthou vljudno vprašata, če potrebuje pomoč. Moški jima z glasom v tonu, ki se giblje nekje med pokroviteljstvom, neotesanostjo in odkritostjo, odvrne: »Ne, vidva sta tista, ki potrebujeta pomoč.« Drugi prizor je srečanje z brezdomcem, ki živi na z najnujnejšim živežem natovorjenem kanuju; rumeni kanu je njegovo prevozno sredstvo, hiša in »vse, kar ima«. Ker je ves čas v tranzitu, nima težav z nadlegovanjem uradnih oseb zaradi brezdomstva. Denar potrebuje samo za hrano, vse ostalo je zanj, kot pravi, »brezplačno«. Cena preživetja je pač optimizacija lastnega telesa.

Poleg številnih osupljivih situacij in prigod na popotovanju po in ob reki Misisipi, ki s pomočjo natančnega kadriranja, sugestivne zvočne podlage in nepredvidljive dramaturške naracije izvrstno izrišejo kulturološke in gospodarske fenomene prebivalstva vzdolž te veličastne reke, se zdita omenjena prizora pomenljiva še z neke druge perspektive. Ponujata realistično idejo o raznovrstnosti življenjskih standardov, a sočasno v podtekstu s pomočjo situacijskega fragmenta že razkrivata sistem družbenih mehanizmov. Zdi se, kot da se prav tu reprezentirajo temeljni atributi Požlepove poetike, v kateri se med seboj konstantno prelivajo in zaletavajo različni robovi družbenih celic. Prav perspektiva in zmožnost izrekanja določenega razreda sta tisti, ki modificirata pogled večine na svet: privilegij kot samoumevnost in socialna izključenost kot lastna izbira. Spodmakniti privzgojeno in pogosto edino legitimno točko opazovanja (sveta) je Požlepova

strategija razkrivanja družbenih ustrojev, a nič manj tudi samega sebe, saj je vsakršna interpretacija že (hotena ali ne) izpoved lastne zavesti. Želja po radikalnem zasuku hegemonškega pogleda je pri Požlepovih raziskovalnih ekspedicijah zakoreninjena kot temeljni impulz. Ne glede na lokacijo in okoliščine performativnega popotovanja je pogosto prisotno iskanje »lokalne avtentičnosti« v vseh njenih oblikah in pomenih, predvsem pa v bistveni komponenti, da je ta čim bolj optimalno neokužena oziroma preslikana neposredno iz izjav ljudi, ki sicer nimajo javnega glasu in moči. Zanimiva je definicija ameriških sanj (*american dreams*) enega od sogovornikov v *Southwindu*, ki pravi, da zanj ta koncept pomeni, da človeku ni treba imeti takega življenja, kakršnega so ga imeli njegovi starši.

V tej konceptualni Požlepovi drži se ne nahaja le naboj angažirane umetnosti, še bolj kot ta je dragocena in pomembna dimenzija neke celostne investicije njega kot avtorja (popotnika/snovalca/izvajalca); investicije, ki se ne konča na deklarativnem nivoju, ampak seže prepričljivo dlje. Zavzame tako rekoč njegovo celotno telo, saj prav to telo v kontekstu posameznih projektov postane večplastno orodje: motor, aparat, shramba in prenosnik obenem – kot takega ga lahko nedvomno beremo tudi v luči fizičnega gledališča oziroma vztrajnostnega performansa. Telo, ki raziskuje, tvega, vztraja, se samooskrbuje in eksperimentira na (ponekod tudi »krvoločnem«) terenu, zato da bi lahko ob sklepnem dejanju vsa ta izčrpna pot postala predstava, performans, retrospektiva, učna ura.

Požlepovi umetniški projekti niso specifični le zaradi večdisciplinarnosti, v kateri se vsakič na novo skrojeno prepletata vizualna in performativna praksa, odlikuje jih predvsem poglobljeno razumevanje dokumentarnih, (avto)biografskih in potopisnih materialov. Projekte *Bolj čudno od raja*¹, *Tloris za*

1 *Bolj čudno od raja*, koncept
in izvedba Mark Požlep,
Gledališče Glej, Ljubljana,
premiera 27. september 2016.

*revolucijo*² in *Southwind* povezuje več sorodnih prvin nastajanja in prezentiranja, čeravno se na koncu (»na cilju«) vsi inscenirajo na sebi lasten princip pričevanja in je odrska izreka posameznega projekta v odnosu do drugih povsem avtonomna. Avtorjevi potopisni zapisi kot tudi njihova naknadna »dramatizacija« na odru v specifični maniri prečijo že omenjene komponente dokumentarnega in (avto)biografskega. Vendar pa ta besedila pred preostro dokumentarnostjo »obvaruje« poetična refleksija, pretirano (avto)biografskost pa prepreči osrednji akter potopisne pripovedi/ zgodbe, ki ni le avtor sam, temveč tudi popotovanje kot tako in vsi njegovi naključni kot tudi načrtovani dogodki oziroma osebe.

Performativnost pri Požlepu še zdaleč ni le v sklepnem dejanju (performansa), performativne plasti so pravzaprav prisotne v vsakem trenutku, ko sta na delu njegova prvinskost in avtentičnost. Obe vznikneta skupaj z nujno »preživetja« na določeni ekspediciji, ki zahteva jasno organiziranje, načrtovanje, nabavo, dokumentiranje, komunikacijo in realizacijo. Krhka zarez med Požlepovo zasebno in javno pojavo ter neprestana fluidnost med spontanim in figurativnim v predstavah in filmih vzpostavljajo unikatno »zakulisno dokumentarnost«, v kateri so potencialni elementi performativnega navzoči že od samega začetka, a se njihov razcvet morda res najbolj optimalno realizira v končnem formatu dogodka. Spoj obojega – povsem realna in nepopačena podoba določene situacije in sočasna vzpostavitev avtorjevega intimnega odnosa do nje – ustvari specifično relacijo med objektivno stvarnostjo in subtilno dovzetnostjo interpretativne reakcije nanjo.

Ni preprosto umestiti derridajevske teze o nesmiselnosti razlikovanja med avtobiografskim in neavtobiografskim diskurzom ter t. i. koncem avtobiografije, saj je avtobiografskost tako ali tako že vselej prisotna v obliki samoreferenc. Avtobiografski model v tem kontekstu izkazuje nekakšno prvinsko politično moč, ki potuje od intimnega (zasebnega) k družbenemu (javnemu) brez večjih zastojev, reinterpretacije ali celo cenzure. Vemo pa, da avtobiografija prav zaradi možnosti avtorskih posegov ni zmeraj

**2 *Tloris za revolucijo*, koncept
in izvedba Mark Požlep,
Gledališče Glej, Ljubljana,
premiera 11. november 2018.**

natančnejša kot biografija, saj lahko namenoma pozabi omeniti določena dejstva ali pa namerno zabisuje določene lastne motive, ki bi jih »objektivnost« biografskega zapisa morda obdržala. Gre za model »avtoperformansa« (Pavis), torej za resnično osebo, ki jo gledamo, kako neposredno pred nami razmišlja o svoji preteklosti oziroma o svojem sedanjem stanju. Tudi pojem aktualnosti pri Požlepu zavzema nove pomene, ki se razširijo onstran klasičnega razumevanja tega naziva, saj sicer drži, da so njegove ekspedicije (s tem pa tudi performansi) vedno v duhu aktualnosti, vendar se ta praviloma staplja z univerzalnim. Prav ta dvojec razpira zaznavo dogodkov, kjer se izkušnja opazovanja ves čas seli od »tujega« k sebi, od množičnega k individualnemu. Družbene fenomene Požlep zazna skozi razsoden objektiv in jih nato subjektivno razčleni, vpne najprej v svoj bivanjski model in nato poišče tudi kanale do ostale javnosti.

Obsežno kompleksni temi kapitalizma in ekološke problematike, ki nas že sami po sebi silita h kritičnemu razmisleku in (samo)ozaveščanju, vzvratno pa z isto silo sprožata tudi nelagodje in tesnobo, se v Požlepovih performativnih gestah osvetlita tako rekoč skozi podčrtano ilustracijo (osemdnevni *roadtrip* s starim Volkswagnom po državah nekdanje Jugoslavije v *Bolj čudno od raja*, rabljen kanu za plovbo okoli Mannhattna v dveh dneh v *Tlorisu za revolucijo*, enoinpolmesečna plovba s prenovljenim šestmetrskim parnikom po Misisipiju v *Southwindu*). Ta »karikatura poti« ima seveda skrajno realne učinke, ki se kažejo v napornih postopkih potovanja, vzdržljivosti, iznajdljivosti in sožitju z drugimi. A prav v tem se nahaja subliminalna lepota, ki presega vsečnost in ideale, izhaja namreč iz čiste in neponarejene podobe življenja oziroma prvinske »arhitekture« mesta ali narave. Prav tako kot prej omenjene zasukane perspektive naracije (neslišanih glasov) Požlep subverzivno nastavi pogled tudi na izbrano okolje kot tako, kjer načelno išče odrinjene, neugledne in obskurne lokacije, pa naj bo to s socialnega (doma starostnikov) ali geografskega/turističnega vidika (pogled na Manhattan prek zarjavelih gradbenih konstrukcij in onesnaženih kanalov ter plovba čez ZDA po reki, polni nevarnosti in nečistoče). *Southwind* je pri tem še toliko bolj pretresljiv, saj ponuja neposreden vid v neoliberalno strukturo poljedelstva ob reki Misisipi, kjer koruzo, tamkajšnjo monokulturno rastlino, zavoljo preživetja lokalnega prebivalstva čaka pot v etanol ali gensko spremenjeno procesiranje.

Analognost in reciklaža se pogosto pojavljata kot moderna in hipsterska trenda v odnosu do sodobnega sveta, a je njuna

realizacija toliko bolj komplicirana, največkrat pa tudi le idejna in salonska. Požlep in Maxime Berthou sta za namene ekspedicijskega projekta *Southwind* obnovila star šestmetrski parnik, ga preuredila tudi za prenočevanje in se, skratka, po mogočni reki Misisipi 2800 kilometrov vozila »na drva«. Pred tem sta že leta 2015 v sklopu projekta *Hogshead 733* (2015–2020) en mesec z dvajsetimi postanki plula od Francije (Trébeurden) do Škotske (Islay), in sicer s prav tako obnovljeno tipično leseno ribiško jadrnico iz leta 1941, ki sta jo po končani poti podvrgla še drugi transformaciji, iz nje sta namreč naredila sode in vanje shranila varjeni viski. Tako je 733 steklenic viskija postalo praktično-empirični artefakt za poljubno nadaljnjo uporabo.

Požlepova praksa antropoloških ekspedicij se skupaj z naknadnimi odrskimi performansi umešča v samosvojo panogo scenskega uprizarjanja, v estetiko, ki ji stežka podelimo fiksno definicijo, saj je sama narava umetnikovega delovanja nenehno fluidna, interdisciplinarna in regenerativna. Njegove dokumentaristične prvine niso samosvoje le zaradi »eksotičnih« lokacij, ki jih raziskuje, presežnost jim zagotovi šele avtorjevo resnično stališče do njih. Projekte zaznamujejo jasni odnosi, osebni pristopi, poetičnost surovih materialov, raziskovalna ranljivost, a tudi nenehni kritični uvidi v izkustvo. Projekti, ki so z vidika reprezentacije kljub pomembnim tematikam najbolj politični pravzaprav v tem, da si odmerijo čas. Dovolj časa, veliko časa. Čas za iskanje, eksperimentiranje, pot v neznano, za refleksijo in širšo umeščenost doživetega, ki presega kategorijo zgolj privatnih preferenc. Projekti, ki zato že skoraj učinkujejo kot nekakšne utopije, čeprav izhajajo iz trde realnosti in prizemljenih konceptov. Koncepti z dolgimi procesi in še daljšimi potmi do cilja. Terensko raziskovanje, ki samo sebi poseblja lastno metodologijo kreiranja – vzdržljivo, potrpežljivo, analogno, adrenalinsko. Kot parnik, odvisen od drv, in kanu, odvisen od vesel. Vsakršen premik naprej pogojuje izključno premo sorazmerna količina vnesene energije vanj. Komplicirana in brezkompromisna dokumentarnost materiala kot tudi lastnega telesa, ki vsakič znova postane oziroma vseskozi že je dokumentarna substanca *per se*. Številni idejni izviri se izlivajo v umetnost, ki vstopa v drobovje družbe, zato da bi ta kasneje umetnosti vrnila isto gesto.

PERSISTENT ARTIST, LASTING ART
Zala Dobovšek

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In the documentary film *Southwind*, a so-called cinematographic essay by Mark Požlep and Maxime Berthou, an authentic image of the Mississippi River is portrayed through a real-time travelogue (video-photo-diary recording). Every river has a poetic, but also cruel dichotomy and it is hard to decipher whether the river is passive or active. The river simply is and as such it influences everything. It is anthropogenically used and regulated. It has great power; however, it is also giving. Within the constant and unforeseeable (micro)events that took place as they sailed down the river, *Southwind* shows two meetings with random »autochthonous« inhabitants that I believe deserve special attention. The first was a meeting with an American on a luxury boat, who joined the travellers on their modest steamboat for a while. He was told how much work and ingenuity the travelling duo invested in transforming the steamboat into their living quarters. When the confident yuppie – after he handed over his business card, of course – stumblingly returned to his luxury boat, Požlep and Berthou politely asked him if he needed any help. The man replied: »No, you are the ones who need help,« in a tone of voice that was between patronising, rude and honest. The second meeting was with a homeless person who lived in a canoe laden with essentials; the yellow canoe was his means of transport, house and »everything he owned«. As he is constantly on the move, he manages to avoid the officials pestering him because of his homelessness. He stated that he needed money solely to purchase food, everything else was »free« for him. Optimisation of one's body is the price of survival.

Alongside numerous astonishing situations and adventures during the journey on and alongside the Mississippi River, which provide an excellent outline to the culturological and economic phenomena alongside this mighty river through precise shots, the suggestive sound score and unpredictable dramaturgical narration, the two mentioned scenes appear important from another perspective. They provide a realistic idea as regards the diversity of living standards, while revealing the social mechanisms through the subtext of situational fragments. It seems that this is where the basic attributes of Požlep's poetics can be found, the poetics in which the various edges of social cells merge and collide. The perspective and capability of expressing a certain class influences the majority's view of: privilege as self-evident and social exclusion as a personal choice. Požlep reveals social mechanisms by removing the imparted and often the only legitimate view (of

the world), as well as his personal view, as any interpretation is already (whether this is deliberate or not) an expression of one own's consciousness. The desire to achieve a radical twist in the hegemonic view is a primary impulse in all Požlep's research expeditions. Regardless of the location and circumstances of his performative travels he often seeks for »local authenticity« in all its forms and meanings, but primarily in its essential component that is optimally unaffected or transcribed directly from the statements of people who do not have a public voice or power. I find the definition of the American dream provided by one of the people talking in *Southwind* interesting, for he states that he believes this concept means that a person does not need to live the life his parents lived.

In Požlep's conceptual stance we cannot see merely the charge of engaged art, even more important and valuable is the dimension of his all-round investment as an artist (traveller/conceiver/performer). His investment, that does not stop on the declarative level, but reaches significantly further. It takes over almost his entire body, for it is his body that becomes a multi-layered tool within the context of individual projects: the motor, apparatus, storage space and computer at the same time – as such it can also be read in the light of physical theatre or endurance performances. The body researches, takes risks, persists, is self-reliant and experiments on a (sometimes ferocious) terrain, in order to turn the comprehensive travels into a performance, a play, a retrospective, an hour of learning in its final stage.

Požlep's artistic projects are not specific merely due to their multi-disciplinarity, in which visual and performative practice always intertwine, for they are always strongly distinguished by the in depth understanding of documentary, (auto)biographic and travelogue materials. The projects *Stranger than Paradise*¹,

1 *Stranger than Paradise*, concept and performance by Mark Požlep, Glej Theatre, Ljubljana, premiere September 27, 2016.

*Blueprint for Revolution*² and *Southwind* share numerous elements in their emergence and presentation, even though in the end (when he reaches his goal) each individual project results in an original principle of testimony and every expression on stage is autonomous in relation to others. The artist's travelogue records as well as their later stage »dramatizations« cross the previously mentioned components of documentary and (auto)biographical in a specific manner. However, these texts do not become a harsh documentary due to their poetic reflection, while the overly (auto)biographical note is prevented by the main character of the travelogue story/narrative, which is not the artist, but the journey itself with all its random as well as planned events or people.

Požlep's performativity is by no means found merely in the final act (performance), as his elementality and authenticity ensures performative layers in every moment. Both emerge in tandem with the need to »survive« a chosen expedition, which demands clear organisation, planning, purchases, documentation, communication and realisation. The fragile border between Požlep's personal and public appearance and the constant fluidity between the spontaneous and figurative in the performances and films establish a unique »behind the scene documentary«, in which potential performative elements are present from the very beginning, but they truly evolve in the final format of the event. The merging of the two – a realistic and clear image of a certain situation and the simultaneous establishment of the artist's intimate relation to it – creates a specific relation between objective reality and the subtle susceptibility of its interpretational reaction.

It is not easy to place into this context Derrida's thesis on the absurdity of distinguishing between autobiographical and non-autobiographical discourse and the so-called end of the autobiography, as the autobiographical is always present in the form of self-references. In this context the autobiographical model shows some sort of elementary political power that travels from the intimate (private) to the social (public) without any significant

2 Blueprint for Revolution, concept
and performance by Mark
Požlep, Glej Theatre, Ljubljana,
premiere November 11, 2018.

stops, reinterpretations or even censorship. However, we know that due to the possibilities of artistic interventions, an autobiography is not always more precise than a biography, for it can deliberately forget to mention certain facts or intentionally neglect certain personal motifs that the »objectivity« of a biographical record might preserve. In the »autoperformance« model (Pavis), we observe a real person considering his past and his current state. With Požlep the notion of relevance takes on new meanings that spread beyond the classical understanding of this word, for it is true that his expeditions (as well as his performances) are always relevant, however, this usually merges with the universal. It is this pair that opens the perception of events, in which observation is constantly on the move from the »alien« towards itself, from the mass to the individual. Požlep perceives social phenomena through a prudent gaze before subjectively analysing them, first including them into his living model and then seeking channels to disseminate them to the general public.

The vast and complex themes of capitalism and ecology, which in themselves force us to critical thoughts and (self) awareness, and reciprocally trigger unease and anxiety, are in Požlep's performative gestures brought to light through the underlining illustrations (eight day road trip with an old Volkswagen through the states of former Yugoslavia in *Stranger than Paradise*, the old canoe used to circumnavigate Manhattan in two days in the *Blueprint for Revolution*, the month and a half sailing on a renovated steamboat along the Mississippi in *Southwind*). However, this »journey caricature« has realistic effects, which are shown in the strenuous processes of travelling, endurance, resourcefulness and harmony with others. This is where the sublime beauty lies, beauty that surpasses agreeability and ideals, for it emerges from a pure and unadulterated image of life or the elemental 'architecture' of a town or nature. Similar to the previously described twisted narration perspectives (of unheard voices), Požlep subversively views also the chosen environment as such, in which he seeks locations that are pushed aside, unremarkable and obscure, whether this is from a social (retirement homes) or geographical/ tourist aspect (view of Manhattan through rusty constructions and filthy canals, or sailing across the US along a river full of danger and filth). *Southwind* is shocking as it offers a direct insight into the neoliberal structure of agriculture along the Mississippi River, where corn, the area's monoculture, awaits

its transformation either into ethanol or genetically modified processing in order for the local inhabitants to survive.

The analogue aspect and recycling often appear as a modern and hipster-like trend in relation to the contemporary world, however, their realisation is complex and often remains merely on the level of ideas. For the purpose of the *Southwind* expedition, Požlep and Maxime Berthou renovated an old six metre steamboat, transformed it so it was suitable for living and sailed 2800 kilometres down the mighty Mississippi River, fuelled by wood. Prior to this, within the project *Hogshead 733* (2015–2020) which they conducted in 2015, they sailed for one month from France (Trébeurden) to Scotland (Islay) with twenty stops on the way. In this project they renovated a typical wooden fishing sailing boat from 1941, which they, once they completed their trip, transformed into barrels, which they used to store whisky. With this, 733 bottles of whisky became a practical and empirical artefact for future use.

Together with his staged performances, Požlep's anthropological expeditions can be considered unique stage performances that provide an aesthetic that is hard to define, as the artist's work is always fluid, interdisciplinary and regenerative. His documentary elements are not unique merely due to the »exotic« locations he researches, for an extra added value is given by the artist's standpoint towards them. The projects are marked by clear relations, personal approaches, the poetics of the raw materials, research vulnerability, as well as permanent insights into his experience. Even though they address important themes, the projects are mainly political, as they measure their time. Sufficient time, plenty of time. Time for searching, experimenting, traveling into the unknown, for reflection and placing the experience into a broader context that surpasses the category of private preferences. Because of this his projects function almost as some sort of utopias, even though they emerge from hard reality and grounded concepts with long processes and even longer paths that lead to the goal. Fieldwork research, which in itself personifies its own method of creation – persistent, durable, analogue, full of adrenalin. Such as the steamboat, dependent on wood, and a canoe, dependent on oars. Any move further is conditioned by proportionate energy invested. The complicated and uncompromised documentary value of the material as well as his own body, which always becomes or is consistently a documentary substance *per se*. The numerous ideas pour into art that enters the core of society, so that this would later return the same gesture to art.

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SOUTHWIND — NA KRATKO O DRAMATURGIJI
Grzegorz Reske

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Naj zveni še tako nenavadno, z vidika književnosti (ali filma) je strategija, načrtana v tem delu, videti precej tipična. Če se osredotočimo na pustolovske žanre – bodisi v knjigah bodisi na televizijskih zaslonih – bi lahko emblematično figuro moškega prijateljstva celo označili za kliše, nemara celo utemeljitveni kliše.

Za uvid, da ta strategija ni naključna, temveč tiči v samih temeljih del Maxima Berthouja in Marka Požlepa, se moramo ozreti na njun prejšnji projekt, ki je združil ta dva posameznika. *Southwind* je brez dvoma samostojen projekt, a če ga želimo umestiti v umetniško prakso Berthouja in Požlepa, takoj vzniknejo vzporednice s projektom *Hogshead 733*.

Poglejmo torej na kratko ta dva projekta skupaj. V obeh primerih je zasnova enaka: čoln, ki ga je treba obnoviti in uporabiti, voda, po kateri bo čoln plul (in v obeh primerih sta velikost in stanje čolna nedorasla izzivu, ki ga predenj postavlja ta voda), dva tipa, željna spopada s tem izzivom, in nenazadnje alkohol, ki simbolično začini popotovanje (in zelo konkretno financira vso avanturo).

In da: v prvi vrsti gre za avanturo. To je več kot očitno v filmu *Soutien de Famille*, ki je nastal v okviru projekta *Hogshead 733*. Tudi ko so v kadru drugi liki (nezanesljivi ladjedelec, ekipa iz destilarne viskija), je to od prvega prizora do odjavne špice filma, ustvarjenega pred skoraj sedmimi leti, zgodba o dveh posameznikih, ki preizkušata svoje veščine in svoje razmerje v pustolovščini, ki lahko okrepi tako eno kot drugo in ki bo v vsakem primeru zabavno trpljenje – nekaj, o čemer bosta čez leta pripovedovala svojim otrokom. Tudi pripomočki za doseganje njunih ciljev postanejo ikonični. Konec koncev, ali ni izkušnja na morju, dokazovanje, da se lahko s čolnom zoperstaviš naravi, vremenu, eden najosnovnejših obredov prehoda – zrelostni preizkus, v katerem se skuje trajno moško prijateljstvo? In ali ni naravno, da se bo potovanje zaključilo s šilcem močne pijače?

Berthoujev in Požlepov podvig v *Hogsheadu* je pravzaprav »hemingwaystvo« v svoji čisti obliki. Tako emblematično – a ves čas deluje. In tako kot Hemingway, in mnogi prej in kasneje, sta svojo lastno izkušnjo (ego) postavila v ospredje ter postala protagonista, junaka, subjekta umetniškega dela. Skozi ves film vidimo, kako se njun projekt (in njune sanje) uresničuje skozi njun boj. Vidimo ta boj (avanturo, dovolj nevarno, da izkusita svoje meje in se naučita zaupati človeku ob sebi) in na koncu vidimo nagrado, ki čaka na drugi strani mosta. Naj zveni še tako klišejsko, a to je skoraj zanesljiv recept za uspešno zgodbo: želimo si gledati ta napor in želimo videti, kako se sanje uresničijo. Medtem ko se igrata z vsemi navedenimi klišiji tega žanra, Marku in Maximu uspe ohraniti nit zgodbe, za katero sta vez med njima in njuno prijateljstvo pomembnejša od same pustolovščine. V vsakem primeru bi kombinacija

tem in orodij, ki jih uporabljata – njihov univerzalni odmev in sledenje ustaljenemu vzorcu – lahko omejila in zadržala mlada umetnika na poti (ali nemara v rečni strugi) tega žanra.

Ob prvih orisih Berthoujevega in Požlepovega novega projekta bi dejansko lahko dobili občutek, da se je to tudi zgodilo. Spet sta tu dva mladeniča, lačna prigod; spet je tu star čoln, ki ga je treba obnoviti, da se bo »spopadel z veliko vodo«, in da, ob koncu poti je spet v načrtu alkohol. Razlika je le, da sta fanta nekoliko starejša, drugi del zgodbe (čoln, dolžina plovbe, število ljudi, ki jih bosta srečala) pa nekoliko večji.

A tu pridemo do trenutka, ko postane umetniški razvoj projekta najzanimivejši. To je namreč točka, kjer se Berthou in Požlep odločita, da bosta zapustila svoje območje ugodja, ali bolje, območje svojega ega. Od prvega do drugega projekta sta se, ne da bi se odpovedala svojim orodjem, radikalno odmaknila od avanture v Hemingwayevem slogu in se približala reportaži v slogu Kapuścińskiego. Ali – če ostanemo v domeni fantovske literature – od Verna sta prišla do Swifta.

Še vedno sta torej tu onadva in čudaški čoln. A tokrat, kmalu po začetku zgodbe, se ta plast zgodbe umakne v skoraj nevidno ozadje, namesto dveh protagonistov pa ospredje kadra začnejo zapolnjevati resnični junaki zgodbe – neverjetno raznolika in barvita paleta posameznikov, ki jih srečujeta po poti.

Ne vem, koliko teh srečanj je bilo načrtovanih – in mi tudi ni treba vedeti. Okoliščine pomagajo? *Hogsheadova* pot iz Bretanje do Škotske ni ponujala veliko priložnosti za srečevanje drugih likov na poti – bila sta samo dva, subjekt in objekt zgodbe. Reka Misisipi, ki je prizorišče *Southwinda*, pa je, nasprotno, neusahljiv vir akterjev iz drugega plana za zgodbo. A zakaj Maxime in Mark puščata te akterje iz drugega plana v ospredje? Gre le za njuno notranjo željo, da gresta dlje znotraj samih sebe, ali pa pri tem igra pomembno vlogo tudi zunanji kontekst? Ne le, da je Severno morje bolj skopo s priložnostmi za snidenja z mimoidočimi; kar ponuja, ima precej bolj domač, lokalni občutek – ponuja nekaj, kar je obema avtorjema že znano. Maxime Berthou je Katalonec, ki živi v Franciji, Mark Požlep je Slovenec, ki že vrsto let živi v Belgiji. Misisipi je, nasprotno, za oba eksotičen. In hkrati eksotičen na zelo svojstven način. Poigrajmo se za trenutek z narodnostnimi klišeji. S francoske perspektive so države ob Misisipiju, če ne kar vse ZDA, manj razvito, manj kulturno, skoraj barbarsko »novo ozemlje«; za Slovenca – ki tukaj širše predstavlja Srednjo in Vzhodno Evropo – ZDA arhetipsko predstavljajo mitsko deželo svobode, blaginje in neskončnih možnosti. Iskrice teh stereotipov sem zaznal med vrsticami opisa projekta in celo, ko sem poslušal avtorja, ko sta govorila o njem. Nisem pa jih začutil v filmu. Maxime in Mark sta še bolj obrzdala svoja ega: nista le prepustila

izraznega prostora tistim, ki sta jih srečala na poti, temveč sta se tudi izognila hitrim in obsojajočim komentarjem na njihov račun.

Takšen koncept ni brez tveganj. Projekt ni omogočal ponovitev. Za vsak prizor je bil na voljo le en poskus in zgodba, ki sta jo odkrila, je morala biti na koncu zanimiva. Kje je torej bistvo uspeha tega projekta? Menim, da je to zelo premišljena izbira konteksta. Zanimive like najdemo v New Yorku ali v teksaških puščavah. Če želimo uporabiti žanr potovanja, se lahko preprosto podamo na *Route 66* ali katero koli drugo transameriško cesto. Na mnoge teme, predstavljene v *Southwindu*, bi najbrž naleteli tudi tam. Razlika je, da New York in Teksas poznamo precej dobro, tako iz pripovedi drugih kultur kot iz poročil in komentarjev v medijih. Po drugi strani je Misisipi pretežno prisoten le v prvem polju. To je drugi veliki dosežek teh dveh filmarjev – našo pozornost usmerita v nekaj, kar mislimo, da poznamo, a tega v resnici ne poznamo.

Brez svojega komentarja na začetku ali na koncu umetnika preprosto nastavita ogledalo (ali okvir slike oz. kadra), skozi katerega gledalci opazujejo realnost ozemlja, za katero so domnevali, da ga poznajo.

Nekaj tisoč kilometrov, mnogo dni, mnogo srečanj in le ena reka (tista Reka) na koncu dajo gledalcu nekaj reprezentativnega. Legendarna »mati vseh rek«, »hrbtenica Amerike«, »ameriška žitnica«, postane ozadje za skoraj epski pristop k upodabljanju skupnosti. Tako dva evropska avtorja privzameta vlogo poročevalcev, ki bosta svetu povedala resnico o tem, kakšne so ZDA v resnici. Na enem določenem ozemlju – emblematičnem, a povprečnem – narišeta portret sodobnosti. Brez preproste priprave, brez vnaprej dogovorjenih intervjujev in brez zunanjega komentarja – le naključna srečanja.

Seveda izbira likov, ki so na koncu uvrščeni v kadre *Southwinda*, ni naključna. Natančna izbira širšega nabora gradiv pred gledalce postavi najmočnejše posameznike in najganljivejše zgodbe. To je pravica, ki si jo film lahko vzame. Končni učinek je brez dvoma brutalen. Trčenje med našimi predstavami in simboli v ozadju teh ozemelj z realnostjo na ekranu, ki jo posredujeta filmarja, je presunljivo. Rečni zavoji Misisipija ne predstavljajo več slikovite kulise, temveč se razkrijejo kot ena največjih ekoloških katastrof na svetu: ameriška žitnica se je sprevrgla v ameriški strup. V ospredju, pred to kuliso, je družba, ki je izrazito drugačna od tiste, ki jo slikajo množični mediji. Radikalna poteza pri tem je, da Maxime in Mark nikakor ne poskušata dopolniti teh zgodb, temveč v njih v večini primerov preprosto ne najdeta nobenega upanja in nikakor ne srečnega konca. In končna slika je mračna, ker je resnična.

To bi pravzaprav lahko bila moja zaključna misel. A v resnici avtorja postrežeta še s tretjim in končnim velikim dosežkom: v dramaturgiji projekta *Southwind* se odločita še za en premik. Vse, kar sem doslej

omenil kot prednost, bi lahko v zadnjem trenutku zdrsnilo v natanko nasprotno smer. Da, lahko vklopiš kamero in preprosto prikažeš realnost brez komentarja in lahko se umakneš iz kadra, kolikor je le možno. A gledalec pri sebi vendarle ve, kdo drži kamero in kdo se odloča, kam bo ta usmerjena. Na tej točki na oder stopi Davis Freeman. V filmu je zgodba predstavljena skozi pogled dveh evropskih popotnikov na svet. V naslednjem koraku pa se junaka zgodbe ponovno odpovesta svojemu glasu in pustita likom iz filma, da govorijo s svojih stališč. Freeman jim ponovno da glas – vendar tokrat ne skozi digitalne slike na ekranu, temveč skozi telo performerja v živo na odru. Požlep in Berthou ponovno odpreta gledališko areno, a spet ne vzameta nič prostora zase, temveč ga prepustita drugim. Spet nam, gledalcem, omogočita razumeti člane skupnosti, prikazanih v filmu.

Odločitev, da združita film in performans, je nemara tisto, kar me danes najbolj zanima. To je fenomen, ki vzbuja mojo radovednost. Avantura je končana. Poti je konec. Izkušnja s poti se hladno razseka in sestavi v digitalno datoteko, ki je film. A izkušnja srečanja z ljudmi ob Misisipiju zagotovo še vedno vre v glavah umetnikov. Sprašujem se, ali je odločitev, da se vrhunec projekta odvije v živo, v resnici način, da si umetnika pustita odprto možnost, da dodata še kakšen poudarek ali posežeta v vzpostavljeno ravnovesje, nagneta jeziček na tehtnici. V današnji fluidni realnosti je težko priti do dokončne teze. Ne glede na to, kaj želita Berthou in Požlep sporočiti s filmom *Southwind*, jima Freemanovo telo na odru daje možnost, da naracija ostane odprta. To orodje se mi zdi izjemno privlačno. In morda je to četrti – tehnični – dosežek umetnikov, ki stojita za tem projektom.

(Prevod: Igor Feketija)

SOUTHWIND — A BIT ABOUT DRAMATURGY
Grzegorz Reske

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No matter how strange this might sound, looking through the perspective of literature (and films), the strategy proposed in this title looks quite typical. If we focus on adventure genres – either in books or on TV screen – the emblematic figure of male friendship might as well be called a cliché, and perhaps a foundational one.

To realize that this strategy is not coincidental, but rather lies in the foundations of the works by Maxime Berthou and Mark Požlep, we need to move back to their previous project that brought these two individuals together. And as much as *Southwind* is an independent and self-contained project, if we want to position it in the artistic practice of Berthou and Požlep, the immediate links with the *Hogshead 733* project appear.

So, let us look for a moment at these two projects together. In both cases, we find the same setup: a boat to be renovated and used, a body of water to sail on (in both cases, size and condition of the boat hardly meeting the challenge brought by the body of water), two guys willing to tackle that challenge, and last but not least, alcohol symbolically spicing up the trip (and very concretely financing that adventure).

And yes, it is first and foremost about adventure. We see it clearly in the film *Soutien de Famille* created as a part of the *Hogshead* project. Even when other characters appear on screen (untrustworthy boatbuilder, whisky distillery crew), from first image to the end credits of the film, created almost seven years ago, the story is always about two individuals who want to try out their skills and their relationship, go through an adventure that might make them stronger and bring some new skills, but most of all, an adventure that will certainly be a funny fuss – something to tell your kids about some years from now. The tools for achieving these ends become iconic, too. After all, isn't an experience at sea, proving that you can control a boat against nature and the elements, one of the most fundamental rites of passage – a test of maturity that forges a lasting male friendship? And isn't it natural that at the end of that trip, there will be a glass of a strong drink?

In fact, what Berthou and Požlep are taking up in *Hogshead* is pure »hemingwayism«. So emblematic – yet all the time working. And like Hemingway, or many before and after him, they put their own experience (ego) to the foreground and become protagonists, heroes, and subjects of the artwork. Throughout the movie, we see how their struggle is making the project happen (the dream come true), we see their struggle (adventure to go through, dangerous enough to learn about their limits and to trust the other human being next to them), and finally we see the reward waiting on other side of the bridge. No matter how much of a cliché it might sound, it is in fact almost a certain recipe for a successful story. We want to watch those efforts, we want to see the dream come true. Playing with all possibly listed genre clichés, Mark and Maxime manage to keep the storyline much

more about bonding and friendship than adventure per se. Nevertheless, the combination of topics and the tools they use – their universal resonance and model-like seeing – could all keep the young artists in the path (or rather the riverbed?) of the genre.

Hearing the first tips about the new project of Berthou and Požlep, one could feel this vibe indeed. There are two young guys hungry for adventure, there is an old boat that needs restoring to »stand against the big water«, and yes, there is a plan for alcohol at the end. There are some differences though – the guys were a bit older, and the other parts of the affair (boat, water, crowd to meet) a bit bigger.

And here we come to the moment when artistic development of the project becomes most interesting, because this is precisely the point where Berthou and Požlep decide to step out of their comfort zone, or rather the zone of their egos. From one project to the next, without compromising the tools, they made the radical shift from a Hemingway-style adventure to almost Kapuściński-style reportage. Or – to remain in the domain of boyhood literature – they turned from Verne to Swift.

So, there are still two of them and the whimsical boat. But this time, soon after the beginning of the story, these layers withdraw to an almost invisible background, and instead of two protagonists, the front of the picture starts to be filled with real heroes of the story – the incredibly diverse and colorful palette of individuals they encounter along their trip.

I do not know how much of it was intentional (and I do not need to know it). Circumstances help? The *Hogshead* traveling from Bretagne to Scotland did not afford much chance of meeting other characters on the way – there were only two of them – the subject and object of the story. The Mississippi river, providing the stage for *Southwind*, in contrast, continuously delivers second-plan actors for such a story. But why do those second-plan actors come forth into the foreground for Maxime and Mark? Is it only their internal wish to go further within both of them, or does the external context also play a role here? Not only does the North Sea provide fewer chances of meeting passersby; whatever it offers feels much more local, something that both authors are much more familiar with. Maxime Berthou is a Catalan living in France, Mark Požlep is Slovenian, but has lived in Belgium for many years. In contrast, the Mississippi stays exotic for both of them. And at the same time, exotic in a very peculiar way. Let us play national cliches for a moment. From a French perspective, the states along the Mississippi, and indeed the entire US, are a less developed and less cultured, almost barbarian »new territory«; for the Slovenian – representing here more broadly Central and Eastern Europe – the US will archetypically epitomize a mythical country of freedom, prosperity, and endless opportunity. And I could hear sparks of these stereotypes between

the lines of project descriptions, or even while listening to the authors describing it. But I do not see it in the movie. Maxime and Mark managed to restrain their egos even further – not only by giving up space for expression to those whom they met on their way, but also by avoiding quick and judgmental comments towards them.

Such a concept is not risk-free. The project did not allow second takes or shots. It was a one-time approach and the story to be found had to be interesting in the end. So where lies the success of the project? In my opinion, in a very careful choice of context. We can find interesting characters in New York or in the deserts of Texas. If we want to use the travel genre, we can easily hit *Route 66*, or any of the Trans-American highways. There is a chance that many of the topics presented in *Southwind* would be found there, too. The difference lies in the fact that we know both New York and Texas rather well, both from narrations by other cultures and from news and comments in the media. On the other hand, the Mississippi seems to be much more present in the first field only. This is the second big achievement of the two movie makers – they direct our focus to something we think we know, but in fact we do not.

And without attempting to comment, neither initially nor in closing, the two artists merely put up a mirror (or basically a picture frame) through which the spectators look at the reality of this territory they thought they knew.

A few thousand kilometers, several days, many encounters, and only one river (The River) bring the conclusion of giving to the spectator something that is representative. Here we go: the legendary »mother of all rivers«, »spine of America«, »feeding fields« become the background for an almost epic approach to community picture. So here we are – two young European authors take the role of reporters to tell the world what the US really looks like. In one defined territory – emblematic yet average – a portrait of contemporaneity is drawn. Without easier preparation, without arranged interviews, and without external comments – just random encounters.

Of course, the choice of figures who ended up on the screen of *Southwind* is not random. Precise selection of much broader material left for the spectators' eyes the strongest individuals and the most moving stories. This is a right that a movie can claim and exercise. There is no doubt that the final effect is brutal. Collision of our imaginations and symbols behind these territories with the reality on the TV screen provided by the filmmakers resonates strongly. Suddenly, the background of Mississippi's riverbends is no longer picturesque, but rather reveals itself as the site of one of the biggest ecological disasters in the world: the American Granary turned into American Venom. In front of that background is a society that

radically differs from any mass media picture of the country. The radical move here is that Maxime and Mark not only do not propose to make up in any way for those stories, but in most cases do not find any hope, and certainly no happy end. The final picture is grim because it is real.

And this could technically be my final point. But in fact, there is a third and final big achievement of the artists: one more shift they decide to take in the dramaturgy of *Southwind*. Everything I mentioned earlier as an advantage could just as easily slip in the opposite direction at the very last moment. Yes, you can turn on the camera and just present reality without comment, and you can remove yourself from the picture as much as possible. But of course, in the back of our heads, we still know who is holding the camera and who decides where it is pointed. And this is where Davis Freeman enters the stage. In the film, the story is being told according to how two European travelers see the world. But this is the moment where the heroes of the story waive their voice once again and let the characters in the film speak from their own perspectives. Freeman gives them voice once again – this time not from digital pictures on screen but embodied in the live performer on stage. Požlep and Berthou open again the arena of the play, but once again not to keep any space for themselves, but rather give it up to others. Once again, they give us, the spectators, a chance to understand the members of the community they portray in the film.

The decision to combine movie with performance is perhaps what interests me the most today. This is a phenomenon I am very much curious about. The adventure ended. The trip is over. Experience of this trip is coldly cut and assembled in the digital file of the movie. But this experience of encountering the Mississippi people is still boiling in artists' heads for sure. And I wonder if the choice of going for the live culmination of the project is in fact the artists' way of keeping an option for themselves to still add some accents or tip the balances differently. In today's fluid reality, it is difficult to deliver a final and conclusive thesis. Whatever message Berthou and Požlep are looking to convey with the film *Southwind*, Freeman's body on stage gives them a chance to keep the narration open. I find this tool extremely appealing. And maybe this is the fourth – technical – achievement of the artists behind the project.

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CRITICAL ZONE
POTENTIAL RAILROAD
TRACKBED EROSION
702.5 - 706.0 R

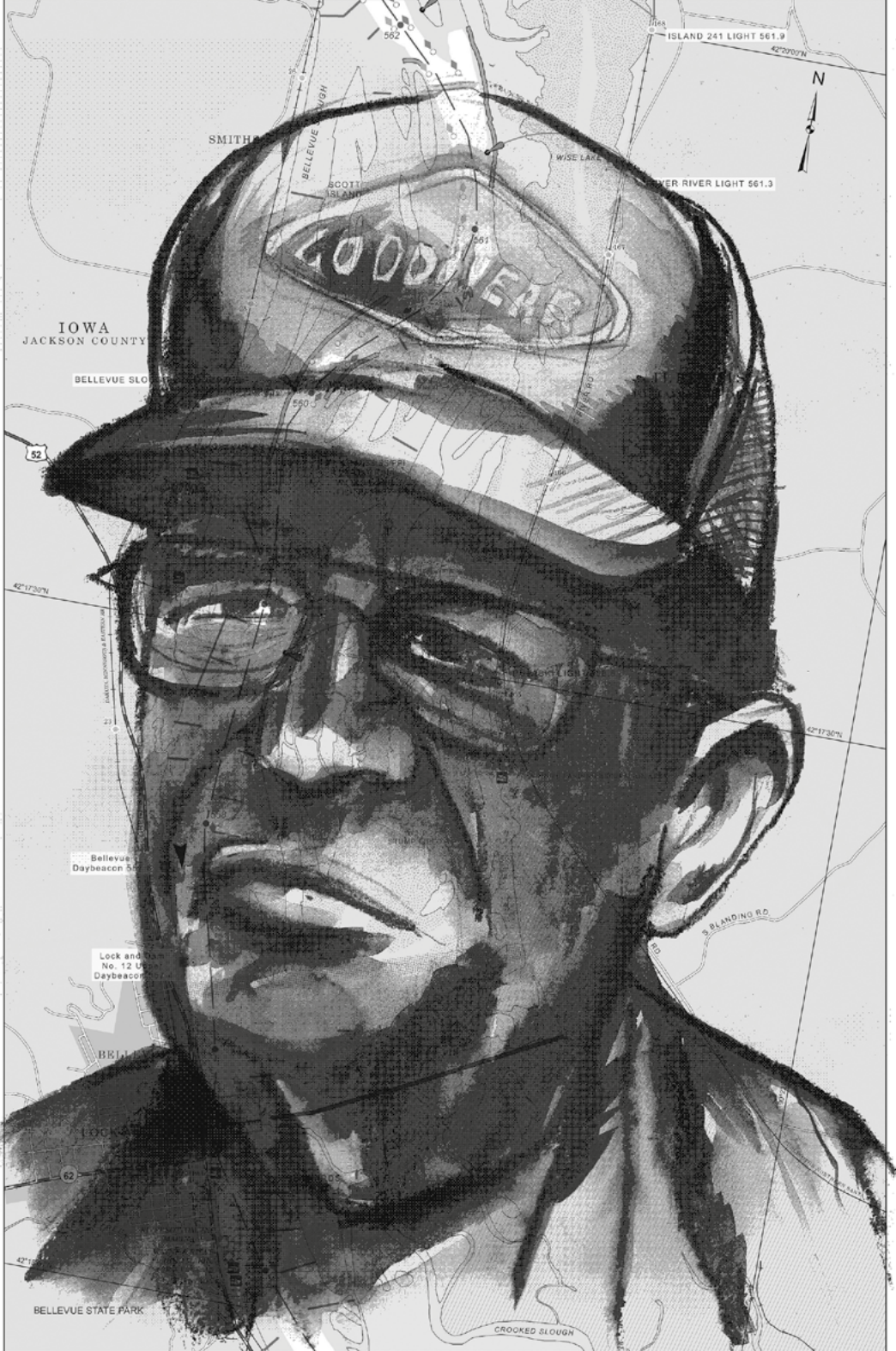
MATCH WITH
CHART PAGE 36

LOCK AND DAM 10

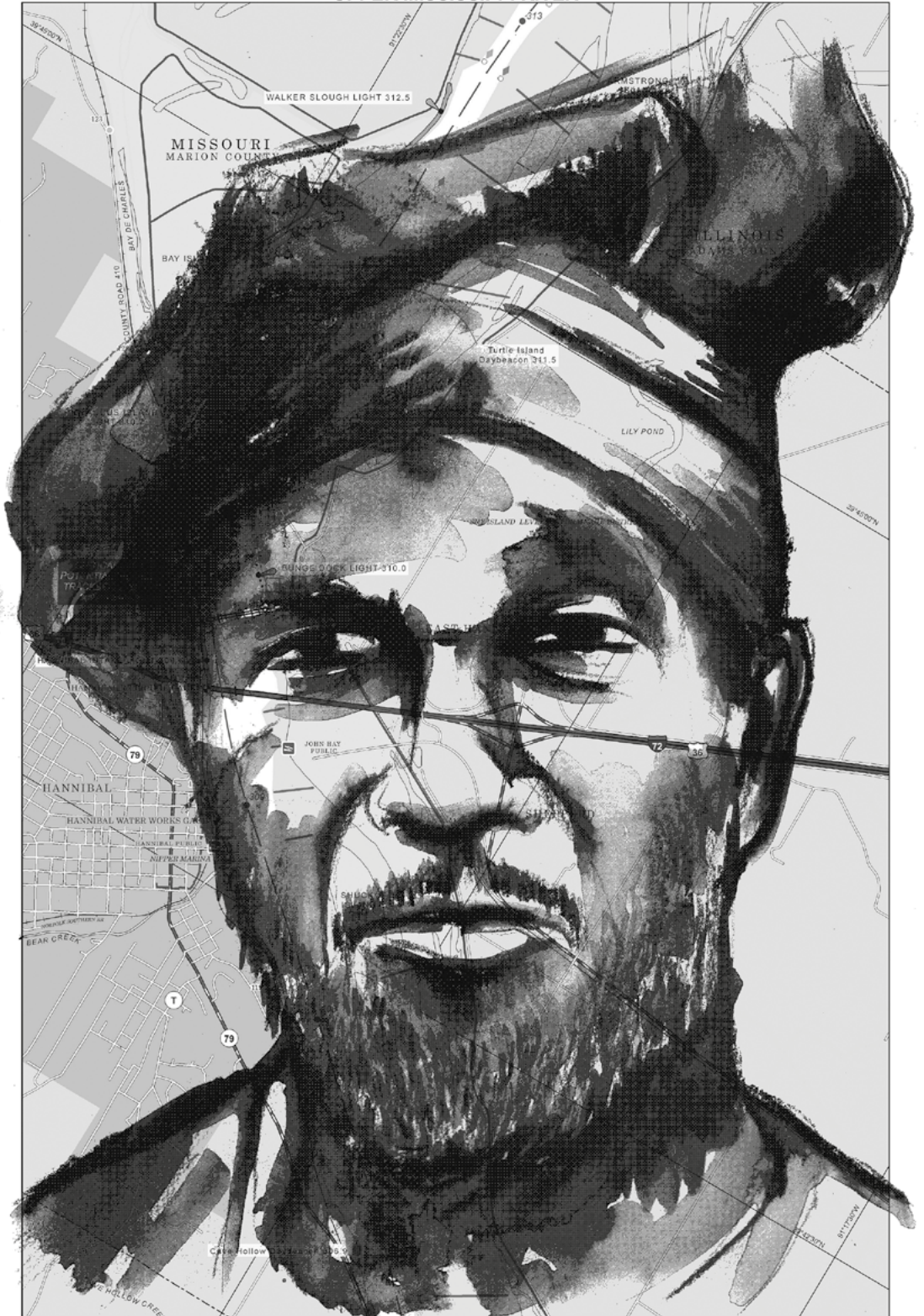
Minnesota Island
Upper Daybeacon
(701.3)

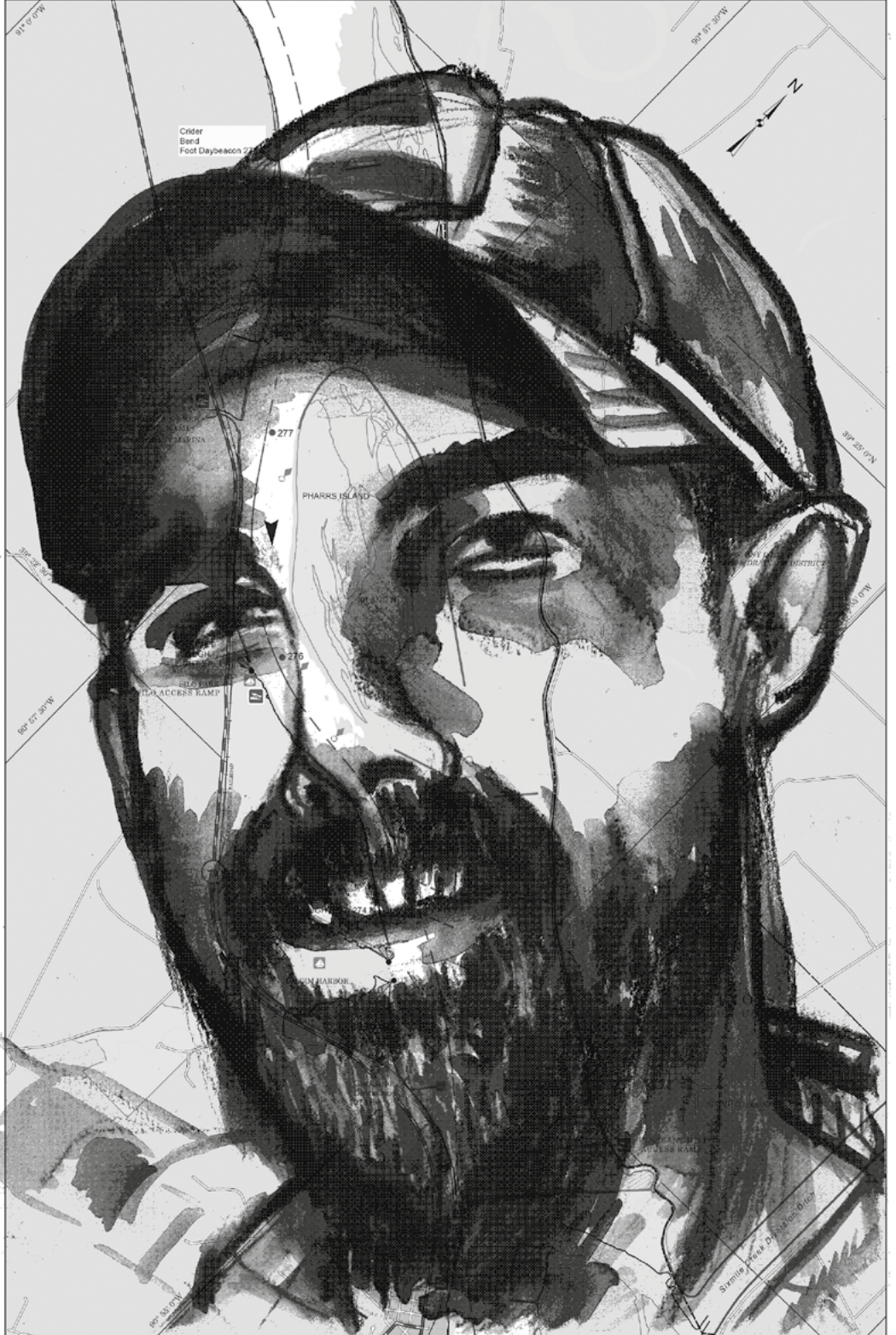
Minnesota Island
Lower Daybeacon
(700.2)

MAINTENANCE OF
CHANNELS AND
SCOUR PROTECTION
PROJECT

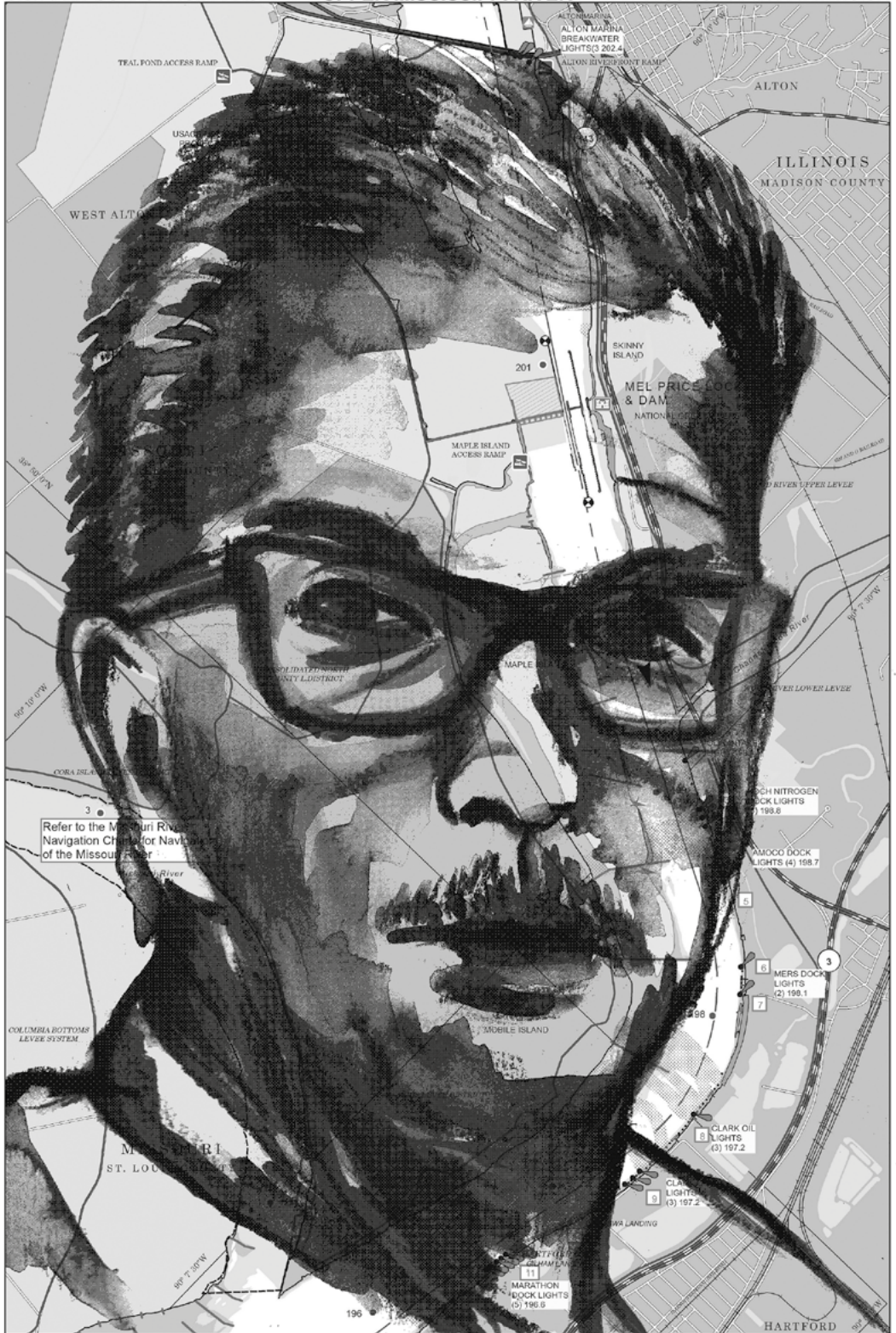


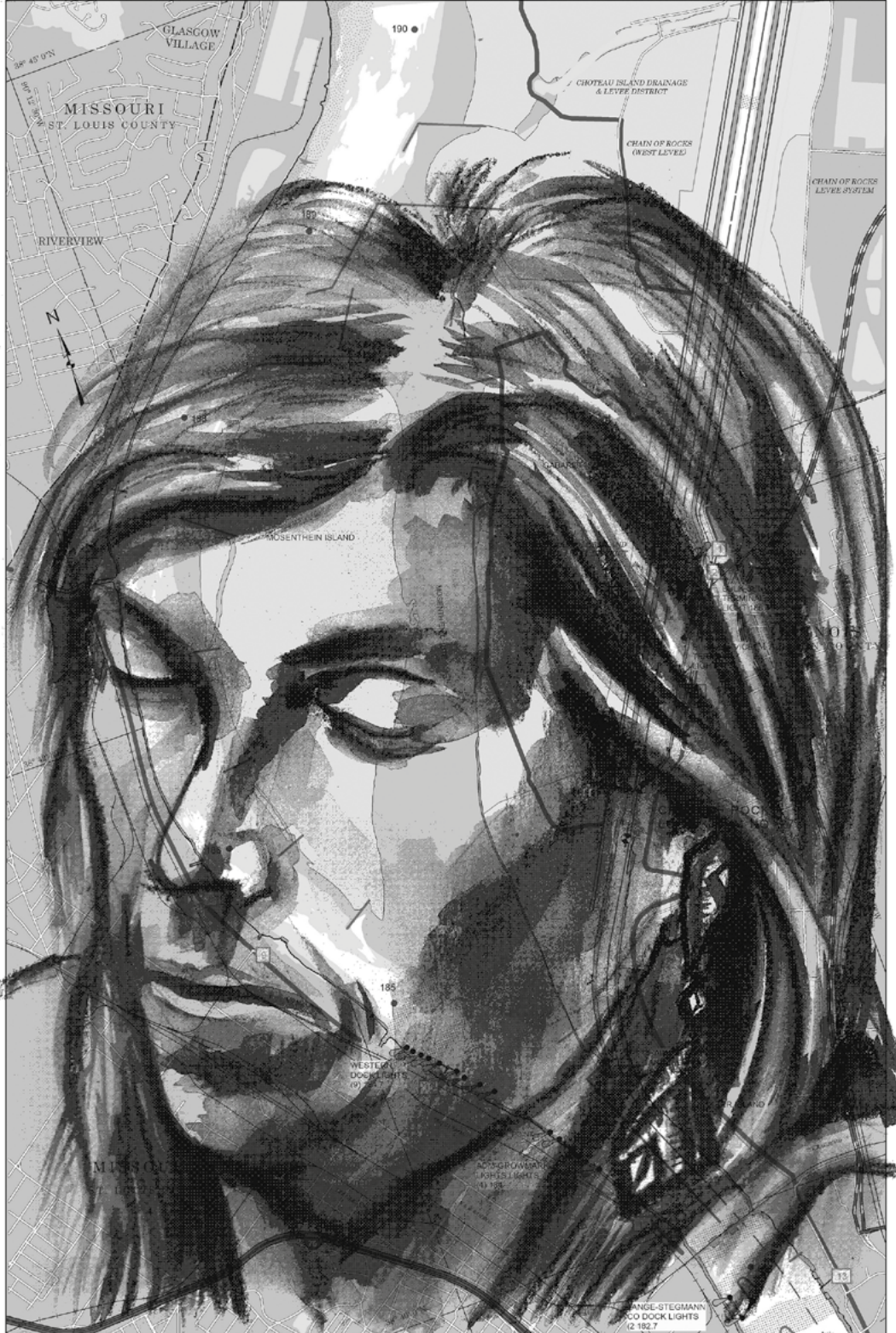


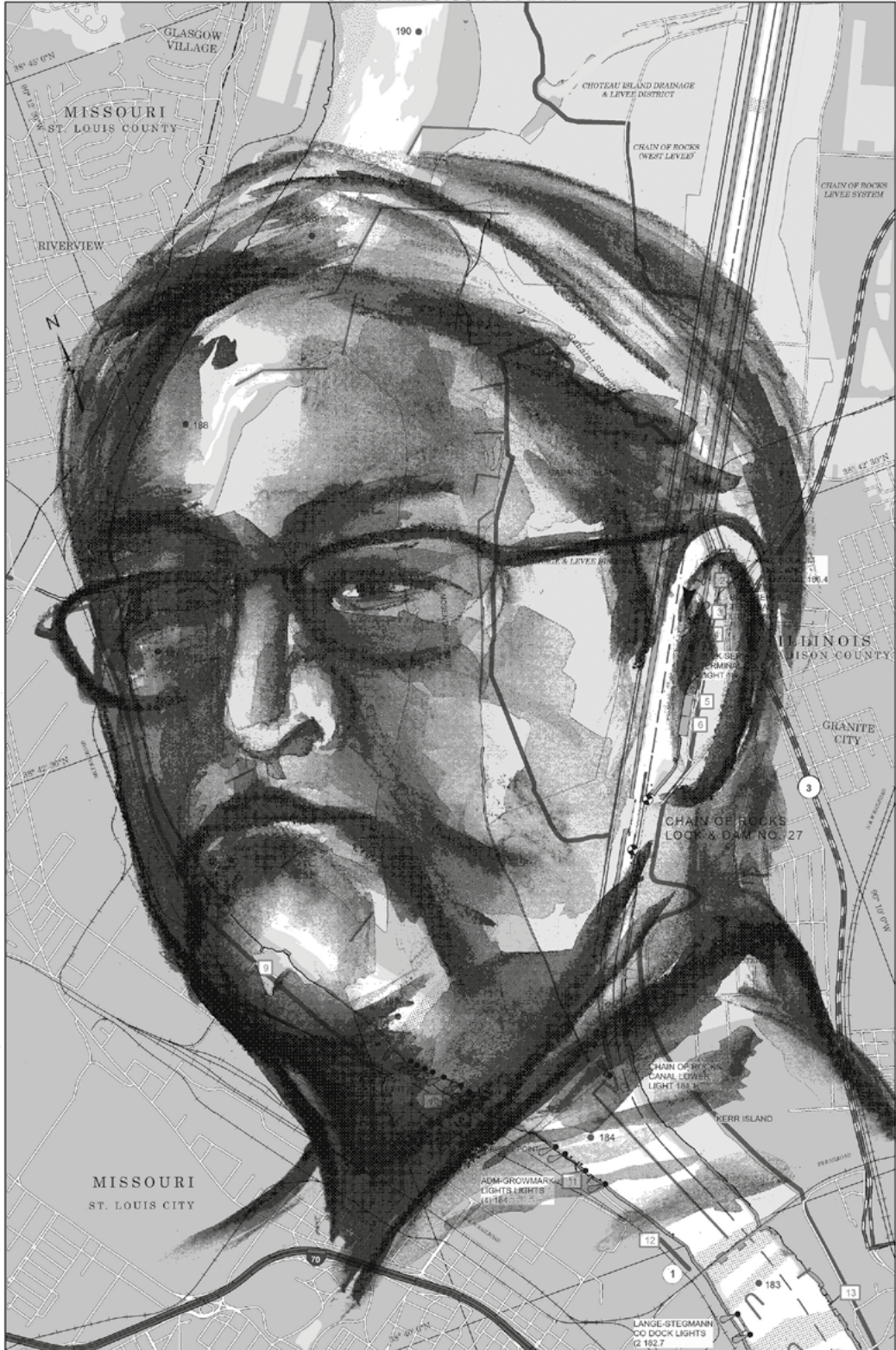


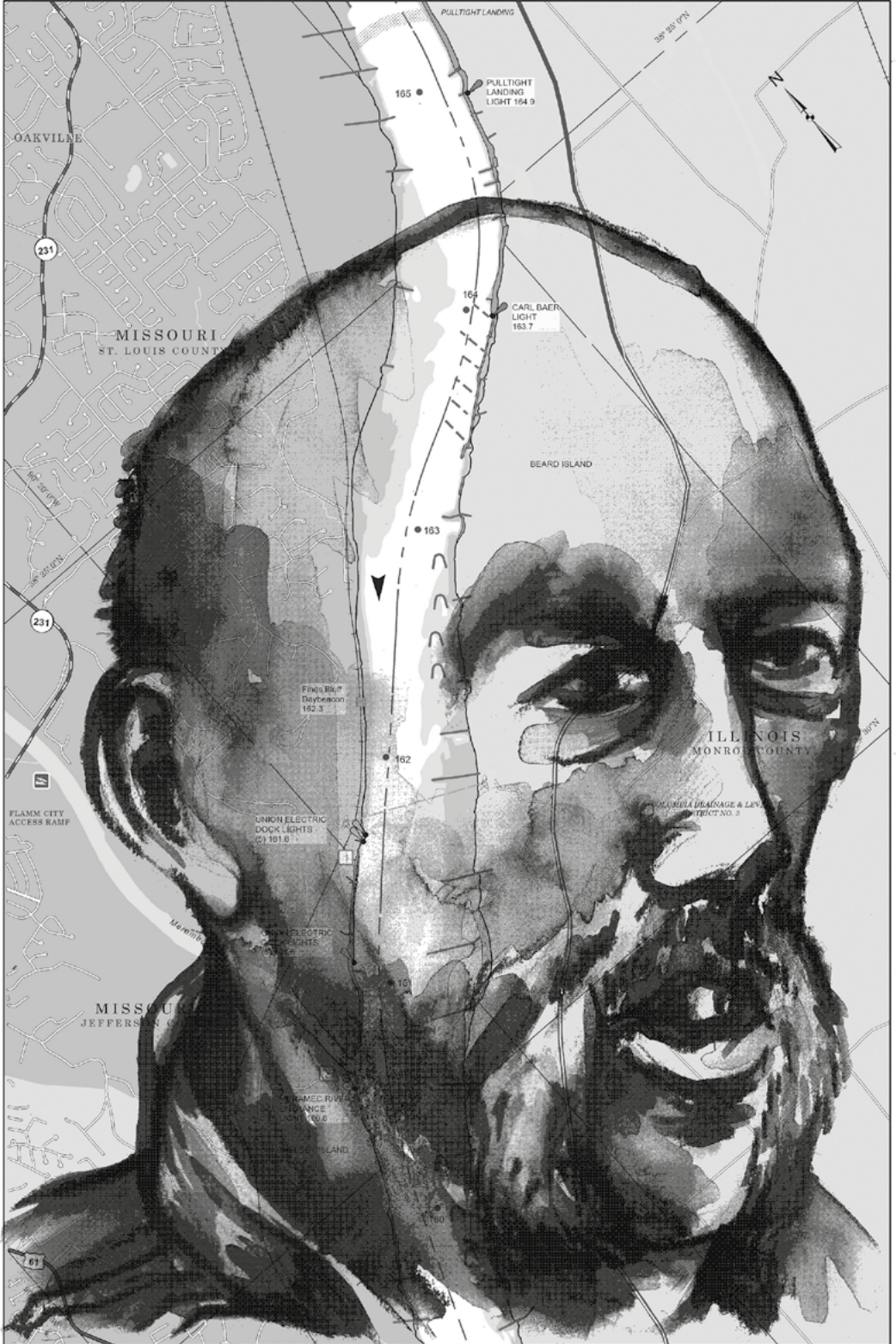


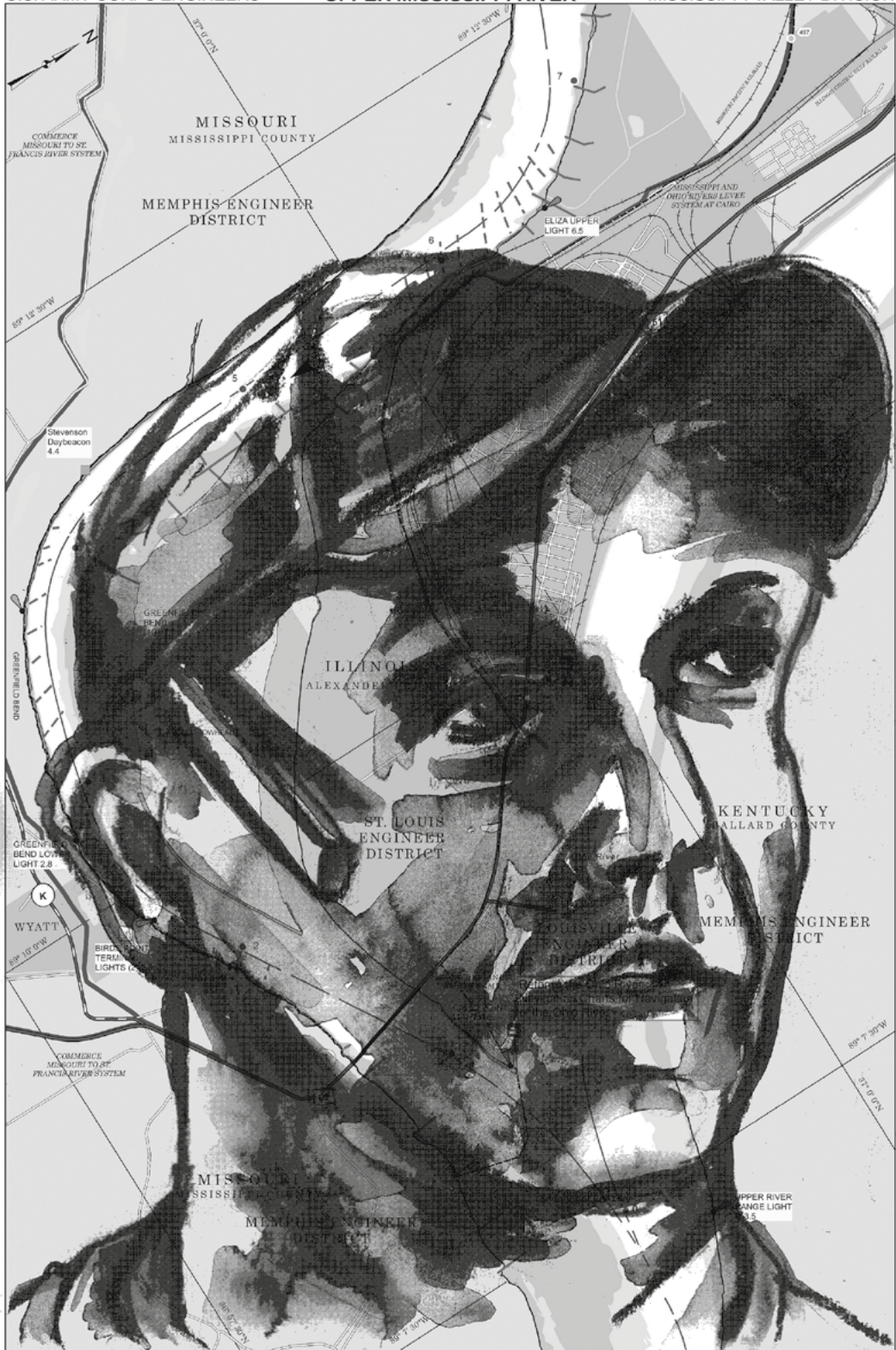


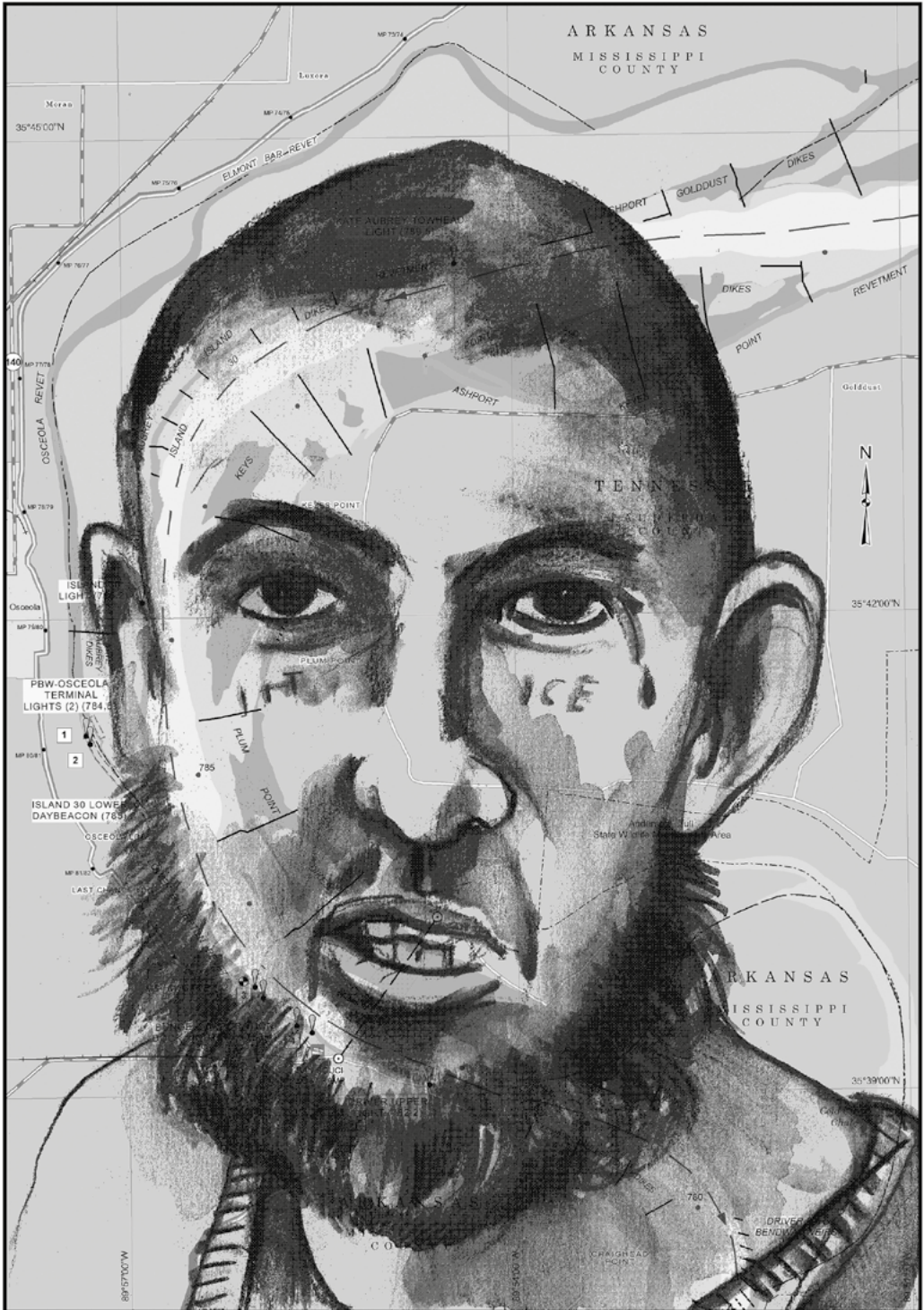












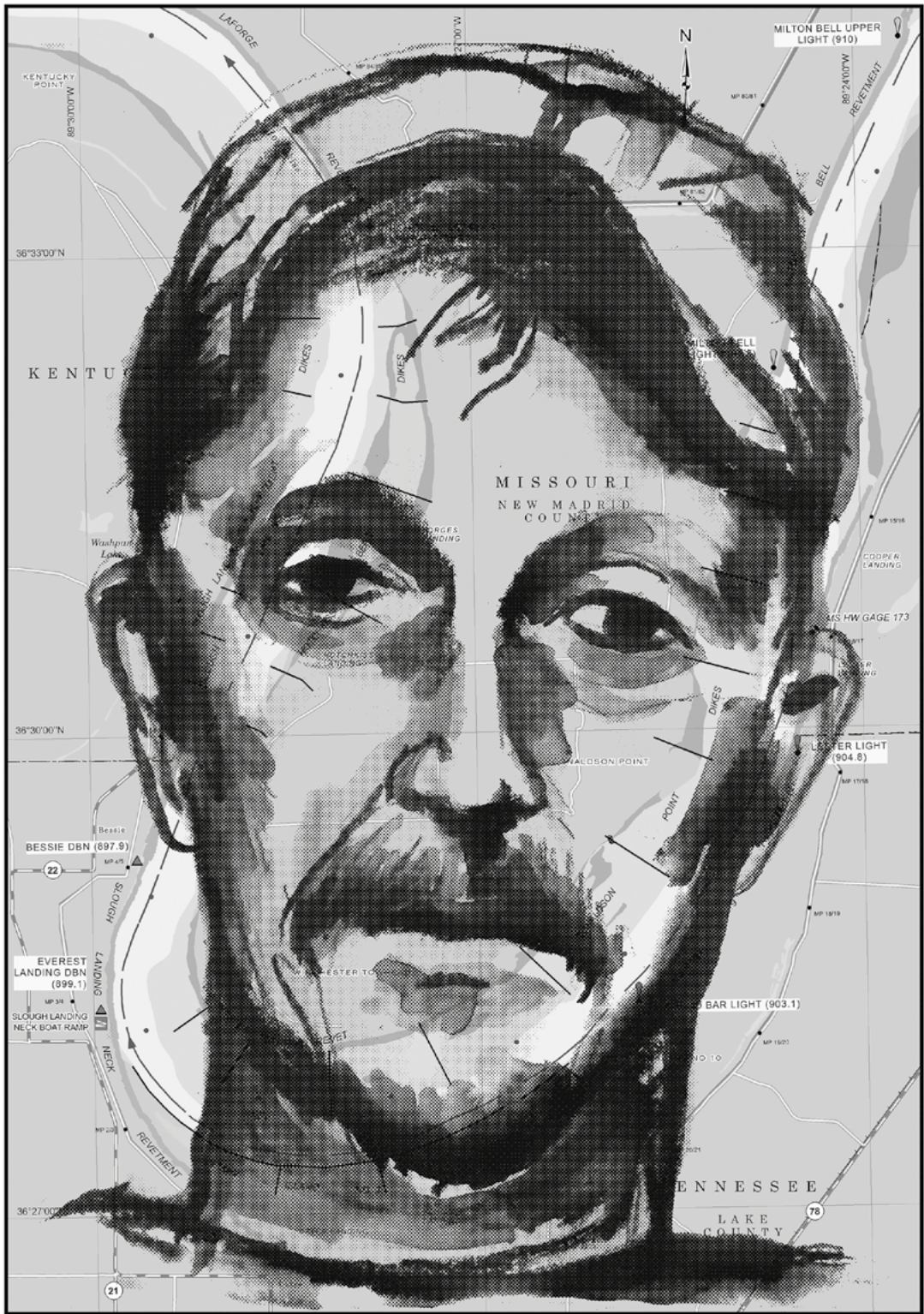
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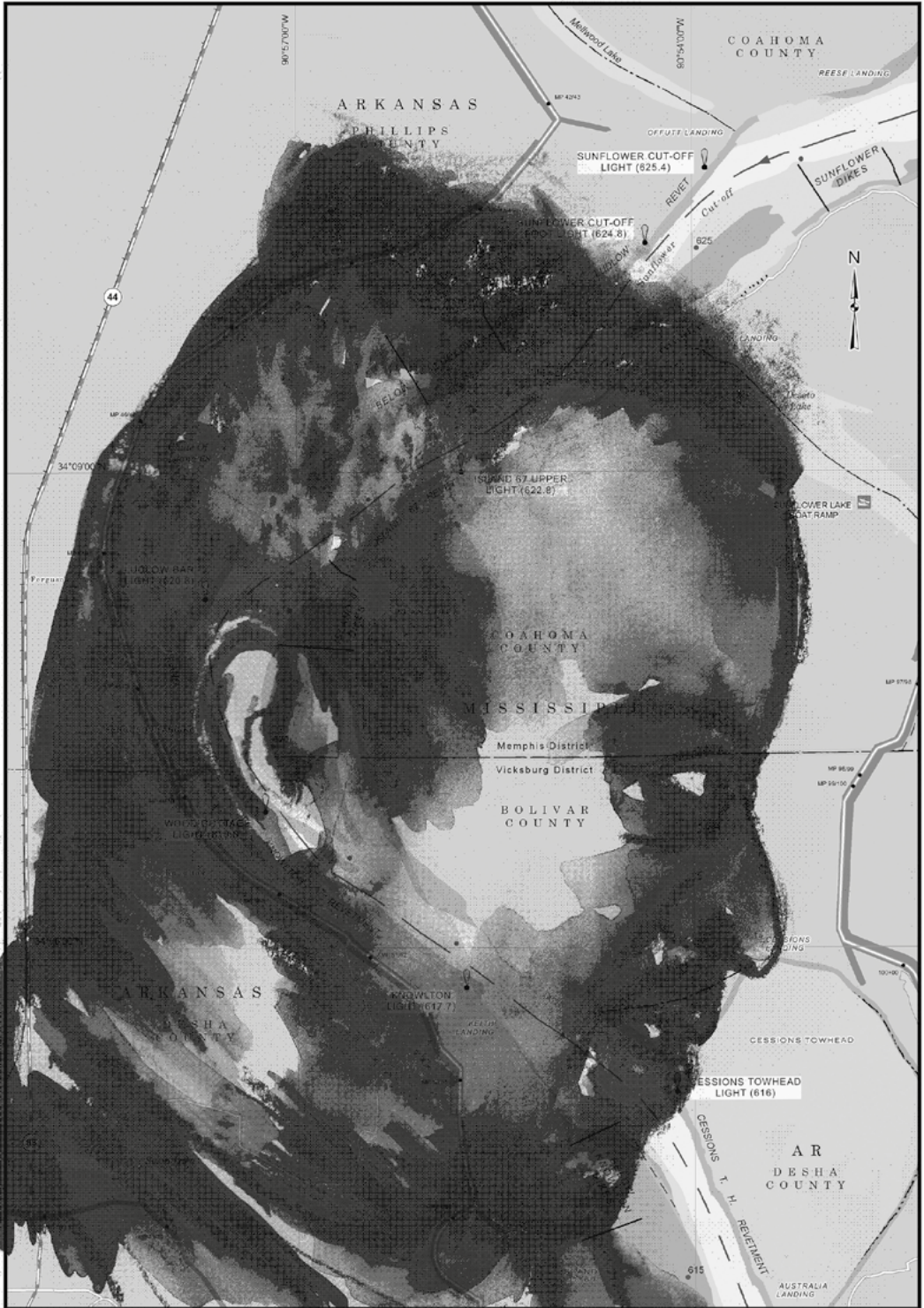


CHART NO. 16

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River Mile 792.8 to 779.1





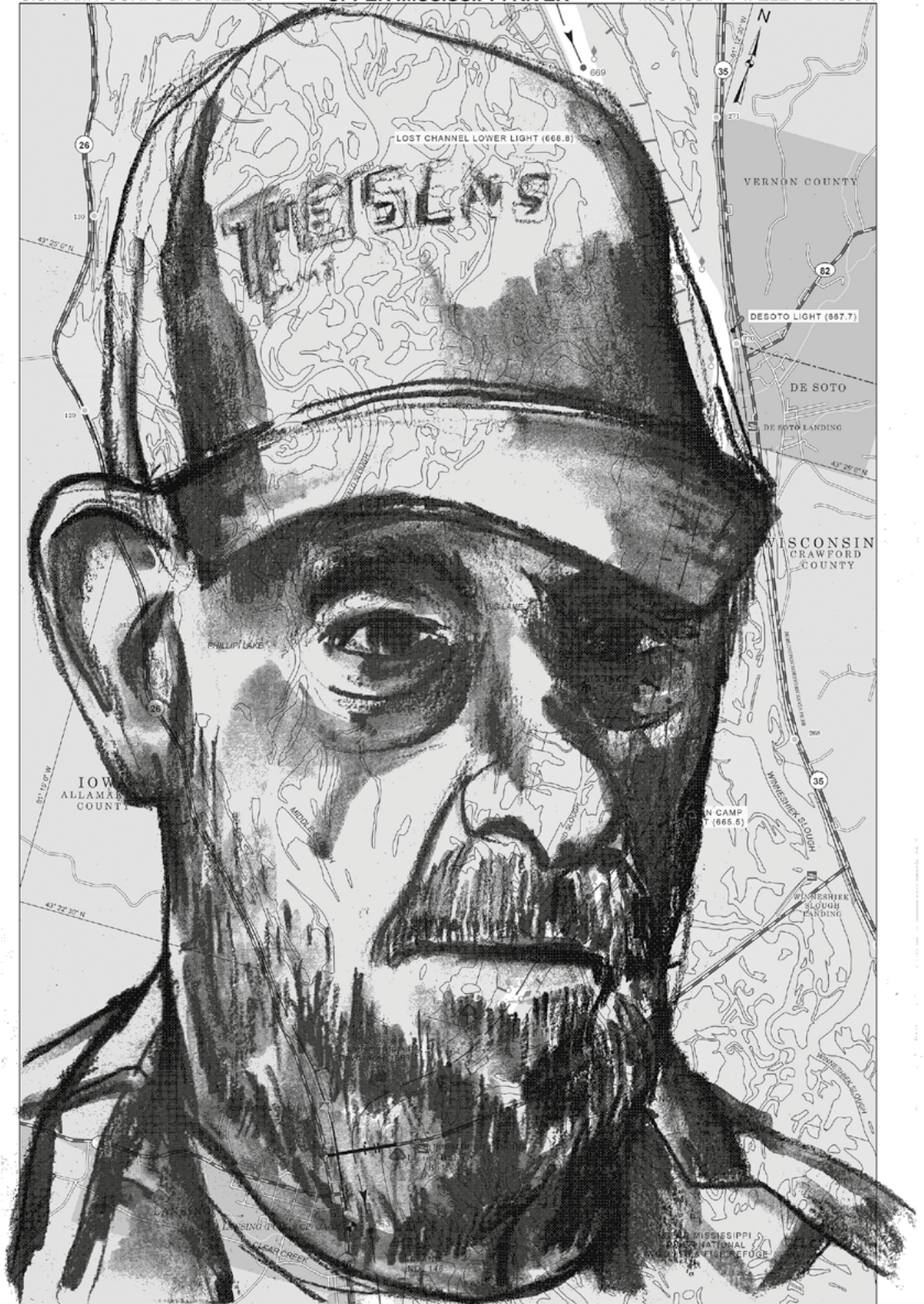
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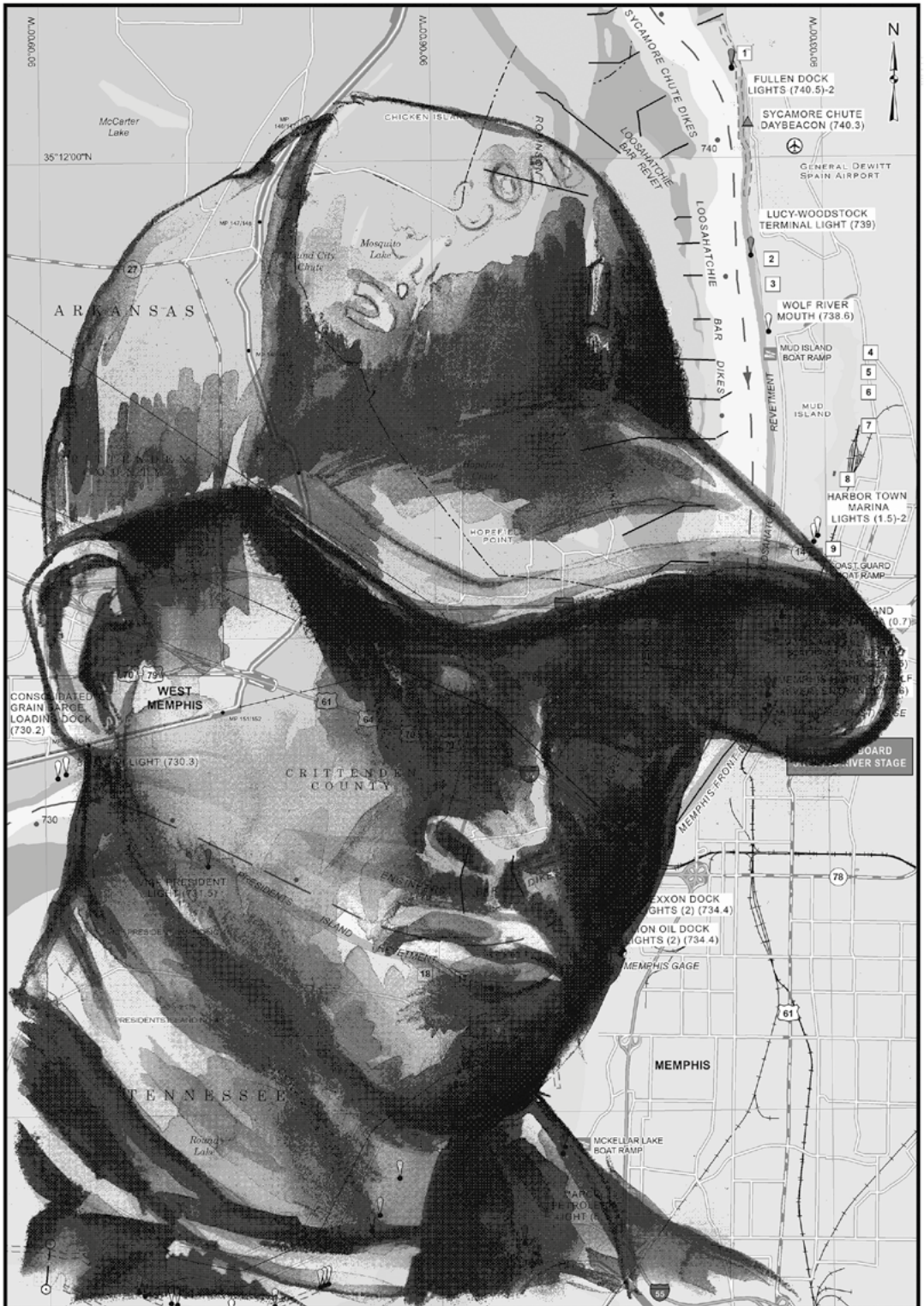


CHART NO. 32

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River Mile 626.9 to 614.8





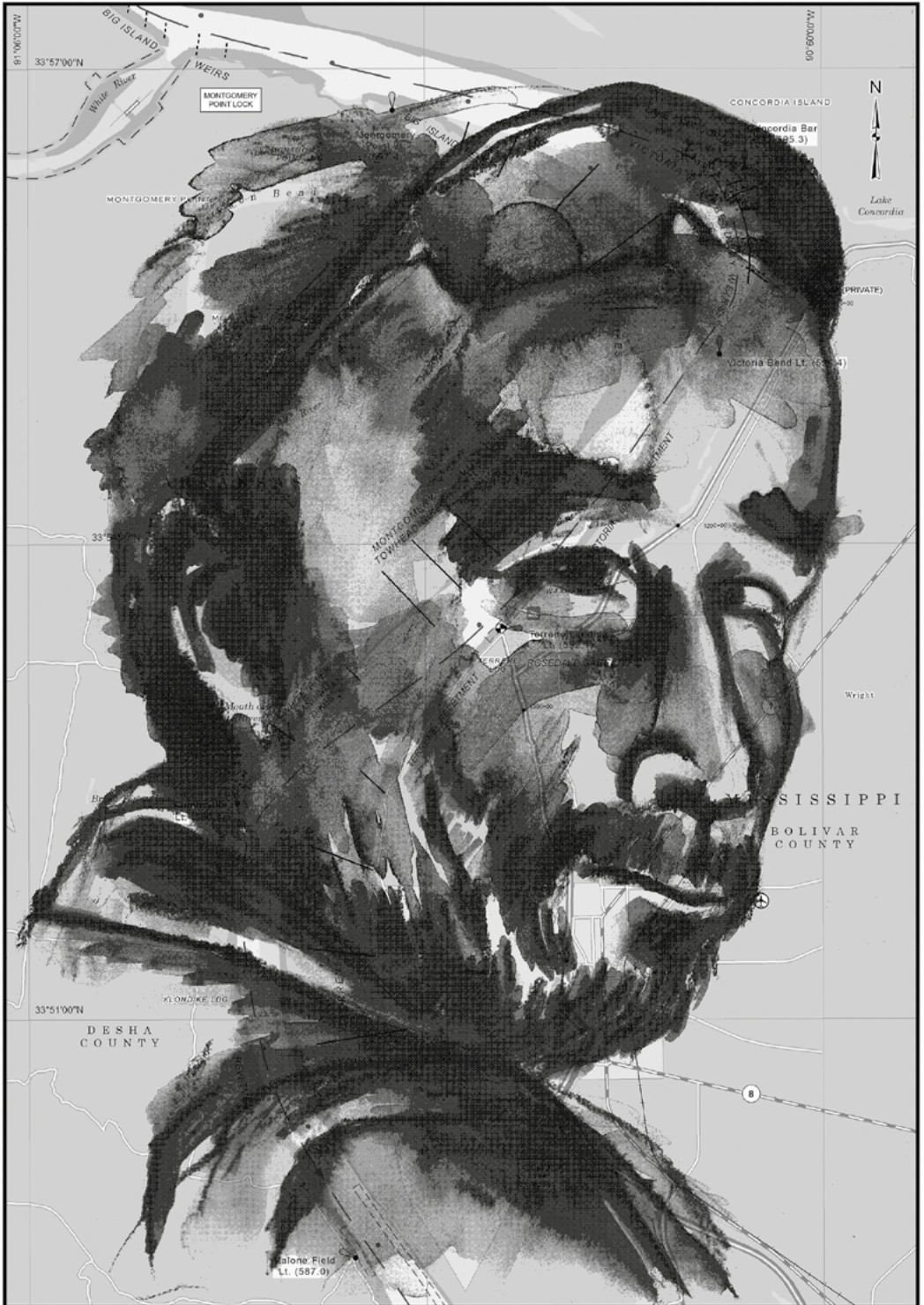
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CHART NO. 21

River Mile 741.1 to 729.8



2015 SCALE = 1:40,000



CHART NO. 35

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River Mile 599.1 to 586.5



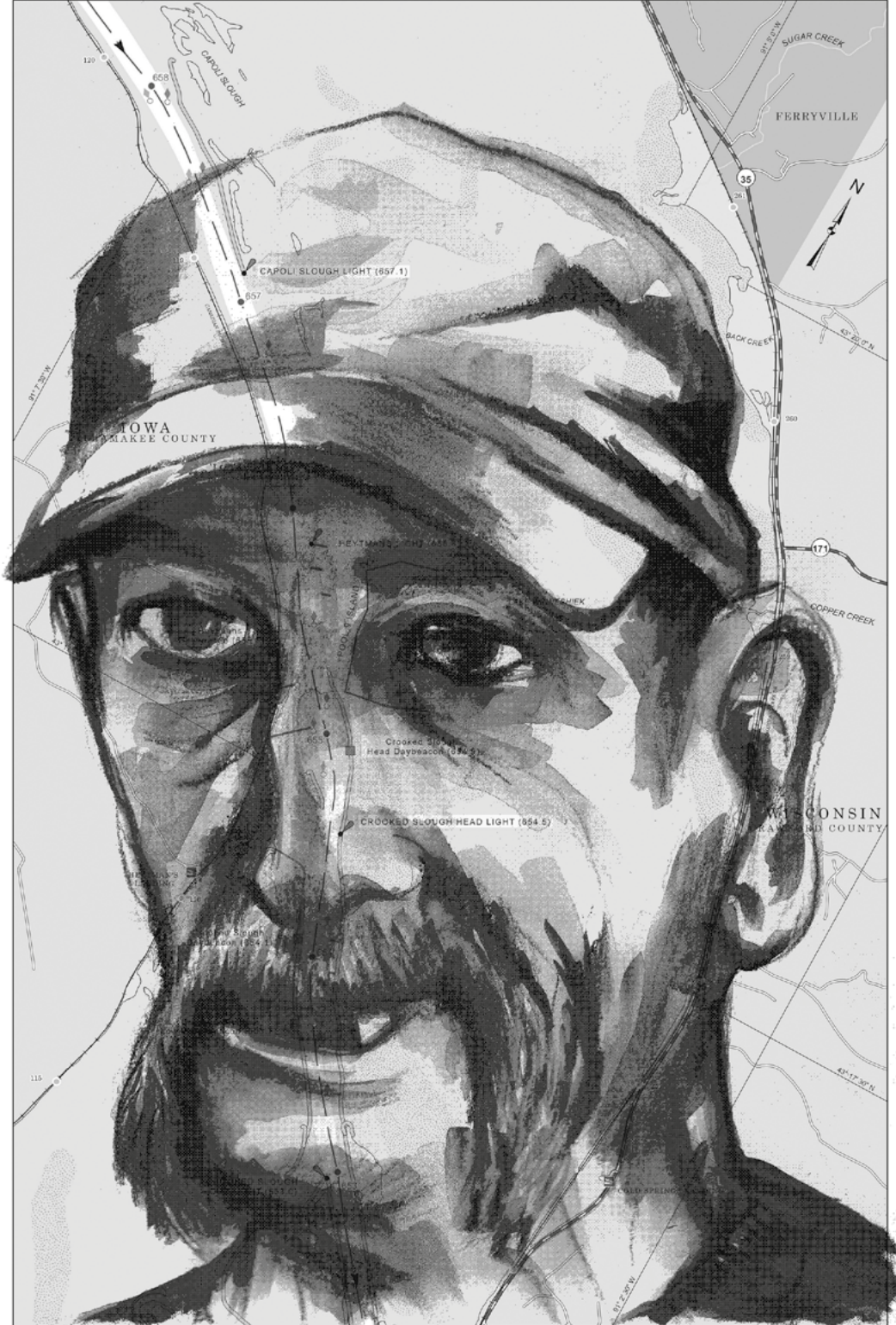
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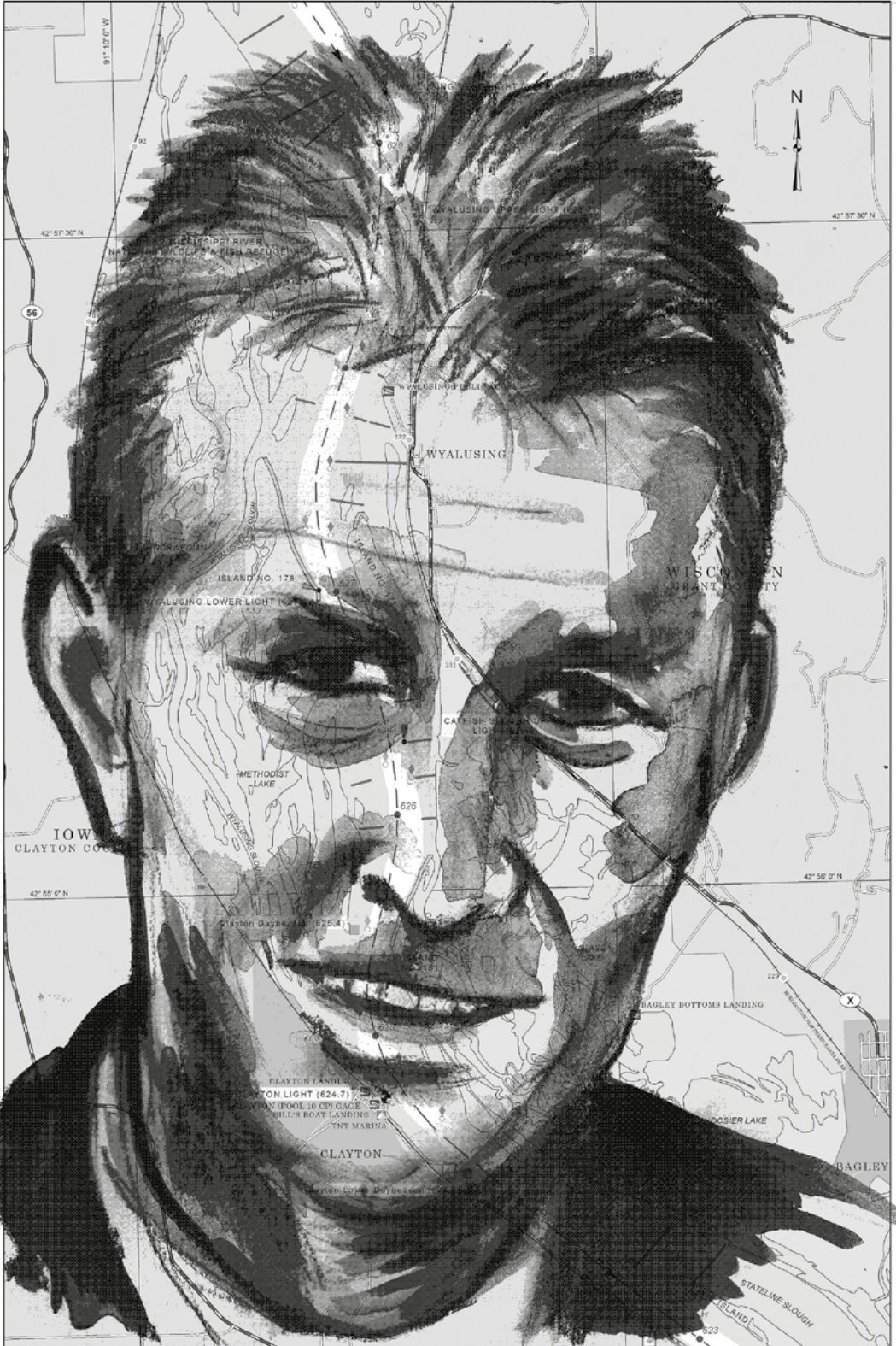
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Last Revised Date: 5/6/2016

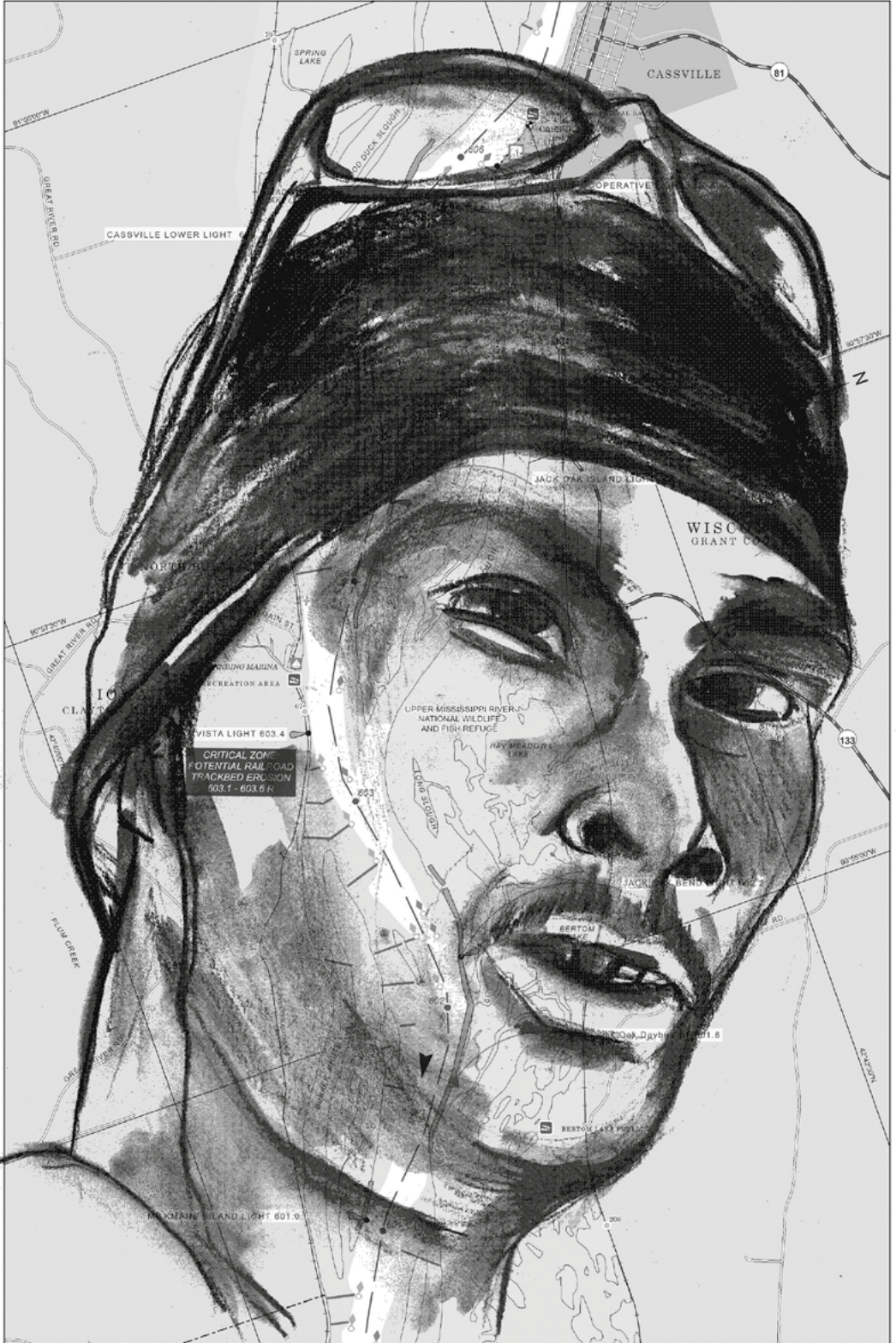
River Mile 519.8 to 507.2













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SOUTHWIND

dokumentarni performans | documentary performance

Mark Požlep, Maxime Berthou, Davis Freeman

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Mark Požlep, Maxime Berthou

Performer: Davis Freeman

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Davis Freeman

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Zvočna podoba | Sound

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Performing Arts Institute, Nau
Ivanow, HISK – Higher Institute
for Fine Arts, Javni sklad za
kulturne dejavnosti

Projekt je nastal v sklopu
programa Crushing Borders. |
Project was part of the Crushing
Borders programme.

Oblikovanje | Graphic Design:
Grupa Ee / Mina Fina, Ivian Kan
Mujezinović

Urednica gledališkega lista |
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Izvršna produkcija | Executive
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Produkcija | Produced by
Gledališče Glej | Glej Theatre

Koprodukcija | Co-Production:
SPRING Utrecht, Forceps Media

Podpora | Supported by:
Ministrstvo za kulturo, Mestna
občina Ljubljana | Ministry of
Culture, Municipality of Ljubljana

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Glej, list | Glej, Paper
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Glej, list | Glej, Paper

Letnik | Year 14, št. I No. 1

Urednica | Editor: Tery Žeželj

Avtorji | Authors: Tery Žeželj, Zala Dobovšek, Grzegorz Reske, Mark Požlep, Maxime Berthou

Prevod tekstov in citatov Ursule K. Le Guin, Astride Neimanis in Estelle Barrett v slovenščino |
Translation of the Texts and Quotations by Ursula K. Le Guin, Astrida Neimanis in Estelle
Barrett into Slovenian: Igor Feketija

Prevod v angleščino | Translation into English: Sunčan Stone

Slovenski jezikovni pregled | Slovene language editing: Svetlana Jandrič

Angleški jezikovni pregled | English Language Editing: Igor Feketija

Fotografije | Photographs: Mark Požlep

Risbe | Drawings: Mark Požlep

Oblikovanje in prelom | Graphic Design: Grupa Ee / Mina Fina, Ivian Kan Mujezinović

Izdalo | Published by

Društvo Gledališče Glej

Tisk | Print: Stane Peklaj

Naklada | Circulation: 300

Podpirajo nas | Supported by

Evropska komisija (programa Erasmus+ in Ustvarjalna Evropa, Kultura) |

European Commission (Programme Erasmus+ and Creative Europe, Culture)

Ministrstvo za kulturo | Ministry of Culture

Mestna občina Ljubljana | Municipality of Ljubljana

Javni sklad za kulturne dejavnosti

Javni zavod Mladi zmaji

Gooja

Društvo za promocijo glasbe

Supercatering, Super gostinske

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