

The background is a complex collage of images. At the top, there are dense evergreen forests. In the center, a circular opening in a dark, jagged shape reveals a small wooden cabin with a red roof. Below this, a horizontal white band contains the text 'Reframing LAND'. The word 'Reframing' is in a red, lowercase, sans-serif font, and 'LAND' is in a dark green, uppercase, serif font. Below the text, there are four horizontal bars in dark green, orange, and red. The bottom half of the collage features a rocky stream with a waterfall on the left, a path leading to a river in the center, and a person playing a piano on a wooden deck on the right. The overall aesthetic is one of natural beauty intertwined with human presence.

# Reframing LAND

# Reframing Land, part two of the Colbert Ferry Film

This booklet is an exercise in understanding your personal relationship to the natural environment. It includes 10 collages from the animated short *Colbert Ferry*, with the memories and thoughts that informed their making.

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You will be asked to consider “sustainability,” as something much more than modifying habits. This project will bring into question how **you think** about the natural world in the context of your current moment and past connections. It works to undo the idea that the environment is a separate, objective noun. It suggests that landscapes are *processes* and change over time with the people who occupy them according to their needs and aspirations. This work intends to build empathy and self awareness within a largely objectified and backgrounded movement for environmental change.

**Please Don't Print all of Me!** I contain a lot of ink and paper.

**Page 21 is printable!**

Follow the prompts in a preexisting journal or any tool that works for you to record your thoughts.

The following collages are places that I felt are at the core of my relationship to land - I encourage you to think of places that come to mind for you as you read this digital booklet.

**Disclaimer:** I'm not an expert on these topics. Reframing land is a challenging process, hard to define, and hard to understand. Please approach this with an open mind.

*“We are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are near the epoch of a juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side by side, of the dispersed.”* Michel Foucault

**Mt. Gilead Road** is a winding asphalt road that goes to the top of Mt. Gilead. It is dense with forests all around, and was a place that invited lots of exploring. My family and I would walk all over this area. I came to learn later that the pines here were *planted*; these forests are really only about 30 years old. Planted on top of what was once a large pig farm, as there are eerie barns scattered through the woods. In the distance is Woodall Mountain, the highest point in Mississippi. With large antennae to show for it.



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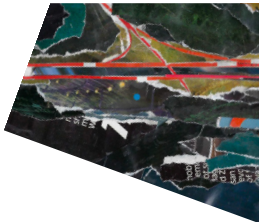
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The United States was founded on occupied land. What land do you occupy? Visit: <https://native-land.ca>

**Landscapes are entrenched in collective memory**, and they carry past traumas and current realities in layers of experience and time. Acknowledging land, and the presence of Indigenous voices throughout this work is intended to build awareness within settlers, like myself, who occupy the U.S. for a more holistic, and inclusive engagement with people and land. This work intends to guide individuals that are unfamiliar with landscapes as “cultural constructs” to find their own place and understanding in these systems.

Take a moment, wherever you are, to consider the landscape around you.



## Landscape

Landscapes are a reflection of ideology. Looking closely at the natural environment anywhere in the world can indicate the values of a society. Landscapes are made and constructed through collective (and divided) engagement.

How do you define landscape?

How do you define nature?

Are they the same?

In your own words: What is land?

What places do you feel connected to? How did you arrive there?

It what ways is this land of service to you? What does it do for you?

List the most important experiences in your life. Where did they take place? Did those experiences connect to nature?

How would you describe your current relationship to land? (However you defined it. Examples could be connected, disconnected, lost, homey, free, indifferent, overwhelmed)

What do you do for the land?

Excercise: Draw a map of a place you mentioned above. Maps are a great example of objects that “pretend to be neutral on a subject which is divided.” Maps can be anything; Memories of a place, landmarks of significance to you, routes you take daily. Create a map that only you can understand and share it with someone.

## Place and Memory

Try imagining places as a combination of landscape and memory. These entities are constantly informing one another; a process, very much alive.

“Hirsch proposes two landscapes: the one ‘we initially see and a second landscape produced through local practice and which we recognize and understand through fieldwork, and through ethnographic description and interpretation.’” (Taylor) with this book, I ask that you be open to examine **your own interpretation of land** through your influences, your past, and your work.

““Finding and fitting a place for oneself in the world is finding and fitting a place for oneself in a story.” The story is composed of mythologies, histories, ideologies -- the stuff of identity and representation.”- Jo Carson and Lucy Lippard, Lure of the Local



**Highway 72** goes from Memphis, TN, all the way across Mississippi and Alabama, and ends just north of the Alabama border shared with Georgia. The long journey by highway was always a key part of visiting my grandparents; watching the landscape change out the window as we went along. Not only was it a long drive on the road - The presence of the highway just beyond the shed was a constant reminder of the loud, aggressive, motion of people moving through space.

Box fans line the hallways at night to keep the noise down. Before highway 72's completion in the 80s, there were cow pastures behind their property. My Mom said it used to be so quiet sometimes her ears would ring.

It's interesting to think about highways as places of engagement with landscapes. Curated and distant; in constant motion.

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*"If it had been the purpose of human activity on earth to bring the planet to the edge of ruin, no more efficient mechanism could have been invented than the market economy." - Jeremy Seabrook*

“Work” has always been intertwined with land. For some, just how intertwined our work is to the natural environment feels blurred and distant. Questions to think about:

This category is loaded with other questions about the role of power within this relationship. Who controls land, determines rules, facilitates development, works directly within it? Who benefits from it? Who uses it?

Industries, for example, are relationships to land in some way.



Think about the people who you grew up around. What did they do for work? Does it connect to the environment in some way?

What work do you do? Does it connect to the natural environment? Are there any connections you can see?

What larger industrial practices connect to the work that you do?

Think about your daily consumption. What are some things you used today?

Hold an object nearby in your hands. Can you feel where it came from? Can you imagine how it was made? This doesn't have to be negative. Think about, for example, the warm sun that grew the cotton in your shirt. The water that came from the river to nourish it. All of these amazing and alive processes are woven into our everyday products. Take a few minutes and sit with something.

Consider how you value the previous object. Why is it valuable to you? Why is land valuable? Is it? How would you describe your relationship to money? Are there any ways in which this relationship merges with an environmental one?

Everything we own is derived from land in some way.

**This is the shed** where my grandpa worked on chainsaws and stored all of his tools and what not. It really hasn't been touched since he passed. It was a haunting moment for me to find his old crutches while filming - arguably those crutches are the reason it was built - when he was stuck inside with a broken leg from a logging accident, the idea to start a business came. I have a vivid memory of him preparing fish on a table right in front of this shed. He had caught the fish himself, and used a small motorized saw at the table. Of course I ran inside at the sight of it.

If you could see it in person, you would notice it's a rustic structure. The wood sheets are rough cut from a saw mill. My Mom says a person from church came over and they built it together. Mom shingled the ridgeline crooked; her Dad never let her live that down.





# Landscapes as tools to connect and divide | Environmental Health and Justice

Environmental injustice uses land as a tool to cause harm, and has a targeted impact. For example, land downwind of a chemical manufacturing plant will be valued differently than land away from the plant. Who lives there? What does that value system do? Human interventions that reconstruct the environment can displace people, make people sick, violate ideologies, and more. This is a deeply rooted system in the US that manifests itself in a number of ways.



**“If the land is sick, you are sick” - Fiona Livingstone**

*“In the old days they gave us smallpox - infested blankets. Today they’re giving us nuclear waste.” - Grace Thorpe (Sac and Fox)*

**(a few of many) Examples to Consider:**

The development of highways - community displacement | Proximity of homes to hazardous spaces | Water management | Gentrification | Access to parks | Chemical use | The ability to manage a lawn per the city code | Pipeline development | Working conditions | Sound and light pollution | Mismanagement of local resources

*Do any of these examples relate to your personal community?*

Think about the places you identified as important to you. What is the health of those places? What are the threats to the health of those places as you understand they could be?

Take a look at the local government where you reside. What environmental initiatives are present? Are there any organizations working to protect the environment?

Try to make yourself familiar with the aspects of place that are (and aren't) protected. Note the land on which you live, how healthy would you say it is?

How would you describe the state of your current mental health? Physical Health? Does it make sense for you to combine these qualities of health and land? Could land be a symbol for health?

What does land use and management say about control/power?

**Pickwick Dam** is located right outside of Counce, TN. You can drive over the bridge that goes over pickwick heading south, turn right, and in 3 minutes pass a massive paper mill called PCA - Packaging Corporation of America. I couldn't believe how many full logging trucks went over the dam while I was filming! Rivers and logging have always been connected, even today.

Pickwick dam is one of those monumental places we would visit as kids. My grandma has portraits of herself from the 60s on the bridge that goes over the dam. Even my Great Grandmother and her sister have portraits taken on this bridge.

As you can see in the maps, this dam radically altered the landscape, and formed Pickwick lake, where now many big waterfront homes sit at its edge.

*“We must be consistently aware of how space can be made to hide consequences from us, how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life.” Edward Soja*



*"When a tourist looks into the flat water backing up behind a dam like Hoover, writes Worster, "he is in fact seeing his own life reflected. What has been done to the Colorado has been done to him as well; he too has, in a sense, been conquered and manipulated, made to run here, and serve as an instrument of production." - Lucy Lippard, Lure of the Local*

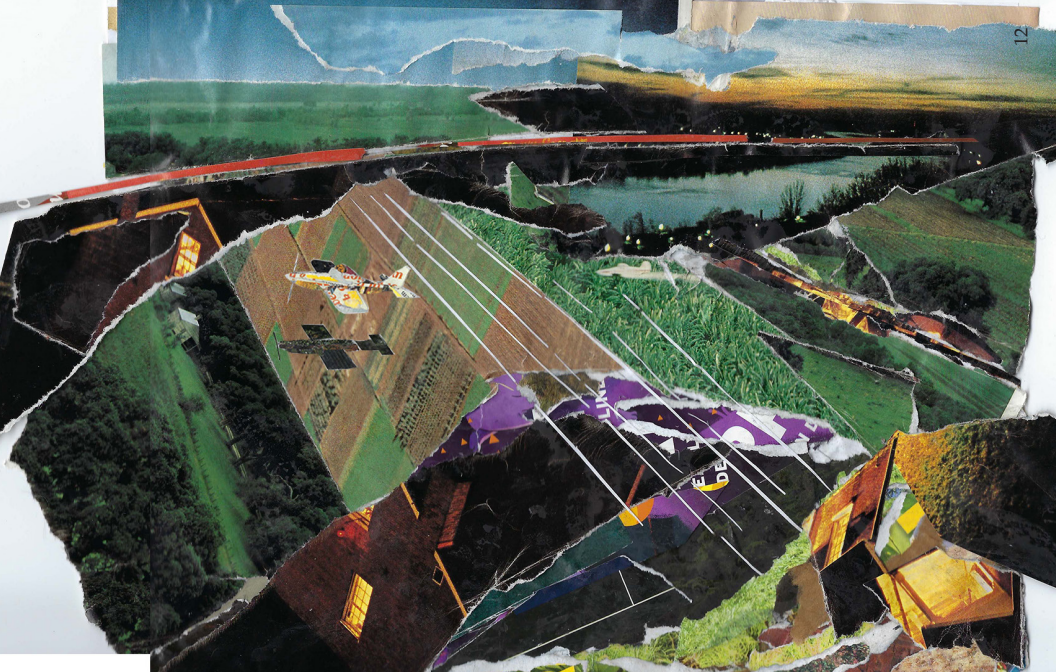
**This is a section of land west of my MaMa's house** along Mt. Gilead road. It's bottomland now - not really used for crops, but I always imagined it to be so. You can see Highway 72 in pink, and the water are the creeks that lead to the Tennessee river to the north west. A crop duster flies over the area.

At one point in our interview, my grandma went into some detail about the Boll weevil, an insect responsible for the destruction of cotton crops in the 1950s. She spoke about her father, who would receive agricultural information and best practice information from the Farmer's CoOp, as well as the pesticides for the Boll weevil that he would spray by hand on his cotton crop.

What fascinated me the most, was the role of the Farm CoOp. Who was teaching people (white settlers) how to tend to land during that time?

What is the role of corporations as a facilitator between the settler and the land? How do corporations inform our relationship to land now? How did this reassert the idea of land as a commodity?

In what has historically been a familial connection, in which teachings about land are passed on for generations, how has the corporation inserted itself as a "teacher" and "provider"? and from whose knowledge is that derived? **What ways of land management went unheard?**





## Familial History | History of Place

**Our earliest teachers had a role in shaping our relationship to the natural environment. Who were these people for you? What did you learn?**

Who are important people in your life? What places do they call home? What “land” are they from?

How was land constructed in your family stories?

What is the religious/spiritual lineage looking down your family line? How do you think this influenced their, and your, understanding of the natural environment?

What are the prominent histories that you know about these places where your family lived? How do you think that impacted who they are?

Can you imagine how the landscape of that place has changed over time?

Can you see yourself as part of that history? What do you bring to it?

*“It is not on any map; true places never are.” Herman Melville*

**Colbert ferry is a major throughline metaphor in this work.**

It is a stop along the Natchez trace, and (taking a little bit of a detour from Iuka) leads to Pickwick Dam.

There is a “secret beach” of shells along the shore that I remember exploring when I was little.

I came to learn that Colbert Ferry is memorialized as a Chickasaw operated ferry that helped aid settler’s journey’s across the Tennessee river. Sources say it was in operation from 1800 to about 1819. Famously, Andrew Jackson’s army came through at one point. George Colbert charged them \$75,000 to cross the river, which was a significant amount of money at that time. Ultimately this operation ended with his devastating Indian Removal Act signed by Andrew Jackson 1830.

I included it because I am ultimately a settler. My family’s whiteness earned them the right to own land - to construct it within an ideology. When we talk about sustainability, we don’t typically go this far - we talk about waste, consumption, and our lifestyles. What is the deeper ideology asserts that land can be taken and “made useful” to build wealth? There is still so much inequality over who owns land.

Tennessee River is one of the most ecologically significant rivers, and at the same time, one of the most polluted with micro plastics. It was also recently involved in a corporate chemical dumping case. The ultimate question is, **if landscapes are inherently part of who we (settlers, people, a culture) are, why do we allow these things to happen? Does really land matter?**

This river connects all of the major collages throughout the film. Look out for this - It’s creeks are all over the Iuka basin. It feeds Bear Creek, Yellow Creek, and the TomBigbee waterway. The groundwater to my MaMa’s well travels to the river too.

Excercise: Draw a family tree. Rather than people, try to be specific about places. Imagine the work performed there or the food prepared there. Make it fun. Think about how the people that came before you lived, and how this may have influenced you. If you don’t know much about your family, imagine your own influences - places you have been, the food you currently eat - evaluate how land has or hasn’t changed throughout your life.



shoreline

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**This house was built** by my Grandparents in 1967, a year after my Mother was born. Before then, a dogtrot house my great grandparents lived in resided behind it.

This is a “working home.” They had a barn with a cow, goats and chickens. When my grandpa was getting started logging he used a clydesdale named “old dan” to haul logs.

Later, my Mom and Uncle helped build the shed to the left of the house, which became the “shop.” My grandpa would fix chainsaws, sell a number of logging products like chains, oil, gloves, masks. When I was little I would make posters for the shop, to advertise and mark the prices. Papa would also give me big boxes from the orders to build forts.

This story is one of technology too; The ways in which technology changed how my Grandparents sustained themselves. From a clydesdale to a skidder.

In what ways has technology changed how you engage with land?



see

they can't see

**Tishimingo Park is situated on Bear Creek**, an 80 mile stream that flows into the Tennessee River to the north.

Indigenous Iconography is everywhere here. A rusted metal sculpture of a man with a large headdress and bow and arrow stands at the fork in the road when you first pull in. What does that say?

This is the place in the film where my grandma and mom are looking at the statue of Clifford G. Worsham, a member of the Civilian Conservation Corps who helped build the park during the New Deal. Again, this reinforces the idea that nature is “built.” Landscapes are processes. This park is constructed, and “nature” that is the park is separate from the city, or the places we call home. The compartmentalized control of nature in the US via lawns, chemicals, etc, is a really fascinating relationship.

## Concluding Thoughts

This book hopes for individuals to recognize that the way they look at land is a relationship actively participated in everyday. This project suggests that our relationships to land are at the core of many ongoing issues around inequality, immigration, climate change, worker’s rights, and the COVID 19 pandemic, in which home has never been more thought about, invested in, and engaged with.



How we live with land in the future, will reflect our values. What do you think the places you identified might look in the future?

How might our needs change in the future?

What will the role of technology be?

I hope this helped you see the different ways in which landscapes shape who we are, our realities, and how we engage with the world. I encourage you all to explore places in your own lives, and uncover the stories that you connect to. There is so much more to unpack and say. This is just a start.

*“I associated environmentalists with hippies, wildflowers, and naturelovers, and I felt all of this had nothing to do with my everyday living process.” - Cheryl Johnson, Staff member of People for Community Recovery in Chicago*



(Page ) **Mt. Gilead Road 2**  
 is a transformed version of  
 the first Mt. Gilead Road.  
 In this version one can see  
 the man made Tom BigBee  
 waterway in the upper right.  
 Mt. Gilead has been clearcut;  
 it is farmland, fenced in, with  
 mining, water flooding at it's  
 base to the left. Rather than a  
 memory, this is a prediction,  
 in another 15 years, the forests  
 will be cut. But then, it will  
 start again, replanted, and a  
 forest once more.

Lucy Lippard, *Lure of the Local* (all quotes here are derived from this work)

Ken Taylor, *Landscape and meaning: Context for a Global Discourse on Cultural Landscape Values*

Vanessa Watts, *Indigenous place-thought & agency amongst humans and non-humans (First Woman and Sky Woman go on a European world tour!)*

JB Jackson, *Sense of Place, Sense of Time*

Tuck, E. & Wayne Yang, K. *Decolonization is not a Metaphor*

Special Thanks to Mom, MaMa, and Brett



*“Because no matter who we are or where we come from, we’re all entitled to the basic human rights of clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and healthy land to call home.” Martin Luther King III*

# Landscape

How do you define landscape?

How do you define nature?

Are they the same?

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What ways is this land of service to you? What does it do for you?

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What do you do for land?

# Family

Who are important people in your life? What places do they call home? What "land" are they from?

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