Bios

Forbes Lipschitz is an Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Knowlton School at the Ohio State University, where she teaches studio and seminar courses in landscape planning and representation. As a faculty affiliate for the Initiative for Food and AgriCultural Transformation, her current research explores the role of geospatial analysis and representation in rethinking North American agricultural territories. She received her Master in Landscape Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and a BA in environmental aesthetics from Pomona College in Claremont, California.

Justine Holzman is an assistant professor professor of Landscape Architecture at the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design at the University of Toronto where she teaches studio courses and seminars in advanced representation and site technologies. In her research and as a member of the Dredge Research Collaborative Holzman explores infrastructural landscapes and site technologies with an emphasis on the relationship between rivers and urbanization. She received her Master in Landscape Architecture from Louisiana State University and a BA in Landscape Architecture from the University of California, Berkeley.
**Pond to Plate** (digital collage/painting using aerial imagery and drone photography)

The catfish farming aquaculture industry began in the 1960s on Sharkey clay soils unsuitable for cotton—the kind of “gumbo” soil that sticks to your boots and won’t come off. Catfish farming offered a sustainable source of protein and an alternative economy to the cotton industry. Inspired by the expansive landscape paintings of William Dunlap’s “Flat-Out” landscape panorama series (1998-2001), America’s Catch Farm, located in Itta Bena, Mississippi, the largest catfish production operation in the country, is drawn in abstracted panorama using photomontage and aerial imagery.
The Secret Lives of Catfish (digital collage)

The subtle dynamics of catfish farming cannot be easily understood through on-the-ground imagery. The “Secret Lives of Catfish” series pulls from Southern landscape paintings and field research as inspiration for snapshot scenes of catfish ponds in different conditions: an active catfish pond, an idled catfish pond, a pond that has been drained and converted to cropland, and a pond restored as wetland conservation area. The montages reveal the different waterfowl and wildlife that frequent each pond type.
Ponds of the Delta
To further grasp the scale and variation of catfish ponds in the delta, the four catfish pond types depicted in “The Secret Lives of Catfish” are depicted in aerial and displayed horizontally. Looking down on the ponds from above, the scale and textures of the ponds present themselves—the high resolution drone imagery captures the variations of wet to dry, marks left by machinery, and differing vegetation. Captured in the spring of 2016, from left to right are a drained catfish pond for agriculture, an active catfish split-pond, an idled pond, and a catfish pond converted to wetlands through the wetland reserve program.
Textures of the Delta (digital photographs)

The Delta is a rich mosaic of textures, bustling with activity. Levees line the bare clay roads for feeding, maintenance and harvesting. Shades of sediment and algae create subtle shifts in the colors of the pond and feeding time transforms the still surface with waves of frenzy. The cracked earth of idled catfish ponds creates shallow puddles and mudflats, teeming with shorebirds in the fall. Photographs were taken at various catfish farms throughout Mississippi and Arkansas.
Maping the Delta
This series of maps explores the relationship of catfish farming to historic conditions. The rectangular patterning of catfish ponds next to curvilinear river meanders reveals levees as both infrastructure and traces of the past. Catfish farms can be seen embedded in a network of publicly and privately owned conservation areas across the Yazoo Basin. At the continental scale, ponds and remnant wetlands provide critical stopover habitat to migrating birds along the Mississippi Flyway.

The Mississippi Alluvial Valley, the floodplain at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, was once a densely forested swampland and the preferred hunting ground for the likes of Teddy Roosevelt and Mark Twain. Since settlement, 7.2 million hectares of bottomland hardwood forest have been drained and cleared and the Army Corps of Engineers levee system has highly reduced seasonal flooding. Inspired by a late 19th century map of the region, this map of the Alluvial Valley shows areas that are still subject to inundation today, as well as the location of levees and transit infrastructure from Cairo, Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico.