

Lodge 441/Old School

Painting for the courtyard at the Old St. Patrick's Cathedral School for the New Museum Festival of Ideas, 2011.



I've been looking into the African American Cemetery in lower Manhattan, specifically focusing on quilt patterns used for hidden-in-plain-sight communication in the Underground Railroad. These patterns are a combination of American, African and Masonic symbols, like any re-mix they contain the past and the present. Initial paintings investigate the formal geometric qualities of these patterns, and attempt to discover how much a pattern can erode before it's illegible.

The project is named Lodge 441 after the first Freemason Lodge in the US to admit black members. This initial lodge grew to form a network of master builder societies which were critical safe houses in the Underground Railroad and whose political significance still resonates today. Large and small scale paintings inspired by quilt patterns will be made in sections on or near the actual sites of the African American Cemetery, to mark these contemporary sites as sacred ground.

Project author or developer:
Molly Dilworth, artist - commissioned by The New Museum

Where:
US / United States / ?????????????????????????????????

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