The first of these pieces came to me in a dream in 2004. I had been watching footage of the Iraq war and the dream showed me a map of Iraq covered with butterflies. It was actually more than Iraq as it included pieces of six or seven other abutting countries. And, importantly, the national boundaries were absent or nearly so and the cities, which have always been where they are, no matter who they “belonged” to, were emphasized. The map was old looking, involving a lot of layers of stains and grinding, and the butterflies seemed fresh and alive. To some degree all the maps in this body of work have married old places and a sense of history, time and age with the fresh beauty of the butterflies and their implicitly short life spans. Also, many of the places have been places that one associates with danger, conflict and / or death. This compared with the luxuriant beauty of the butterflies. I suppose another duality is between the land — implied by the map — and the air, alluded to by the suggested aeriality of the flying insects.

All of the pieces in this series are named “All Souls” followed by a specific place name of some town or city on the map, but never a particularly big or famous one — a small and specific one, by contrast. This “All Souls” title is a reference to the implication that butterflies have cycles of life — I think one always thinks of the different stages of living and dying they go through. And perhaps here is the implication, and hope, that troubled places can cycle into being not so troubled at some future time.

Jane Hammond

2010. Gouache, acrylic paint, metal leaf on assorted handmade papers with graphite, colored pencil and archival digital prints, rabbit fur, feathers and horsehair. 66.5” x 55” x 4”