



2019 season



The Artists in Residence
2019

montello foundation

Blane De St.Croix

Brooklyn, NY

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The Montello Residency is placed in a breathtaking environment, truly off the grid and imbedded in the high desert surrounded by snow-capped mountains in an ever-changing vast landscape. The residency is an idyllic setting for an artist to truly connect with the land and environment for any creative research, solitude and studio production.

I spent my residency exploring the landscape, its open plains, deep ravines and wild rivers. The weather changed dramatically daily from hot and sunny, to cold and snowy, to hailstorms and downpours, all enhancing the dynamics of the day to day

Broken Landscape, (detail), 2010, an 80 ft sculpture depicting the US/Mexico border fence, wood, plywood, foam, plastic, paint, branches, dirt, and other natural materials, 80 ft x 2.5 ft x 7 ft



Nomadic Landscape, 2012, wooden crate, acrylic paint, dirt and other natural materials from the Gobi desert, photographed in the Gobi Desert, 24 in x 13 in x 15 in

interactions with the elements. I spent focused time with my journal on long walks and studio time drawing and in preparation for upcoming exhibitions. I would suggest the setting of Montello for any artist that needs a strong connection to the land.

My landscape work explores the geopolitical landscape through sculpture, installation, and works on paper. The work addresses many underexposed issues, including climate change. My work in sculpture seeks to extend the dialogue with nature initiated by Land Art in the 1960s. In my work, I reach back the traditional role of artist-explorer, while framing my work for contemporary times using the landscape as a social signifier. Being in close proximity to and exploring Holt and Smithson's work during the residency was incredibly enriching.

My work also formally draws from the historical references of the landscape painting tradition and its sublime beauty; however, it is further interested in contemporary societies' underlying ecological and political conflicts that uniquely frame the memory of the current landscape. My work also seeks to underscore the dualities of the beautiful and devastating elements, both natural and man-made, which precipitate environmental and cultural changes in the landscape, transcending beyond nature and becoming symbolic of humankind's desire for control. The work's research also responds to the physical, historical and social situation of the site or landscape. I reveal what is already there to heighten the experience of place.

Ryan Dewey

Cleveland, OH
ryandewey.org



My work focuses on discovering new ways to think about nature across deep time (past, present, and future). I am particularly interested in building collaborations between contemporary humans and geologic forces for both near-future and deep-future scenarios. I utilize empathy, ritual, and speculative design to communicate about our relationship to nature and to highlight the entanglements between people, places, land use, and climate change through installation, performance, research, workshops, and land art. By drawing formal comparisons between geologic forces and human activity, I aim to knit a tighter connection between contemporary humans and the rapidly changing climate conditions of our current situation. What I'm after is a set of tools to prime natural landscapes for collaborations across time scales in a way that references the human systems that accelerated global warming and delayed the next ice age. To get there I build hand tools and landscape models that help me better understand geologic forces and I speculate about new ways to engage the functions displayed by geologic forces like

Disease of the Heart, Disease of the Flesh, the Boastful Pride of Life, 2018, red oak, white oak, lumber beam reclaimed during demolition of the original wood-framed Sears Tower, dimensions variable



cuprum / cyprium / cipres, 2019, cypress, copper, malachite, 48 in x 48 in x 4 in

glaciers, volcanoes, and the rock cycle. These hand tools and physical sites of priming are simultaneously memorials, warnings, and sites of hopefulness about our place in nature. My work also explores human conceptualizations of time, finding expression in the use of lineage, the life cycle, and heirlooms to help think about geologic deep time. As a kind of ecological dreaming, I bring my audience into new awareness of what it means to be a part of nature. I do this by producing contemplative moments that translate environmental issues into physical and experiential forms.

I've lived and worked in a wide range of geographic environments including mountain forests, continental savannas, remote island jungles and major cities, but until this residency I had never been to a desert. As an artist working on climate change, I felt I needed to experience the desert to expand my vocabulary of geologic and geographic metaphors that I draw on in my practice. Thanks to the Montello Foundation I've been able to begin my encounter with the desert, to begin ground-truthing some of the ecological issues we are facing today and to see first hand the impact that social decisions writ large have on ecological systems at local levels. The scale of resource extraction taking place in the middle of fragile desert ecosystems surrounding Montello was especially surprising. I'm grateful that I was able to spend time carefully observing in the desert, and I have come away with a handful of experiences that will inform my practice for years to come.

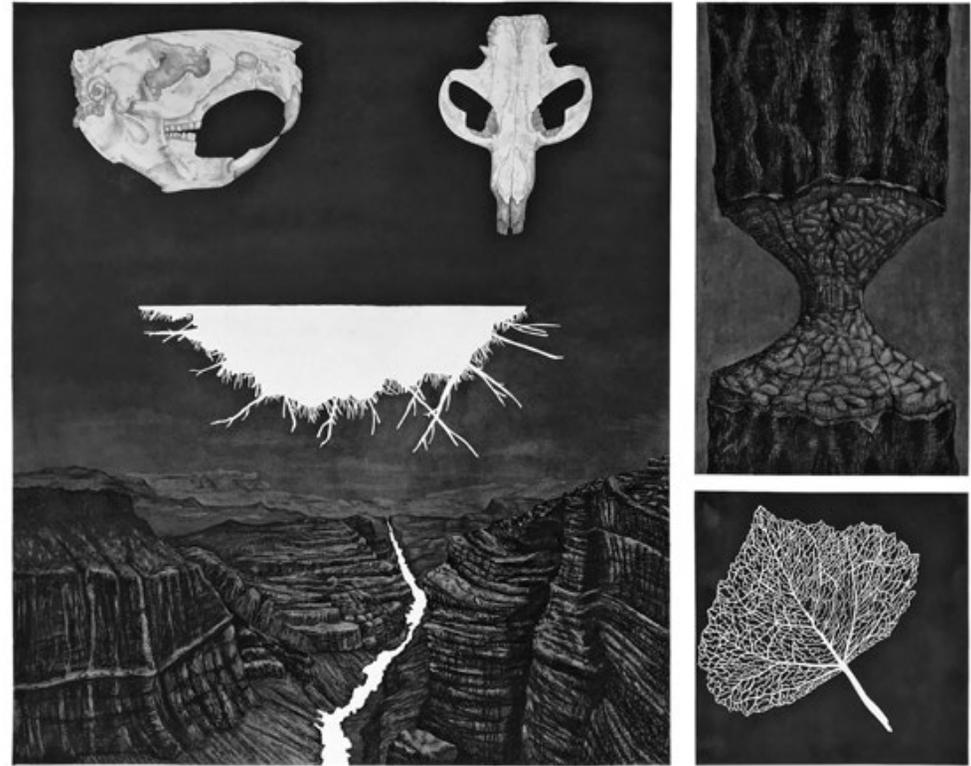
Nina Elder

Albuquerque, NM
ninaelder.com



Solitude. Aridity. Independence.

These were my assumptions of what I would experience during my time at the Montello Foundation. After a dry and dusty 48 hours, it became clear that I was wrong. It rained and rained and rained and rained. The sagebrush stewed in vast puddles that never evaporated. The roads were ankle deep in slippery ooze. My dogs and I were encased in mud. My AWD van sunk to the axles, tires shredded on submerged rocks. In this vast place, I wondered about distance and time, both poetically and logistically, as I imagined that I would have to walk out. It is a long story, one that



Interrupted Ecosystem: Beaver and Free Flowing Rivers, 2019
Charcoal, graphite, ash, and dirt on paper, 48 in x 60 in

involves elk steaks and Bud Light and unthinkable generosity, but the sole neighbors came to the rescue in myriad ways. Tony and Lupe, through their profound neighborliness showed me this: I am never alone. Being stuck is a temporary state of being. Wonderful things happen through acknowledging our interdependence.

As an ecological artist, researcher, and writer, I have been focused on what happens when natural systems succumb to human disruption. I am not an optimist. Yet, because of benevolence and patched tires, sodden todays and potentially sunny tomorrows, my time at Montello resulted in an essay about hope that was published by *American Scientist*. The drawings I made there consider resilience. Those two weeks were a shifting point. I have a new appreciation for both the finesse and force that it takes to become unmired, even though it can be deeply unsettling.

My work explores the presence of absence - voids and holes, memories and hauntings, secrets and reliquaries. I am still finding traces of mud in my van, in my studio, in my perception of dry places. The generosity of Tony, Lupe, and the Montello Foundation left a more indelible mark. Thank you.

Nina Elder's article is at americanscientist.org/article/paradox-sunrise-and-a-thirsty-place



Rachel Harkai

Detroit, MI

rachelharkai.com



My writing interrogates notions of attachment and impermanence. Whether referencing the topography of the land or the contours of the body, my work emphasizes how everything is subject to disintegration. It unpacks my personal compulsion to relive past experiences and emotions, interweaving interior spaces—including those of perception, reflection, grief, and desire—with a diverse range of external inspirations.

Deriving from a deep curiosity and reverence for the natural world, inquiries into astronomy, geology, landscape, and the senses permeate my work. As an interdisciplinary writer, inquiries into form also deeply motivate my practice. I will often begin to pursue a topic in a traditional nonfiction essay, but will later continue to explore similar themes in more experimental poetic forms. Regardless of genre, my writing seeks to find an ear for rhythms of language and syntax, leaning into a space where sound can create texture and even meaning. In this way I often engage both sonic repetition and thematic refrain as attempts to recover the past—but the function of memory grows obscure when we see that almost nothing lasts.

Since completing my residency at Montello Foundation, I have been struck by the powerful effect that my time amidst the remote, high desert landscape has had on my writing practice. Of course the cabin is a functional and very necessary shelter from the harsh desert environment. But it takes just one glance at the panorama presented through the studio windows to see that the space is also a lens—a frame. So often when I write I find myself lamenting how the work is 'hard'—those of us who make art pit ourselves against our expectations and our egos; we seek beauty and transformation and, too often, perfection. In this way artmaking can be arduous. But to be able to write at that desk, with those views, offered me—very literally—perspective. I could see the patterns of the natural world playing themselves out each day—the enduring mountain a backdrop to the cycles of the birds and the insects and the flowers and plants that fed one another to survive—a struggle from which I was, within the cabin walls, just barely held exempt.

And I left the residency feeling very deeply that the desk is not a place to suffer—that making art is an act through which we can process pain or difficulty without being a source of it. For my two weeks at Montello I was able to breathe; I stopped struggling to write something perfect. This helped me to remember that inspiration feels like pure excitement—that it is pleasurable—that art exists for our enjoyment and our learning and I am grateful for it.

YUCCA MOUNTAIN

Think of a river as something that
comes and goes, fickle as a mineral vein

run dry. Everyone here knows
how the land shifts, its ridges rising

quick as a town that boomed
and then busted. They'll tell you everything

decays with time, even the radioactive.
So in a million years, when there is no language

left for what we've made, mined, and hidden,
I hope for the desert's half-life to bloom

into uncertain greenery, into flowers
that fade toward an ocean beyond this

bitter antecedent. But for now, the water
will remain a wish called in the name

of every town from here to California,
in these wide plains—their empty basins

held in prayer, their energy surrendered
somewhere deep in the Test Range,

in the precious metal fields,
in every person who has come this close

to nothing, not to live but to die
in double-wides and dusty bars, or

on Friday nights at the Lion's Club supper,
where an old woman might rise every so often

to feed the jukebox and dance alone.
There is no way to put ourselves back

together, cracked as the claypan, as the
honeycomb caliche, as the night sky cleft

with lights we cannot know—the atoms of the air
like mizpah coins splitting over and over.

James Hua-Zen Kao

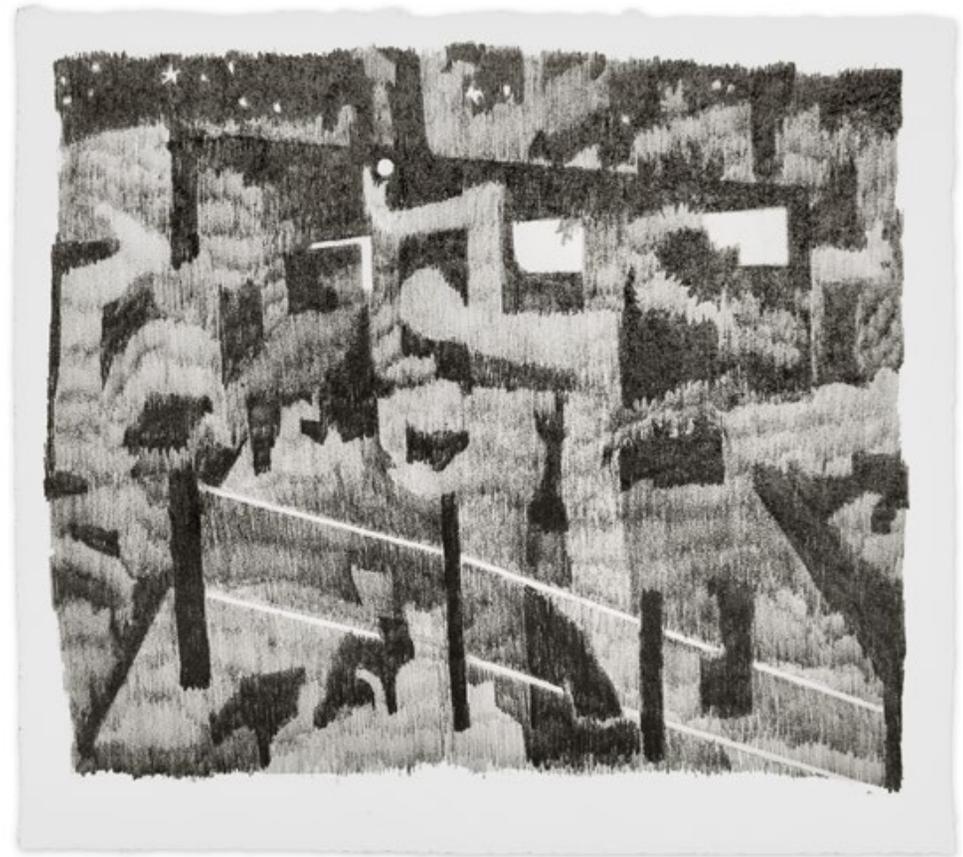
Chicago, IL

jameskao.org



Slow, deliberate, and direct observation is the foundation of my artistic practice. I find comfort in the way sounds fade and time disappears when looking dominates my senses. When the world I see diverges from the world I imagine, my practice moves from observation to invention. In this new world, darkness gives way to light, and forms shape-shift from foliage to animals to figures. I am interested in the untamed qualities of all that is child-like, animal-like, and angelic. My paintings and drawings are architectural fragments that reflect the moments and routines of a world where such shapes and qualities reign.

Basin, 2019, oil on linen over board, 14 in x 20 in



Daylighting, 2019, pencil on paper, 10 in x 11 in

At Montello, morning hikes kept me on the lookout for animal bones, fossils, and wildlife. In the afternoon, Montello's library contextualized the flora, fauna, and history of the Great Basin; and from evening to late in the night, I worked in the studio to understand my presence in the wilderness. Mourning dove coos, a yellow-throated warbler's song, and distant owl hoots marked time. In between, I gazed across the sagebrush for miles upon miles where distant storms, a lone elk, and an unfamiliar bird all demanded pause.

I had been making landscape paintings and drawings for some time before I arrived to Montello. During my stay, I began to sense a difference between 'landscape' and 'land'. I will continue to seek and to imagine the landscape motif, but I am striving to articulate all the traces and nuances that are not in the landscape but in the land, itself. I strive to reconcile the built and the unbuilt, and I am considering, now, how politics lies wide open across the land. Statecraft becomes more present than the vista, and this will be my lasting observation.

Eden Latham

The Hague, Netherlands
edenlatham.com



I left a few hours after my exhibition was cleared. The work still had yet to make sense in my mind.

Artistically, I had found myself obsessed with human traces, my work fundamentally informed by the influence of people upon a place, the remnants that linger after they have gone and the small impacts they have made. Utilising organic structures, textures, growth and decomposition, I reference the body and its residues directly. These are points of departure in a process of wrapping, rubbing, encasing, in order to conserve corruption. The works, though filthy in their nature, become somehow seductive and familiar and coalesce in a scene that proposes a slumbering decay and disconcerting absence.

Perhaps it is in our nature to at first try to seek those remnants and residues of other people. Walks at first around the incomprehensibly vast desert land found me

Excavational act in five parts, 2019, soap, dirt, margarine, Merlot, tar, paracetamol, cellophane, glue, Estée Lauder Pure Colour Envy HI-LUSTRE 330 Bad Angel, slime, gazeuse, salt, citalopram, tissue, plastic, wood, flourescent lamp



Frontierland, 2017, soap, fat, rust, insulation material, flourescent lamp, wood

with my head bowed, gazing ground wards. A spear head, a piece of acrylic rope, a bullet casing, a faded can of mountain dew. A silver pick up driving in the distance, staring until it disappears, just a speck behind the sage brush. Sometimes the air shattering penetration of an army plane cutting though the atmosphere, young recruits with no idea that they could be disturbing anything but nothingness as they circled above.

My most unwanted and surprising yearn for human kind led to a panicked trip in my truck to a desert border town and into a 24 hour casino where time doesn't exist. Dizzying, smoke stubs, sweet cola and whiskey, 50+ burger deals, the muffled smell of carpets and dollar bills, 'Have you been injured in an accident that wasn't your fault?' Diabetes tertiary care, craps, seafood buffet, eye contact with no one.

Then back to the retreat, where I learned the real meaning of that word. Time stretched out, bewildering. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. Cold, dark, light and heat. And again. Satisfaction. An acceptance to waste time. A focus so alien, I didn't know what to do with it.

I left the morning when the snow started falling, more lost than found but with the unshakable feeling that I had never really experienced gravity before then.

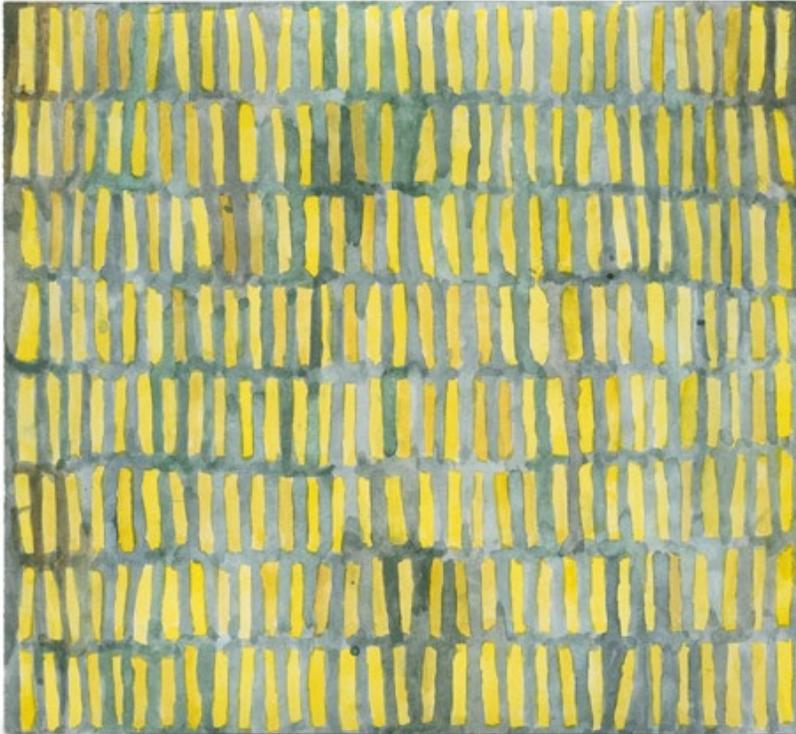
In my work, I consistently question certain energies that exist in our world. My work is fundamentally informed by the influence of people in upon a place. Physical, visible or metaphysical. My work is very focused on 'the everyday'; what happens when nothing happens? To put a stop to the passing of time, and to attempt to preserve what is transient. I attempt to confront these vast themes with simple interventions upon everyday materials.

David McDonald
Culver City, CA
davidmcdonaldart.com



I can unequivocally say that my two weeks at the residency were two of the most satisfying, productive, and revealing weeks of my life. I went to Montello to find out what my life would be like with only art, meditation, and self-knowledge as my daily activities and what I found was a peace, equilibrium, and focus that provided a new opening in my work.

Untitled, 2019, watercolor on Paper, 14 in x 11 in



Stone Web #6, 2019
hydrocal, pigment, foil, plaster wrap, acrylic, watercolor, enamel, polyurethane

I have been a zen practitioner for the past fifteen years and have done several long retreats in that tradition, so the silence and isolation were familiar to me. What was different was the incorporation of art making into my schedule. At a zen retreat your whole schedule is set for you, here I had to find my own way. Having no outside contact and nowhere to go allowed my mind to settle very quickly into a lovely routine of meditation, art making, reading, walking, and just being aware and attentive. I found myself working and acting as I haven't in thirty years, a time when my responsibilities to jobs, family, and career were a small part of my life.

I also must mention the influence and impact of the small library. I read five books and numerous collections of articles that have sent my interests in a new direction. The library felt curated to my taste and was further evidence of the intelligence and design of both the physical and experiential environment.

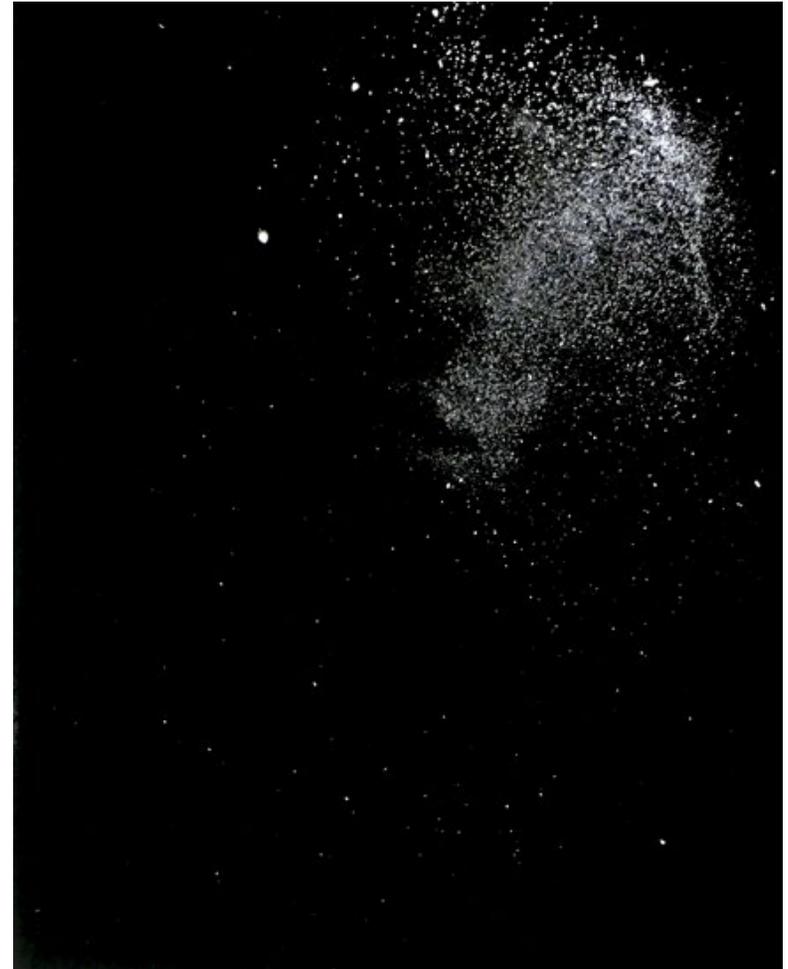
Sara Morawetz

Brooklyn, NY

saramorawetz.com



The stillness you encounter in Montello is one you carry forward — it embeds itself within and permeates into the world beyond. Time is weighted differently there — offering a quiet form of introspection that can be summoned again from even the busiest city sidewalk long after the desert has been left behind.



left and above: from the series *Our sun is somebody else's star*, 2019, unique photographic prints

My work in Montello was a response to this sense of expansion — a consideration of the immensity of earth and sky and how light and darkness amplify within it.

Our sun is somebody else's star is a series of unique photographic prints that utilise the night sky as a source of light to transform the photographic surface. In its remoteness Montello is absent of anthropogenic and artificial light, allowing each image to be created through direct exposure to the light of the stars and moon, and capturing an intimate connection to this unique desert landscape and the dark-sky conditions that surround it.

Nathaniel Ober

Big Sur, CA

nathanielober.com



For the past five years, I have lived in many remote off-grid situations. I spend a lot of time alone in the wilderness and alone in general, but in all of my endeavors I've never been this isolated from society. I had never spent this much uninterrupted time with myself. It was awe inspiring, completely secluded in such a vast landscape. I immediately became overwhelmed with giddy joy. The only sign of humanity was the road that led me to the Montello Foundation.

My days were filled with morning hikes, preparing meals and lots of silence with plenty of room to think. I found myself at times just sitting in the studio looking out onto the immense landscape, sometimes thinking deep thoughts, sometimes



without a thought at all. After meditation and many cups of green tea, I realized that the artwork I was staring at was far more important, far more beautiful and poignant than anything I would ever produce. In a sense, just being in the studio, looking out upon the valleys and mountains, I realized that my work was already done just by simply being there.

In my work, I explore the natural world through sound. I work with data from astrophysics for sonification purposes as well as natural forces such as light, wind, water and trees. I aim to create works that are not just influenced by the environment, but physically rely upon an intimate collaboration with the elements. With my time at the Montello Foundation, I continued to develop an ongoing series of aeolian harps. The harps are played by the wind and set in remote locations. Each one has a sound hole that doubles as an entrance for a bird so that one day they may house a new family of local fauna.

Does it make a sound when no one is around? Only the birds can say.

Eleanor Ray

Brooklyn, NY
eleanorkray.com



I arrived at Montello a few days before the summer solstice. Patricia, the previous resident, had placed bouquets of wildflowers around the studio and kitchen, the arrangements gathering isolated notes of color into concentrated bursts — orange-red, yellow, blue — a companionable foreshadowing of the variety waiting to be found in the desert. The mid-summer days were long and my time was always filled. I woke at dawn to watch the first light, listening to the birds and coyotes at their most vocal. Each morning I studied the house's maps, choosing a direction to explore by bike or on foot. When the sun reached its peak intensity, starting around 10am, the birds quieted and the light flattened, and what felt like a second night settled in, leaving space to shelter inside, reading or working. Calm mornings often gave way to sharply increasing winds, which I monitored with interest on the kitchen's mini weather station, noting the sustained speeds of 20 or 30 miles per hour, with gusts sometimes reaching 40 and 50. I enjoyed the strange suspense of not having a weather forecast, and watching to see what new patterns might unfold. The library's collection of field guides became valuable friends, as I looked up the animal tracks I was seeing and the birds I'd glimpsed on walks. By the third day, I was becoming familiar with the bright yellow shape of the



Nevada Window, June, 2019, oil on panel, 7 in x 8 3/4 in

western meadowlark, audible every day at the house, often singing from the top of a juniper tree, or on the grass right by the porch. I thought of it in the deep quiet of night. The sagebrush was a luminous green that time of year, alternately silvery and warm as the sun shifted. Rain fell at the house once, and for ten days, no cars passed.

Time at Montello is luxurious and uncluttered, but not empty. I had space to give my attention to whatever called it, and to notice my own responses. Unexpected things become interesting and valuable in that remote context. Perhaps experiencing this attention in such a concentrated way can build a kind of muscle memory, helping to sustain something similar even in different circumstances. (Thoreau was only a mile from the nearest town at Walden Pond, reporting experiences familiar to many Montello residents: *It is surprising how contented one can be with nothing definite — only a sense of existence.*) I felt a different awareness of scale at Montello, my attention alternating between the particularity of individual birds and the abstract expanse of geologic time, visible in its own way in the Great Basin. The same snow-capped mountains that looked small and distant from the gravel road filled the window frame when seen from the bed at dusk.

In the months since my time at the house, I've made small paintings of the images that have held most clearly in my memory, particularly the view from the studio — the irregular line of the horizon, close sagebrush, sunlight on the wall. That expansive space remains so vivid to me, and I love to imagine it changing across the seasons with each new resident.



Diana Shpungin

Brooklyn, NY

dianashpungin.com



My artistic practice is dedicated to challenging ideas of drawing through sculptural and time-based forms. The works involve obsessive processes while exploring themes of memory, failure, repair, —employing optimism in a quest for empathy across identity lines. My work often draws upon the natural world as a poignant metaphor for larger concepts.

I often think about nature when I am in the city. But actually being in nature for extended time periods has become a more rare occurrence. The ability to not only be in nature for an extended time but be truly ALONE (not counting husband and dog) in nature was astoundingly valuable for my personal and creative ability to think, create and simply be.

The majority of what I worked on was filming daily walks in the landscape to be used for source footage for a part of an extensive hand-drawn animation project

To Get Out Of The Way, 2020, work in progress, drawing still from hand-drawn video animation



Desert Ghost Limb, 2019, graphite pencil hand applied to juniper branch

to be shown in an upcoming solo exhibition in January 2020 at MoCA Tucson.

Additionally, I hiked and explored the surroundings with the utmost focus where time was not a consideration and no appointments were to be missed. I collected broken juniper branches and altered them into sculptural drawings, patiently encasing them by hand in graphite pencil.

As well, a good amount of driving and exploring took place. The ability to see the landscape of Utah and Nevada, the Salt Flats, The Copper Mine, Sun Tunnels, Spiral Jetty and more was an incredible art pilgrimage type experience.

Unlike city life, out in the desert the basic ritual of meals were attuned to the sunrise and sunset. Every daily sky was different from the last, an incredible way to start and end each day. At night it was shockingly silent, with an occasional coyote howl in the distance and the most picturesque bright starry sky one can imagine. I also managed to read several books cover to cover. And my dog Rhino was ever so happy here, king of the desert!

This residency time made me realize being in true solitude, without, email, wifi and the chatter of daily modern technology fueled life is very good for ones brain and I should do it more often!

Martha Tuttle

Brooklyn, NY
marthatuttle.com



Although I consider my work to be within a painting discourse, I use mostly textile techniques such as spinning, weaving and dyeing. I see these practices as allowing material variation, as well as touch (my own, a place's, a process's) to be recorded into material form. I like most the part of my practice in which I start to emotionally confuse a piece of cloth, an image of skin, and a landscape.

At Montello, this kind of boundary dissolution was easy to access. Organically- and quickly- my mind softened and flowed. I got so quiet I began to confuse my heartbeat with an approaching truck. I watched the grasses droop and leave semi-circle drawings in the sand when the wind blew them. I drew constellations in the sky and found their counterparts in the holes dug by insects and animals in the ground. For the first time, in a long time, I found the space to sit and watch the day, the weather, the light.



Like the way galaxies recede to the rim of space, 2019, wool, linen, pigment, quartz, 63 in x 46 in

I wrote and wrote and wrote, read, made dye from juniper berries, walked for hours in every direction, collected stones, put the stones back, sang, said hey to a hunter, found an elk carcass and recorded how it decayed over weeks. I made and photographed textile installations on fences, which have started a new body of work I am now focused on.

Most importantly, at Montello, I sat with what I did not know. I sat with the questions- hard ones- that I've needed to ask of my practice for a long time. I began to envision how to engage further and more directly with the ecologies and places that inspire me most, and to think how poetic space can exist symbiotically alongside ecological advocacy. I'm surprised that such a short time in a place can have such reverberating affects, yet months later I still feel Nevada in my work, my thoughts and in my body. Montello shifted me, I think radically, and I miss it so.

Patricia Watwood

Brooklyn, NY

patriciawatwood.com



This untouched spot on the earth is remarkably isolated, more than 20 miles from the little town of Montello, NV. No phone signal, no wifi, no distant lights from other humans, no other houses. I was astounded to discover a lush and verdant “desert,” after a record high rainfall over the spring. There were wildflowers everywhere, and folks in town reported seeing species in bloom that they had never seen before.

While I was in Montello, I wandered the valleys and ridges and picked flowers. I made lush bouquets and was delighted to discover just how many colors of Indian Paintbrush there are.

They bloom fuschia, cherry, vermillion, scarlet, sunrise coral, bubblegum pink, pale apricot. Their leaves range from kelly green to plum violet, making an infinite number of combinations with the blossom colors.

I also painted the “Nine Mile Mountain Triptych,” an oil landscape on 3 large sheets of Fabriano paper, 22” x 90” in total. The mountain is the spiritual center



of the landscape, and the key landmark for finding my way back to the refuge of the house. Watching the pageantry of the clouds parading across the vast sky makes for endless hours of visual feasting, and the long format triptych was a good way to capture the infinite expanse.

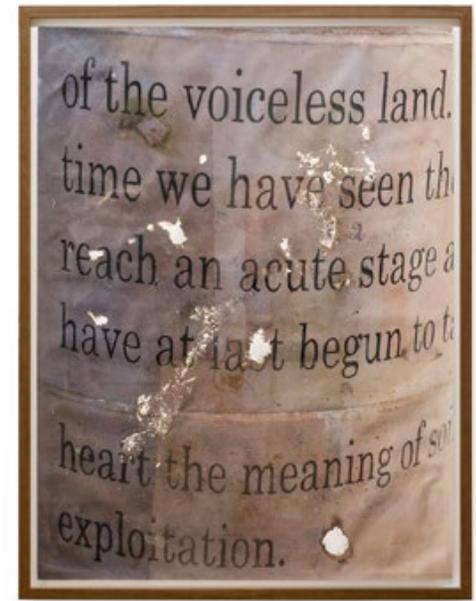
Nine Mile Mountain Triptych, 2019, oil on paper, 22 in x 90 in



Suzanna Zak
New Haven, CT
suzannazak.com



I arrived to Montello after 1 period of intense rains. It is the desert, so any windfall of water grasps your attention, even days after the clouds pass. My traverse of the 20 miles of dirt roads through the seemingly endless sage brush to the Montello Foundation building was punctuated by large puddles of mud. As I, alongside my dog Lady ran on these roads daily, I carefully watched the material transform, becoming a perfect canvas for capturing the footprints of animals who I shared this environment with. These footprints, not dissimilar from the methodologies of printmaking, mold making, or photograms recorded a presence that I didn't have the pleasure of witnessing. These impressions in the Earth served as a harrowing reminder that to experience a place, one cannot just take a quick glance, but rather, a type of deep looking, or mushroom gaze is required. My time at the Montello



The Meaning of Soil Exploitation, 2018, weathered digital c-print, 30 in x 40 in

Foundation revolved around fine tuning my method of deep looking. This involved distance runs through the landscape, photographs created from double exposures, reading about the local ecology while also close examination of rocks and plants, writing, and paying attention of the wind to the point that I can now guess wind speed within a 5 mph accuracy. You can imagine this is imperative as someone who rock climbs, and an artist with a studio practice that frequently involves laying out photographs outside to undergo a weathering process.

My work is a way for me to engage with landscapes more intimately. I had visited Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty a year prior, and I brought 30" x 40" photographs that I made in the surrounding environment to the residency. These prints were laid out on the porch, in places where water would drip from the rains the days prior. One photograph in particular shows pelicans in flight, and I was able to read more about this particular species from books in the collection of the Montello Foundation. Pelicans are known for their ability to sense distance sources of water in desert environments, and so my photograph is altered through exposure to water, mud, wind, and sun through the duration of my residency. I am currently processing the photographs from my time at the Montello Foundation, that will be altered through their exposure to environments in New York, a merging of seemingly distance places that is critical to my practice of blurring the divides of urban/rural, human/animal, nature/culture. I am thankful for my time at the Montello Foundation to help me realize amalgamations that foster new forms of cohabitation.



We went down into the silent garden. Dawn is the time when nothing breathes, the hour of silence. Everything is transfixed, only the light moves. - Leonora Carrington

Many of the Artists-in-residence have commented on the quietness at the retreat, their discovery of silence. Most of them live and work in cities; their ears are accustomed to filtering out noise - and at some point actually all sounds. It is a natural reaction, since we perceive unwanted sounds as an invasion of our space.

Silence is something very difficult to grasp. It is simply defined as an absence of sound. But is it a void? According to acoustic ecologist and founder of Quiet Parks International, Gordon Hempton, silence is not the absence of something but the presence of everything. Hempton would have us believe that silence is not a void, but is instead filled with matter. Translated into the visual world, silence becomes light in every color - white light. White light enables us see colors; it gives us clarity and possibilities.

This silence opens up the Artist-in-residence's personal sphere of awareness to the sounds of birds, crickets and especially the wind. The sound of the wind here has many notes. The wind in the Juniper trees sounds different than the wind in the sagebrush, different than the wind in the grasses. This soundscape of silence then defines a whole new space for the Artist-in-residence, almost a physical space, a space not invaded by the sounds of machinery and electronics - on a par with the sky, the land and the studio.

The residents do listen in awe, but I also know that the silence is not always easy to appreciate. This silence and its possibilities can become overwhelming and our actions seem insignificant, but the quietness is also sheltering and comforting. Whether intentionally or not, the silence adds a whole new element in their work.

Please have a look at their reports. Much is to be discovered there.

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I also wanted to give you an update on our Waypoint - which many of you are very generously supporting. Last year we started this ambitious project, building a waypoint, a place for contemplation and exhibitions, easily accessible near the village of Montello. Our waypoint will focus on nature, the wide vistas as well as delicate details.

Through a student competition, we arrived at a very open design by Naoki Ono and Tinca Decuseara, consisting of five concrete slabs cast directly from the earth at the site.

Of course there were numerous design decisions to be made and the precise plans to be drawn up, but finally, we have now the building permit from Elko County, NV. There are technical details and logistics to be figured out, and starting construction in the harsh winter of Northern Nevada would not be the right time, but we are confident that we can have the main structure raised in spring 2020.

Stefan Hagen, Founder





Thank you to all the individuals for all the help and support they have given to us.

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Montello Foundation is a foundation dedicated to support artists who foster our understanding of nature, its fragility and our need to protect it.

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