

## Jodi Connelly

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My art practice investigates the effects of our activities and consumption on the landscape and its native ecology. Working intimately with the land has illuminated the complex political and ecological systems at play in the Anthropocene. By placing ecological issues in an artistic context, my work aims to increase awareness of the necessity environmental stewardship.

When I arrived at Montello, I felt the frenetic energy I brought from day-to-day life. My mind felt loud and chaotic against the soft green palette of the desert. As I unpacked my things, the clamor of my activities succumbed to birdsong and cicadas. I smelled sage and earth and was elated to find so many colorful flowers blooming. As I marveled at each new discovery, I began to experience the calm, energized clarity of being fully present.

My days quickly attuned to the rhythms of the desert. I noticed the hues of each hour, the rising sun, the afternoon rains, painterly sunsets, starry night skies. I spent time wandering, journaling, drawing, dancing, meditating, reading, collaging, studying plants and collecting clay. At night I enjoyed the library, whose contents gave me a sense of belonging with the other artists that had been there. Below is an excerpt from the journal I kept during the residency:



*Untitled, gold ink, paper, desert earth, 9 x 9 in, 2023*

*North Pit Diptych, charcoal on paper, cyanotype on paper, 36 x 16 in, 2023*



Here on this land, wandering through its vastness, feeling its textures and topography, the changes in light and temperature, I have reconnected with my body, mind, and creative being. I notice how much more time and care I need than I give myself at home. I notice how the spaciousness here is both internal and external—as if my inner terrain reflects this environment. I am grateful for the invitation to wander, watch and listen. I often feel guilty about needing time to move slowly, to walk, to explore, to sit in silence. I've been taught that these things are frivolous, unproductive, or indulgent. But they are an important aspect of my art practice and self-care. It is through these quiet activities that my work comes to be. I will take this sacred knowledge with me back into the world.