

Kyla Hansen

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As a native rural Nevadan, living in Los Angeles, I am committed to exploring the shifting aesthetic culture, economic landscape, language, and idiosyncrasies of the West in my artwork. For the first time in history, more of the world's population is living in urban rather than rural areas. I use my artwork as a lens through which to view this shift and its multiple implications.

I used my time at the Montello Residency to read, hike, and experiment in the studio. I was able to complete one large fabric piece while at the residency. During my travels to and from the retreat I visited Lehman Caves in the Great Basin National Park, which was particularly edifying source material for my artwork.

Fool's Gold, 2012



Tarbender, 2015



Perhaps the most significant outcome of my time at the residency was a deepened understanding of the natural history and ecosystem of the American West, a region my artwork centers on. The Foundation supplies a small but library for residents. During my stay I read Stephen Trimble's *Sagebrush Ocean: A Natural History of The Great Basin*. I would take time each morning before my hike and studio time to read a few chapters. There was something very valuable about reading about the geology, flora, and fauna of the Great Basin and then being able to walk directly outside to physically observe that landscape. It was fascinating to slow down and really look at the small details of the desert, rather than looking at it as one large expanse.

One of the defining attributes of good artwork is its ability to change our perspective and perceptions of the world around us. The Montello Foundation offered me a similar privilege by providing the time and space to reexamine my understanding of the Western landscape.