

## Kevin McNamee-Tweed

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In the months leading up to my residency at Montello, I'd been making mostly paintings of nature. I expected this to flourish in my time there. I found in the first few days that this wouldn't work; that my renderings of the land felt absurd and unworthy of the visual reality I was experiencing. On the third night, there was a full moon. After dinner I walked around the side of the house to discover the glowing pink plate sitting a few inches above the twisting horizon line. There were streaking clouds on this night so the waning daylight produced a spectrum of pinks and oranges which bled green into the dissolving blue which was cut by the black-green mountains. And there at the center of it was the pink moon, a hole of light.

The following morning, and for a few mornings more, there was a silver moon to the

*Comet, 2016*



*Tree with Sky, 2016*

east of the house until about ten AM. Circular forms have been an enduring element in my paintings for some time, but they became the focal point of my work at Montello. I produced a series of pseudo-perfect circles quietly situated in a field of two or three layered colors on raw canvas. This language of color and circle forms functioned in a way that depictions of plants, animals, and landscapes could not. It communicated just enough, nothing more. I found that the expansive and heavy silence, the gentle fluctuations of light and color, and the way time occurred in Montello pushed me to adopt a mode of expression that removed my own narratives and symbolologies. In the months that followed my time in Nevada I have returned to more familiar ways of working—painting and drawing natural settings—but I have also embarked on a printmaking project which has allowed me to delve into the mysteries and memories of Montello as I simultaneously wade into a new mode of image-making and story-telling.

The house and the studio at Montello are lovely and quite comfortable but the greatest gift of the fellowship is no doubt that of pure time and space in its rawest, most truthful form.