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My residency at the Montello foundation overlapped with Monika Wuhrer for three days because we are collaborating on *Backyards Utopias*, a project centered on biochar specifically and more generally on building a network for initiatives that promote mutual aid and exchange, carbon reduction and local food production in the urban setting; three day think tank on the project. Charring became a daily activity during the residency. We made our first pot of biochar on the night I arrived. The pyrolyzed contents of the pot became a daily gift of treasures uncanny in both the crystallized preservation of the most delicate forms and the transformation of color and texture; three-dimensional carbon copies.

I was prepared to be working primarily with biochar and charcoal during my stay but an unexpected exploration emerged almost immediately. On the first day after my arrival, Monika took me to the little canyon just north of the building. We slipped into the crack; a hidden, parallel Lilliput world of rearranged scales. A tiny monumental landscape where my perception of self fluctuates between a looming physical presence, projected



on the wall of the canyon with a marked shadow of meteorological proportions, and an imagined disembodied inhabitation of a vast landscape where nooks and crannies become caves and crevasses and the sage bushes loom like sequoias on the canyon's edge.

This is the world that accompanied me back to the studio. From sticks, stones and mud clay made of rice paste and dirt, desert creatures emerged; simple forms with character and determination. They began encroaching on my space as I have on theirs. The creatures quickly organized and it soon became clear that they had embarked on an odyssey in search of the fourth dimension, ever elusive time, casting their shadows to capture their ever fleeting prey. The wind propelled their orbit while I accompanied the journey with frenetic activity building their vehicles and horizons with onion skin paper, rice paste, and egg shells. Some of my garbage was appropriated by the mission for the development of strategic instruments. The biocharring production was also incorporated, carbonized forms of various organic matter, from dung to dead flies to flower puffs as tools and embellishments for the voyage. The various outcomes of the mission might coexist in alternate present moments but the energy and verve of the crew reverberates through the galaxy.