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My residence in Nevada at the Montello Foundation was framed by my academic sabbatical from teaching in Baltimore - an intense period of rest, reflection, research, and art-making. I arrived at Montello at the end of summer, in time for the hordes of hummingbirds drinking from the Rocky Mountain Bee Plants during the work day and the numerous swooping of bats in the full moonlight. Growing up on a farm in rural North Carolina, I know there is nothing quite like seclusion and a close proximity to nature to replenish my artistic spirit. While at Montello, I took hikes every day - inspecting the land, the flora, and looking for signs of fauna (much of it hidden, but evident in their traces). I read numerous books by Edward Abbey, Rebecca Solnit, Thoreau - and many books about the Great Basin region's history and native life.

I found this time to be not just informative, but restorative. There was no rushing for deadlines or push to resolve an artwork. I made a few paintings, very different from my

American Catastrophe Report, installation at American University, Washington, D.C. 2015



Venus Fly Trap, 2013

typical research-based installation projects. Montello offered a contrast to my 'normal' studio behavior and patterns. A retreat in the desert was an ideal way for me to explore landscape, sky, and the history of the interior west. As an East Coast artist, this was an important and invaluable recalibration of my relationship to land, site, and time. Relevant to me is what Solnit writes in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, "There are fossils of seashells high in the Himalayas; what was and what is are different things." Learning about the history of the Great Basin, both in land and in its people, forced me to reconcile subjects I do not normally consider. I was able to renegotiate my self in relationship to my studio practice and the broader world. This is a privilege that I will always remember.

An installation that acts as both homage and critique of the decorative frescoes in the United States Capitol Building, originally painted in the 19th c. by Italian-born artist Constantino Brumidi. The site-specific artwork is installed in American University's Katzen Arts Center, in both the upper and lower rotunda in the center of the building, less than six miles from where Brumidi's paintings are located. The prints forming *American Catastrophe Report* have the appearance of paintings due to the unique process I use, where hand-painted originals are digitally scanned then printed for long-term public display. I am updating Brumidi's Capitol ornamentation by directly addressing ecological disasters in America that have been caused by human activities.