

## Lilah Fowler

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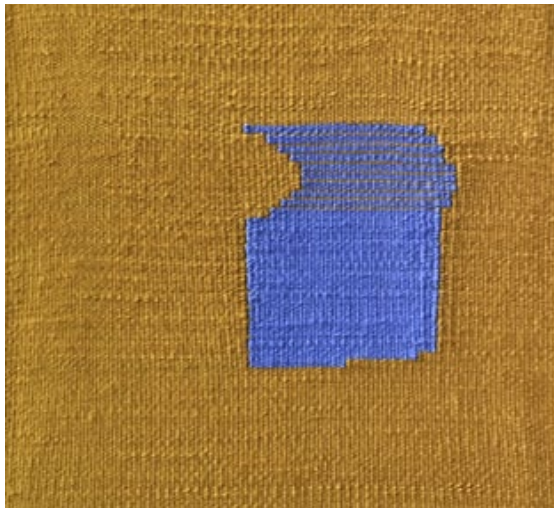
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'Why exactly am I here?' I asked myself out loud in the audio log of my second day. My mind was a landscape, its terrain a challenge to navigate. I came with a set of ideas to start, continue and finish; nothing physical, since I was forced to purge all the usual materials I work with; travelling from a safe and green island, half way across the world, just to experience silence and the desert. In the end it was the silence that stumbled me; I drew and read, but what captivated me was how deafening, nothing could be. It's startling how the mind adjusts. The onset being the captivating fear of reconciling the distance between myself and the space I had travelled to: a result of a worrying realization of an addiction to remote technological links to the world, combined with absolute solitary isolation in a landscape that calls on survivalist instincts. There was mellowing as I learnt to sense rather than think, the sounds revealing themselves in layers and shapes that filled the vast space.

The gusts of wind played chords and the insects ticked and buzzed, but curiously I

*14203, (Wool, string) 2016*



*Untitled, (film still), 2016*

found human solace in the planes flying 30,000 feet above me, the sole evidence of human presence. This drew my eyes to the sky and I began filming, finding moments to examine. The acute alertness brought on listening and sound as vibrational waves and static forms; feeling with hearing: the puckering, pinging and hissing, and I began to think about how sound can be heard in other ways. It is a bodily process, searching for sounds in the silence. The soundscape is the lasting descriptive memory of the space, infinitely more accurate than my images produced.

I arrived with a mind full of thoughts and research, all feeding the sculptures and artwork that I make; contemplating the often contradictory understanding we have of contemporary landscape, when it is shadowed or paired with technology. I was curious about this transformed global perspective that satellite maps give to my occupation of the space the under my feet, aside this space in a virtual map. It uncovers a vast system of infrastructure, miles of cabling and data centers, often placed in remote locations like this desert. Over the shifts in my practice, the core remaining feature is of finding new shapes in looking; only now, this extends to how the digital and physical collide, when, after all, they both rely on a hidden infrastructure in remote locations.

There's a difference between being captivated by the aura of mountains and desert when living afar, to when the distance is reduced from the object (me) and the subject (the land) and in a way de-aestheticised. The beauty is actually monotonous. The extended time in the cabin broke down the separation of reading the environment as a 'thing' and set in to motion a kind of puncturing, rupturing, dissolving and re-approaching a co-existence with my surrounding landscape and related thought processes. It's unique and rare to have the chance to work in this way and to fracture my pattern of making and thinking; the result will inevitably filter into future works.