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Driving back from the cabin, I got out of the car to move a rock from the track. An eagle swooped past me in the clear Nevadan air. I was hit by a wave of emotion. This was not soft-mindedness: my head had cleared in the preceding weeks spent free from social media, email, and people. I responded spontaneously to the encounter without a self-conscious screen: a mark of my experience at the residency.

I am engaged in a series of projects that explore the multifaceted nature of the desert and our perceptions of it— exploring the desert as a complex site. Examples of topics I am interested in are the ephemerality of time, the fragility of the environment, the desert as a spiritual retreat, a boundary zone, and a place where modernist tropes of a 'growing desert' co-exist with manifold utopian speculations.

still image from *IR*, silver gelatin print, 8 x 10 in, 2024



Opening #2, Gelatin Silver Print, 10.5 x 10.5 in, 2024

My time at Montello passed slowly, with the days lingering long and spacious like a childhood summer. I would take off on the bike to follow a track just to see where it went, or walk through the sagebrush at 5 am when the stillness felt palpable. My residency felt like a long meditation, in which I would release the shutter of my camera at certain times, trying to drill down into the moment. I grew more familiar with the comings and goings of my mind and the comings of the nature around me. I felt a series of 'openings' through which I could feel a visceral connection to the wild community around me.

Making art through an unmediated experience of the non-human is becoming central to my art practice. In this sense, the residency came at the right time for me, and I am grateful for the experience. I was able to devote time to my practice, to research in the wonderful library, and to experience the American wilderness for the first time. I took the opportunity to read *Walden*, and Jung's 'The Earth Has a Soul', which are on my shelves at home but I had never found the time to read. I will carry this with me and allow it to shape my work.