

Tahir Karmali

Brooklyn, NY

www.tahir.com



The Montello residency enabled me to embark on creating several new works, whilst also providing a cross-country road trip that expanded/impacted my practice by giving me first-hand experience of various regional landscapes in the south west of the United States. I took immense pleasure in exploring the terrain--be that in my car or at the residency itself--and found new methods of approaching landscapes coming from New York City's enclosed period of quarantine that lasted eighteen months. My trip took me through the center of the United States to Portland, Oregon with a two week stay in Montello. While in residence in Montello, I utilized my time to contemplate on the land and interrogate new forms emergent within. My stay and journey to and from Montello deeply impacted my relationship to landscape, territories, and the systems that shape them.

My work investigates how institutions construct and withhold global migration that disproportionately negatively affects marginalized peoples. I interrogate the ongoing effects



PAPERscreening, 2019, paper, aluminum mesh, wood, 11 ft x 35 ft x 8 ft

Handmade paper pulped from photocopied government-issued identification documents and commercial paper; with aluminum mesh



of colonialization and its afterlife in neocolonialism and late stage capitalism. Because my work engages with the deterritorialization of landscapes, I appreciated the opportunity to experience territory beyond the conditions of coloniality. This experience reoriented me to the power of form and nature in landscape. I connected closely to the earth and the celestial bodies, letting go of time-keeping. I allowed my body and intuition to dictate my actions. I better understood my practice and developed a level of trust in my actions.

My practice/process led me to follow the flows of desire that came from a first hand experience of being in the land. The work that came out of these channels were sketches for future sculptures. As the immediacy of the being in the land was my origin, I mapped my desire rhythmically in these sketches that also became a corporeal extension of how I felt whilst there. I was more attune to my body and the environment around me. I placed large sheets of vellum on the large windows facing the landscape. This allowed me to feel as if I was directly drawing on land. I had no desire to copy what was directly in front of me, yet I would allow a form in the distance to inspire me. The drawings became gestural expressions of my body's reaction to the entire experience.