

Zoë Sheehan Saldaña

Brooklyn, NY

www.zoesheehan.com



I got nowhere to run to, baby, nowhere to hide - Martha and the Vandellas

Before I left for Montello I told my friends that they could find me by looking up nowhere on the map, and I'd be smack dab in the middle. A particularly smart friend told me that utopia means nowhere [ou (no, not) + topos (place)].

The morning after the first night I walked east into the big wash where the sagebrush grew lush and every eroded hole in the dry caliche held traces of animal nests.

Another day I went south toward the pass and when I stopped to pee I found a big piece of petrified wood.

I saw no other humans until the fourth day when I was riding the bicycle west and came up over a rise to find myself face to face with a pickup carrying three men in camo. I'm not sure who was more surprised. Turned out they were on their second day of tracking an elk

Kite in the sagebrush



Bandana Kite Train, 2017

they'd shot but only wounded. The driver asked if I knew of any springs nearby.

"No, sorry, I don't."

"Ok thanks anyways. You want some water? You sure?" They rode on.

I rode north fifteen miles along the wash, past the scar of the gas pipeline, under a pair of thermalling golden eagles, across a meadow of dried grass, until I got to the Thousand Springs Creek that traced a portion of the 19th century overland trail from Missouri to California. Then as now as ever it seems we are all just passing through.

Unless the wind was howling, the days were so quiet I could hear crows' wings flapping two hundred feet above. While working in the studio one afternoon a loud rumbling sound startled me. I thought a truck might be pulling into the driveway so I stepped outside to look and realized it was an airliner flying over at 30,000'.

Coyotes sing any time they damn well please.

The piñon pine might be my favorite tree.

One night long after moonset I was awakened by the brightness of starlight.

I built kites from bandanas and flew them in long lines tracing the invisible eddies of air rushing over the earth.

The evening before I was to leave, rain fell steadily for an hour or more, and in the morning I could see snow at 7,000'. I was prepared to stay for several extra days if the road was unforgiving but it still seemed dry so I packed up the car and carefully drove out. At 5,500' a coyote dashed across the way. At 6,000' an elk sauntered by. At the pass I stopped to collect snow-dusted juniper berries. Just beyond the pass a buck mule deer and his harem gathered at cloudbase, the last visible members of the farewell committee.

Until soon, nowhere land.