

Annie Varnot

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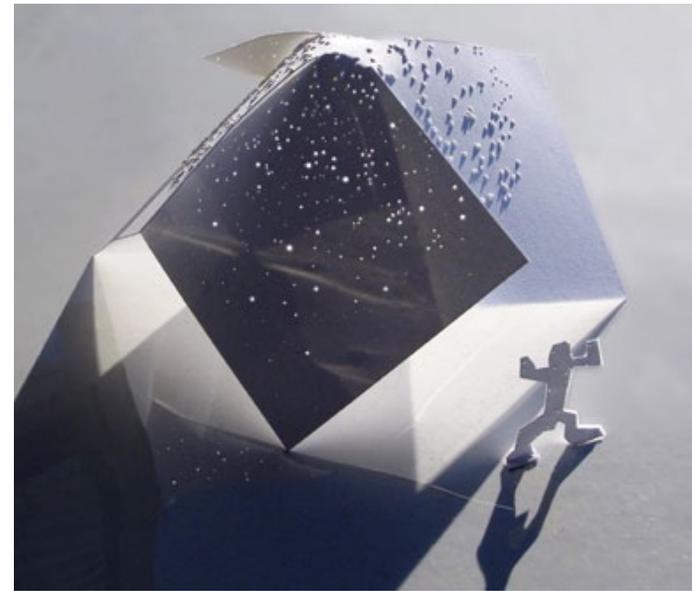
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Hovering between abstraction and representation, my art engages with several environmental themes, albeit in a non-linear, poetic way. These include human interference with nature, spectacular natural phenomena, and my own relationship to the landscape. I am interested in creating a dialogue between contrasts such as synthetic and natural, geometric and organic, and excess and nothingness. The compositions come from a hunger to link landscape with the human desire for connection. Positive forms interact as if they are stretching, breaking, forming, reaching, piercing, filling, protecting, or spilling into voids.

My artistic practice is characterized by an unconventional use of materials and processes. My materials, including drinking straws, plastic and natural debris, poultry eggs, and envelopes, are integral to the content of my work. My process for obtaining these

Sunset Storm at Montello, 2016



Paper Model of Constellation Shelter I with Petroglyph Anasazi Yellow Jacket Man, 2016

items includes such means as draining poultry eggs and gathering drinking straws from around the world, actions that are also fundamental to my work.

At the Montello Foundation, I spent the first two weeks of May nervously yet cavalierly, driving a rental compact car through mud puddles two feet deep, getting accustomed to the composting toilet, being mindful of my water usage, listening to the melodic wind, watching the sun rise and fall, waking to the staccato drilling of woodpeckers, and taking in the spaciousness of the remote high desert. The first seven days I was in awe of the environment, not quite grasping how it would affect my artistic practice. I found that the desert was eerily still by day. With a desire to become similarly still, I patiently rendered still-lives of dirt-road debris like faded Budweiser cans and wild cacti. At dusk, the sky was my television. I spent all evening entranced by it. Every evening, I painted the sun until it had retreated below the horizon. I then laid flat on my back and stared at the 360-degree view of the stars. Watercolor as a medium seemed perfect for the ephemeral and epic sunsets. Still searching for deeper inspiration, I explored and watched the landscape, hoping to harvest an idea I could explore more once I was back in New York City. After days of near artistic despair, I finally lit up with creative fire and imagined and explored something that I hope to develop further: constellation sculpture shelters. The dominant chords for me in the North East Great Basin are sky, sun, heat, light, wind, and stars. These outdoor sculptures would act as shelter from the sun and wind. At Montello, I pricked holes into paper, corresponding to the South West sky at night. I folded the paper to create a maquette example of one of these shelters. Within the constellation map, I added fictitious constellation characters inspired by my discoveries at the Montello Foundation.