



2022 season



The Artists in Residence
2022

montello foundation

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This desert is serenading me every day and every hour in a different form. The hard storms with the bashing water down pours changing into a soft rain, moistening the dry desert air opening my nostrils to the potent but gentle scents of the sage bushes and juniper trees. I inhale deeply and don't want this moment to pass, a smell that cannot be bottled or kept by merely picking a branch. It is only available in the moist air and thereafter in my memory.

This high valley is surrounded by hills and beyond those high snow-covered mountains which collect the moisture and allow tree vegetation to cling to its side, one of the oldest living species of tree.

#386 | *Ancient Wisdom of the Juniper Trees, Nevada Desert, June 2022*,
pigment ink on ash veneer, 40 x 60 in, 2022



PLATE 108 | *German Alps*, archival pigment print, 60 x 40 in, 2019

The vegetation is far from hesitant, though short and wind beaten, protecting the clay-like earth by spreading her curved branches with her tiny but hardy leaves. In reciprocity, the earth nourishes the plants with minerals.

These old trees emulate old wise people whose graceful appearance enhances with age, their shapes bent by harsh winds, hugging the landscape in their elegance.

Walking through the juniper groves in the Nevada desert with my boots brushing against the sage, I feel welcomed. My camera becomes the extension of my eyes and I don't care about the outcome of these photos. My presence in these groves, an experience that has its value in the very moment. I understand the meaning of community, the strength of the interconnectedness of nature – and as we are a part of this nature it feels good to be welcomed and not feel like an intruder.

I am promising to become a keeper of their memories.

Margaret Cogswell

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My drawings are the result of many months of walking, exploring, photographing and filming the landscape of an area I am researching for the development of each of my River Fugues projects. Much like an archaeologist or geologist, I may search for clues to the history of a river, a people, or a place in the enigmatic remnants of their past. While researching Red Hook Harbor Soundings, I became intrigued with the fragmented remains of infrastructure and industry emerging from the Red Hook harbor where the tidal waters of both the Hudson and East Rivers alternately reveal and then conceal the histories of these ruins. Similarly, hikes through desert landscapes in New Mexico and Wyoming, wanderings along the Cao Gong River in the ancient water town of Zhujiyajiao, China, and hushed ventures through abandoned steel mills in Cleveland all led to drawings which are often acknowledging loss, paying homage to the defiant traces of a people, their lives embedded in a place - in a landscape – literally, metaphorically, or metaphysically.

Walking along the Ashokan Reservoir in the Catskills today, basking in sun under big skies and surrounded by mountains brimming the horizons, I suddenly flashed back to Montello in the desert of Nevada. Perhaps this is why it felt so familiar there in the Great Basin - even though I had never been there before. The skies, the mountains, the “basin”- though one was wet and filled with water and the other

Ghost Stories, 2022, lithograph ink bar rubbing of desert floor, watercolor, colored pencil on Chinese paper, 15 in x 44 in, 2022



Defiant Landscape, watercolor, colored pencil on paper, 22 in x 33 in, 2022

dry with a sea of blue-grey sage floating in bleached ochre clay.

I remember stepping out onto the “porch” of my temporary home/studio and feeling the warm embrace of a place that I had anticipated would be parched and hostile- but which instead felt familiar like an old friend. I decided then that I was there to listen and to learn- though what exactly I did not know. Seeking to be more receptive to my environment and minimize my intrusion, I vowed not to play any music during my stay. Instead I was serenaded by cicadas, and mockingbirds, and the clicking of crickets marking time like a metronome. Between early afternoon and sunset, the wind sang solos, joined in interludes by choruses seemingly coming from atop the surrounding ridges.

There was comfort in the powerful sense of time upended- of life having been forever and ongoing despite being weathered and worn. There was beauty in the dancing arms of the “old sage”, in the sculpted rock forms that turned out to be dried elk dung, and in the desert floor which held the memories of everything in its dust, including my own footprints.

And so I painted - intensely focused on the desert floor - perhaps thinking that I would solve some persisting questions about life and living if I was quiet and patient, and just looked and listened hard enough.

Lydia Gravis

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After spending the last couple years observing and absorbing the collective trauma and grief of the pandemic, politics, and climate crisis, I needed this opportunity as an artist to think, and then respond creatively.

I spent my first two days at the retreat giving my nervous system a break from the chronic stress it had grown accustomed to, and felt wonder and gratitude for the intentional stillness I could have in this vast and unfamiliar landscape. I often thought about the nearest humans; ranchers or people who simply wanted to live in remote settings. I imagined we may have very different political views and backgrounds. But I also contemplated our shared connection to the land, and the fact that these were the people who would most likely help me in an emergency. I thought a lot about stew-

Align, marker on colored paper, 22 in x30 in, 2022



Clarity, watercolor on paper, 12 x 18 in, 2022

ardship of the environment, but also each other. And Otherness. And caring for the “other.” It reminded me of this quote by Aruna D’Souza, from *Empathy Will Not Save Us*.

“Solidarity is rooted not in our capacity to cross divides and understand each other, but in recognizing we have the obligation to care for each other no matter what stories they tell about themselves, no matter if they refuse to speak, and no matter if we have any sense of ourselves reflected in them.”

This quote resonated during my stay at Montello. I pondered, “What if we applied this idea to the natural environment, and created collective solidarity in our stewardship of it not because we directly profit from it, or because our identity is rooted in a specific place, but because we have an obligation to care for it, just like we do each other? How can you not love something that you care for? How can you not defend it when it’s threatened?”

So, as this question gently occupied the backdrop of my mind, I made drawings inspired by my intangible sense of absolute smallness and undeniable belonging that I felt in the greater ecosystem around me, where human destruction felt minimal and distant and where I felt a sense of peace that I had not felt in a very long time.

Gordon Hempton

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My early May visit to Montello had two goals. First, I would test Montello for Quiet Residence status according to the standards of Quiet Parks International. And second, if my disability would permit, I would record my first soundscape portrait in more than 10 years with the help of two state-of-the-art hearing aids.

Reaching a determination of quiet at Montello was straight forward and simple. I would be attentive all sounds continuously over several days, noting noise polluting sources, decibel levels and prevalence. I would use the data to support my subjective evaluation. Do I feel quiet? Am I quiet? If so the award would be granted.

The air at Montello was thin (elev. 5,000+ feet), cold (20 - 30° F), dry (humidity 30%) and turbulent (gusts up to 30 mph)—all factors that favor quiet because sound waves lose power as the air becomes less elastic. The Amazon Rainforest by comparison is lower in elevation, hotter, more humid, and calm both day and night. When visiting the Ecuadorian Amazon in March of this year, I found the extremely elastic atmospheric conditions allowed the sound waves to hold power much longer and travel further (~15 miles) than Montello, providing the listener with an auditory awareness zone the size of more than 700 square miles! At Montello the relatively non-elastic atmospheric conditions typically allowed sound to travel about 1/4 mile providing an auditory awareness zone of only about 160 acres. To my ears, listening to Montello is intimate and personal. While the experiences at Montello and the Amazon are dramatically different, both share quietude or a very limited amount of noise pollution. Faint sounds may be heard—from falling flakes of snow at Montello to the hum of insect wings in the Amazon—at these quiet destinations.

Haleakala Crater on the island of Maui, also known today as the quietest place on earth because of its high elevation, often cold temperatures, dry conditions and a landscape composed of sound adsorbing volcanic ash. The Ancient Hawaiians considered Haleakala Crater to be the birthplace of creativity.

Montello is also a birthplace of creativity. My footfalls translate the sand, crushed rock, dust or twig into pouf, cresh, puff and snap to put it crudely. All sound is information—even noise pollution. The problem with noise pollution is that it is simple information (a car, a plane, a train, or electric plant) that usually has little if any benefits and loud enough to deny the listener access to the meaningful information that has everything to say about what makes each place different. The faintest sound audible to the human ear

was described by John Muir as a Sequoia seed falling onto thinly crusted snow. Quiet places are informative places. The innocent question, *Why is quiet important?* can be rephrased as, *Why is awareness important?* The answer is so obvious it demands no answer.

The western meadowlark is music to my ears. Scientists say the meadowlark sings to advertise for a mate and establish its territory as a food base to feed its young—but wouldn't a series of chirps do? Why does the meadowlark sing! Each individual's song is its song, different from all others owing to the facts that the song is both learned from its parents and improvised during its performance. Windblown meadowlark song maintains intelligibility despite the adverse propagation conditions because its song design uses specific amplitude and frequency modulations that hold up under the most difficult conditions. No birdsongs in the Amazon Rainforest are comparable. There the jungle has its own set of rigorous criteria that requires songs be designed differently, often single notes with slow changes, if any. But in both Montello and the Amazon when a bird sings for a mate, it is not just the potential mate who listens but also all potential predators. Yet the song is passionate and without fear. Love and risk are inseparable. The quiet winds of Montello revealed by sage, juniper, and sparse grasses all play the same tune but with different tonalities, a perfect accompaniment to the meadowlark which uses none of those frequencies.

Our symphonic halls around the world spend tens of millions of dollars to be quiet. Does wildlife need quiet, too? Nearly 300 miles to the north is Barber Sensory Laboratories at Boise State University, traffic noise was artificially introduced into a wilderness study area with speakers to study the effects of highway noise on bird populations—all species declined and some were eliminated entirely despite the presence of food, water and shelter.

Everywhere, Montello whispers time. The ageless junipers especially. Unlike photographs which can be captured in 1/60th of a second or less shutter speeds, sound takes time. Is that why it has become so difficult to listen?

Just as light is invisible until it illuminates an object, so is the air until it brushes the landscape to become audible.

For a recording by Gordon Hempton please go to montellofoundation.org/audio.htm



Fred Holcomb

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My landscape paintings can be categorized as realism. I see the landscape as resting on not-so-solid ground, unsettled by forces, social and natural, beyond my comprehension. This leads me to present landscapes as dynamic and equivocal entities, and at times I bend the axioms of perception to draw attention to these qualities.

With *Truck*, the landscape is blocked by the massiveness of the semi-trailer-truck, which dominates the picture plane, visually dwarfing its surroundings. It is an example of technological power overwhelming nature as it rides roughshod over the landscape, reducing it to an inconsequential background. Still, there is an awe inspiring thrill to experiencing the aggressive power of the truck from the seemingly safe distance of

Truck, oil on canvas, 43 in x 30 in, 2015



Point, oil on canvas, 56 in x 48 in, 2022

the next lane (or the gallery wall), not unlike an encounter with the sublime.

The Montello retreat, I discover, is a natural fit for me. It is an unusually green June at the studio. Flowers usually gone by now are still blooming. It is a vast landscape, open and sparse. Evidence of human activity is muted, but pervasive. It is not a wilderness.

Land is sold in 40 acre chunks – and the market is hot. But the fire danger is high and wells are running dry. Water is commonly trucked in. Next month, the bucket-list hunters, vital to the local economy, arrive. Permits are issued by lottery. The lucky winners get two weeks to kill an elk, and they will not be denied.

With my nearest neighbor five miles away, I feel isolated, but also exposed – conscious of my visitor status and the visual prominence of the studio structure in an area of few landmarks. My mornings and evenings are spent outside, staring at the terrain; every day the same, every day new. The horizon beyond the hills is at my fingertips. Nine Mile Mountain rests in the palm of my hand.

The wind blows hard most of the day and sometimes nights. The art studio becomes my spaceship, on autopilot with a course set for the summer solstice. It sails through the cosmos, straining against the wind. Door screens slam open (and shut). Paper takes flight. I hear melodic voices outside on the deck at night, but there is nobody there.

Katerina Marcelja

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My residency at the Montello foundation overlapped with Monika Wuhler for three days because we are collaborating on *Backyards Utopias*, a project centered on biochar specifically and more generally on building a network for initiatives that promote mutual aid and exchange, carbon reduction and local food production in the urban setting; three day think tank on the project. Charring became a daily activity during the residency. We made our first pot of biochar on the night I arrived. The pyrolyzed contents of the pot became a daily gift of treasures uncanny in both the crystallized preservation of the most delicate forms and the transformation of color and texture; three-dimensional carbon copies.

I was prepared to be working primarily with biochar and charcoal during my stay but an unexpected exploration emerged almost immediately. On the first day after my arrival, Monika took me to the little canyon just north of the building. We slipped into the crack; a hidden, parallel Lilliput world of rearranged scales. A tiny monumental landscape where my perception of self fluctuates between a looming physical presence, projected



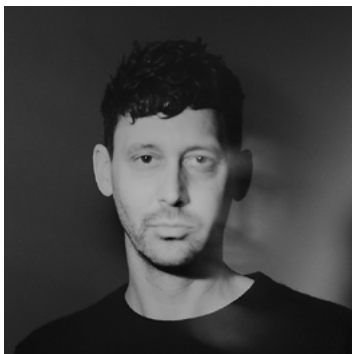
on the wall of the canyon with a marked shadow of meteorological proportions, and an imagined disembodied inhabitation of a vast landscape where nooks and crannies become caves and crevasses and the sage bushes loom like sequoias on the canyon's edge.

This is the world that accompanied me back to the studio. From sticks, stones and mud clay made of rice paste and dirt, desert creatures emerged; simple forms with character and determination. They began encroaching on my space as I have on theirs. The creatures quickly organized and it soon became clear that they had embarked on an odyssey in search of the fourth dimension, ever elusive time, casting their shadows to capture their ever fleeting prey. The wind propelled their orbit while I accompanied the journey with frenetic activity building their vehicles and horizons with onion skin paper, rice paste, and egg shells. Some of my garbage was appropriated by the mission for the development of strategic instruments. The biocharring production was also incorporated, carbonized forms of various organic matter, from dung to dead flies to flower puffs as tools and embellishments for the voyage. The various outcomes of the mission might coexist in alternate present moments but the energy and verve of the crew reverberates through the galaxy.

Samuel Reinhard

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In my compositional work, I'm interested in exploring how art can guide us towards recalibrating and directing our perception in more deliberate ways. I find this particularly relevant in the face of an economy that is turning attention into an exploitable commodity. Most recently, my inquiries have taken the shape of audio collages, reductionist compositions for piano ensembles, and sound installations.

Upon arriving at Montello Foundation, I was confronted with a degree of isolation beyond anything I had ever experienced. Having lived in urban environments all my life, and as a happy resident of Downtown Manhattan, I am generally suspicious, if not outright terrified of rural settings. But the immense beauty of this vast space, combined with the thoughtfully considered cabin, instantly dispersed any negative connotations I had with open country. And to my own surprise, I found my circadian rhythm almost

Rehearsal for *Repetitions* (for Three Pianos) Lucerne, Switzerland, July 2022



immediately aligning with the cycles of the natural world and celestial bodies around me. By simply following intuition and letting go of time-keeping, a tranquil kind of routine emerged and structured my days.

To the question of *what did I do* during my stay, I would say mostly *nothing*. I sat and observed: the weather and the landscape, the countless small creatures going about their days around the cabin, and my own exponentially decelerating thoughts. Rarely have I felt more grounded than in this sustained absence of the murmurings of communication technologies, and our related fixation on hyper-productivity. The little work I did do - a few hours of working on collages while gazing at Nine Mile Mountain - was absented a sense of ambition. Rather, I worked only *if* and *when* I wanted to. As a result, my queries in the studio were driven purely by curiosity and joy, free from the anxiety and guilt that notions of maximal productivity evoke.

Simply observing how deeply the technological intrusions of our time, and the compulsion of production have penetrated my life and work was at once sobering and revelatory. I left Montello profoundly recalibrated and I find myself back at home, re-examining my own desensitization within the propulsion of productivity and career-mindedness. Particularly in the context of a practice that is so deeply concerned with attention, perception and presence.

For recordings by Samuel Reinhard please go to montellofoundation.org/audio.htm

Jill Sebastian

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Beyond the symphony of wind punctuated by occasional bird song, the only sounds I heard at the Montello residency were sounds I made. I arrived with essentially no materials, some hand tools, a couple vague notions and thought I'd press myself to do only what I can do in only two weeks. I didn't fully understand, though it crossed my mind – that being immersed is the real deal, “quieting my mind”. I can always work but I can't always have the time to connect and be so minutely observant.

I am committed to exploring the relationship between nature and culture, material and language, environmental science and art as expressed through cycles of regeneration, transition, and transformation. Responding to a given environment,

Desert Diary - Midday, bookboard, paper, 14 1/2 x 12 x 3 in,
and *Desert Diary - Sunset*, bookboard, paper, 14 x 9 1/2 x 2 1/2 in, 2022



Gimme Land, Lotsa Land, sagebrush bark, paint, 7 ft x 7 ft x 3 in, 2022



I forage. Scavenging natural materials and working them by hand connects me with the most ancient of human activities.

In this “sagebrush ocean”, I collected only the dead layers of bark cast completely off. Embracing the silence, I used only a Swiss army knife to peel the outer and inner bark apart to reveal how wind has stressed these tough plants, the twists in their trunks sculpted as they recover, drought separating outer unsupportable layers. Like imposing an artificial grid upon land, I forced these shards into an unnatural geometry in *Gimme Land, Lotsa Land*.

The constantly changing color of the basin surprised me. I captured single moments of the ever-changing palette in a series of 8 wall reliefs. Viewed frontally, they appear as simple color studies, but they are terraced to reveal spatial aspects of the landscape. On the risers are a diary of the waste materials recycled from what I ate, read, or consumed during my stay.

Relaxing into a natural rhythm at Montello has reconnected me with the honest impulses that motivate my work.

Jennifer Sirey

Brooklyn, NY

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My sculptures embody both architecture and viscera. Rigid glass tanks establish logical structures where bacterial slabs, fleshy planes, jars, tubes, and wax forms are suspended in holy geometries. Each work contains a world that is also an immortal body, like a supernatural totem. My process is collaborative with the materials I use. Meticulous parameters are set for substances to behave naturally as the sculptures literally grow into themselves. Each piece stands on a unique pedestal, elevated and exposed...presenting the inside to the outside.

My sublime experience at Montello will manifest in my work for years to come. Everyday I watched the sunrise, then proceeded to do only as I felt in each moment. My works on paper are geometric plans of my sculptures. As I drew, the desert colors infiltrated my palate which brought me to begin painting "en plein air". I played guitar, wrote songs, danced and sang.



Schematic for Xantheo, oil pastel, acrylic medium, gouache, and watercolor on paper, 12 x 18 in, 2022

Montello Landscape, guache on yupo, 11 x 14 in, 2022

Scape 17, oil stick, oil pastel, acrylic medium, and watercolor on paper, 15 x 20 in, 2022



Naked In The Desert

by Jennifer Sirey

I rode a bike naked in the desert No undies no tee shirt Yeah it felt good I wasn't scared
Had flip flops on my feet and didn't sit on the seat And yes, yes, I wore sunscreen I could so I did I was off the grid

No people or phones for miles and miles Me and Juniper trees immersed in the silver sage

I rode about a mile over rocks and hills till I turned back in case I got a flat I did because I could I wasn't scared
Pink and yellow little fluffy clouds in the sky Birds singing songs and flying high A scape full of grace A smile on my face

No people or phones for miles and miles Me and Juniper trees immersed in the silver sage

Ben Wahlund

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I'm incredibly grateful to the Montello Foundation for two transformative weeks of solitary silence living among the sagebrush and juniper of the great basin. I've been to a number of residencies and while each one is unique, this one more so than most, and about as different as is possible from my last one in Shanghai, from the crush of one of the most populated cities on earth to one of the most open. The most exceptional, and for me, valuable thing about this residency is its isolation. It was 4-miles from the nearest phone signal, away from the intrusion of the outside world, in this day and age that's a truly remarkable thing. While here you consider carefully the resources you use that we often take for granted. The cabin



operates off of solar power and uses a rainwater collection system, emphasizing for me how rare and precious water can be. I found that even after the first day I began to adjust myself to the rhythm of this stark and beautiful area. The sunrise and sunset, walks in the cool of the morning, the sometimes-fierce afternoon and evening winds, and the startling array of stars at night. My first few days there were defined by smoke from the tragic wildfires around Tahoe. Further underscoring the fragility of our environment. There's a beauty and subtlety to the landscape here, so much so that you begin to notice not just its openness and grand gestures but a multitude of small and wonderful things. This is a place that in its isolation compels reflection. While I spent plenty of time painting and drawing, a lot of what I did was consider my own practice, the threads of which are already forming the beginnings of a new body of work.

For recordings by Ben Wahlund please go to montellofoundation.org/audio.htm



Eric Weeks

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My stay at the Montello Residency afforded me the time, space and solitude to contemplate the landscape and consider its history. I spent each day making video and still captures, editing during the heat of the day, and researching the history of the Great Basin in Nevada by reading numerous books from the Residency's library. I was off the grid for most of my time, which allowed for complete undistracted concentration.

I was first attracted to the Residency because it offered a counterpoint to my

Untitled (from the series The Great Basin!), 2022



Untitled (from the series The Great Basin!), 2022

usual metropolitan experiences. I have made three short films since 2020 that are about urban civilization, so I wanted to try to work in an environment absent of humanity. By leaving the bustle of human civilization for a short time, I found a new perspective from which to make work.

The results of my initial explorations there are the start of a long-term investigation. *The Great Basin!* is a film, book and print project that addresses climate change, the severe drought in the Western United States, gun culture, the military's use of the basin and range of Nevada for atomic testing, cultural stereotypes, as well as my own experiences in this remote area. In the short film I am creating complex collages of my own imagery of the desert with appropriated short clips from Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom, recent weather footage, as well as John Wayne's and other historic films, cartoons, and other cultural artifacts in order to speak to the place and its significance.

The book component of *The Great Basin!* project will reference Pocket Western Pulp Fiction Books from the 1940's and 1950's, appropriating the design and text of these books. The inside pages will collage stills and text from the film.

I am returning to Nevada to continue my work this winter. My time at Montello was life changing, life affirming, and has inspired me to push my boundaries as an artist.

Aura Wolowiec

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Entering the landscape from the small town of Montello, one travels along a dirt road for about twenty miles. In places, it is less like a road and more like a dry river bed, winding, tilting, rocky, alluvial indentations that bring to mind a shared traversal for bodies of water. The sense of beauty and remoteness was overwhelming. I made it to the house just before light completely disappeared from the sky, an orange glow punctuated the ridge of the mountains, grounded in deep blue.

The color of that distance is the color of an emotion, the color of solitude and of desire, the color of there seen from here, the color of where you are not.

After a few days, I learned a daily rhythm through waking with the sun, walking, reading, and a strong awareness of interrupting—in the conditions of the desert we become acutely aware of our needs, our fragility in relation to the fortitude of the desert moss, the unfathomable time contained in each stone.

I hung the Geologic Map of Elko County, Nevada on the studio wall and mapped the area from Montello to the house: Pluvial Lake Deposits, Aluvium, Limestone, Mudstone, Shale, Chert, Siltstone, Gray Quartzine, Marine Sedimentary Rocks.



sky music, collaged found photograph cut in the form of musical staves, on archival paper, 2020

blue blue blue blue
blue — blue blue blue
blue blue blue



blue vespers, blues cut from *The Blue of Distance* (Rebecca Solnit)
with musical pauses from *Masses and Vespers* (from a series of 9), 8 x 11 in, 2022

Roland Barthes described voice through a geology of speech, the grain of the voice, where language, water, and rock are related. What are the fragmentary visuals where speech and material meet? A restless, embodied tectonics.

It wasn't particular things, but the spaces between them, that abundance of absence, that is the desert's invitation.

In the studio, I began extracting the pauses and silences in *Masses and Vespers*, a book of discarded hymns, paired on paper with crystalline forms, how auditory silences meet the material silences contained in geology. I loved thinking about *Masses* as physical mass—rock, stone, earth—and *Vespers* as the shifting desert air—clouds, wind, and breath. These pauses also joined the blues from a chapter in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, by Rebecca Solnit, a wayfinding companion in the solitude of the desert. I extend deep gratitude to both the land itself and the Montello Foundation, for a short but immersive stay, with lasting resonance.

Monika Wührer

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I was both excited and full of fear about being completely alone at the Montello Foundation. But as soon as I got there, the natural beauty and natural spectacles were excellent entertainment. Besides, I wasn't exactly alone, but surrounded by many companions: namely, the common house flies.

At first I was a bit bothered by the flies, but soon I was calm enough to watch their behavior and started seeing them as my acquaintances, a word I learned to use from Amor Towle's character, "Billy." For 8 year old Billy, his acquaintances only become his "friends" come day 3.

My acquaintances seemed so curious and restless. Maybe it is because their life is so short and so everything has to be sped up? I felt fortunate to follow them in their life long journey and feed their curiosity in their short life.

Once I arrived at the foundation I felt terrible about all the stuff I brought with me. Why did I bring so much? What was my fear? Maybe I was nervous to be alone. What if I get depressed and I eat all the food in the fridge in one day? What if I crave a beer or a glass of wine? What if I want chocolate? Why didn't I bring chocolate!



The Fly, My Acquaintance, detail,
various plastics, aluminum, textiles (pants, T-shirt, Bedsheet) paper, wool, 57 x 48 in, 2022

I wasn't sure what art I would be making, so I brought a shitload of stuff that could be used as material. What if I want to knit? What if I want to sew? What if I want to use trash that I find on the New York streets? (I brought this concern up at work and Matt Oliviero is the one who mentioned that I will be making my own trash!) What if I want to make some papier-mâché sculpture? I bought some flour just in case!

Usually I travel light, but to Montello I even brought lots of clothes. I don't know what I was thinking. Not even on a month long trip would I bring that much stuff, but for a trip where it's only me? why?

To answer all my questions I started documenting all my stuff including clothes, art materials and groceries. I categorized it in a spreadsheet-kind-of-way. I photographed every item and organized them by trash, potential trash and no trash.

The flies enjoyed my curiosity in the trash. They explored the empty can of beer, the dirty sock and anything else that might have smell and texture and be potential food or play. The beer cans are especially fun, because they make this awesome sound when flies go in, like when you blow on the rim off a glass of wine.

At times a fly wanted to play with me. They sat on my head first and when I didn't react they sat on my nose. But most of the times they minded their own business and said, "Hi," here and there. It almost felt like they came by to tell me about a discovery they made. Would I be as bothered or excited by a human companion?

I think being alone is not at all what frightened me. What made me more fearful was not knowing what to do all day and how to engage with myself. I did not realize that in one day I could explore so many ordinary things. I certainly had no need for all this stuff I brought. Thanks to all my flying friends, I discovered that the world was full of things to explore.

They are in awe of the sounds. Our residents prepare themselves for many things and sights, but the soundscape of the Sagebrush Desert often comes as a surprise to them. Someone who knows a great deal about the sounds and the silence in nature, Gordon Hempton, visited the retreat this spring and listened, measured, and recorded the sounds at the retreat. Gordon describes himself as an acoustic ecologist; he has recorded the sounds of nature all over the world and is also the Co-founder of Quiet Parks International, a non-profit committed to saving quiet for the benefit of all life. The Montello Foundation is honored to be included now in this group of amazing places and are now officially the first Quiet Artist Retreat. Please also have a look at his report and have a listen to the recording Gordon made at the retreat, posted on our website: montellofoundation.org/audio.htm.

In the summer of 1845, the young Henry David Thoreau set out to stay alone in a small cabin at Walden Pond near Concord, MA for over two years. There, he studied nature and society from the perspective of simplicity. His observations and meticulous note-taking, presented in wonderful prose, make him a guiding figure for our residents. So with great pleasure, I announce that we will have the opportunity to present a new version of the exhibition *This Earth*, an exhibition featuring Montello Foundation alumni originally at the Southern Utah Museum of Arts in 2021, at Concord Arts, less than two miles from Thoreau's cabin site, in the spring of 2023.

Then, thanks to a wonderful steel frame, built and donated by Brett Wilson, we have launched, created our first humble steps towards creating our Waypoint, a place to show art, a reason to stop. Our inaugural showing is a unique print, *Vespers/Thunder* by Patricia Watwood, from her series *Montello Book of Hours*. Her creative response to the Sagebrush Desert was to mark the conscious presence of that time and place: those particular sunsets and moonrises, storms and clear skies, that rabbit, that coyote. More is planned and we will keep you posted. In the meantime, we hope you can stop by on your way through the West, three miles North of Montello, NV on the way to Nancy Holt's Sun Tunnels.

Stefan Hagen, Founder



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