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How often are we afforded the time and space to simply observe and engage with the rhythms of the natural world? My stay at Montello was directed by the cadence and the flow of the daily rituals around me. The nighthawks would arrive in flocks at dusk, skimming the sagebrush until the sun set over the mountains. The bats would appear as the sky darkened, fluttering around the cabin in pairs, I would often lay on my back and watch as they became backlit by the emerging stars. Constellations would pop and twinkle, as the moon slowly rose above. Every night, I had the privilege of engaging in this routine.

camera obscura prototype #1, 5'x5' pvc box outfitted with three layers of blackout material and a lens on top



A projection of the clouds onto the earth, created using the camera obscura

As a visual artist, my work is driven by photography and rooted in light and image capturing. As an anthropologist, I am deeply interested in influence, both how people experience and shape place and how place shapes people. The initial connection with the Nevada sky, open and wide and unlike that of the urban settings I am accustomed to, guided my creative work during my stay on the land. Over the course of my residency, I had an unencumbered schedule and the amenities to build three camera obscura prototypes, large boxes that let light in through a pinhole and project the outside world in. The sky—night and day—drove this building process. I set the lens on top of the camera, projecting the heavens onto the earth, a practice of the ancient concept of earth-sky mirroring. I sat patiently inside the camera, sometimes for hour long exposures, to view how above and below could join to create a single image.

These camera prototypes and the creative practice at Montello have laid seedbed to my continued research and mapping of sacred star sites in my home state of Wyoming. I look incredibly forward to bringing my camera obscura state wide to continue to photograph the meeting of the sky and the earth.