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For some years now my work has been focused on how images guide our understanding of landscape, and through landscape, nature itself. My process is critical and research based, but also has a speculative trajectory- I want to know where our understandings of landscape come from so I can better contribute to new understandings for the future.

For the past 5 years I have been specifically focused on making experimental works in response to how the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) uses photography, visibility, and images as crucial parts of its land management policies. These projects investigate a little known, but highly significant, land management policy called the

Work in Progress at Montello Retreat, 2025



Visible Landscapes, video still, 2023

Visual Resource Management System (VRM). The VRM System is used by the BLM to determine, and reinforce, the “scenic or visual” qualities of America’s public lands. The VRM’s quantification system both borrows from and upholds a vision of the American West that draws heavily on 19th and early 20th century American landscape painting and photography, and I am especially interested in the tension within the system between the understanding of the American West as a space of wild, unsullied nature, and as an abundant resource, empty and available for use—a tension that evokes the legacy of Manifest Destiny American colonialism more broadly.

The Montello Foundation retreat was a perfect place to ask these kinds of questions because it is located in a landscape that defies expectations. Viewed from a distance, or on a map, my expectation was to find a vast and mostly empty wilderness, but on the ground I discovered a landscape of contact zones and contradictions, where the surface is divided into a checkerboard of ranch lands, wilderness areas, and Bureau of Land Management land. This seemed like a more honest version of the American landscape, a place of natural beauty and solitude, but also a place where natural processes and capitalist processes are entangled, and the expected image of the landscape is frequently punctured by encounters with other realities- agriculture, extraction, wildfire.

The retreat itself feels like an inherently experimental space. Free from schedules and my usual responsibilities, I was able to lay the foundations for a new body of work without any pressure to succeed. I spent the cool mornings and evenings traveling around the valley by bicycle, shooting photographs and making psychogeographic maps, and took refuge from the midday heat in the studio, where I worked on still-life photos and made artists books out of BLM management plans.