

## Diana Shpungin

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My artistic practice is dedicated to challenging ideas of drawing through sculptural and time-based forms. The works involve obsessive processes while exploring themes of memory, failure, repair, —employing optimism in a quest for empathy across identity lines. My work often draws upon the natural world as a poignant metaphor for larger concepts.

I often think about nature when I am in the city. But actually being in nature for extended time periods has become a more rare occurrence. The ability to not only be in nature for an extended time but be truly ALONE (not counting husband and dog) in nature was astoundingly valuable for my personal and creative ability to think, create and simply be.

The majority of what I worked on was filming daily walks in the landscape to be used for source footage for a part of an extensive hand-drawn animation project

*To Get Out Of The Way*, 2020, work in progress, drawing still from hand-drawn video animation



*Desert Ghost Limb*, 2019, graphite pencil hand applied to juniper branch

to be shown in an upcoming solo exhibition in January 2020 at MoCA Tucson.

Additionally, I hiked and explored the surroundings with the utmost focus where time was not a consideration and no appointments were to be missed. I collected broken juniper branches and altered them into sculptural drawings, patiently encasing them by hand in graphite pencil.

As well, a good amount of driving and exploring took place. The ability to see the landscape of Utah and Nevada, the Salt Flats, The Copper Mine, Sun Tunnels, Spiral Jetty and more was an incredible art pilgrimage type experience.

Unlike city life, out in the desert the basic ritual of meals were attuned to the sunrise and sunset. Every daily sky was different from the last, an incredible way to start and end each day. At night it was shockingly silent, with an occasional coyote howl in the distance and the most picturesque bright starry sky one can imagine. I also managed to read several books cover to cover. And my dog Rhino was ever so happy here, king of the desert!

This residency time made me realize being in true solitude, without, email, wifi and the chatter of daily modern technology fueled life is very good for ones brain and I should do it more often!