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As a place-based installation artist, I collaborate with a place to learn how the historical interaction between the wild and the human has determined its cultural makeup, revealing its complex issues, ecologies and cultural histories. My art explores the “unsettling of America” through Manifest Destiny, and the impact and marks that European Americans have made on the land. The landscapes I work in become my studio, not as subject matter to draw or paint, but to observe and look, discovering materials that I can collect to create new landscape portraits.

Artemisia tridentata. This is the only scientific plant name I remember from the Forestry Summer Camp I enrolled in as an undergraduate at Utah State University, beginning my minor in Forestry as a Studio Art major.

The home studio at Montello is surrounded by a sea of sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*). I arrived during autumn’s rainy season. The smell of sage emanated across



the range as I drove out of Twelve Mile Canyon and dropped down into the basin. My first two days at Montello were clear and beautiful, but then the clouds moved in, and it rained for the next twenty-four hours, hitting the steel sheet metal roof above. The storm moved on, and the morning sunrise sparkled across the basin. The twisted blackened wet trunks of *Artemisia* intensified the plant’s grey green foliage, its smell redolent from the morning sun. The aroma settled into the basin for the duration of my stay as the clay soil dried out.

The morning after my arrival, I took a walk to find Stefan Hagen’s land art circle. I walked its one-kilometer trail and, then walked it again, counting the wooden stakes marking its circumference. It was approximately twelve feet between the 256 paired stakes. Four cardinal markers had also been set, with a large limestone rock opposite the trail. I was impressed by the tenacity of accomplishing this work and, as I circled the trail, my own installation opened.

During my preparatory Zoom visit, Stefan had suggested I stop and collect some of the slate rock felled along the talus slope as Juniper Airport Road passes through the canyon. Knowing that a multi-day storm was headed my way, I knew I had a one-day window for collecting slate before the road would become impassable. Thus, my week was set. I would create an installation inside the studio reflecting Stefan’s circle created years earlier.

The following morning, I retraced the road I had come in on two days earlier. I collected 256 pieces of slate for the circle I placed on the floor of the studio. I marked the four cardinal points with coyote prints painted in gold.

