infinite nowhere

on texts, trails, and speaking to place

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I

I.

introduction

"I conceived the idea of making a sign, that's true enough, or rather, I conceived the idea of considering a sign a something I felt like making, so when, at that point in space and not in another, I made something, meaning to make a sign, it turned out that I had really made a sign after all."
-Italo Calvino [1]

There is a power in marks: they are signs, evidences of difference, of presence, of action, of something always outside of themselves. A mark works through contrast and difference; the moment that pencil touches paper the process of making meanings has begun. Meaning to or not, we are mark-making creatures, and thus, by extension, makers of signs. But what of signs that fail? Jacques Derrida, in *The Truth in Painting*, suggests that there is no *parergon* (a term meaning "outside the work") for the sublime; as a boundless entity it is impossible for anything to exist outside of it, and is therefore unpresentable.[2] One can never re-present the sublime moment (or awed, or transcendent, call it what you will) only translate it, and translation always fails, always comes short.

My work deals with this translation, engaging in issues of place and the connection between human and non-human nature through an examination of memory, myth, and both personal and imagined histories. While pictorially I engage with motifs of nature, landscape, the beautiful, and the sublime, I use these themes as the means to metaphorically explore ideas regarding the spaces (and non-spaces) we create for ourselves, the stories we tell and inhabit, the desire to transcend the boundaries of our bodies and our reason. This urge and its ultimate failure lies at the crux of my practice.

My practice attempts to navigate the territories between dichotomies of text/image, image/object, mediation and direct experience, interior and exterior space. I am interested in how this repeated attempt relates to the idea of ritual. Rituals are acts of futility, but in their accumulated reenactments they create meaning, succeeding instead at something which is not their most ostensible goal. My work takes place in the space that results; it is a performative act that yields objects of labor, artifacts that are meant to convey meaning that is incapable of being shared. We often place our faith in objects to somehow clasp meaning and memory, to hold them fixed within their tangible bounds, and yet what we usually end up with is an arrival at the beginning again: desire for connection, and an internal landscape that is in many ways more real than the actual thing.

II

II.

for dust thou art...

"Time and space are in touch with the Absolute at base. Eternity sockets twice into time and space curves, bound and bound by idea...Lines, lines, and their infinite points! Hold hands and crack the whip, and yank the Absolute out of there and into the light, God pale and astounded, spraying a spiral of salts and earths, God footloose and flung."
-Annie Dillard [1]

An empty country road in Utah, snow on hills hairy with sage and juniper, and I am driving south. On the right, a white roadside sign with black block letters, perhaps double my height, too imperfectly spaced to be machine made: LAND (with arrow pointing west). The sign is surely an advertisement of acreage for sale, perhaps a future mountain retreat for the city folk, and yet it seems incongruous here. Surrounded by nothing but land, hill over hill of it, is there any reason to point and label? And isn't this just the latest iteration of our pushing into the empty landscape following those siren calls promising fields and furrows and manifest destiny, leading west, drawing trails across the land with wagon wheels? Land is a word loaded with meaning, or, in any case, too heavy a word to be simply painted on a sign on the side of the road, even in block letters.

I've heard it said that our chemical and physical makeup contains elements from exploding supernovas, that we are literally the stuff of stars. But with iron and water and carbon and salt all flowing through our veins as well, aren't we also literally made of the stuff of soil, and is that any less ennobling? The Genesis mythos has Adam sculpted directly from the rough hummus of the clay. And in a strange reversal, there is a Native American concept, found in tales of what we now call the geology of the Pacific Northwest, of a time "when the mountains were people,"[2] hurling rocks and fire and words at their fellow ambulatory peaks before taking root in their present geography. We are made of land; our bones are the stuff of which mountains are made.

People becoming mountains becoming people.

The Norse were more humble in their view of our progenitors: Ask and Embla, ash and elm, are found on the rocky shore, washed up like driftwood. They too come from the earth, but are merely the residue, arboreal bones polished white in the surf. Maybe they had us pegged, these old vikings. Perhaps we are only the cast off remains of what once was bound to the land, but the umbilical cord is cut and it cannot be reattached by any knot-work. Do we long to root ourselves in the dirt beneath us and swallow its nutrients with open mouths, blessed and cursed as we are to move about on its surface instead? Do we ache from the memory of contact?

These old stories certainly suggest a connection between land and limb: the contours of the body following the contours of the earth, spines of rocky hills running north across our backs. Can we then map ourselves as we map the earth, and if so, what unknown regions of ourselves are we searching for, to tame and to claim?

The land is a mirror in which we see reflected back to us our desires and obsessions. Sometimes I feel like I am carrying mountains of earth with me on bent back and sloped shoulder; the weight of place, like that of family, of culture, of memory, is a burden we will all bear to our graves. But if the land is a mirror, are we then just carrying ourselves around?

No, not even ourselves are ourselves; like the land, we are made up of stories, trails of texts, weavings of words. Solon once wrote, "Myth is not the story of something that never happened, but something that happens over and over again." We live forever in the shadow of myth, and not just the ancient stories of creation, but in the echoes of our mythic fore-bearers and their close and combative relationship to the landscape. The wilderness we seek is the same that they sought to order, and it is marked by its refusal to be settled or stilled. And yet still we go, walking pilgrim lines to rocky peaks. We follow trails as we would follow the words on a page, reading again and again the same story even as we walk it, even as we insert ourself into it. Maybe we want to be myths ourselves. We cross the neat boundaries we have built to mark out our space, our homes, our cities, hoping to find whatever it was we lost when we were pulled from the earth. Perhaps we never will, until at last we are laid again beneath the soil, to dust returned.

III

III

text/image

To d e l i n e a t e
The inscription of a line, wound, round, an enclosure
It announces, fixes, establishes, marks, a visible trace.
It is a word, a name, a signature
Roving the border between
A hiss sounding the silence of
A dividing from
A dividing by
Erasures.
History.
Between a reader and a writer

-Ann Hamilton [1]

"I recall now how he once said to me that one of the chief difficulties of writing consisted in thinking, with the tip of the pen, solely of the word to be written, whilst banishing from one's mind the reality of what one intends to describe."

-W.G. Sebald [2]

In my high school calligraphy class our teacher told us that we must learn to draw, not write, the letters we endlessly copied from our workbooks. A simple distinction, that between writing and drawing, but it made all the difference in understanding the unfamiliar slant and flourish of the Italic lettering I was learning. It was also the first intimation I had of how text and image, writing and drawing, can become one and the same. I think of the Islamic commandment against image-making, and the scribes who in response funneled their representations of the divine into the perfect geometries and curved strokes of the Arabic script. Words themselves are the image here; the absolute becomes text.

Though calligraphy is perhaps the most direct example, the interconnectedness of text and image is something we all live with but rarely question. Some of the earliest of all written forms were drawings after all, crude representations of tangible objects present in the world. Among jaguars and falcon-faced gods, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese characters, and Mayan scripts each took this idea further; their glyphs functioned both as a representation of a thing or idea as well as a mnemonic carrier for the mouth-sounds of a spoken tongue. These were texts both representational and abstract, pictographic and phonetic. This strangely doubled way of representing the world resulted in texts both iconic and symbolic, a knotting together of the visual and the spoken. From these first tentative moves at fixing speech to page, the nascent technology of writing is thought to have spread from the Egyptians north to the Semitic

tribes of Sinai and Canaan, where the sea-faring Phoenicians took it up, sailing their adapted and adaptive letters across the Mediterranean to the Greeks, who lent them in turn to Rome, which bore them conquering to the rest of their known world. *Aleph* and *beth*, the names of the first letters of the Phoenician script, became our *alphabet*. With each shift in language and place the original images that made up these texts grew more and more abstracted, becoming in the end entirely phonetic, divorced from any apparent visual representation. Few now can recognize the ox's head () that made the letter A or the watery expanse () that became our M.*

* *The name for the first letter of the Semetic alphabet was* Aleph, *which is also the Hebrew word for ox, and the letter* Mem, *which became our M, is Hebrew for water. The shift in Semetic alphabets from previous glyph based systems was in their adoption of a purely symbolic, sound-based system of meaning; though the names and forms of the letters still referenced objects in the external word, they no longer carried the iconographic symbolism that glyphs did.* [3]

The phonetic alphabet is one of the greatest technological advances of humankind, allowing for the transmission of ideas and voices across vast times and spaces through a relatively small set of easily memorized symbols. It is not, however, without its critiques. No other than Plato (through the mouthpiece of the Egyptian king Thamus, rejecting the gift of written language from the god Thoth) offers this critique in his *Phaedrus*: "If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls... calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks."[4] Eco-phenomenologist David Abram goes so far as to claim that our entrusting of words and memories to self-referential abstracted marks has ultimately led to our divorce from the natural and sensate world that surrounds us. In adopting the alphabet, our ancestors traded the text(ure)s of the rocks and woods and wind and animal prints that allowed them to read the earth like we would a book today, trusting instead in arbitrary symbols which echoed their own sounds back to them.[5]

And yet, though the letters of the alphabet have been removed from the representational in a way Chinese characters never will, they still remain images. When we say that art has a magical ability to say what written language cannot we are forgetting that writing itself developed from representation; it is only in its present, domesticated form that we have abstracted it to the point of self-referentiality. Even as I write now, using these seemingly arbitrary signs, I am participating in the same impulse that drove my ancestors into dark caves to scratch and smear oxen and deer and lions onto the rock walls by torchlight. The magic is not in what images cannot say, but instead in what they can and do, in the alchemy that turns sound into sight into sound again.

. . .

We all use a complex interaction of our senses to experience the world around us; we cast our sight and our hearing outward, our skin is a membrane in constant contact with the world, and smells and tastes alert us to subtle shifts in our environment. At times these senses become closely entwined with with each other, to the point of confusion. Synesthesia is the name for this neurological phenomenon. In extreme cases, those who experience synesthesia strongly associate specific colors with certain

letters, or understand numbers spatially, or taste certain sounds (what does the sound of waves crashing taste like to you?). Famous synesthetes have among their numbers a disproportionate amount of artists, musicians, and writers,* suggesting the base necessity in these acts of transporting meaning from one sense into another, which is essentially another way of talking about metaphor.

** Including David Hockney, Wassily Kandinsky, Nikolai Rimski-Korsokov, Duke Ellington, and Vladimir Nabokov.*

Take, for example, the work of artist Ann Hamilton, which is almost entirely concerned with this interplay of the sensing and the sensuous, and the confusion that results from sensing in new and unexpected ways. Her poetic installations confl ate lines of text with lines of thread and lines of speech so the visual becomes tactile and the tactile becomes auditory. In one of her more striking pieces, the artist created a pinhole camera out of her mouth, communing with people while fixing them in image through the opening and closing of her lips. In this work, sight and speech, our two most direct ways of connecting with others, of understanding the world itself, become intertwined.

I open my mouth. I see you.

Yet synesthesia, for all the extreme examples above, is actually a fairly common occurrence. Written language, in both its writing and its reading, is a particularly synesthetic experience. Writing is an act of transposing sound into visual notations, which then carry the ability to return to voice when we read them again. Silent reading is even more strange: here/hear an interior voice stringing the disparate sounds of each phonetic symbol into meaningful words, sentences, and paragraphs, while at the same time projecting elusive images on some sort of interior screen. Try, if you can, to discover the source of that omnipresent voice, or to focus on the constantly shifting image somewhere behind your eyes as you read a novel. In the act of reading we create the world anew.

Language has a direct role in shaping the way we experience the world. It is difficult to sense what we cannot name. The Ancient Greeks, having no word for blue, called the sea "wine dark," a phrase which curiously also describes cattle and sheep. Early scholars used this information to attest that all Greeks were colorblind. But the lack of accurate descriptors of blue in other ancient tongues led to a second, maybe

hraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhrau
nhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhra
unhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunh
raunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraun
hraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhrau
nhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhra
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unhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunh
raunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraun
hraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhrau
nhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhra
unhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunh
raunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraun
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nhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraunhraun

more plausible, though no less wondrous, theory: that, for lack of articulation, the Greeks could not perceive the difference between the color of wine and that of the ocean simply because they had no name for it.[6]

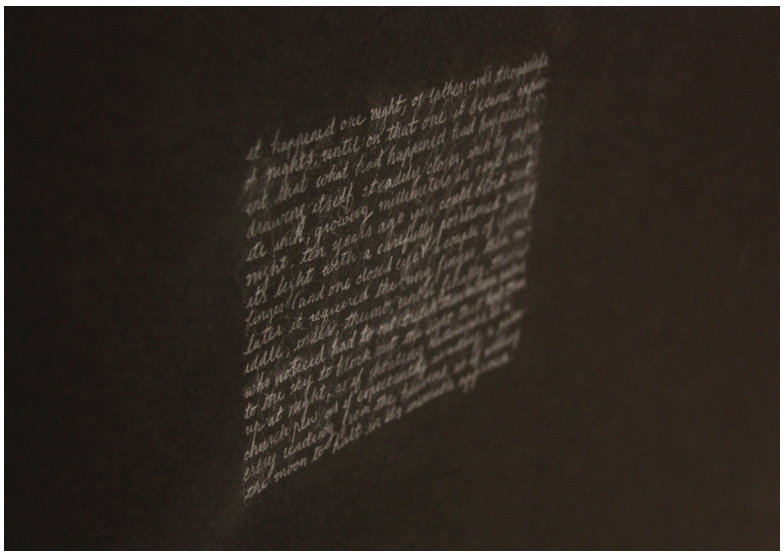
But language not only influences the way we sense place, it also has the power to create it.

In Aboriginal Australian belief, the Dreamtime is a sort of creation period in which the world was sung into existence by the Ancestors as they moved in paths across the unformed land, finally going "back in" to rest, becoming part of the landscape themselves. Other than forming the physical features of the sensate world, the various rocks, watering holes, and local animals, the Ancestor's songs are inherited by each Aboriginal child upon his or her birth into place.[7] To one degree these songs, which describe the track along which they are to be sung, work as a mnemonic device which allows the singer to find water or shelter or animals in the scarcity of the Australian outback, a sort of map made of voice and thought.* But beyond its practicality as a map to understand the terrain, the Dreamtime is also understood not only as a completed event of the distant past but one of the present and future; every time the path is walked and its rightful song is sung along it, the world is created again, a synthesis of sound and movement and memory becoming reality. Conversely, should the song be forgotten, or sung in the wrong order, there is a danger, in Aboriginal belief but also in actuality, of the world itself unraveling.[8] If a map becomes undone the world does as well, its mental manifestation and one's place in it thrown into uncertainty.

** In contrast, an ancient Roman mnemonic technique involved constructing a building within the mind and storing information in places where it could be easily retrieved again. Orators would then traverse these "memory palaces" as they moved through their speeches, retrieving information along the way. These wholly interior spaces created a vessel to contain knowledge, to orient oneself in regards to the past.*

Though bounded by a very Western conception of linear time, the Hebrew Bible offers another example of words and place woven and unraveled from each other; in it the world is ordered from chaos through an act of speech, a deific "Let there be" that separates light from dark, land from water. Like most ancient religious narratives, the Torah is extremely concerned with place, locating Eden in the fertile basin of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, where archeological evidence tells us agriculture, and thus settled human life, began. In fact the whole of the text is the story of a people moving from a nomadic lifestyle to a sedentary one, of pilgrims in search of a promised home. And yet, ironically, in its having been written down, the Torah becomes a text of embodied exile, describing a place that can never be reached.[9] In an expanded echo of Islamic calligraphy, the Hebrew letters contain not just the divine, but also all the sands of Sinai and all the stones of Jerusalem; in the rolls of each scroll is a place always removed from place. Though if it is always removed, it is also always present.

Through image and text, and often both, we carry our promised lands with us.



IV

IV.

ísland/island

"Island and labyrinth—Big enough to get lost on. Small enough to find myself...As long as you don't stop—there's no getting lost in a labyrinth, though there is the illusion. The labyrinth razes all distinction. Disorientation comes quickly. Your sense of place breaks down. Your relation to the world beyond becomes tenuous. Go on long enough and doubt may isolate you. Go on long enough and clarity will become you."
-Roni Horn [1]

When ninth-century Norwegian viking Flóki Vilgerðarson landed on the northwest shores of what is now Iceland (guided, it is said, by three ravens) he climbed a mountain and looked down at a fjord punctuated with sea ice. He cursed his newly discovered land with the name *Ísland*, literally "land of ice," and moved on in his voyages.

Island is the English word for a landmass bounded on all sides by water.

Ísland is an island.

. . .

In the one-room library of the small fishing village of Skagaströnd (population: 450) on the north coast of Iceland where I was on residency this last summer, I found a two-volume collection of all the maps that had ever depicted Iceland from the middle ages to modern times. I was fascinated by the way the shape of the island itself changed in each depiction, at times seeming nothing more than a vague island-like placeholder for something that the mapmaker knew was there, somewhere; at times taking on a specificity of rivers and mountains and inlets that nevertheless fails to correspond to the actual terrain of the island today. Even the name changed from map to map: *Islandia, Ysland, Ultima Thule*, this last the name the ancient Romans gave to the rumored land *beyond* the perpetually frozen *Thule* (what we now call Norway and which itself was only a rumor) a land literally off the map.

Islands have the capacity to conjure the unknown. Remote, and surrounded entirely by water, they are places of endless possibility (think Treasure Island) and at the same time extreme isolation (think Robinson Crusoe). Unlike the endless expanses of the American West, where I am from, an island is a landscape of definitive bounds, a piece of earth adrift. I think of the romantic possibilities inherent in the imagining of an island, as an untouched paradise, as a prison, as a gateway to the openness of the waters all around (if you have a boat). I am always struck by the impossibility of really getting to know a place, but an island in its limits offers perhaps the possibility of doing that very thing.

Judith Schalansky writes, "The island is both a real place and a metaphor for itself

at the same time,"[2] which is, if you stop and think about it, a truly radical proposition. How can something both be itself and point outside itself, as metaphor always does? In his book, *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino writes: "Rarely does the eye light on a thing, and then only when it has recognized that thing as the sign of another thing: a print in the sand indicates the tiger's passage; a marsh announces a vein of water..."[3] Here Calvino is talking of the indexical, but I'm also interested in the symbolic possibilities of representation. It seems that not only language, but everything has the capacity, when filtered through the observing eye/I, to point down the chain of signification. I am especially struck by the metaphoric in landscape itself. The ancestor of our own word, *landschaft*,* referred to an area of cultivated land often surrounded by unknown wilderness) that could in its being known, be represented cartographically or artistically. The presence of the human is assumed here; even the sublime wilderness landscapes of the Hudson River School could only become so when observed, and it is the mere act of seeing that instantly shifts previously unknown terrain into the realm of representation. Like the question of the tree falling in a wood, we can ask ourselves: if there is no one to observe it, is the landscape even there at all?

* *The Middle-Age term* landschaft *referred to settled land surrounded by wilderness. This was in turn adapted by the Dutch, who had by and large tamed their entire land, into* landschap, *which referred to the ability to represent these ordered spaces in maps or paintings, finally becoming* landskip *in English where it began to take on the connotations it has now, as a wide view of often rural or pastoral scenes.* [4]

. . .

In another library, albeit one sans books, overlooking the harbor of Stykkishólmur, I walked among a forest of mysterious transparent columns of glacial melt-water,** placed there by American artist Roni Horn, who has been returning to Iceland for over forty years and whose work, even when it doesn't deal directly with this place, seems to carry the echo of it. She has produced, since 1990, nine volumes of a book project, titled *To Place*. The work is encyclopedic in its examination of diverse aspects of the Icelandic landscape (geology, flora, water, weather phenomena) and yet if it is an encyclopedia, it is remarkable for how little information it actually gives. One volume consists of photographs of a horizonless ocean, which, we are informed by the title, contains the border between the Atlantic and the Arctic, an invisible circle circumscribed on the globe. Like the Arctic Circle, Iceland is a place by which Horn

***Housed in the town's former library, Roni Horn's "Library of Water" is a collection of melt-water from each of Iceland's rapidly retreating glaciers, stored in floor-to-ceiling transparent columns, an archive of one of Iceland's richest natural resources, which scientists predict may vanish within the next century. On the springy rubber floor (meant to evoke Icelandic moss) are inscribed words in English and Icelandic which describe both the weather and the human temperament.*

orients herself, but nevertheless finds impossible to pin down, even in the authority of a book, the documentation of a photo, or the cylindrical containers of glacial water of her "library". She writes of her deep connection to the land as if it were a haunting:

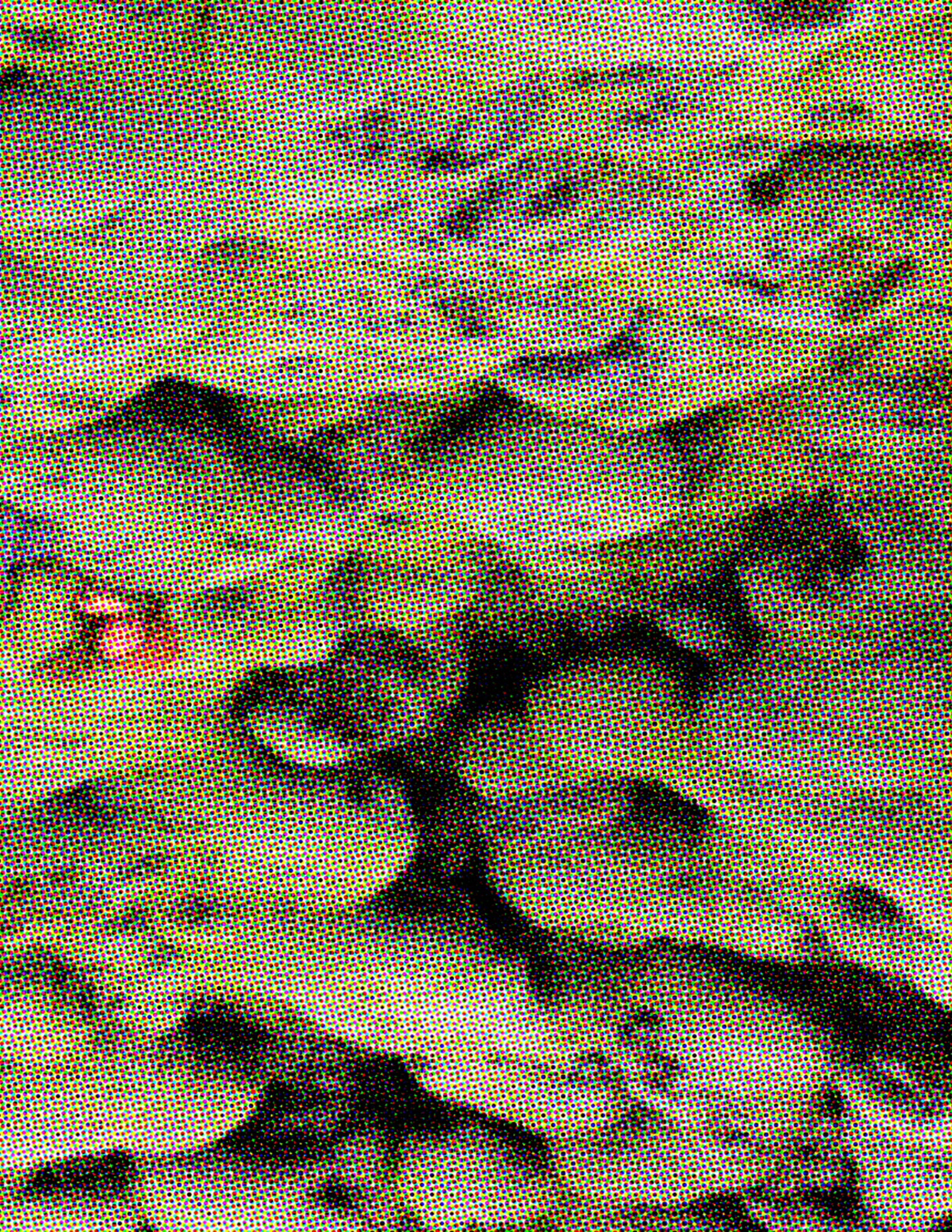
> "Iceland taught me to taste experience. Because that's possible here, because of the intensely physical nature of experience on this island... This added dimension that presence gives to experience is partly how the landscape here mastered me. Presence is the thing sensed, never known." [5]

Like the phenomenologists, Horn speaks of reality in terms of what is sensed, touched, tasted. While Descartes sought the self in the "I" that thinks, noting that things like sight and sound themselves might lie, phenomenology posits the self in the presence of the sensate being, in the *eye* that sees and the hand that feels. The embodied experience that results affirms that is through our bodies and not in spite of them that we experience the world. Horn seems to take this idea further, though, suggesting that something in the wild Icelandic landscape triggered a more fully present bodily experience, that the land itself might be a body interacting with the artist's own. And finally, unlike the phenomenologists, Horn here seems to suggest that even with the full faculty of one's senses knowledge is elusive or perhaps unattainable. Though it is also worth noting that for Horn, knowledge is not the goal. In her writing and her work it is unknowing rather that seems to take the fore, as if sensing results in only a half-image, full of possibilities of mystery and wonder.

I too came to Iceland with the hope of connecting with it through embodied experience. I spent much of my time there walking: up mountains, across ash and lava deserts, along multi-day trekking routes.* It was a rare chance to attempt to understand the otherworldly landscape by feeling my way along its surface at three miles an hour. Rebecca Solnit calls the act of walking a sort of "spatial theater" where we move "to inhabit bodily, stories we trace with our feet as well as our eyes."[6] The implied movement evidenced in the paths we walk suggests a ritual contact with the surface of the earth, in the touch and not-touch of each footfall, in the physical passing back and forth along a line, a drawing made with the whole body, an evidence of presence.** For me, drawing and walking are parallel practices. Drawing is a sort of sympathetic magic, in which the act of mark-making mirrors the act of traversing space itself, the pencil becoming a stand-in for myself across the terrain of the paper. This act results in a direct relationship between my hand and eye and the forming image, allowing me to attempt to call back lost time, things that I haven't experienced, places I haven't been, and also those that I have but cannot return to. Like

*I expressly dislike the word "hiking" in describing what I view to be a major aspect of my practice, that is, walking in wilderness areas. "Hiking" carries with it connotations of conquering a difficult landscape, a sport in which there are winners and losers.

**The relation of art to this most elemental human act was forever altered by British land artist Richard Long's 1967 work, A Line Made by Walking, a performance he has continued throughout his practice in various lines, spirals, and patterns temporarily imprinted on the earth's surface by the movement of his feet. "By making bodily contact with the earth the prime focus of the performance, and by...marking himself as simultaneously present and absent, the artist opens a new space between the fiction of pure nature and an acknowledgement that the earth is an endlessly shifting ground that precedes and will continue beyond human history." [7]



walking, the locus of drawing is found in desire for or lack of; of wanting to take the next step, to experience the changing vista, to see where the line will lead.

But if walking, however gentle a gesture, might still be viewed as a sort of colonization, of claiming a place through understanding, I, like Horn, found Iceland resisting my efforts to pin it down. Perhaps it was something about the vastness of space there, or the alien-ness of the primeval landscape, or its ever changing quality, where rivers and glaciers and even mountains refuse to stay put on the map. Or

perhaps it was the translation of an imagined landscape, full of romantic possibility and desire, into a tangible and flawed one, full instead of tourists and gas-station hot dogs. Whatever it was, my efforts were frustrated. Ironically, it is only the more removed from this island that I get, in time and space, that I am able to make sense of my sojourn there. In light of this failure, I begin to ask myself: how could one speak to place rather than merely about it?

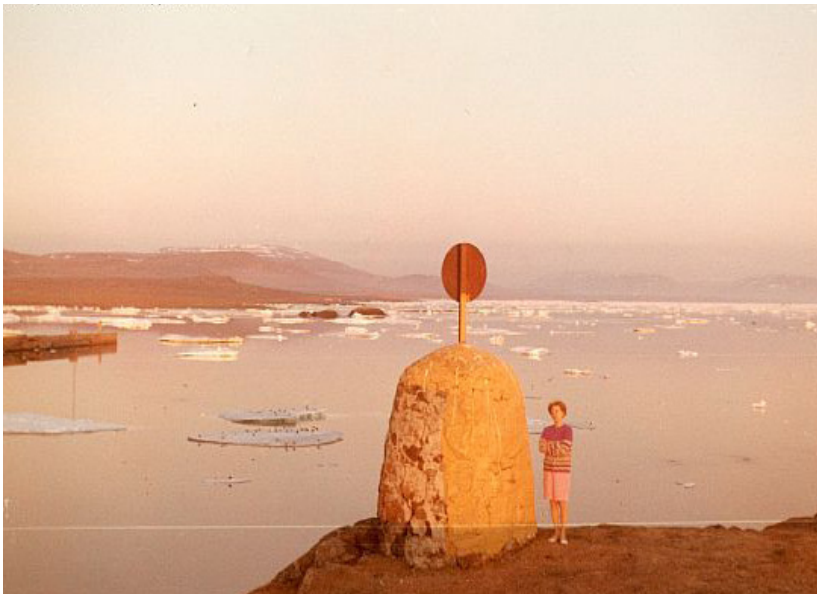
In the figurative language of poetry, apostrophe* is the direct addressing of inanimate objects or non-human nature. Though as a rhetorical device (like soliloquy, in which apparently unspoken thoughts are expressed to an audience) apostrophe is always a winking acknowledgement of the lack of a responding voice on the part of non-sentience, it nevertheless becomes a poetic means by which we might experience the material world as more than the dead matter of a Cartesian dualism. Apostrophe,

** a distinct term from the punctuation mark which denotes possesion or conjunction.*

free from the constraints of the literal, allows the author to express "intense feeling for the act of address itself," furthermore engaging with what Maurice Merleau-Ponty terms "the flesh of the world", that is, "the invisible layer of reality linking the perceiver and the perceived, the sentient and the sensible."[8] I began to wonder, if poetry has personification and apostrophe, what was the equivalent in the visual?

Every day on my way to my studio in Iceland I walked past a lone blank sign, a geometric construction of wood on the shore pointing out into the water. It was, I discovered, a sea-marker, a guide for sailors as they left and returned to terra firma. I began photographing the sign everyday from behind, a daily ritual that attempted to capture something in the sign itself which captured me. Beyond its practicality, there was something elusive and mysterious about this object on the shore (a threshold *par excellence*, it might be said) which was not addressed to me in my space on the island, but rather into that unbounded space beyond. The question of how to address place itself raises many others: How does place speak back? What is the language that can bridge the gap between sentience and non-sentience?

What stands at that threshold and who can cross it?



V

V.

the sea speaks back

"Do I have the right to turn down even an imagined possibility of contact with this Ocean which my race has been trying to understand for decades? Should I remain here? Among things and objects we both touched? Which still bear the memory of our breath?"

-Kris Kelvin[1]

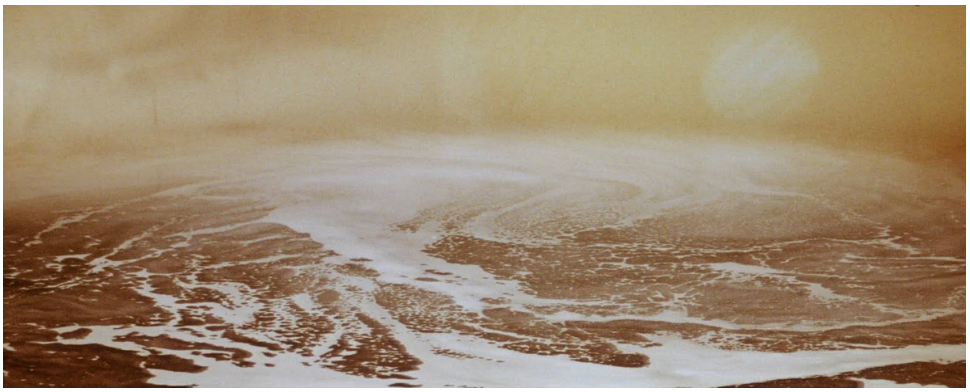
In Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 science fiction film *Solaris*, psychologist Kris Kelvin is sent from earth to examine reports coming from a remote space station orbiting the oceanic planet Solaris, in which the three remaining scientists have been seeing (maybe) hallucinatory beings that distressingly "have something to do with conscience." However, before he can unravel the mystery of the visitors, as the scientists call them, he finds himself in the company of his own, an alluring woman who we learn is his dead wife, Hari, who committed suicide when Kris left her years before. The film follows in a fever dream examination of guilt and memory, of falling in love with ghosts, of an aching nostalgia for life on Earth. Scattered throughout the film are almost inexplicable shots of a swirling horizonless expanse of liquid, the ocean of Solaris, which the viewer gradually comes to understand is somehow sentient. Kris learns that the strange happenings on the station began shortly after the scientists attempted contact with the ocean. The visitors, it seems, are the ocean's answer.

I am struck here by the language the ocean seems to speak in its conversation/communion with its own human visitors, that is, through the medium of memory and representation. The corporeal visitors are tangible, seem to be slightly wrong. In her first incarnation, Hari cannot remember how she got into Kris' chambers, she does not recognize a photograph of herself, her dress unlaces to reveal that she is sealed inside it, no seam in sight.

The visitors are expressly not the beings they replicate, and yet they serve as living walking memories of those, who being absent, they represent. The anthropologist Michael Taussig, in his work *Mimesis and Alterity*, speaks of mimetic figurines used in healing and shamanistic rituals by the Cuna people of Panama, which, meant to represent various spirits and persons, allowed their owners access to/over the power* of the original through it's likeness, however flawed. Here, representation, enacted through imperfect memory, offers a "palpable, sensuous connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived."[2] Place too speaks through memory. The drive to represent a landscape through a painting or a photograph is superfluous. Whenever we see a landscape, we are always already in the process of re-presenting it through memories of all the other places we know, of projecting a web of associations and meaning on top of its surface.**

**Or to bring the discussion into Walter Benjamin's terms, we might say "aura of the original"*

***"The artist can evoke a place that will always only exist as a memory of another place in the mind of the viewer, because I think you need to have visited a place before you can really know it, and then only you will know it in that way. That is why place is so personal and intangible, but at the same time universally understood." --Tacita Dean* [3]



. . .

In the film, images of the unknowable ocean of Solaris are visually opposed to Tarkovsky's lyrical shots of the cultivated territory of Kris' father's country estate on Earth (scenes for which Tarkovsky, exploring personal themes of beauty in the natural world, received criticism; a third of his science fiction film takes place on a decidedly un-futuristic earth). This opposition brings to mind the Kantian discourse on the differences between beauty and the sublime,* the former being within the bounds of reason and the latter outside it. For Kant the sublime is "absolutely large... beyond all comparison," and is to be found in formlessness, or "unboundedness."[4] Indeed, Kant's entire philosophy is obsessed with finding the outer limits of reason itself, and the sublime, which he locates precisely at this boundary, offers fertile territory for him to explore. It is categorized as a feeling of pleasure mixed with a feeling of displeasure or fear. Kant links this feeling of discomfort to an inadequacy of imagination in attempting to approach infinity in order to bring our conception of the sublime object under rational understanding, and at the same time an understanding that the judgment of this inadequacy brings us back within the bounds of reason. The sublime, then, is an awareness of lack, of an inability to control or to bring under reason, which simultaneously confirms reason's power.**

The word itself comes from the Latin sublimis*, which further derives from the roots* sub*, meaning up to, and* limen*, a threshold, or alternatively* limes*, a boundary or limit; already here we see what may have interested Kant in the concept of a thing which pushed at the very boundaries of experience.*

*** It is fair to note, given the too-often tendency to classify the sublime as residing in nature itself, that for Kant, the sublime always occurs as a result of the processes of the intellect of the thinking subject, rather than that of the sensible object. Though it may be a response to external stimuli, the sublime is a feeling born out of interiority.*

I think about conceptual artist Bas Jan Ader, whose performative films of himself falling off roofs and into canals literally bring the experience of horror in the face of the sublime to the banality of the locations in which he enacted his tumbles. Ader's falling pieces were an attempt to experience bodily, and thus declare through his art, "everything there is to know about falling."[5] These dreamlike videos of Ader, tumbling in a slow-motion that recalls the feeling of watching an unavoidable disaster, exhibit a complete offering of the artist's will and control to the unyielding force of gravity,*** like Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void*, but without photographic trickery. Ader is a particularly apt example when speaking of the sublime, as he has since become a quasi-mythical figure within the art world; his final piece, *In Search of the Miraculous*, to be executed in three parts, ended prematurely in an ill-fated attempt to sail a tiny craft across the Atlantic from America to Europe. His boat was found months later, adrift without an occupant, the artist subsumed into the total sublimity of the vast ocean.

*****"I do not make body sculptures, body art, or body works. When I fell off the roof of my house, or into a canal, it was because gravity* made itself master *over me." (author's emphasis)--Bas Jan Ader [6]*

Theorist Roland Barthes suggests that myth develops when the combined meaning of the signifier and the signified (the sign) becomes confused with further meanings and associations that develop from it.[7] The totality of the sign becomes mere signifier, and the meaning is both opened up to further interpretation and at the same time ossified into that same interpretation. If Ader's last piece, or even himself, has

become myth, it is because the totality of the piece as it was originally conceived is now unable to be divorced from the new signification it takes on with his death, namely a romantic subsumption into the sublime. One might further argue that this death followed from Ader's own confusion of the realities of the ocean with its mythic possibilities.

This tendency towards myth is difficult to avoid though, especially knowing of Ader's own concerns in his previous work in surrendering himself to elemental forces. Artist Tacita Dean muses that like the knight Tristan, Arthurian Ader's surrender, in this case to the elemental of the Atlantic, was for him the highest form of pilgrimage."[8] Even the title, *In Search of the Miraculous*, suggests a sort of religious quest. The first part of the work is a series of photographs of Ader wandering around the night-time city with a flashlight as if seeking some lost thing, finally arriving at the Pacific, the lights of Los Angeles in the background. Inscribed on each photos are the lyrics to the 1957 song *Searchin'*: "Yeh, I've been searchin' I've been searchin' Oh yeh, searchin' every-which way." There is the sense, however, that to succeed in a quest of contact with the infinite, one must unknow the known, or rather, return the unfamiliar to the sense of the familiar. The tragedy of discovering a new place is that as soon as you have come upon it, it enters into the realm of knowing, from which there is no return. There is the tiniest moment as you chance upon it when things are not yet known, but not fully unknown, that is, perhaps they are perceived but not understood, and it is that moment that seems to be the object of my own quest. I wonder if the sublime, being a threshold itself, and one that repels attempts of knowing, might be that space where contact with the infinite other, the sentient non-sentience, or the absolute might be made, or at least where it might be attempted. Though, as we learn from Ader, if the attempt to engage with the sublime becomes the entire nature of the quest, it can become a dangerous one. After all, if he became lost, why not me?


In Search of the Miraculous

VI

VI.

image/object

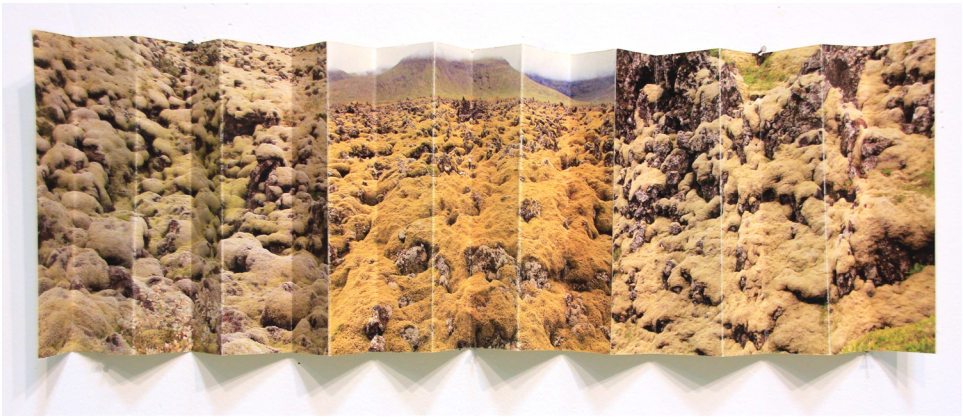
"In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such a Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Provence. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it."
-Jorge Luis Borges [1]

Another word on ghosts:

The Greek word *eidolon* denotes an image. It is also the word for a spirit: Odysseus in the underworld meeting the *eidolon* of his mother.

Legend tells of the maid of Corinth who inadvertently made the first drawing, tracing the torch-thrown shadow of her lover (off to war in the morning) with a piece of charcoal. It is a pretty story, though ultimately a false one; Lascaux and Chauvet stand testament to the true origins of this earliest of human practices. It does, however, accurately reveal the roots of drawing in loss and desire. The silhouette of the lost lover is both ghost and image, a rem(a)inder of something once there. Ghosts as images and images as ghosts, both an original and a copy, both containing being and not-being.

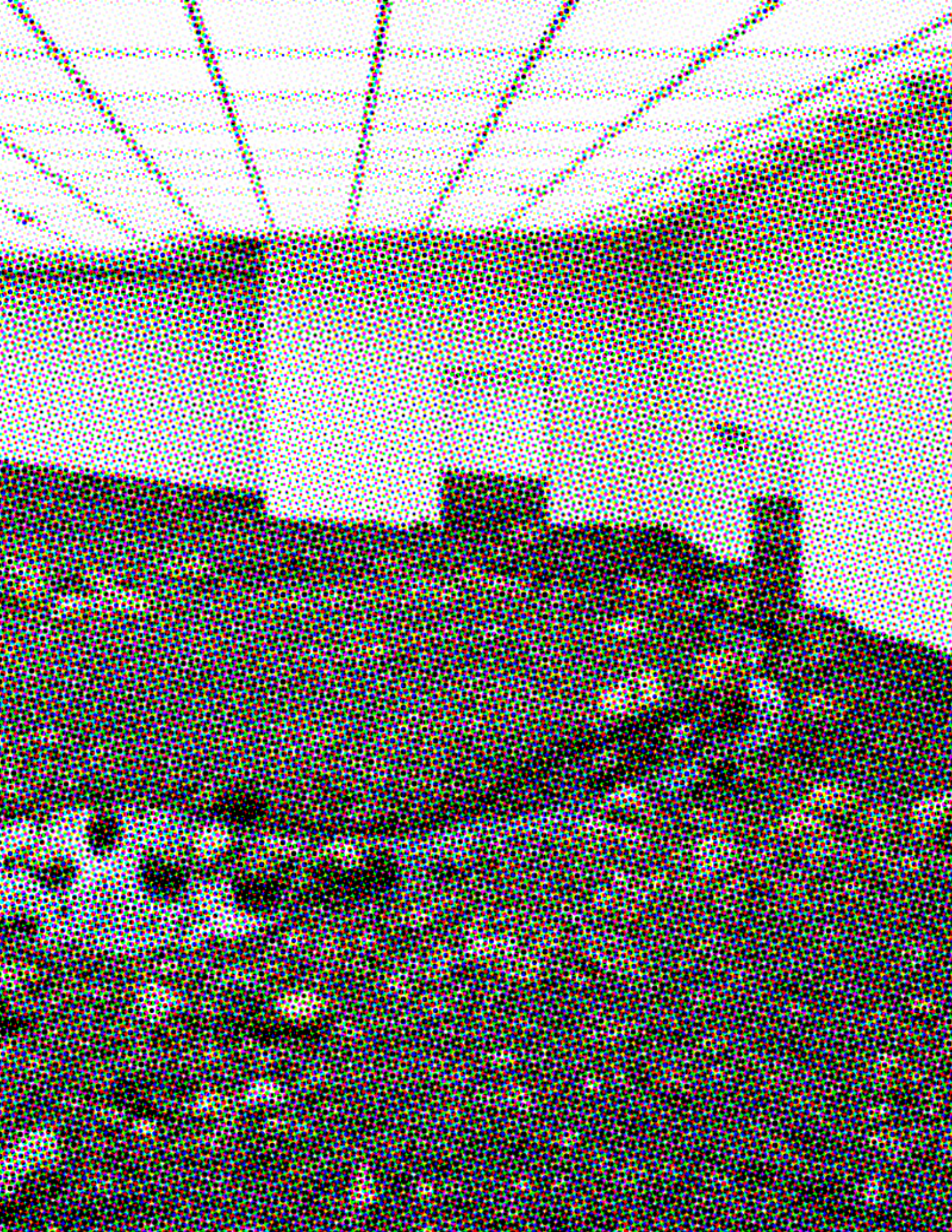
Another anecdote on the origins of image-making deals with a competition between two painters, Zeuxis and Parrhasios, to determine who is the greater. Zeuxis presents his work first. Pulling back the curtain, he reveals a masterful still life with fruit that seems almost ripe enough to eat, and, as if in response to his talent, a bird alights on his painting in an attempt to steal a tender grape. Confident of his victory, Zeuxis asks his rival to remove the curtain on his own work so that the two might be judged side by side. Parrhasios refuses, and Zeuxis in his anger attempts to rip away the veil only to discover that the curtain *is* the painting. Having fooled even a fellow master with his painting (in the Greek, *zografia*, or 'life writing') Parrhasios is awarded the distinction of the greatest painter. The contrast between this tale and that of the maid of Corinth illustrates both the strength of images as well as their inevitable failure, a point somehow connected to the dichotomy of life (*zografia*) and death (*eidolon*) and a distinct confusion between the two. It is during the expansion of Greek philosophy that painting began to be considered not only for its decorative properties, that is, as a craft, but for its ability to reflect an external reality, an art. Echoing the ghostly etymology above, Plato, who finds much to critique in both text and image,



insists that paintings that purport a relation to an objective truth instead present only "phantasms, not reality."[2] The question is not, it seems, an ethical one, located in painting's false claim to be what it is not (the curtain of the myth), but in its inability to even be considered on its own terms. To judge the "truth" of a painting we must both look at it and simultaneously turn away toward the reality on which it is based.[3] A representation can only be a derivative; it is an unreality which tangles with reality and alters the way we view both.

This is an especially perplexing dilemma in a digital age in which we receive almost everything through the image of something else. Prophetically anticipating our increasingly image-based existence, philosopher Jean Baudrillard wrote, "Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept...The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it."[4] He calls this state, wherein there are no longer images of things, but images of images, the hyperreal. The simulation of representation becomes a simulacrum, a sort of self-sustaining truth that replaces whatever basis in objective reality may once have existed. I think of the vast proliferation (and veneration) of images of the outdoors, paired as they often are with an effort to sell sporting equipment or to market a lifestyle "in touch" with nature. When I wish to go on a hike I can with little effort find maps and directions online with photographs that show exactly what each turn in the trail will look like. You can today experience the sublimity of the Grand Canyon on Google Earth in a full 360 degree view. These are the *eidola* of our era, ghosts that lack bodies, Platonic ideals without a material-bound form.

The dilemma of the hyperreal is also especially evident in our experience of art, whether in the its creation or its viewing. As with the technology of writing, the ability to share and experience aesthetic works has been greatly expanded with the development of photography, though it has changed the way we conceive of emplaced



and embodied images in our "age of mechanical reproduction." We tend to no longer think of paintings (or, indeed, images of any sort) as objects with form, heft, and volume, stretched fabric smeared and spattered with mud. Instead, they are reduced to mere surface that will be transmitted in exhibition catalogues, posters, postcards, and the screens of our computers. As an artist engaged in representation I often wonder how to emphasize the object-ness of the images I produce, to return body to the incorporeal. This concern results in an emphasis on materiality in the work: in paper that curls and exposes its edges, in un-stretched canvas that drapes heavily on the wall, in images carved into other images, in sculptural pieces that intrude into space and beg a bodily interaction.

I find all of these qualities in artists' books, where image, text, and object collide in a form that demands an encounter on the part of the reader. Books are tactile and temporal, they require presence and movement and can only be experienced in a sequence, unlike the ghost-like image whose reception is received simultaneously. Like physical space, the viewer can move through the book, turn the pages, feel the words and images. Within its framework (between the covers as it were) I find a structure that houses and supports my many concerns. Books carry with them a transportive authority, like a suspension of disbelief that occurs while watching a film, that allows the reader to enter the framework and comfortably dwell in it; the book in a sense

teaches you how to experience it. This frame, however, is not a constraint, and again, very much like film, the reader becomes themselves an editor, moving back and forth between pages, guided by the path the book has carved out, but free to explore as they will. Perhaps it is this sense of freedom on the part of the reader to co-participate with the artist/author in the experience of the work that excites me most in this format.

In his book, *The Open Work*, Umberto Eco describes artworks that must be performed by the audience in order to be understood.[5] His strongest examples are musical, for example the shifting compositions of John Cage. 4 mins 33 seconds is often erroneously described as a piece which consists of total silence, but it is in fact performed by the audience (and ambient environment) themselves, whose breaths and shifting bodies provide the notes and tones which fill the absent spaces of Cage's notated rests. But this is also how visual artworks function; even static images must be filtered through the understanding of an audience. And this to speak nothing about sculptures, which must be experienced dimensionally, or installation, with its fully immersive environments. For example, Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson's installation, *Riverbed,* consists of a gallery transformed into a landscape. Upon entering, the viewer is confronted with an undulating terrain of bare stone, the smell of earth, the sound of water flowing among the rocks. Eliasson invites the viewer not only to contemplate this displaced place from a distance (as in the non-sites of Robert Smithson), but to walk among, around, and through its features. He notes that even in a pathless environment, people begin to form their own trails, developing a sort of "collective expereinece." He speaks about the museum experience of his work as an act of creation: "So we don't *take in* the exhibition, I always say, we *produce* it by walking through it. That is to suggest the authorship, of reality if you want, lays within the beholder, within the user, within the museum visitor. The museum is constituted by the visitors, and this is I think such an important thing, and why one should trust the visitors to take the authorship to become creators."[6] The resulting piece, along with Eliasson's artistic philosophy, is thus in Eco's sense a truly open one, constantly in flux, constantly developing through the actions of its' audience.

VII

VII.

an open work

"Think with me about your extension of now...we can say that my understanding of 'our' time is necessarily within my 'own' time; my 'now' is inside yours, or, your 'now' is my surroundings (and vice versa)...The familiar 'now and here' (also known as 'nowhere') might just as well be 'now and there'."
- Olafur Eliasson [1]

This body of work, *infinite nowhere*, revolves around a central image which originated, as many of my interests and images do, from an experience firmly rooted in place, in this case a smokestack in the fishing-town where I was living in Iceland on residency. The disused smokestack was part of the old fish-processing facilities, the tallest structure in the town by far. One could access the interior by ducking inside a hole that once connected it to the old furnace, now sandwiched in a narrow space between the tower and a newer corrugated iron clad building. Inside were burnt-down candles and old chairs, a beer-can or two, evidence that I was not the first to venture inside. I had been drawn inside by the haunting voice of the wind swirling around the cylinder of the tower, which one could hear even outside the structure. Looking up from inside, I saw the sky trailing across the circular opening above me, alternating blue and white, light and dark, sky and cloud. I was struck by how this shifting portal resembled the moon (but wasn't), of how the sky seemed brought down to the earth by way of the brick walls of the smokestack, of how this moment seemed so specific to a particular place and time, my now (or is it then?) while at the same time remaining so vague and universal.

infinite nowhere consists of this one motif taken through various translations and iterations in medium and form. This begins with a video of the original image, the moving clouds in the circle of the smokestack's oculus, projected from a tripod through a small round aperture onto a postcard-sized drawing mounted on the gallery wall. The video alone gives a clue as to the actual source of the repeated image, which is easily taken as a rather straightforward representation of the moon, though its transposition onto the vertical of the wall and its intimate size induce a shift which is meant to disorient the viewer. This video/drawing is placed at the end of a sequence of other like-sized drawings consisting of images sourced from the town's photographic archive as well as various signs referencing constellations, nets, and knots. These small drawings are the only hints at the actual location of this specific place and time, and yet they give little away as to where exactly this might be. Layered on the images are

the words: "know where," "now," and "here," which also hint at a specificity of location, while at the same time referencing the word "nowhere". I have often noted that the location of the memory or the place I am attempting to represent is essential in the creation of my work, but that as I filter that information through the lens of translation and representation, this specificity become far more universal and indeterminate, moving from a "where" to a "nowhere." This body of work was one of the first where I did not feel a need to point directly at the place/time or origin of the specific memory that I was trying to represent. Indeed, the experience itself took place in a location that itself shut out all identifying features of the surrounding landscape.

In that central act of embodied connection with place, with my neck craned back, the pattern of the clouds moving across the circular opening became almost like a text. Alongside the question of how to speak (back) to place, my visual fascination with the form and idea of the sea-markers led me to make the *now/here signs*, my first attempt at translation. Using successive layers of water-soluble graphite, I made large circular drawings referencing nebulous darks and lights of the original video and built supporting scaffolds that referenced the visual language of signs, billboards, and the sea-markers that so fascinated me. The resulting drawings are both sculptural and textual, images and objects, structures that play on flatness and dimensionality. The work is meant to be encountered as familiar and yet totally alien, the viewer sensing a form of communication which is not directed to or for them. The underlying structures, built of raw lumber, reference a sort of utility that one might see in billboards and signs, though they contain an unfamiliarity and a specificity that suggests a purpose beyond the merely practical. The supports themselves function as a sort of drawing (a continuation from the more direct drawings they hold in space), relying on the formal qualities of line and a confusion between what they represent and what they actually are. The *now/here signs* stand dispersed throughout the space, seemingly communicating by visual projection with each other, speaking across the distance of the gallery.*

On the wall a grid of Risograph prints seem to reference the phases of the moon, but on further examination are revealed to be stills of the aforementioned video; the images are sequential but not cyclical. They offer a key to reading the rest of the image/objects, but their true origin pushes back into a space of unfamiliarity. Beside them is a text-drawing in minute white cursive on black paper. The viewer must approach closely to attempt to decipher the words, which detail a fictional narrative about what appears to be an imperceptible approach of the moon,** though this too is ultimately left unclear. Like the prints beside it, the text serves as a sort of poetic or elastic exposition, referencing gallery texts whose role it is to make clear the ideas and intents of the artist, but which nevertheless only further prompts the viewer to question their relationship to the space and the objects and images within it. As an open-ended

** *it happened one night, or rather, over thousands of nights until that one it became apparent that what had happened had happened. drawing itself steadily closer, inch by infinite inch, growing millimeters in size each night. ten years ago you could block out its light with a carefully positioned pinky finger (and one closed eye) a couple of years later it required the ring finger, then middle, index, thumb, until finally those who noticed had to outstretch their entire palms to the sky to block out the light that kept them up at night, as if shouting hallelujahs in a church pew, as if expectantly waiting a palmistry reading from the heavens, as if willing the moon to halt in its approach.*

* *In addition to a feeling of projection, the circular drawings also carry a strong sense of reflection, even if not reflective surfaces themselves. They seem to be reflecting the sky back at itself, and in this sense remind me of the Claude Glass, an optical instrument of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, made of a circular cloudy dark mirror in which landscape painters were to frame pleasing compositions, turning their backs on the actual vista to view a tamed reflection.*

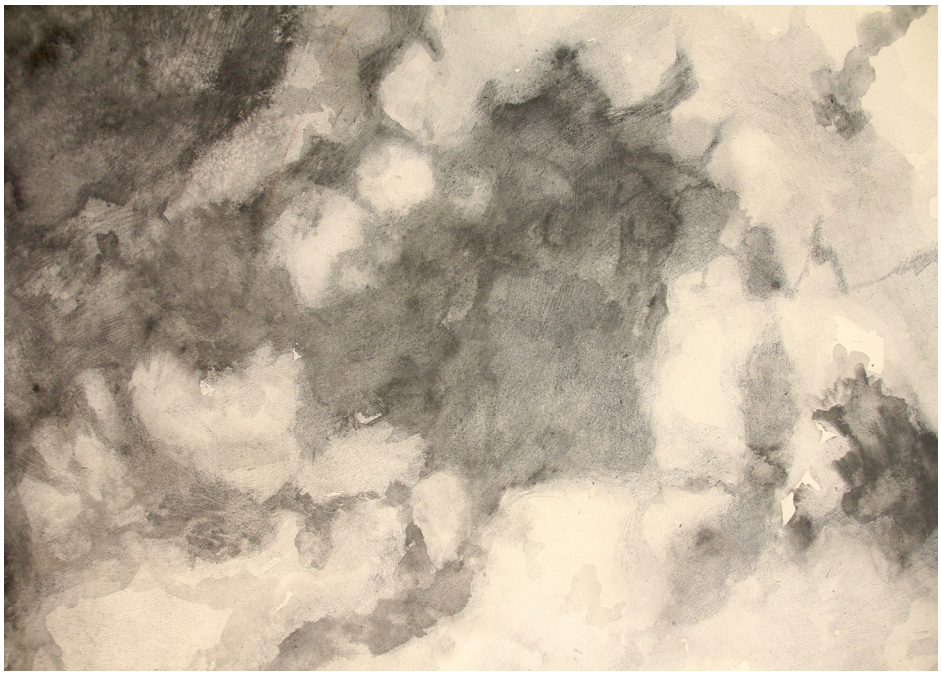
fiction (titled *the distance of the moon* in reference to one of Calvino's short stories) the text also opens up a dialogue that seems to frame the rest of the work, placing everything within the indeterminate boundaries that the story itself sets up.

This conflation of fact and fiction is essential to understanding my practice. Like the discussion of myth, fiction allows for a telling of a sort of moral or intuitive truth, even while denying historicity or empiricism. Director Werner Herzog's writes about the nature of truth in documentary filmmaking, contrasting the idea of objective reality with that of what he terms "ecstatic truth," a truth which becomes factual through its use of symbols and an experience with the sublime.[2] He relates the Greek word *alêtheia* (truth) to its root in the word *lanthanein* (to hide): truth is something that is uncovered or revealed, though it still contains the trace of the hidden. This idea of ecstatic truth allows for the creation of a sphere within which to experience the work that begins to generate its own weather-system, with its own set of logics and understandings that may not conform to those outside the frame of the narrative space. I am reminded of how it feels to walk under the eaves of a forest, where one's spatial experience suddenly shifts from openness to enclosure, from walking *through* to walking *between*. Space itself becomes altered and the rules of movement slide, engendering a feeling of having entered a new world, which is perhaps why we have a long tradition in legend of outlaws, magicians, and lovers dwelling in or escaping to the forest where, hidden in the space between trees, social norms and even natural law might be upended.

. . .

At the end of installing the show I intuitively drew a simple net form directly onto the wall, extending down as if from the ceiling. This was surprising as it had not been part of the original plan for the space, and because it was not related visually to the central image that had been repeated throughout the work. In fact, the form references a project I am currently in the middle of researching, which involves weaving a sort of screen with which to capture (or through which to view) a landscape. This woven screen, like a net, is defined by its open spaces, on what it allows to pass through it, on what it catches and what it fails to catch. Though visually distinct, this new "sign" engages with many of the same themes of my practice on a whole, an interest in text/texture/textile, and an attempt to catch the uncatchable, to fix the intangible into physical form. Most significantly, however, this move allowed room for my practice to take on elements with which it is concerned, namely an uncertainty and improvisation which more clearly resonates with a sense of the unknown. I was worried throughout the process of developing this work that in creating a what felt like a culmination, I might close the work off to future explorations. After all, how is one to speak knowingly of the unknown? Like Derrida's *parergon*, this paradox is perhaps unsolvable. But in allowing myself the room to explore, even in the late stages of installation, to rely on

intuition without having a fixed reason, or even words to explain the connections I feel between objects, images, and texts, the work ultimately becomes open not only for its audience, but also for its artist, puling visual motifs from past work as well as future and allowing an open-ended exchange with as-of-yet unrealized ideas.



VIII

VIII.

conclusion: lost

"For many years I have been moved by the blue at the far edge of what can be seen, that color of horizons, of remote mountain ranges, of anything far away. 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. And the color of where you can never go." — Rebecca Solnit [1]

In Robert Moor's book, *On Trails*, he describes a possible definition of the common foot-path, based on the writings of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, a tracker. The Colonel, in his 1876 book, *Plains of the Great West*, says that a trail is "a string of 'sign' that can be reliably followed." The word "sign" in this case is specialized use of the term, always written in the singular, which refers to any markings a animal might leave behind in its movement. Moor extrapolates: "Something miraculous happens when a trail is trailed. The inert line is transformed into a legible sign system, which allows animals to lead one another, as if telepathically, across long distances."[2] I like this definition of trails; they are a continuous sequence of sign(s), a trace which tells a walker, above all else, "this way."

For all their usual simplicity, trails are surprisingly complex things: they are often created organically (or at least those are the ones which survive the longest); they mark the best, though not always most direct, way to cross a landscape; they bind their walkers to all the those who have gone on before, and in turn each new footstep continues the message to those that will follow. Trails orient us in a world of extended space and endless possibility. Like looking at a blank paper deciding to make the first mark, the thought of trying to forge one's way across a trackless expanse can be an uncomfortable one. Studies suggest that we rely on trails so much, that when left on our own to attempt to navigate straight lines across unfamiliar terrain, we will inevitably tend to loop back on our own tracks. It is not impossible to become lost on a trail, but they do give us the comfort of knowing that at least someone has passed that way before and will likely do so in the future.

I like to think of my work in this light, as a system of signs laid down and left for those who will experience them outside the rarified space of my studio. As much as I am devoted to the wonder to be found in exterior spaces of wild nature, and to the creation which happens largely in the interior of the studio, I am most interested in the objects and ideas which pass between these two spheres. The resulting objects are remnants of my passages and experience, my own body being the primary of these bridges between interior and exterior, and though they may not accurately convey

exactly what that experience was or how it felt, they nevertheless seem to point down the trail, saying again, "this way, this way, this way."

There is much to say about the pleasures, and indeed, the desirability of getting lost. But getting lost does not necessarily mean wandering without a path. Like the sublime, it is a far more interior condition of induced unfamiliarity. There are several levels of lost as well: the reckless and tragic lostness of Bas Jan Ader (along with others like Amelia Earhardt, Robert Scott, and Everett Ruess who before him also disappeared into sublimity) and the lostness of artists like Tacita Dean, who point into the unknown and say "here it is, closer than you may have imagined." It is, I believe, the artist's role to induce this later sense of being lost, to open up questions not only about the state of the world, but also the state of human experience. Rebecca Solnit opines that "It is the job of artists to open doors and invite in prophecies, the unknown, the unfamiliar; it's where their work comes from, although its arrival signals the beginning of the long disciplined process of making it their own."[3] How is one to make the unknown their own? It is a question I have yet to answer, my own trackless wilderness into which I wander at times, looking to leave a string of signs.

I am searching i am searching i am searching i am searching...

notes

i: introduction

1. Italo Calvino, "A Sign in Space," trans. William Weaver, in *Cosmicomics*, (New York: Harcourt, 1968), 31.

2. Jacques Derrida, "Parergon //1978," in *The Sublime*, ed. Simon Morely (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 41.

ii: for dust thou art

1. Annie Dillard. *Holy The Firm*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 71.

2. Ella E. Clark, *Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 8.

iii: text/image

1. Ann Hamilton, "ghost...a border act/2000," *Ann Hamilton Studio,* Accessed February 16, 2017, http://www.annhamiltonstudio.com/projects/ghostaborderact.html.

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