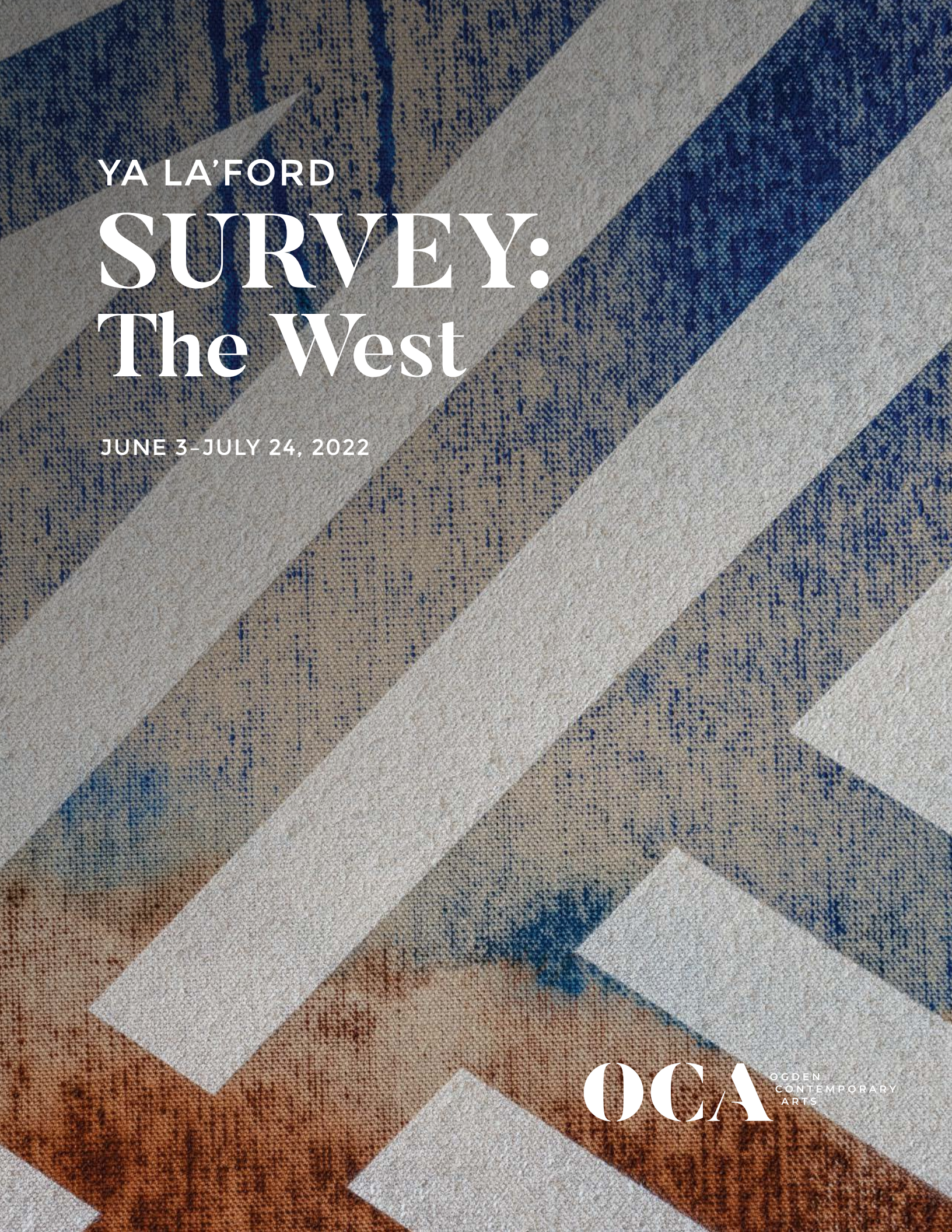

YA LA'FORD

SURVEY: The West

JUNE 3–JULY 24, 2022

OCA OGDEN CONTEMPORARY ARTS

SURVEY: The West

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FOREWORD

OGDEN CONTEMPORARY ARTS (OCA) is honored to have Ya La'ford—Tampa based/Bronx born–as our very first Artist-in-Residence.

Not only is Ya a world-class talent who has taken a genuine interest in our community, but the warmth and positivity she radiates is uniquely encouraging as we strive to generate more awareness and inclusivity in our local contemporary art scene. Her reach and generosity extend throughout our town, especially with her connection to Youth Impact of Ogden, as they participated in her permanent mural installation in The Monarch.

The work she has created illuminates how fortunate we are to live amongst the natural beauty that surrounds us here in Utah, particularly in relation to her stay in Ogden. Ya took the opportunity to explore Utah's surrounding landscapes and has created a visual and aural exploration, or "survey," of The West. Her work raised awareness and generated the dialogue that has and will continue to inspire our community to get involved in preserving it.

Lastly, this exhibition would not have been possible without the support of Weber County RAMP, Nation Endowment for the Arts, and Rocky Mountain Power Foundation. We would also like to thank the Utah Office of Tourism, George S and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, Dr. Ezekiel R. and Edna Wattis Dumke Foundation, Utah Division of Arts and Museums, and Ogden City Arts for supporting both our general operations and marketing efforts. We truly appreciate all our donors, board members and most importantly, our community.

Venessa Castagnoli
Director, Ogden Contemporary Arts

OCA OGDEN CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Detail from
Tumbleweed - Our Russian Invaders

YA LA'FORD

YA LA'FORD (B. 1979, BRONX, NY) is an artist, educator, and foremost a transporter—working between the visual and the complexities of the human community with layered meanings—through a wide range of media including paint, sculpture, installation, video, and sound. She received her Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts from The Art Institute of Boston and also holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Florida's Levin College of Law.

As a first-generation American, she moves between her Jamaican heritage and vulnerable communities using the power of art as a universal language. Ya La'ford's mission is centered on creating art and experiences, which exist to immeasurably transform and revolutionize the social, cultural, and historic contexts of creative expression within the human journey.

La'Ford's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Vinik Family Foundation, NFL, Indy 500, Grand Prix and Nike. She has notably exhibited at the Tampa Museum of Art, the Orlando Museum of Fine Art, the Asia Contemporary Art Show, Venice Biennale Activation Projects, Yeelen Gallery, Baker Museum of Art and John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

Survey: The West exhibition will travel east to The James Museum of Western & Wildlife Art, Fall-Summer 2025.

Her work can be found as monumental sculptures, fully immersive installations, mural design, and exterior sculpture façades with a focus on the language of geometric design, symbols, and ethnography to recreate the connections of a space and the divine intervention paths that preserve our destinies as individuals and as a community.

WATCH THE VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH YA LA'FORD

SURVEY:
THE WEST

Scotti Hill

A SURVEYOR TRIPOD STANDS NEAR the street-level entrance of Ogden Contemporary Arts's (OCA) gallery space, pointed toward an infinitesimal map in the corner of a nearby glass pane. Looking through the tool allows participants a magnified view of the landmass of the Western United States, an area artist Ya La'ford has spent the past few months traversing.

Her exhibition "Survey the West," the culmination of her tenure as OCA's inaugural artist-in-residence, is novel for a host of reasons, among them presenting a signature aesthetic of formal modernist abstraction rooted in a site specific and conceptual framework of place. Here, Utah and the Western States serve as a theoretical backdrop for a psychic investigation of the forces that have shaped us, both before the arrival of humankind and those that continue to impact us despite our species' insistence on ignoring the plight of our planet. Indeed, by relishing the beauty and power of our earth, art may beckon us to heed her repeated cries before her peril becomes our own.

In the spring of 2022, La'ford's journey would take her out west to the wide-open spaces and gargantuan mountains of Utah. La'ford's interests are rooted in the majesty of the elements—the rocks and geological forces carved over millions of years, the land on which we now reside, and which serves as the ancestral homelands of several indigenous tribes. Devoid of preconceptions, she began by scrupulously reading up on all things Utah and exploring its vast terrain in order to understand these forces larger than herself.

Hers is an exhibition full of tantalizing dualities—the collective versus the personal, the stylized mark versus the rugged tactility of pediments, to name a few. The exhibition tackles how our identities are entwined with the natural soul of the spaces we reside, how minute our existence may be in the grand scale of geological time, and ultimately, how delicate a balance our relationship to our world may be.

Just as many before her have experienced, La'ford's journey through the West left a lasting impression. Her travels instilled a reverence for the potency of the land as a sacred space for both its first inhabitants and the Mormons's Zion. Her work aims to transfer the energy of these spaces into the gallery, using a violent manipulation of the most humble of artistic materials (clay, stone, iron) to create a uniform body of work that captures the essence of the West. Her art uses a series of perceptual sensations to bring the outside inside, to encompass the sublimity of contemplating our role in this vast universe. By turning matter into form is to invite the mind to adapt to a new kind of creative space.

Among the most fascinating implications of her philosophy and practice is the notion that the area's expansive deserts and mountains render us insignificant and conversely accelerate the feeling of apathy towards our climate crisis. Even the idea of human versus geological time–and the true astonishment that comes from the realization that the earth is 4.5 billion years old–instills a reverence for the pressures unfolding beneath and despite us.

Baked indelibly into the identity of the West is a particular form of discoverer's mythology that has afforded Euro-American pioneers the exclusive power to confer boundaries, ownership, and nomenclature. And while it should be stressed that La'ford does not make art explicitly centered on identity—hers is an egalitarian form of artmaking—it's impossible to ignore the symbolic power of an artist whose identities are decidedly outside of this Western mythology—as a black woman and mother—reclaiming and mapping in artistic form, the landscape as she sees it.

Tutuventi—"marks of those before"

La'ford's geometric installations—those which hang as three-dimensional forms and as illuminated decal-like configurations of copper and iron—mirror the shapes embedded in her abstract canvases. The sleek geometry is distinct from the tactile texture used in her canvases, which betray signs of human intervention in both her handprints and the rough surface resulting from her forceful application of ground pediments. Her use of blue and brown colors symbolizes the universal aspects of earth and sky, grounding in organic form our often sterile and cerebral association with abstraction. Moreover, her fascination with formal geometric patterns is related to an acknowledgment of the true scale of the universe, and the fact that the once unified supercontinent of Pangea for example, has over time exploded into puzzle-like constellations accompanied by plate tectonics and forces almost too grand in scale to fully comprehend.

Her series of abstract works on the gallery's upper level combine rich textiles with dark overlay that resembles volcanic basalt rock, in yet another example of her singular fusion of the abstract with the organic.

On an individual and artistic level, it is clear, however, that she is less interested in the ethos of artistic dominance that comes from the sort of high modernist brand of authoritative mark making, which she admittedly admires but deviates from in her practice. Hers is a flexible approach which combines a consistent aesthetic with formal experimentation guided by new spaces and experiences.

Born to Jamaican immigrants and raised in the Bronx, from afar La'ford's life appears a symbol of possibility, fueled by an unending curiosity and travels to far reaches of the globe. A former lawyer, La'ford's analytical focus has also rendered her attuned to the codes of human behavior—mapping out in an almost anthropological way the essence of a place and the drive of its people---using the art of persuasion to express such phenomena in artistic form.

Her video work of wildlife in Yellowstone National Park investigates the ways in which animals live in harmony with nature in addition to the unending sanctity of water as a collective lifeforce. Yet since her visit, the area has fallen victim to unprecedented flooding and the ever-increasing effects of climate change, making salient the ephemeral nature of the natural beauty we hold in such regard. Indeed, her art captures a lasting impression of our world as we desire it to be.

Stills from *One last time: Nature in harmony and nature in conflict*

Still from *Twin Falls, Idaho Twins*

Her installation of clay pots inspired by the indigenous cliff-dwelling peoples of the Southwest remind of this eminent focus that transcends centuries, while her video of a bubbling geyser activity alludes to the innate pressures which create us—those both within our subconscious and those emerging to the surface. Her video loop of an upside-down waterfall and reversed sand filling imbue a sense of levity to the gravity that sustains us.

La'ford relishes in the transformative properties of the rocks and earth that surrounds us, taking care to mark in an archeological way, a series of unique pediments from her travels. She sees what so many of us have marveled at in our stunning state—the artistic properties of gargantuan geological forms centuries in the making—a sort of divine modernist sculpture garden. To her, the West provides a more complete record of the forces shaping our world, utilizing the materials used by early inhabitants to this region–namely sand, stone, and geological maps–to replicate the grandeur and the possibilities of the great sculptor that is our universe.

The act of surveying is to construct new histories-reclaiming the ethno-cultural dominance of this narrative while engendering a familiar type of awe long shared by artists who encountered this incredible landscape before. La'ford recalls the significant fact that George Washington and other Founding Fathers acted as early surveyors of this nation, acknowledging her complicated relationship to this country that despite its foils, still manages to inspire.

Ya La'ford's vision is one of unending possibility, evidenced by her sprawling webs of geometric patterns that evoke a Sol LeWitt-style overgrowth subsuming all who come in their path. Her public murals grant but a tease of the unending possibilities that come from being afforded the opportunity to create—to make one's mark on a space and call it your own. Indeed, it is within this philosophy that La'ford shines. Her work is a catalyst, a force igniting the possibilities of communal action, for they are as much guided by the artist's own vision as they are the collective input of those around her. In this way, even when her work is not explicitly site specific, it is heavily rooted in the poetics of place.

YA LA'FORD ARTIST IN RESIDENCE:

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Kelly Carper

THE OCA ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM is offered to national and international artists, but it has community at its core. Residents are selected their fresh perspectives and unique processes, but most importantly, for their ability to inspire Utah artists and expand local engagement and discourse around contemporary art here in Ogden.

Ya La'ford has set the standard with her impactful presence as OCA's first visiting artist. The work she created in OCA's Lofts was inspired by the western landscapes that surround Ogden, and embedded with the spirit and history of this place and the people within it. La'ford spent weekends traveling with her own family in their airstream camper, exploring the west with fresh eyes as she gathered inspiration and material for her work, culminating with her solo exhibition, Survey: The West. Her work is invigorating for the local community as it not only illuminates the natural wonders of the West from a new perspective, but also acts as an invitation to get involved in its protection and preservation.

La'ford's personal and artistic impact, however, reaches far outside the walls of OCA's galleries and studio lofts. During her whirlwind residency in which she traveled the West, concepted an exhibition and created an entirely new body of work, she also spent valuable time with young artists in our community in collaboration with Youth Impact, Inc. This non-profit organization aims to positively impact the lives of at-risk youth by nurturing their emotional, physical and social needs. In addition to studio talks and art instruction, La'ford engaged students in a collaborative mural in The Monarch building. The children's painted handprints are layered within one of La'ford's signature geometric labyrinths, which symbolize the interconnection of humanity and the common threads that unite us.

La'ford says of her work's community connection: "I have learned that art is a reflection of us; each line, pattern and intentional intricate design layer represents the heartbeat of humanity. Each artwork builds upon my interaction with each unique community and I consider those moments significant to understanding how connecting influences a better appreciation of each other and the natural world around us."

Ogden's effect on the artist was just as impactful as her local influence. "I like to find the soul of a place and plug it in," she says. "Ogden is a hidden gem. We can search all over the world for magic and not even notice the sacred grounds that are right here."

THE EXHIBIT

Survey: The West introduces a different perspective by attempting to transport viewers into a geological history that harbors an ecological beginning, whereby change has characterized the Earth since its beginning some 4.5 billion years ago. From the outset, heat and gravity shaped the evolution of the planet and the American Southwest. Through this exhibit, I created new stories of discovery, excavation and research at many sites in Utah and the surrounding states, where art can be the revelation exposing new timelines, visuals and a synthesis of the southwestern symbolism that carefully considers the past, the materials, and the cultural characteristics that unite us with the land.

> “Our lasting impressions of the world are mainly visual ones. We remember best and longest what we have seen, yet, measured in the shortness of a human life, natural change is almost indiscernible. Because we are generally unaware of changes shaping and reshaping our precious environment, we tend to fix images in our mind’s eye to believe that the world about us should always look as it did when we first saw it. The west provides a more complete record of the forces beyond us that are constantly changing. The landscape is forever shifting in response to natural processes.”
>
> —Ya La’ford.

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE EXHIBIT

The Grand Staircase Series

The **Grand Staircase** is an immense sequence of sedimentary rock layers that stretch south from Bryce Canyon National Park to Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, through Zion National Park, and into the Grand Canyon National Park.

The major sedimentary rock units exposed in the Grand Canyon range from 200 million to 600 million years old, and were deposited in warm shallow seas and near-shore environments. The nearly 40 identified rock layers in the Grand Canyon form one of the most studied geologic columns in the world.

The oldest exposed formation in Zion National Park is the youngest exposed formation in the Grand Canyon – the ~240-million-year-old Kaibab Limestone. The Bryce Canyon area to the northeast continues where the Zion area leaves off by presenting Cenozoic-aged rocks that are 100 million years younger. In fact, the youngest formation seen in the Zion area is the oldest exposed formation in Bryce Canyon – the Dakota Sandstone. There are, however, shared rock units between all three, creating a super-sequence of formations that geologists call the Grand Staircase. Bryce Canyon’s formations are the youngest known units in the Grand Staircase. Younger rock units, if they ever existed, have been removed by erosion.

These layers have undergone 5000 to 10,000 feet (1500 to 3000 m) of uplift starting about 66 million years ago with the Laramide orogeny which has increased the ability of the Colorado River to cut its channel to make individual plateaus out of the Colorado Plateaus region. The major canyons of the region did not start to form until about five to six million years ago when the Gulf of California opened up and thus lowered the river’s base level (its lowest point).

Standing By The Rim

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

What makes the Grand Staircase unique is that it preserves more geologic history than any other place on Earth. Geologists often liken the study of sedimentary rock layers to reading a history book—layer by layer, detailed chapter by detailed chapter. Unlike igneous and metamorphic rocks, only sedimentary rocks are capable of preserving fossils. The problem is that in most places in the world, the book has been severely damaged by the rise and fall of mountains, the scouring of glaciers, etc. Usually these chapters are completely disarticulated from each other and often whole pages are just missing. Yet the Grand Staircase and the lower cliffs that comprise the Grand Canyon remain largely intact, speaking to over 600 million years of continuous Earth history—from Permian-Tertiary (275- 50 mya)—with only a few paragraphs missing here and there.

Unfortunately, the Grand Staircase is such a vast region of rock that no matter where you stand on its expanse, most of it will be hidden behind the curvature of Earth.

Weather & Erosion

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

Water and ice, extreme temperatures, and underground salt movement are responsible for the sculpted rock scenery. These violent forces, along with 100 million years of erosion, created one of the world's greatest densities of archways.

Meltwater

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

New features are being formed as old ones are destroyed. Erosion and weather work slowly but relentlessly, creating dynamic landforms that gradually change through time.

HooDoo

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

The word "hoodoo" means "to bewitch," which is what Bryce Canyon rock formations surely do. The hoodoos are **tall skinny shafts of rock that protrude from the bottom of arid basins.**

The uplift of the Colorado Plateau caused the area that is now Bryce Canyon to move to a higher elevation. For ~200 days of the year, the region experiences both above and below freezing temperatures, allowing ice and rain to create the hoodoos. **Water seeps into spaces between and within rock.**

300 Million

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

The park lies atop an underground salt bed that is responsible for arches, spires, balanced rock, sandstone fins and eroded monoliths that make up this sightseeing mecca. Thousands of feet thick in places, this saltbed was deposited across the Colorado Plateau 300 million years ago when a sea flowed into the region and eventually evaporated. Over millions of years, residue from floods, winds, and oceans blanketed the saltbed. The debris was compressed into rock.

Temple of Aeolus

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

This piece is inspired by a canyon carved by erosion. The virgin river and humans have eroded the path known as Angels Landing.

Canyon of the Grand Pangea

Material: Alcohol markers, gold leaf and Titanium
Size: 15"x12.5"

About 200 million years ago all the continents on earth were a supercontinent, surrounded by ocean, called Pangea. However, this gigantic continent broke apart and spread out to form a supercontinent that we are familiar with today. I think I was forced into this space where I could think of our planet as being 4.5 billion years old. On this time scale, 200 million does not seem like such a long time. It redefined how I perceive time: human vs. geological.

I wanted to emulate plate tectonics in this installation. The shapes of our continents fit together like a puzzle; identical rocks have been found on different continents, and I found similar connections between western and eastern states where pressure creates rocks and minerals under similar conditions.

THE IRON (Fe_2O_3) Series

From the red rocks of the Navajo Sandstone, to the Vermilion Cliffs of the Moenave and Kayenta Formations, to the pink, crimson, and chocolate cliffs of the upper Grand Staircase: many who visit the Colorado Plateau wonder what gives the rocks their brilliant colors.

Minerals are the basis of many pigments and dyes, so it should be no surprise that they are also responsible for the coloration of rocks. Of all the common colorful minerals found in Earth's crust, few are as abundant, dynamic, and multi-colored as iron. Depending on how it combines with other elements, iron can form a veritable rainbow of colors. When iron combines with oxygen it becomes iron oxide, and its degree of oxidation largely determines its color. Ochre, a mixture of clay, sand, and iron oxide, has been one of the most commonly mined mineral pigments for tens of thousands of years and is composed of the same minerals that often color rocks. Obtained from iron-bearing clays, ochre can produce several colors and hues that are used as natural coloring agents. Red ochre comes from hematite (Fe2O3), a mineral named for the same Greek root word for blood, and has long been used as a red pigment. Some iron oxides, when hydrated (combined with hydrogen and oxygen), can form bright yellows such as yellow ochre which comes from the mineral limonite (FeO(OH)+H2O). Brown ochre comes from the mineral goethite (FeO(OH)) and is a partially hydrated iron oxide. Iron can also form black pigments from minerals such as magnetite (Fe3O4), or even blue and green hues from minerals such as glauconite and illite. For the most part, these iron minerals, and particularly hematite, are responsible for coloring the Colorado Plateau's sedimentary rock layers.

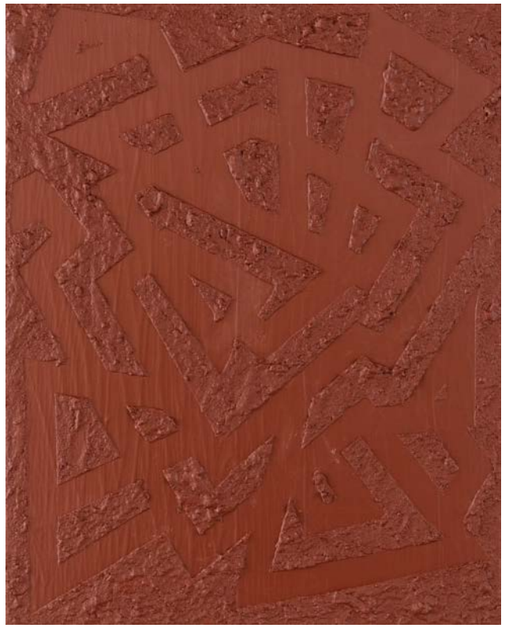
The Monument—Valley of the Gods

Material: MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, leather, string and acrylic
Size: 30"x20"

Westward expansion often focuses on the men and women who made the pilgrimage across the Great Plains; however, animal power played a significant role in reaching the destination and maintaining life in the new territory.

Monument Valley, a red-sand desert region on the Arizona-Utah border, is known for the towering sandstone buttes of Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park. The park, frequently a filming location for Western movies, is accessed by the looping, 17-mile Valley Drive. The famous, steeply sloped Mitten Buttes can be viewed from the road or from overlooks such as John Ford's Point.

The drive is not a valley in the conventional sense, but rather a wide, flat and sometimes desolate landscape, interrupted by crumbling formations rising hundreds of feet into the air—the last remnants of the sandstone layers that once covered the entire region.



We welcome El Nino (The Story of the Flash Flood)

Material: MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, rock , clay, sand, leather, string and acrylic
Size: 25"x16"

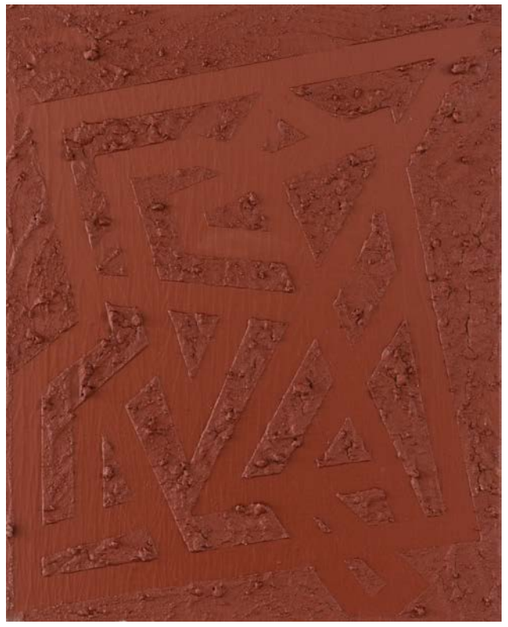
This piece considers our current drought versus flooding issues. In 1997, the effects of the Pacific weather system known as “El Niño” impacted the Colorado Plateau. In August of that year, storms threatened almost daily while weather reports showed nearly an inch of rainfall in single days, an astonishing amount for a region that gets an average of nine inches per year.

Native lifeways acknowledged the scarcity of water and moved with the seasons. Later on, life for the first homesteaders in the area was difficult due to poor soil conditions, lack of natural rainfall, extreme winds, heat, and cold. While many gave up and left, some stayed, and the desert communities eventually grew beyond their natural means. Humans developed systems to change the landscape and our ways of using it, for our benefit.

The Upper Antelope—The letter A

Material: MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, rock , clay, sand, leather, string and acrylic
Size: 20"x16"

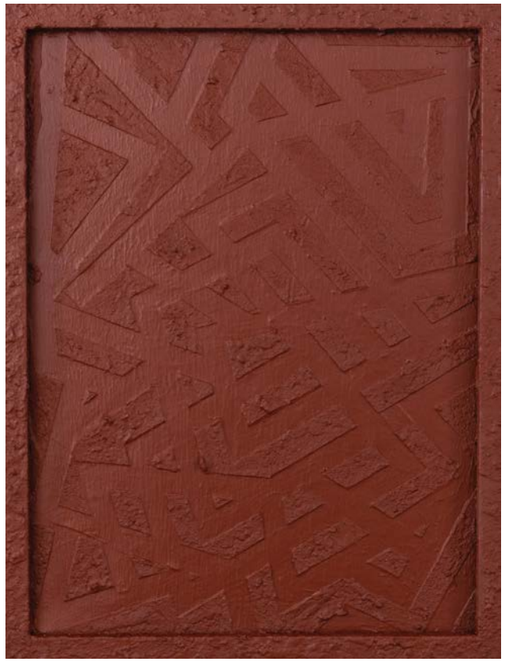
Upper Antelope Canyon, or *Tsé bighánílíní dóó Hazdistazí* in Navajo tongue, is known as “the place where water runs through rocks.” This slot canyon is well known in Arizona as it was formed by massive flash floods that eroded the Navajo sandstone. Without Arizona’s monsoon seasons, Antelope Canyon would not exist or at least, we wouldn’t have the surreal enchanting sandstone as it appears today. Walking through the canyon feels as if you are exploring a painted world made of sand and rock. The entrance and entire length of Upper Antelope Canyon is at ground level, meaning it provides easy access and tours for people of all physical abilities. **The canyon begins wide at the bottom while getting quite narrow at the top–similar to the shape of the letter A.** This grants all canyon goers an easy walk through the canyon and is welcoming to anyone who may be concerned with tight and twisty turns. However, the narrow top causes this canyon to be slightly dimmer than its counterpart.



Baby brother, Lower Antelope The letter V

Material: MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, rock , clay, sand, leather, string and acrylic
Size: 20"x16"

The surreal, dreamlike imagery in this piece is inspired by the baby brother, Lower Antelope Canyon. *Hazdistazí,* or “spiral rock arches,” is actually located several miles away from big brother Upper. The Navajo origin of its name comes from the twisty and curvy pathways within the canyon. Lower Antelope is a topsy turvy alternate. There is more narrow walking space on the ground of the canyon and a wider top—similar to the shape of the letter “V.” Mystical light beams shoot down from the skies above so that the light reflects and glows off the walls in a similar fashion as light beams.



The Mexican Hat

Material: MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, rock , clay, sand, leather, string and acrylic
Size: 25"x16"

After passing the eroded mesas of Monument Valley, highway US 163 crosses 20 miles of rather flat landscape, past scattered Navajo houses until you reach Mexican Hat, a small settlement named after a curious nearby formation consisting of a large flat rock 60 feet in diameter, perched precariously on a much smaller base at the top of a small hill.

The village itself is small, home to fewer than 100 people without many facilities. The surrounding scenery is exceptional yet rarely visited, featuring 1,200-foot sandstone cliffs at the edge of Cedar Mesa, the deep, layered canyons of the San Juan River, vast sandy desert plains, and a wide valley studded with isolated red rock buttes and mesas.

Primal Forces Series:
Journey to the Center of Earth

This series tells nature's story of Yellowstone, boiling with information of hydrothermal activity. Yellowstone National Park preserves the most extraordinary collection of hot springs, geysers, mudpots, and fumaroles on Earth. More than 10,000 hydrothermal features are found here, which includes more than 500 geysers.

Microorganisms called thermophiles, or heat lovers, make their homes in the hydrothermal features of Yellowstone. Although individually they are too small to be seen with the naked eye, so many are grouped together in the park's hydrothermal features—trillions!—that they often appear as mats of color. These microorganisms are also called extremophiles because they inhabit environments that are extreme to human life. Imagine living in water at near-boiling temperatures, with the alkalinity of baking soda, or with acidity that can burn holes in clothing. Microorganisms in Yellowstone not only exist in such conditions, but require these extremes to thrive.

HOODOOS

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 31 ¼"x25 ¼"

Hoodoos are clear evidence of weathering and erosion. Rivers and streams from the high plateau course to the sea, conforming to the variable topography created by lava flows, glaciers and their own erosive action. These streams and rivers plunge over ledges to create unexpected waterfalls; whether flowing or in the form of snow, ice or steam, water is a major erosive agent that shapes the landscape.

Geyser Mammoth

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 19 ½"x23 ½"

At the surface, carbon dioxide is released and calcium carbonate is deposited, forming travertine, the chalky white mineral forming the rock of travertine terraces. The formations resemble a cave turned inside out. Colorful stripes are formed by thermophiles, or heat-loving organisms.

Angel Terrace Geyser Mammoth White

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 19 ½"x23 ½"

Crater of the Moon

Material: Stencil Ink, Black 3.0, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 19 ½"x23 ½"

Crater of the Moon Cave

Material: Stencil Ink, Black 3.0, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 15"x12 ½"

Petroglyphs Trail Series–
Petroglyphs and Pictographs

Pueblo Bonito to Chetro Ketl

In Chaco Canyon, many petroglyphs were carved into the soft sandstone surface by a sharp-edged object. Through these sacred areas, I viewed thousands of unique, fascinating, and mysterious images that the Chaco people created on rock surfaces and Canyon walls, while learning about their enduring cultural legacy.

Tutuventi—"marks of those before"

Material: Stencil Ink, Black 3.0, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, glass, broken diamond, crystals and acrylic
Size: 35 ¾"x90 ½"

Throughout the American Southwest, rock images were intended as a visual communication—they represent clan symbols, records of important events during migrations, memory aids for recalling stories, songs and ceremonies. Descendants use them today as meaningful affirmations and ongoing associations with sites. The Hopi people call them "Tutuventi," which means "marks of those before."

This work considers those that came before us, introducing the prehistory of southwest from an artistic archaeological perspective.

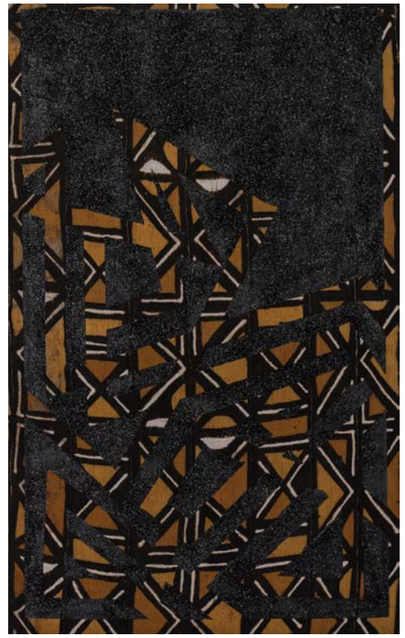
Mesa Top Loop 600 BC

Material: Stencil Ink, Black 3.0, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, glass, broken diamond, crystals and acrylic
Size: 58"x36"

This work is about what makes a house a home. Abundant resources? Closeness to family? Generational memories? I walked through one of the world's oldest permanent structures, built on a mesa where early ancestral pueblo settlers lived for thousands of years. Here, these nomadic people identified resources that made this a good place to live.

This artwork represents a 7,000 foot high viewpoint with a southward slope of the plateau, which provides more sunlight and warmth and lengthens growing seasons. The prevailing southwesterly wind also deposits rich sediments, receiving 18 inches of precipitation annually between winter snow and late summer thunderstorms. This pattern allows for farming without irrigation.

The idea that the land can supply everything is the statement here. The porous sandstone caprock soaks up some of the seasonal moisture. The water percolates through the rock before seeping out and forming springs on the canyon rim. The seep springs provide important water source for plants, animals and people alike. This created a home for more than 1,000 species of plants and animals, providing food, tools, clothing and medicine.



Aztec Ruins

Material: Stencil Ink, Black 3.0, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, glass, broken diamond, crystals and acrylic
Size: 58"x36"

This piece is a marker of the viewpoint. The patterns of Astronomical events like winter solstice and sunset, where builders intentionally left the spaces unroofed as an observatory.

This piece is a reflection of a place that was never really abandoned, but that gave homage to the spirits of our forefathers. Therefore, this work is a pilgrimage to essentially connect with the spirits of ancestors

Video Projections

Video from Yellowstone and Lake Powell

Navajo Ojavan

WATCH THE VIDEO

Twin Falls, Idaho Twins

Formed by the erosive actions, each droplet a tiny prism as the mist rises into the sunlight and transforms into a beautiful rainbow

WATCH THE VIDEO

One last time: Nature in harmony and nature in conflict

A) Where the road no longer is vs. where Lake Powell is gone

B) With this piece, I wanted to capture America's first National Park—home of the geyser, Old Faithful and land of the bison. The 4 minute video aims to capture the four sides and entrances to the park. Wildlife abounds from the smallest to the largest mammals found in North America.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Of water, heat and rock - Old Faithful Geyser

Old Faithful is a Yellowstone feature element and is one of over 300 geysers. However, here you can faithfully witness a focal point of the forces of erosion at work. This was a magical explosion that captivated this continent and has the possibilities of inspiring the world.

In creating this piece I considered, will Old Faithful ever stop erupting?

- This statement of geological systems is not static; geothermal activity is dependent on forces acting deep within the earth. Activity can be altered by seismic events or natural depositions of sinter within the plumbing system.
- This is out of our human control. We can only observe and record as a geyser suddenly explodes with a roar. The waters that hang suspended for one shimmering moment may have last captured the sunlight. A drop of rain falling travels a distance of one to two miles into the subterranean labyrinth.
- By the time it returns to the surface, hundreds, maybe thousands, of years have passed.
- A geyser has 3 main components: ample water supply, an underground heat source, and a subterranean reservoir with a network of cracks and channels. Rain and snow provide the first element, while molten rock, closer to the surface in Yellowstone than in another part of the world, heats the rock with which the seeping water comes into contact. The heated water rises and eventually flows into the geyser's plumbing system, which usually lies within 100 feet of the surface. This interconnected system is a perfect display of the poetics of space and a reminder of the internal fires lurking within the earth.

Tumbleweed—Our Russian Invaders

Russian immigrants introduced tumbleweed to the U.S. in 1873 when it was used as a contaminant in flax seed in South Dakota. Then in 1895, tumbleweeds were introduced to the Pacific Coast as they found their way on railroads and livestock cars headed to California's Antelope Valley.

The sight of a tumbleweed blowing in the wind is a scene that immediately evokes nostalgia for the American West; it symbolizes desolation and empty expanse, as the land just beyond the American frontier opens out into the unknown. Tumbleweeds are mysterious, with uncertain origins and unknown destinations, moving across the land at the mercy of the winds. They are the spirit of the cowboy– nomadic, lawless, and rough around the edges. Yet for all that they encapsulate as a part of the American tradition, the tumbleweed originated on the other side of the world.

Tumbleweeds, also known as "Russian thistle" or "wind witches", originally developed in the arid grasslands near the Ural Mountains in Russia before spreading across much of Asia and Europe.

The tumbleweed, however, is not an entirely useless vagabond. Farmers used young tumbleweeds to feed cattle, while other frontiers people burned tumbleweed to make soap. The Navajo found medicinal uses for it, treating influenza and smallpox. Recipes utilizing tumbleweeds evolved in environments where the landscape offered little else, and some of these folkloric culinary traditions are being revived through recent interest in foraging for food.

The word "tumbleweed" refers to a few different species, which share the property of being able to detach from their roots and be carried in the wind. The genus for many tumbleweeds (salsola) derives from the Latin word for salt ("sal")—a reference to the plant's high salt tolerance. Yet there is something unintentionally poetic in what the plant has come to signify in barren landscapes, alluding to the way in which tumbleweeds seem to "salt the earth"– cursing the land with their stubborn roots.

Before becoming the familiar mess of tangled, dry branches that we now recognize, tumbleweeds are small, light green shoots that sprout out of the ground, often with purple-red stems. As the plant matures, delicate pink and white flowers grow along their branches. Once the plant has finished growing (some grow to be as large as a compact car), a layer of cells forms at the stem and the tumbleweeds breaks off from its roots. Once a tumbleweed begins its undulating journey, it can disperse up to 250,000 seeds.

Spiral Jetty

The monumental earthwork Spiral Jetty (1970) was created by artist Robert Smithson and is located off Rozel Point in the north arm of the Great Salt Lake. Made of black basalt rocks and bits of earth gathered from the site, Spiral Jetty is a 15-foot-wide coil that stretches more than 1,500 feet into the lake. Undoubtedly the most famous large-scale earthwork of the period, it has come to epitomize the genre of Land Art. Its exceptional art historical importance and its unique beauty have drawn visitors and media attention from throughout Utah and around the world.

Rozel Point attracted Smithson for a number of reasons, including its remote location and the reddish quality of the water in that section of the lake (an effect of algae). Using natural materials from the site, Smithson designed Spiral Jetty to extend into the lake several inches above the waterline. However, the earthwork is affected by seasonal fluctuations in the lake level, which can alternately submerge the work or leave it completely exposed and covered in salt crystals. The close communion between Spiral Jetty and the super-saline Great Salt Lake emphasizes the entropic processes of erosion and physical disorder with which Smithson was continually fascinated.

The Mammoth Mounds Series

This piece was inspired by a geothermal site located in Yellowstone National Park that has the largest number of hot terraces in the world.

Located in northern Wyoming, this exceptional thermal site is unlike anything we have seen in Norris Geyser Basin. There are no geysers spewing acid waters and no transparent blue pools, yet, this place is the expression of volcanic forces that have been working in Yellowstone for hundreds of thousands years.

Liberty Cap

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 72 x 54”

- The tiered and scalloped pools of Minerva Terrae serve as a colorfully evolving backdrop to historic Fort Yellowstone. The ledges are formed from ornate travertine deposits.

Devil’s Thumb

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 72 x 54”

Devil’s Thumb was named by Native Americans, specifically the Ute and Arapahoe tribes, who, after feuding for decades, settled their differences and buried the Devil, leaving only his thumb exposed as a perpetual reminder of the evils of war.

Travertine Terraces
Travertine terraces are formed from limestone (calcium carbonate). Water rises through the limestone, carrying high amounts of dissolved calcium carbonate. At the surface, carbon dioxide is released and calcium carbonate is deposited, forming travertine, the chalky white rock of the terraces. Due to the rapid rate of deposition, these features constantly and quickly change.

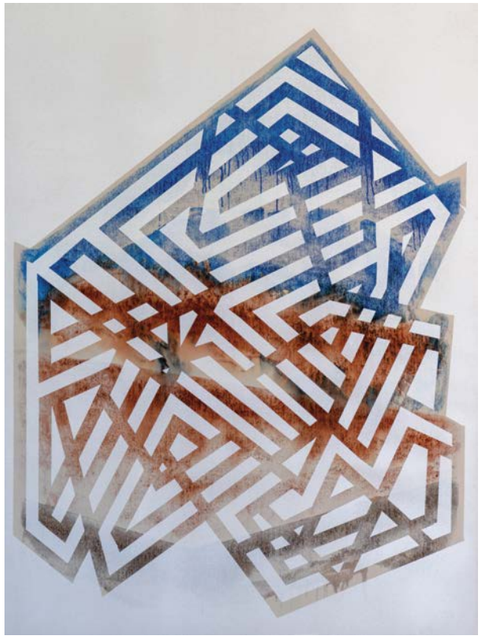
Color & Heat Lovers
Hydrothermal features are also habitats in which microscopic organisms survive and thrive. They are called thermophiles: “thermo” for heat and “phile” for lover.

Although they are too small to be seen with the naked eye, trillions are grouped together and appear as masses of color. They are nourished by energy and chemical building blocks.

Colorless and yellow thermophiles grow in the hottest water.

Orange, brown, and green thermophiles grow in cooler waters.

Imagine living in near-boiling temperatures, in hydrothermal features with the alkalinity of baking soda, or in water so acidic that it can burn holes in clothing. Microorganisms in Yellowstone need these extremes to survive.



Orange Spring Mound

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 72 x 54”

The Orange Spring Mount flows from several vents in its top and side. Its striking colors come from the thermophiles living in the hot water. The road was recently moved away from the spring to allow the free flow of water and travertine formation.

A network of fractures and fissures form the plumbing system allows hot water from underground to reach the surface at Mammoth Hot Springs. Small earthquakes may keep the plumbing open. The water comes from rain and snow falling on surrounding mountains, seeping deep into the earth where it is heated.

The volcanic heat source for Mammoth Hot Springs remains somewhat of a mystery. Scientists have proposed two sources: the large magma chamber underlying the Yellowstone Caldera or a smaller heat source closer to Mammoth.

For hundreds of years, Shoshone and Bannock people collected minerals from the Mammoth Hot Springs terraces for white paint.

Inside-Out Cave

Material: Titanium dioxide, gouache, MOAB Pigmentation, egg, wax, saved rock, clay, sand, alcohol, bleach and acrylic
Size: 72 x 54”

This cave was formed largely because limestone is a relatively soft type of rock, allowing the travertine formations to grow much faster than other sinter formations. It has been described as a cave turned inside out.

At Yellowstone each year, the rain and melted snow seeps into the earth. Cold to begin with, the water is quickly warmed by heat radiating from a partially molten magma chamber deep underground, which is the remnant of a cataclysmic volcanic explosion that occurred 600,000 years ago.

In the Mammoth area, the hot, acidic solution dissolves large quantities of limestone on its way up through the rock layers to the hot springs on the surface. Above ground and exposed to the air, some of the carbon dioxide escapes from the solution. Without it, the dissolved limestone can’t remain in the solution, so it reforms into a solid mineral. This white, chalky mineral is deposited as the travertine that forms the terraces.

Aztec Ruins meets Chaco Culture

Kiva Spruce Tree

The word “kiva” comes from the Hopi language. With this work, I want the viewer to imagine the vessel from the inside, and what it might have meant to climb down into this special room.

The pattern on the outside is a reminder that ancient people were interested in decorating their homes as we are today. In AD1200, people covered interior and exterior walls with plaster, and the geometric design created a dado. However, this design could also be the openings that may have been windows or doorways.

Pueblo Bonito

This work is dedicated to the great house, with the pattern driven by distinctive masonry, multistoried construction, and huge subterranean ceremonial chambers.

Balcony House

This work is about building: builders often oriented home and place to solar, lunar and cardinal directions and surrounded them with sophisticated astronomical markers, communication features, water controlled devices.

Wetherill Mesa

Also known as no 21, this pattern was a reminder of the deep grooves worn into the rockface.

Artifacts from Step House offered more intriguing clues as to how people lived: a bowl with browned cornmeal, a corrugated jar containing seeds of ten plants, five pairs of scallop-toed sandals, willow baskets, feather and fur holder, pouch of prairie dog skin filled with salt, and much more.

Kin Kletso

The person who gave me these artifacts wanted me to hold on to their legacy and ancestry. This is why I named this one “Kin Klesto,” because it shows strong evidence of construction and occupation by Pueblo peoples who migrated to Chaco from the northern San Juan Basin in the time period of 1125 to 1200.

The ground plan is laid out like the pattern on the face of pot. Rectangular and, unlike many earlier great houses, there is no associated great kiva or plaza. The pueblo was three stories on the north side, dropping to two stories over the remainder of the building.

Teton Series

Moose Junction

Sitting at the base of the southern end of the Teton Range, Moose Junction is a gateway between Jackson and Grand Teton National Park. Visitors have spectacular views of the Teton Range, along with access to the Snake River.

Moran Junction

Moran offers access to the Snake River and the Two Ocean Lake Trailhead. Visit the iconic Oxbow Bend, hike around a lake, or float the Snake River.

Two Ocean Lake is a trailhead with access to Two Ocean Lake, Emma Matilda Lake, and Grand View Point.

Jackson Lake Junction

With an elevation of 6,765 feet, Jackson Lake Junction has expansive views of Willow Flats, Jackson Lake, and the Teton Range to the west. Jackson Lake Lodge is home to black and grizzly bears, moose, elk, and other large animals. Bears are often seen on trails and in the developed areas.

Jenny Lake Junction

Focus on the Jenny Lake Scenic Drive that skirts the east shore of Jenny Lake and provides spectacular views of the peaks

The Enchanted Meanders
Environmental Installation

Material: Metallic paint, Iron, LED Lights

With this work, I tried to build an unimaginable space like Horseshoe Bend and Gooseneck, which has vast stretches of red rock sandstone slabs at the top of the rim. The Colorado River far below is blue, because at that point in its journey it has just emerged from the dam at Lake Powell. Goosenecks State Park has more of a crumble rock surface at the rim and has lots of vegetation on the canyon walls. At the bottom, the San Juan River is muddy and brown.

Both are miracles of nature that I wanted to display in this installation. The LED light represents the lake, reflecting the sun in the day and the moon at night. The surrounding patterns represent the colors of the cliffs that were molded by rivers. The circular motions and vibrations represent the landscape's perfectly shaped rock formation. With this piece, I want the viewer to feel as if they have varying perspectives of this geological evolution.

Geothermal Activity
Projection Inside Media
Room

Mr Surveyor

A surveyor updates boundary lines and prepares sites for construction (or an art exhibition!) They make precise measurements to determine property boundaries and provide data relevant to the shape and contour of the Earth's surface for engineering, mapmaking, and construction purposes.

The earliest surveyor dates back to ancient Egypt, when farm boundaries were re-established after the flood of the Nile River. In America, George Washington is our most famous surveyor, along with Abraham Lincoln, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson.

THANK YOU

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