

Spaces and Places
A Re-Envisioning of the Landscape
by
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Abstract

My current work is a search for reframing space through collage and mixed media paintings in a series of abstracted, symbolic landscapes. This search arose after leaving behind every familiar place and person, and having lost someone whom I shared a connection with. After living with the grief of losing a loved one, and inspired by a series of dreams, the use of symbolic space emerged in response to memories of my hometown out West and exploration through nature surrounding the New River Valley. Notes taken from my dreams, memories, and walks are my sources for this search in reconnecting myself with others and with the world.

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Dedication

With great honor I dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Akiko Brown, who passed away shortly after I left home to enter into graduate school. My spirit is infused with memories of her stories, quiet determination, love of nature and boxes of yarn. Each day, in the quiet of morning, I embark on a walk and spot a dime, waiting to be picked up; each day, I know she smiles my way.

Goodbye, Grandma.

Farewell, Moon.

Acknowledgements

To my cherished friends and loved ones; we've traveled together in spirit for all these years, thank you for celebrating this milestone with me.

To my mother and father, for their astonishingly deep well of love and support.

Last, but never least, I could not have reached the final hour of graduate school without the support of the faculty and committee members of the Art Department. With gratitude, I thank Dr. Halide Salam for her passion, honesty, and the time she invested in challenging and encouraging me to grow as a painter; to Dr. Roann Barris for engaging with my mind in many meaningful ways; to Dr. Eloise Philpot for supporting my interest in paying heed to the symbolic content of dreams.

To those whose name weren't mentioned.

If you're wondering if you belong, then you're already here.

Thank. You.

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INTRODUCTION

"For the artist communication with nature remains the most essential condition. The artist is human; himself nature, part of nature within natural space." - Paul Klee¹

My current work is a search for reframing space through collage paintings in a series of abstracted, symbolic landscapes. This search arose after leaving behind every familiar place and person, and having lost someone whom I shared a connection with. Inspired by a series of dreams, my use of symbolic space emerged in response to recalling my relationship with my grandmother while walking home out west and through trails surrounding the New River Valley.

What was it about dreams that fascinated me? In my undergraduate program, dreams had been a rich resource for accessing inspiration and ideas in the studio, but I had very little practice in talking about the purpose of the images coming out. It left me struggling with how to communicate with others about my work at the start of graduate school. In my struggle, I had let go of dreaming, and allowed it to sink into the background as I continued my studio practice, searching for new forms and ideas to explore.

¹ Klee, Paul. *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, p. 7

My grandmother passed away, unexpectedly, within weeks of my first semester in graduate school; this experience completely shattered my sense of reality and security, leaving me with the task of reconciling with this loss. I sought comfort and reconciliation through walks, as a way of re-connecting with her presence. Eventually, I pieced together my experiences through my studio work. I was searching for a way to honor the grief I was moving through in order to come back to wholeness; and it began with a circle. It gave me comfort to draw such a simple form, and was coming through regularly in my dreams. I began to reflect on the circle and other symbolic imagery, searching for how to connect these images with experiencing being in the world.

Over time the presence of the circle opened, and I began to incorporate the use of the landscape as a focal point. For this thesis, the landscape is defined as both a stretch of land experienced externally as well as a descriptive metaphor for an internal state. A landscape is a body of land observed and experienced by the senses; it also has the potential to activate a surge of memories and experiences within the mind - in this case, a landscape is as much a body of land as it is the mind, encompassing dreams and finding a sense of place in the world. I've used walks through nature trails in the New River Valley of Virginia and near the Foothills of California as one of several sources for collecting information on landscapes, absorbing my experiences of being in nature and translating these experiences through collage.

I am pulled into and deeply moved by artists who share their stories and experiences through incomprehensible mark making and abstracted work. The pain that stems from the need to speak and the inability to do so is so real and relevant for me. I find myself transported when I experience a glimpse of another's memory and story, especially when it comes through with hesitation or a suspended in mystery. Due to the personal, dream and memory-driven aspects of my work, the artists that I feel most affinity towards for my work at this time are Paul Klee and Gael Stack.

My work is marked by the search for balance, harmony, and transformation. It's my intention to show the viewers the seed of transformation through three bodies of work - *Presence*, *Wish You Were Here*, and *Last Night I Dreamt....* Informed by my walks through nature, I chose to explore the themes of the mountain, valley, and oceans in my latest series of collages, incorporating the sense of overlapping memories through the use of torn rectangular paper, thin bands of dark stripes and transparent, rounded squares. Textures became the highlight of my work through the act of tearing, sanding, and layering. Soft creams and earth tones, which showed frequently in my work earlier, faded, supporting bolder uses of blues and yellows in the compositions. This searching through collage culminated in my final thesis project, a series of oil paintings on wood panels.

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF ME

I found myself in a field of golden wheat; the sky seemed endless, a striking blue.

For this thesis, dreams are a cycle of feelings, thoughts, and images experienced during certain stages of sleep. Although, as human beings, we are connected by reoccurring themes and symbols, the dreams we experience remain unique, tailored to the personality and life of the dreamer. How we perceive the themes and images that arise in our dreams is shaped largely by our personal mythology. Gradually, after my grandmother passed away, I began to pay closer attention to my dreams as a source of inspiration in the studio; tentatively, I embarked on my first successful collage series *Presence of the Circle*, as a result of encountering the form of the circle in my dreams. The circle first appeared in a dream I experienced shortly before leaving for graduate school:

I was standing in a field of golden wheat before a circle of older women.

The circle opened, and was made welcome. I took my first step towards the center.

-July 27th, 2011.

The circle could be anything and appear anywhere - a celestial body, the sun, a disc, the base of a vase. For me it was a beginning, signifying the search for being

present. My use of the circle has been both personal, as well as a reunion with slowing down and appreciating nature - I feel an affinity to Dr. M.L. von Franz's thoughts on the circle. The circle, according to von Franz, is symbolic of the self, expressing the union of opposites and the totality of 'the relationship between humans and the whole of nature'² Traditionally, the circle links our egoic identity with the eternal, ever-evolving Self that resides within; across time and cultures, the circle has appeared in creation myths, Zen buddhist ink paintings, modern western painting, e.g.³

I'm informed by artists who respond to the world around them, pulling in elements of their life and translating these elements as symbols. For Dr. Carl Jung, a symbol is an object, name, or image that implies something more than the immediate impression or meaning.⁴ For example, the circle finds its way in artist Paul Klee's *Ad Marginem* (Fig. 1), where a red disc, encased in a faint, diamond shaped halo, hovering above a ground that seems to glow with washes of earth-tones. Delicately hatchmarked forms of bird, plantlife and ambigious shapes cradles the perimeters of the work. As a young student, Klee created numerous botanical studies, and later on continually searched to 'make the invisible visible'⁵ by responding to the natural world in his work.⁶

2 Jung, Carl. *Man and His Symbols*, p.266

3 Ibid. p.267

4 Ibid. pp.3-4

5 Klee, Paul, *The Creative Credo*. "Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible".

6 Friedewald, Boris, *Paul Klee: Life and Work*. p.91 The author includes Paul Klee's notes on reality being an analogy for a spiritual world; or, at least, a world beyond our senses.



Fig. 1

Circular forms, once I acknowledged them from my dreams, began to pervade my waking life. I also felt an innate pull towards images of water and the moon, an expression of the circle. I was stirred especially by the circular patterns made by ripples in water, which mimicked, in my eyes, the different curves of the moon. Even stains left from my coffee mug on sheets of paper carried significance. Circular forms began to take precedence in my works by then. The circle has come to symbolize, on one level, my grandmother and the connection we had shared.

I've also used the circle to reference the moon, or simply as a compositional device to draw the viewer's eye to a specific point in a work; the latter of the two moreso as I moved on from *Presence* to *Wish You Were Here*. In my most successful works, I don't use the circle - I wait for it to be finished with me. I've made the mistake of incorporating the circle when the need wasn't present, and it's shown through each time. I needed the form to be there in the same way I began to recognize it in my dreams. The circle evolved into an exploration of symbolic space, and gradually into incorporating the use of memories of walking through nature and experiencing landscapes into my works.

SPACES AND PLACES

*An engulfing vision of a blue mountain, shadowed; The chill of the moon
cascading above it.*

RECALLING LAND

How do we define our sense of space and land? A landscape can be defined as a stretch of land perceived by the senses. The use of land in my work represents both the external view of nature and an internal space of emotions, feelings, and intuition. My focus on the landscape is partially due to the profound and pervasive dreams I've experienced that have placed me in the space of mountains, valleys, and oceans. These bodies of land are the most autobiographical and symbolic in my search for working with memory and land. The places I walked through are became my touchstones for defining the landscape in my work. This exploration became the foundation of searching for an understanding of the landscape, and its connection to memory and dreams. Memory is what makes us human - it is used as a touchstone for understanding where we come from, and how we identify our sense of place with the world; we use our past experiences as a tool for understanding how to navigate through challenges ahead.

One of the greatest influences in my life was the presence of my grandmother, who passed away unexpectedly shortly after I entered into graduate school.

Ultimately, my grandmother was a woman who appreciated walks and tending to her garden. Only once in a blue moon would she open her life's history with her loved ones; growing up, I became the recipient of glimpses of her life in postwar Japan. My heritage is rooted with loss on a massive scale; my grandmother lived through the bombing of Hiroshima and survived devastating circumstances as a young girl. The stories from her school years after the bombing that bubbled from her periodically have embedded themselves into my memory.

Collage accommodates my childhood memories, which are rich with stories of running across golden fields of wheat and the distant mountains at home, with the smell of the sea and the sounds of water lapping at the sand during family trips. I've found that the most natural response to the strata of experiences from walking is collage; assembling and re-framing space through cutting and combining different textured materials. Land is translated into layered strips and torn sheets of paper material; the endless lapping of waves is transformed into the varied hatchmarks of pastels and charcoal.

WALKING

Walking was the initial response to the sense of loss I felt during my residency in Virginia. It eventually began to inform my works, transforming the ethereal and dream-like images of my work into spaces more grounded in response to what my eyes were taking in.

As I suggested earlier in this paper, my collages are not a specific memory, but rather contain a full spectrum of events and dreams pulled from my life experiences. Part of how we understand the world is shaped through the memories we carry with us. I go on walks, often, when I visit my home out west. The flatness of fields dominant the space of my hometown, and seem to stretch out forever, bleached gold by the sun. These fields are complemented by the vastness of the sky; only in the distance, obscured by smog, can you make out the faint tracing of mountain ranges. It's when I reach the foot of the mountain that the full presence of the form reveals itself. Although I take photographs to record a moment of walking and taking in beautiful views, I'm hesitant to print out these photographs to incorporate in the collages. My main focus is to use found materials in my works, especially outdated copies of National Geographic magazines. By using classic magazines, I can appropriate the experiences and lenses of others into my work that viewers might recognize.

JOURNALING

Author Julia Cameron, in her book *The Artist's Way* presented a daily practice which, for me, has transformed into an essential tool in my life. Aptly named 'Morning Pages', this practice is designed for the individual to lay out all of their thoughts, first thing in the morning, through writing.⁷ With the limit set at three pages, memories, concerns, inspirations; all of these are encouraged to be transmitted onto paper or word processor. Cameron encourages the person to stuff these pages into envelopes, away from prying eyes. I consider journaling as crucial a process in my studio works as walking and taking photographs of my surrounding. The writings are sometimes used in my collage studies, and eventually translated as a series of mark makings in my collage paintings. I sought to bring out a sense of recollection in these works, gathering information from walks through nature and creating mark makings based on the feeling of being in natural space.

⁷ Cameron, Julia. *The Artist's Way*. pp. 3-5. Included in the beginning of the book, Cameron offers a step-by-step process of cultivating your creativity. I find it important to note, for future readers, that the sibling to the *morning pages* process is the *artist date*, which is mentioned and explained later on in this book.

INSPIRATION AND INFLUENCE

Pause, and breath; sinking into the reflection.

PAUL KLEE

Swiss artist Paul Klee was one of the few modern painters brought to my attention as a young woman, before studying art. Klee's response to the natural world, in making the invisible visible through art, served as an inspiration in my studio practice by helping me bridge the use of dreams and responding to the natural world from my own walks.

Although Klee had an exceptional command of line in his work, it wasn't until his trip to Tunisia in 1914 that he recognized himself as a painter and fully explored his relationship with color.⁸ Klee's landscape studies from his student trip to Tunisia shows his loose use of colors as squared and rectangular forms. Klee eventually cultivated symbolic content in his use of color, with a wide range of values culled from similar hues of color.

What I love about Paul Klee's work, especially his watercolors during and after his student trip to Tunisia, is how he interprets the landscapes as a series of squares and simple, geometric forms. Doing away with pure representation, lines and dots of color become the texture of the land. Klee's works are at once delightful and meticulous; known for experimenting with a variety of mediums,

⁸ Felix, Klee, ed., *The Diaries of Paul Klee*. p.260.

Klee's work ranges from small works on paper, to paintings on slate, or watercolors on canvas, even burlap. Texture of surface comes through as a priority in his work, along with color arrangement and his use of line. David Burnett's writings on Paul Klee is insightful regarding the artist's relationship and response to land :

Klee did not seek to approach the external landscape as matter for interpretation but as a matrix of experience - landscape meant a certain scale, certain modes of color, an atmosphere, a tracing of memories, a sense of continuity, a metaphor for even wider spaces.⁹

GAEL STACK

Gael Stack uses handwritten notes in her works; shorthand notes or scribbles jotted down for groceries are translated in many of her paintings. I feel connected to her inclusion of these mysterious points of entry and notation; in a similar fashion, I incorporate journal entries into my collages, and utilize notes from my dreams as inspiration for a body of work. Her layering of pastels in her oil paintings are breathtaking; hovering between physicality and ethereal, they behave similarly to her mark making; ghost-like, and thin tracing of a body or image.

⁹ Burnett, David, "Paul Klee: The Romantic Landscape", p.323.

Stack uses her family and friends as subject matter for her works. I look to Stack in her overlapped drawings and her particular use of mark making to address the scope of memory. Stack's works are difficult to engage with; a blend of the personal and historical, her figures suggest a narrative that wants to be plainly told. Stack's method incorporates the use of collage and painting techniques, drawing directly on tissue paper and layering the same image as if a ghost were hovering above the original form (Fig. 2). Stack incorporates drawings, oil paints and pastels, with layered drawings of tissue paper using graphite and colored pencils in her works. Stack's drawings make use of memory by incorporating elements of writing from her personal life as well as references to art history¹⁰.

In *Helen's Dream*, (Fig. 3) colors that would have been beautiful – creams, periwinkle blues, soft pinks, and faded yellows - stretch out in a series of bizarre pastel marks, floating, scratched and uncertain, held up above a space of faded earth tones. Ambiguous forms, and perhaps writings, begin to emerge from the pastels, as if drawn by a child's hand. The way the pastels are built up alludes to one of Stack's tissue paper drawings, but denser in the handling.

¹⁰ Rubinstein, Raphael, *Reinventing the Mystic Writing Pad*, essay on Gael Stack, p.7.

Stack's work is tied to the themes of repetition, the role of memory, and the presence of undefined and indesipherable elements.¹¹ Stack approaches memory not by land, but by exploring, "...the random shuffles of recollection, the interruptions of daily life...reassembling and emroidering story lines with each retelling."¹²

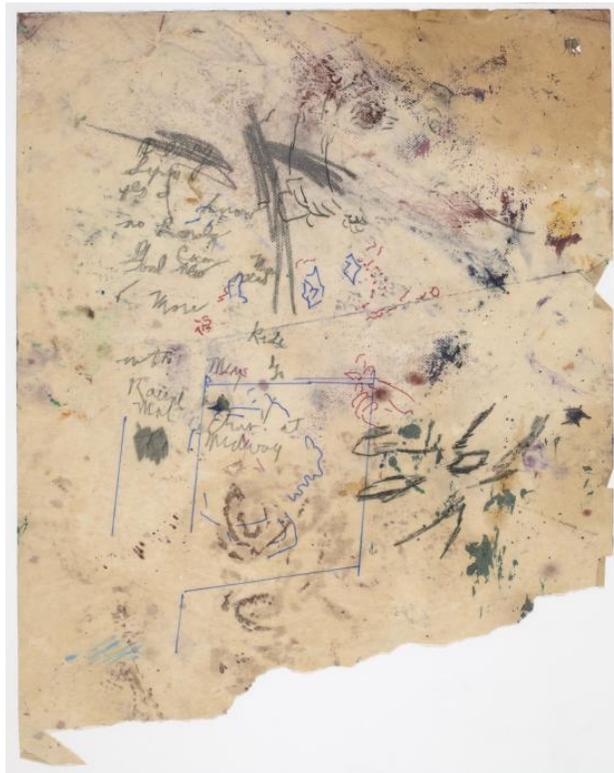


Fig. 2

¹¹ Stack writes, "I have a continuing interest in the unknown and, even more, the unspoken, and the past's rather implacable hold on the present".

In Alison De Lima Greene's essay on Gael Stack, she pulls a quote from Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings* that Stack has referenced in approaching her artistic process:

The events of our lives happen in a sequence of time, but in their significance to ourselves they find their own order, a timetable not necessarily - perhaps not possibly - chronological. The time as we know it subjectively is often the chronology that stories and novels follow: it is the continuous thread of revelation."¹³

¹² De Lima Greene, Alison, *All That Remains*, essay on Gael Stack, p. 15

¹³ Eudora Welty, *One Writer's Beginnings* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 69.



Fig. 3

TECHNIQUE AND PROCESS

Dissolving in the ocean, gazing at the crescent moon.

DRAWING

In the beginning I worked directly with incorporating images from my dreams into my paintings and drawings. These works came through prominently as a series of drawings during my first semester. Many of my earlier drawings emphasized the use of creams and earth tones, and were often very light and ethereal in form. The *Dream Series* drawings encapsulated my fascination with softening hard edges with layering translucent, white hatch marks. In *Drawing V*, ambiguous forms emerge from and sink back into an ethereal space of pinkish hues and creams. One aspect of these drawings that trumped me in the beginning was my reluctance to define the significance of using these forms in my works. Regardless of why the images were coming out, the techniques which developed from these series of drawings would eventually serve as a catalyst for my exploration into collage.



Fig. 4

COLLAGE

Since the act of mark making, erasing, and layering were already present in my drawings, collaging was a natural transition for me later on. The ability to take apart my drawings and rearrange them through cutting and pasting became a refreshing change of pace at that time. The word collage comes from the French *coller* ('to glue'), its emergence coinciding with the rise of Modernism in the early 20th century, as Pablo Picasso and George Braque began experimenting with collage technique in their drawings and paintings.¹⁴ Incorporating bits of found material to inform a work, the object and the painting were fused with scrapes and bits of glue.

¹⁴ Craig, Blanche. *Collage: Assembling Contemporary Art*, p.7

The bridge between the *Dream Series* drawings and collage came from *Dream Sail*, a work created from found material, tissue paper, and torn drawings on wood panel. The panel's surface really holds together from the repeated actions of erasing and sanding, and is ideal for how I collage. While some areas of *Dream Sail* have been painted, the bulk of this collage has clearly been drawn upon. I would introduce painting as the dominant element in my work later on. Still coming from a place of dream-like imagery, *Dream Sail*, the treatment of space is deliberately broken up by the use of the transparent, rectangular form. Here the moon shape makes its first deliberate appearance in my studies, coming through in slivers of charcoal and cream tones as a crescent suspended in the background.



Fig. 5

I'm obsessed with the process of using common materials to create works of beauty, rich with textures. I create my heritage and upbringing for this fascination; every scrap of material was held onto and ingeniously re-used in my grandmother's home. Milk cartons became containers for plants, stashes of paper were held onto for years to write notes on, and pounds of cloth were saved for future projects. As a survivor, every material had value, potential, and possibility.

I've come to associate texture with intimacy; it's my intention to create works that viewers would want to touch, and to be drawn in on a personal level. I appreciate it when I see viewers come up to my works and peer in closely, their nose hovering over the surface - especially with my collages. I've kept my collages at a small scale, ranging no more than 12" x 12" - these works are meant to be displayed in a small niche or space, embraced, almost hugged, by the walls.

PROCESS

How do I begin creating my series of collage paintings? It begins with drawing, using graphite, charcoal, and pastels. I stay at my drafting table with several (or more) 4"x4" sheets of paper, and because I work in the square format formally, I prefer to keep my drawings within the square while I'm exploring ideas. Similar to the collage paintings, my drawings involve a heavy use of building and scraping away layers with dry media.

For the collages, I often use elements I've worked out from the drawing act as a base for the composition. I then begin with finding the right materials to cut out and use to paste on the canvas or panel. And that's where the magic begins to take form, for me. My methods for working with collage include transfers, sanding, drawing, painting, and pasting using found materials and photographs I've taken. To preserve the images, each layer is sealed with an application of matte medium, an acrylic polymer that acts as a clear, matte sealant once dried.

Before starting a new collage, I begin by bringing out my collection of collage materials. National geographic magazines, maps, and photographs are all laid out on the table; some have already been torn, others are fresh off from the printer, ready to be used. I usually proceed next by applying a layer of tinted gesso on the panel, sanding the prepped surface to better hold glued paper. Once the surface is ready, there is no determined process for creating these collages; usually the steps are swapped around. I sometimes begin with applying marks on the surface with graphite and charcoal pencils, and sometimes I jump right away with coating the panel with two or three applications of acrylic paint. Afterwards, I turn my attention next to the stacks of paper material that I have gathered; depending on the composition I want to build, I'll glue an entire sheet of paper onto the panel, or else I'll tear and cut the printed image to a suitable size.

I cannibalize my works over a period of time, reusing materials and keeping scrap drawings and studies for years in the off chance that it will be needed at some point in my next work. Many of my collages and collage paintings still contain representational images that have been altered by the hand. My hands work with an already existing image, adding to it my own perspective through mark making, sanding, or painting. Found materials became the focal point in my studio practice, as well as pastels, acrylics, oil paints, tissue paper, sand paper, and different textures of paper.

I've recorded my dreams regularly for years now, and use my notes as a source of inspiration for my work; the moon, the movement of wheat fields, and the seemingly endless skies that I recall from dreaming make frequent visits in my studies. I also incorporate mark making as a way of translating the sense of journaling into my works, symbolizing thoughts surfacing while experiencing a land or view. My use of color focuses on the spectrum of creams, earth tones, blues, and yellows, and rarely deviates from this range. My use of blues has come to symbolize the presence, and sometimes emerging, of land, sky, and water.

PRESENCE

The *Presence* collage series were a radical departure from my first drawings.

Rather than using color schemes that were creamy and ethereal, these new works became considerably more grounded in its use of earth tones and blues. The use of the circle became grounding, spurring me into a momentum of working out this form in the *Presence* series. *Moon Movement*, my preliminary study before embarking on *Presence*, is the first painted collage which focused on the use of the circle, using the imagery of movement and cycles as the focal point of this work. Gouache, tissue paper, and collage material were the mediums I used, layering and sanding each sheet to build up rippled textures. The tissue paper was used over dark sheets of collage material and sanded in between coatings of matte medium to give the space an appearance of reflective waves of water. The blue and ochre crescents represent the reflection of the moon cycle over the body of water.

As I incorporated the use of circles in the *Presence* series, some of the forms were sharp in focus, while others were ghostly and fading into the background of landscapes; it is from this series that the use of abstracted land began to emerge in my works.



Fig. 6

The collage painting *Presence of the Circle III* incorporates the use of the mountain range, fused in the middle of the space, The mountain is the only image that is representational, while the remaining space dissolves into abstracted forms using creams, earth tones, and washes of blue. The creams follow the form of the mountain, broken into a series of squared rectangles. This is also the only work in the *Presence* series that has left the circle as a ghostly image, rendering it in subtle lines in favor of showcasing the mountain and deep blue sky.



Fig. 7

WISH YOU WERE HERE

The series *Wish You Were Here* is a deliberate exploration of re-framing space through collage paintings. Communicating this visually, I've come to rely on textures, and the materiality of the collage paintings. One group of collage paintings that showcases the adaptation of perception, memory, and land is the triptych *Three Sisters*.

Three Sisters is a semi-autobiographical collage painting, inspired by my mother and her younger sisters. The theme of water comes up, as well as the appearance of rocky terrains and ocean shore cliffs, making use of blues, whites, and earth tones. Images overlap one another, with tissue paper glued on to push back some of the forms. This is the first time I used collage materials and acrylics to deliberately create an ambiguous sense of space - it is difficult to discern whether the blue forms are sky or water, while the white hatch marks seem to foam and crash against the rocky, earth tone figures. The spaces of sky, water, and earth overlap, creating an atmosphere of tension as they reconcile the occupation of space. It's *Three Sisters II* that dissolves the hard edged space of sky, water, and land; the layers of rounded squares are more subtly arranged. I experimented with scumbling and some glazing with varnish to blend the edges of the blues and ochres.



Fig. 8

Wish You Were Here series is the most directly informed, among my body of work, by my walks. Executed as collage paintings, each work comes from a specific time or frame of reference; I used dreams as the driving point of what body of land I work with. For example, *Wish You Were Here III* is a reference to memories of playing in the beaches of California as a child. At the same time, the circle is also present, and there is a sense of waves taking over and crashing over the entire composition.

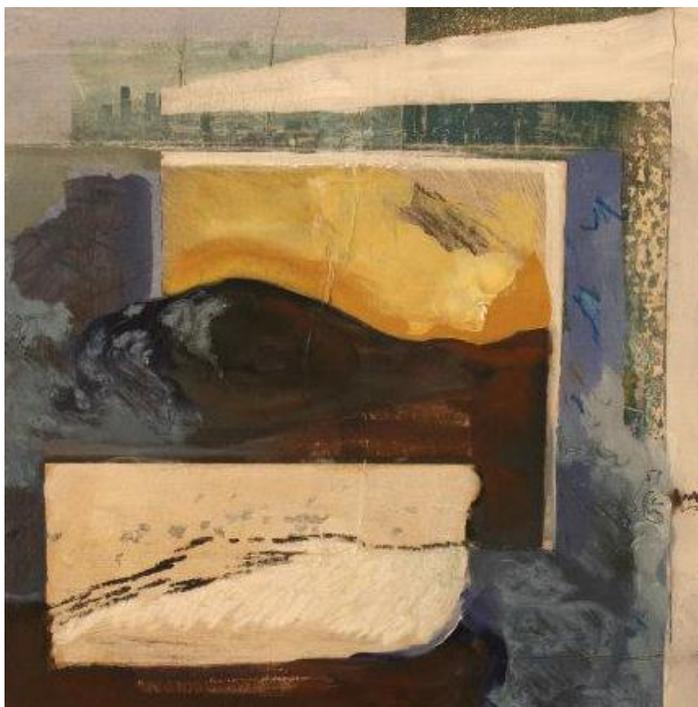


Fig. 9

LAST NIGHT I DREAMT...

As human beings, we make sense of the world through the stories that we tell from experiences we've had in our lives. We share these stories to connect with others, and to better understand our placements in our world. As a child, I learned that a rabbit lived on the moon; until adulthood, when I looked up at the night sky, all I could find was the shadow of a rabbit in the full moon. The final project for my thesis is the triptych, *Last Night I Dreamt the Rabbit Returned to the Moon*, a series of oil paintings on wood panels. My largest work to date, the panels are broken into four sections, each depicting a different scene. The triptych loosely references a Japanese folklore of a rabbit that lives on the moon, pounding barrels of cooked rice into mochi for the children of earth.¹⁵ Both the water and moon are commonly regarded across cultures as a symbol of transformation and cycles. The theme of the story is one of transformation; this painting is a farewell to my grandmother, pulling at my last memories of her. By using a story linked to my childhood, it was my intention to fuse the feeling of being with both land and personal memory. My goal was to depict a series of abstracted landscapes, where memories are ultimately transformed into references of mountains, moon, sky, and water.

¹⁵ Menzel, Daniel H. "The Moon As An Abode of Life?", p.102.



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, how we understand our memories is part of how we understand the world. I chose to work with images of the landscape in an abstracted, symbolic form; I found collage to be the most appropriate avenue of exploring this concept, and looked to both 20th century and contemporary artists for inspiration and how they grappled with the role memory plays in a personal and historical sense.

Through what lens do we perceive reality? Reframe the story, and you reframe how you perceive the world. Part of where we come from is the interpretation of our own mythology; our collection of stories help us to navigate through the world, perceiving events through a lens influenced by our environment - e.g., our childhood, memory, and geography. My work reached out to reconcile loss through the lens of memory; this search has carried on an obsessive quality in reframing space and displacement.

Working with collage has become a method for interpreting and navigating through the world, incorporating memories and dreams as a format for building an abstracted landscape. The core drive of my thesis comes from reconciling with loss, and a need to connect with the world by piecing together memories. In this sense, my works are experiential, using collage to conceptualize a recollection of different places and internal spaces.

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