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Artist Statement

My work has long been about human relationships to place. How do these relationships define and sometimes change us? In the fall of 2018, I set out alone to travel across the United States on a three-month photographic road trip. I would capture the landscape on film and make albumen silver prints (a photographic process popular in the mid-late 19th century) along the way. I envisioned myself following the proverbial path of photographers like Timothy O'Sullivan with his darkroom on wheels and Eadweard Muybridge with his mammoth plate camera documenting Yosemite. I created a modern equivalent of O'Sullivan's portable darkroom- a custom built cabinet to fit perfectly in the hatchback of my Subaru, with compartments for chemistry, paper, and equipment. I outfitted myself with a monorail view camera and several lenses.

My route took me through sacred places that are personally and/or culturally significant. I drove from Rochester, NY, through the Badlands of South Dakota to my birthplace at the base of Mount St Helens. I meandered down the Pacific coast, dipped in to Yosemite and then headed inland over the Rockies to my childhood playground in Colorado. I sped through Texas to land in Louisiana, a place I called home for a bit. I photographed all of it.

As I drove, I spent a lot of time thinking about my place in the history of photography. While the medium has been much more accessible than say, painting, to women throughout its short history, this particular arena of photography has always been (and is still) vastly dominated by men. Perhaps this is because wandering out into the land takes a certain sense of adventure that girls so frequently are not encouraged to explore as children, or maybe it's the physical demands of carrying a camera (though I do know of several women who are working in the landscape with significantly larger cameras than the one I use). What does it mean to be a woman conquering the landscape? I certainly don't feel as though I have conquered it, more so, I feel reclaimed by the land and the places that are significant. I have a romantic relationship to place and landscape. Mount St Helens is my mother, Pikes Peak is my father, and the Gulf Coast is my lover.

This romance with the landscape is largely why I chose to print this body of work as albumen silver prints. They have an inherent romanticism to them. My images as albumen prints are tangible and yet fantastic. They represent some sort of reality, but it is certainly a skewed reality. The images are of both place and time, yet... they are timeless. One of the most beautiful aspects of an albumen print is its luminosity. This glowing quality comes from the fact that the image itself is suspended in egg white above the surface of the paper. Light passes through the albumen layer and bounces off of the paper, giving the image subtle backlighting. This is not lost on me as I am in the field, under my darkcloth, watching the light, thinking... about place, about time, about history.