

PASSAGE

An installation of original music by Michael Harrison with musicians
Elliot Cole, Ina Filip, and Benoit Rolland
Lighting by Nina Elder

TIME PIECES

Drawings by Nina Elder

JULY 7, 2023 - DECEMBER 2, 2023

HODGES, COMMUNITY,
AND BICKERS GALLERIES



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Curatorial Summary

Passage and **Time Pieces** are closely related but separate installations initially conceived by composer and performer **Michael Harrison** and multidisciplinary artist **Nina Elder**. The immersive debut installation, **Passage**, interprets Earth's light and dark, using illumination and shadow to simulate cosmic movements. In collaboration with composer/performers **Elliot Cole**, **Ina Filip**, and **Benoit Rolland**, **Michael Harrison** presents an interactive performative artwork that responds to the passage of one day of celestial and human time. In addition to designing the lighting for **Passage**, Nina Elder created the exquisite graphite drawings in **Time Pieces** – contemplations on the physical texture of time and the potential for transformation.



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Artist Biographies

Nina Elder

Biography



Artist and researcher Nina Elder creates projects that reveal humanity's dependence on and interruption of the natural world. With a focus on changing cultures and ecologies, Elder advocates for collaboration, fostering relationships between institutions, artists, scientists, and diverse communities. Her work takes many forms, including drawings, performance, pedagogy, critical writing, long term community-based projects, and public art.

Elder's work emerges from a deep time perspective: planets, geology, and ecosystems mingle and create constellations with social issues and personal narratives. She harnesses curiosity and empathy as conduits between various forms of knowledge. Her research is

physical, experiential, and solitary. She explores places where human impact is evident yet camouflaged, taking photographs, studying scientific and social interpretations, and collecting substances that become the material of her meticulous drawings. Elder has traveled from the Bering Strait to the US/Mexico border, documenting military bases, nuclear test sites, clear cuts, dams, and pit mines. She seeks overlooked stories, erased legacies, and uncanny metaphors.

Recent solo exhibitions of Elder's work have been organized by SITE Santa Fe, Indianapolis Contemporary, and university museums across the US. Her work has been featured in Art in America, VICE Magazine, and on PBS; her writing has been published in American Scientist and Edge Effects Journal. Elder's research has been supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation, the Rauschenberg Foundation, the Pollock Krasner Foundation, and the Mellon Foundation. She is an affiliate artist of the National Performance Network. Elder has recently held research positions at the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art, the Anchorage Museum, and the Art and Ecology Program at the University of New Mexico. Nina Elder migrates between rural places in New Mexico and Alaska.

Michael Harrison

Biography



Composer/pianist Michael Harrison's works blend classical music traditions of Europe and North India. He seeks expressions of universality via the physics of sound – music that brings one into a state of concentrated listening as a meditative and even mind-altering experience. Harrison is a Guggenheim Fellowship and NYFA Artist Fellowship recipient.

His latest release *Seven Sacred Names* reached the top 10 classical albums on Billboard and was called “music of positively intoxicating beauty” in *The New Yorker*. “Just Constellations,” commissioned and recorded by Grammy-winning Roomful of Teeth, was

among NPR's Best 100 Songs of 2020 and Bandcamp's Best of Contemporary Classical 2020. *Time Loops* was among NPR's Top 10 Classical Albums of 2012. His work, “Revelation,” achieved international recognition and inclusion in the Best Classical Recordings of 2007 selections of *The New York Times*, *Boston Globe* and *TimeOut New York*. Harrison collaborates with performers including Alarm Will Sound, Cello Octet Amsterdam, Maya Beiser, and others, who have commissioned his works using just intonation.

Harrison invented the “harmonic piano,” which plays 24 notes per octave. His primary teachers are La Monte Young, Terry Riley, master Indian vocalists Pandit Pran Nath and Ustad Mashkoor Ali Khan, and Reiko Fueting. Harrison received his Master’s Degree in Composition at the Manhattan School of Music.

His recent engagements include the Minimal Music Festival in Amsterdam, Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, DaCamera and The Menil Collection in Houston, and the Mattatoio Museum in Rome. Past performances of his music include BAM Next Wave Festival, Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Park Avenue Armory, United Nations, the Louvre, Pompidou Centre, MASS MoCA, Spoleto, Big Ears, and Sundance.

Ina Filip

Biography



Originally from Brazil, vocalist **Ina Filip** lived for several years in Bhopal, India, studying Dhrupad (Hindustani Classical music) with the renowned Gundecha Brothers. Drawing inspiration from her Dhrupad training as well as her former studies in Pop vocals and Brazilian music, Ina has developed a unique sound, in which Dhrupad is at times presented traditionally and at times presented in experimental ways. She has performed internationally with her different projects, including collaborations with electronic producers, contemporary classical composers, and solo performances of voice and drone.

Elliot Cole

Biography



Elliot Cole is a composer, producer and "charismatic contemporary bard" (The New York Times). He is currently on faculty at Juilliard and The New School where he teaches Music Production and Composition. He has written for and performed with Grammy winners Roomful of Teeth, Grammy nominees A Far Cry and Metropolis Ensemble, and many other ensembles. His music evokes "sparkling icicles of sound" (Rolling Stone). Elliot has a PhD in Music Composition at Princeton University and lives in New York City.

Benoit Rolland

Biography



Benoit Rolland spent his teen years playing in various psychedelic punk bands in France. In 2006 he completed his studies at the Conservatoire de Musique du Québec in Montreal, in the electroacoustic composition class of Yves Daoust. Since then, he composes regularly for theater and cinema, and

participates in various avant-garde music projects. Benoit's interest in the wide range of social functions that music can play led him to work for 6 years with the native Innu community of Nutashkuan. He directed collective and collaborative creations of contemporary works, as well as audio documentaries reflecting the evolution of the Innu culture and its relationship to the Western modernity. For over twelve years, he composed music to accompany the stories of the great storyteller Simon Gauthier. The duo gave over a hundred performances across Quebec, France and North Africa. More recently, his interest in Dhrupad led him to collaborate with Dhrupad singer Ina Filip and to travel twice to India in order to get initiated in this tradition.

Passage

Exhibition Statement

Passage is a multi-disciplinary project that coalesces cosmic rhythms, spatial tonality, global music, and the human experience in the form of a performance-activated art installation. Using sonic and visual tones to emulate the shifting universe, Passage creates space for contemplation, interpretation, and co-creation.

Passage creates a multi-sensory holographic effect through a constellation of tones which accentuate the audience's movement through sonic and visual space. Embracing the cultural traditions of Indian classical music, in which the ragas correspond to specific times of day, **Michael Harrison** has collaborated with composer/performers **Elliot Cole**, **Ina Filip**, and **Benoit Rolland** to compose and record 10 hours of raga-based music corresponding to celestial bodies.

All the music is created using Harrison's just intonation tunings for the piano, with vocals, tabla, and electronics. The passage of individual audience members through the space will affect the sound waves as such that their bodies become sonic instruments, creating an interactive experience whereby they are also "performers." Audiences will truly feel their place in the universe, at once experiencing harmony, their ability to cast shadows and to participate in disruption. As humans enter this era of social and climactic acceleration, the artists aspire to contextualize our species in deep space and time.



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Artist's Statement

The Music for Passage is based on North Indian classical ragas (melodic archetypes) corresponding to the day's different hours. While following the relatively strict guidelines of the ragas and talas (rhythmic cycles), the music also creates hybrid relationships by incorporating elements of Western music, including harmony, polyphony, polyrhythmic patterns, synthesizer drones and electroacoustics. A primary element of the project involves adapting the ragas and techniques of Indian classical music to the piano, a nontraditional instrument for playing this music. The piano is tuned to my "ragas in just intonation" tuning, which adapts the ancient concepts of Pythagorean tuning and just intonation to optimize beauty of tone and natural resonance.

Nine ragas form the basis for 27 musical compositions, spanning 10 hours of music. The music is entirely new and heard here for the first time, although some of the compositions recall old and traditional melodies from the Indian classical repertoire. *Passage* (based on raga Bhairavi) opens the program and closes it on Fridays, honoring its traditional placement as both a morning raga and the last raga of a classical Indian music concert or festival. *Raga Yaman: Alap* is also repeated during the extended hours on Fridays.

— **Michael Harrison**



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Credits

Composition (piano & vocal tracks): Michael Harrison & Ina Filip (except where otherwise noted)

Composition (piano tracks): Michael Harrison (except where otherwise noted)

Arrangement & Production: Elliot Cole & Benoit Rolland

Editing: Elliot Cole

Mixing: Louis Morneau (TrueSound) & Benoit Rolland

Lighting: Nina Elder

Snowfall composed by Michael Harrison with lyrics by Elliot Cole

Raga Bhairavi: Ambient composed by Michael Harrison & Elliot Cole



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Performers

Michael Harrison: piano, tuning design

Ina Filip: vocals

Elliot Cole: synthesizer

Benoit Rolland: electroacoustics

Shawn Mativetsky: tabla on ragas Brindavani Sarang, Sarang Yatra, Bhimpalasi, Patdeep, and Puriya Dhanashree

Ritvik Yaparpalvi: tabla on ragas Bhairavi, Jaunpuri, Todi, and Yaman

Program

10:00 am

1. Passage (Based on Raga Bhairavi, piano)
2. Raga Jaunpuri: Alap (piano)
3. Raga Jaunpuri: Tarana in Jhaptal Vilambit (slow 10-beat cycle) by Hazrat Amir Khusrau (piano)

ca. 11:15 am

4. Raga Miyan ki Todi: Alap (piano)
5. Raga Miyan ki Todi: Sargam Bandish in Teental Vilambit (slow 16-beat cycle) by Pandit Pran Nath (piano)
6. Raga Miyan ki Todi: Tarana in Teental Drut (fast 16-beat cycle) by Ustad Bahadur Hossain Khan (piano)

ca. 12:30 pm

7. Raga Brindavani Sarang: Ambient Alap (vocals & piano)
8. Raga Brindavani Sarang: Yatra (Journey) (vocals & piano)

ca. 1:20 pm

9. Raga Shuddha Sarang: Ambient Alap (vocals & piano)
10. Raga Shuddha Sarang: Alap (vocals & piano)
11. Sarang: Yatra (Journey) (vocals & piano)

ca. 2:30 pm

12. Raga Bhimpalasi: Alap (vocals & piano)
13. Raga Bhimpalasi: "Khusrau Nizamuddin" in Jhaptal Vilambit (slow 10-beat cycle), traditional (vocals & piano)
14. Raga Bhimpalasi: Snowfall (vocals & piano)
15. Raga Bhimpalasi: "Snowfall" Jhala (vocals & piano)

Program

ca. 3:00 pm

- 16.** Raga Patdeep: Harmonized Alap (piano)
- 17.** Raga Patdeep: "Mora Re Hey Piharava" in Teental Madhya Laya (medium tempo 16-beat cycle) by Pandit Pran Nath (piano)
- 18.** Raga Patdeep: "Rang Rangeela" in Ektal Drut (fast 12-beat cycle) by Ustad Ali Baksh Jarnail Khan (piano)

ca. 3:50 pm

- 19.** Raga Puriya Dhanashree: Harmonized Alap (piano)
- 20.** Raga Puriya Dhanashree: "Par Karo Aaraj Suno" in Ektal Vilambit (slow 12-beat cycle), traditional (piano)
- 21.** Raga Puriya Dhanashree: Tarana in Teental Drut (fast 16-beat cycle) by Hazrat Amir Khusrau (piano)

ca. 4:30 pm

- 22.** Raga Yaman: "Snowfall" Jhala (vocals & piano)
- 23.** Raga Yaman: Alap (vocals & piano)
- 24.** Raga Yaman: Lehra (vocals & piano)

ca. 6:00 pm (Fridays only)

- 25.** Raga Yaman: Alap (vocals & piano)
- 26.** Raga Yaman: Lehra (piano)

ca. 7:00 pm (Fridays only)

- 27.** Raga Bhairavi: Alap (piano)
- 28.** Raga Bhairavi: Ambient (piano)
- 29.** Passage (Based on Raga Bhairavi, piano)

Time Pieces

Exhibition Statement

Accompanying Passage is a new body of drawings, **Time Pieces**, by Nina Elder. Elder's large-scale realistic drawings use unique pigments and scientific observation to explore themes of impermanence, change, loss, and regeneration. The artist interrogates the viewer. Is there a horizon between the past and the future? When exactly does change begin? The drawings in **Time Pieces** are Elder's contemplations on the physical texture of time and the potential for transformation. Rendered as realistic graphite portraits, she captures fleeting moments with nuanced attention. Commonplace events mix with icons of social justice – a tumbleweed tossed on the spring wind in New Mexico, Harriet Tubman's grasped hands, the secret maps that we each carry on our skulls, the sky over Standing Rock, the reflection of sunshine on a river, the brave first steps of the march from Selma. Highlighting the mighty and the mundane, Elder presents evidence of the perplexing and poetic nature of transformation.

Artist's Statement

I recently spent several months in a socially hostile environment. Due to a situation far beyond my control and some wacky personalities, I became the brunt of some serious grumps. To survive, I created a rigorous daily routine. This schedule included set hours for reading, writing, and communication; also, eight hours in the studio without a computer, and two hours of absolute nothing. What emerged was a quietly happy Nina and what feels like an unfathomable amount of new work and new ideas. All my recent creations have to do with marking time - horizons between the past and the future, hallmarks of change, thresholds of irreversible transformation. Looking at this body of work, I can see that duress often explodes into beauty.

I meditated on and drew swarms of moths, the extravaganzas of blossoms. Evolution always happens as a response to an unmet need. Growth is usually a tendriling into the unknown, a speculative reach towards a nourishing future. Superblooms are phenomena that are exciting, fecund, beautiful, and bountiful. They signify that plants are adapting to stress, working with diminished resources, and making the most of a little moisture. And they are doing it all together, a big flamboyant party of fleeting color and non-competition. In a time-tempest with turmoil and stress, it does not work to bloom alone.

— Nina Elder

Nina Elder's comments
about her drawings in the
Bicker's Gallery recorded
in conversation with Mary
Anne Redding, Senior
Curator, Turchin Center
for the Visual Arts



Nina Elder

Mom's Hands, 2022

Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"The first drawing is of my mom's hands on my back, like she's hugging me. My sister took this photograph. I've just always loved my mom's hands; I've seen them age over the years and always cherished them. I see my mother's hands in mine more and more every year. She kind of hates this drawing, she thinks her hands look really old. But, Mom, you've got some aged hands and they're really beautiful!"



Nina Elder

Einkorn Wheat, 2022

Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"The next one is a drawing of a kind of wheat that's now called the Einkorn Wheat. Einkorn wheat was the first kind of wheat that was domesticated and grown in Mesopotamia. This wheat was really the beginning of American culture and a non-nomadic lifestyle which changed the world probably more than anything that humans have ever done. So, I think it's beautiful, but it's also like a little bit of a tragedy."



Nina Elder

Migration Tradition (Sandhill Cranes), 2022

Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"The next drawing is a pair of Sandhill Cranes. Sandhill Cranes are always a sign of time for people that live on their migration route. They show up in the late fall in Albuquerque and New Mexico, where I live, and they show up in the spring in Alaska, which is also another place that I live. So, theirs is a seasonal migration. Another interesting thing about cranes is that they have barely evolved since the time of dinosaurs. They still have teeth. They're very, very, very large birds and they have what some people say is like a multi-million-year intact DNA and a DNA-based memory. Because of climate change, however, they're finally having to change their migration patterns, so they're adapting. And it's too bad that they have to adapt now."



Nina Elder

Hiroshima Sky, 2022

Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"The next drawing is a photograph of the sky over Hiroshima, taken from the Enola Gay moments before the atomic bomb was dropped. This is recent history. I think we often look at clouds and think they're very beautiful and wonderful, which they are. But these clouds became the worst toxic waste that the world has ever known and spread all over the world. So, this is sort of the last moment of the innocence of clouds. Before they were weaponized."



Nina Elder

Canaries, 2022

Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"The next drawing is of a table full of dead Canaries. Canaries are indigenous to the area that we now call Rio de Janeiro and the surrounding areas. Because of air pollution and urban surfaces like high-rise buildings and traffic, and stuff like that, canaries are going extinct really fast. They literally are the canary in the coal mine of climate change. This drawing depicts the number of canaries that die each hour—each hour (!) it's estimated, in that part of the world.

Scientists think canaries will have very little time before they're fully extinct, they're endangered right now. This drawing is a little bit larger than life. It was a sad drawing to make. There's something about drawing for me that's a meditation and I think you can just look at this as a mountain of dead birds, but I drew each of these feathers and each of their facial expressions and each of their little feet. It's a longer conversation, but that's why I'm not a photographer, I think, and why I draw photo-realistically; it's for that act of meditation. I draw to bear witness and honor these stories that are very uncomfortable. It's easy to read a fact and move on or, you know, turn a page but to see a drawing is different."



Nina Elder

Mercury (The Mortal Interlocutor), 2022

Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"The next drawing is called Mercury, the mortal interlocutor. An interlocutor is someone that speaks between two entities. And Mercury—the planet is named for Mercury—the god or the demi-god, who was the only entity that could speak between the Roman gods and mortals. I am concerned about the greed and grandeur that humanity has taken on—that we've become like the gods of everything. This is a reminder to me that we should be seeking our interlocutors."



Nina Elder

Autumn (Bitterroot Mountains), 2022

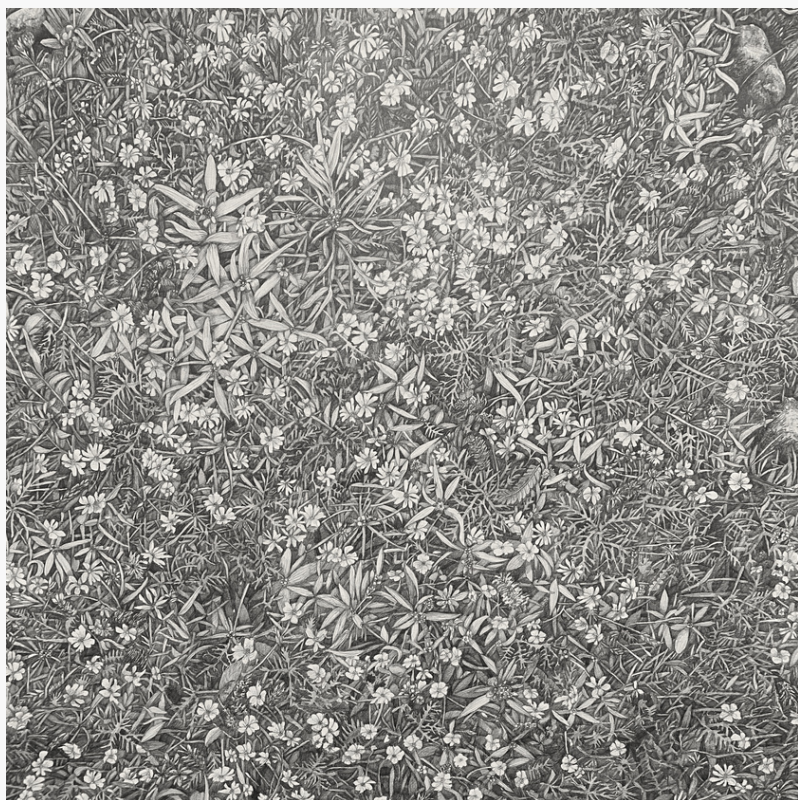
Wildfire charcoal and graphite on paper

"And then the last drawing, it's similar to the Superbloom drawing downstairs in that it's a life-size drawing of the ground. So, the leaves are drawn to scale. I snapped the photo when I was on a backpacking trip several years ago in the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho. I found out later that the Bitterroot Mountains have the greatest tree diversity of anywhere in North America. And to me that was like, ohhhhh, how interesting that I found it beautiful. But what I was probably actually attracted to was diversity and resilience. There are so many kinds of trees in the Bitterroot Mountains that they're not experiencing huge forest fires or die offs or anything like that. That part of Idaho is a very healthy part of the world."

Nina Elder's comments
about her drawings in the
Community Gallery
recorded in conversation
with Mary Anne Redding,
Senior Curator, Turchin
Center for the Visual Arts

"All the drawings in this series are ways that our time is measured.
I'm looking for calendars and clocks within nature."

— Nina Elder



Nina Elder

Superbloom, 2023

Graphite on paper

"What I was interested in with super blooms is that humans love them, but they are signs of environmental duress. When there's prolonged drought, all of the plants, when they get a certain amount of moisture, will bloom all at the same time, which is not very natural because they're blooming without consideration for competition or whether there's going to be enough pollinators to sustain their propagation, or whether there might be places or conditions for the seeds to grow. A super bloom is actually kind of a swan song or a funeral dirge for the flowers. I mean, in a long, slow way, but I find it really fascinating that what we think is so beautiful and pleasing to the eye is a sign of environmental duress. These flowers bloomed in the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque, New Mexico, September of last year.

The reason I made this drawing a meter by a meter is that's what scientists' study. When you're studying something scientifically, you mark off a meter by a meter on the ground or on the side of a mountain. That's your test plot; I use that dimension a lot in my drawings—a meter by meter because it has this really scientific relevance. And those flowers are drawn exactly to the scale of the actual blossoms. Archaeologists will do the same thing, direct test plots show up very across all sciences, so I use it for my drawings."



Nina Elder

Glass of Water, 2023

Graphite on paper

"Then the next image is a glass of water. Why I think of a glass of water as a clock is that I mean obviously it gets warm. It's a fleeting, cold, cold drink of water that we all experience, but from a scientific point of view, there are so many, what are call state changes happening with the ice; it's going from solid to liquid. It's evaporating. It's creating a heat transfer. Basically, almost every scientific state change that we can think of, happens in a glass of water. And yet, we often don't think about that."



Nina Elder

Selma, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next one is the "March from Selma" and it's taken from a famous photograph. I can't remember right now who took it. What I wanted to do by cropping the image from the waist down of these civil rights icons – in this image is Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King in the middle. Well, they knew when they started the March that day that the CIA had been called in to shoot them. And so, basically, they were saying, we're walking into a future and we're risking our lives. By cutting the image off that way, I really wanted the viewer to feel like the marchers were walking towards us and that we were that future. We are the future. That they were walking towards and to maybe decentralize those famous faces that we kind of can take for granted and, I hope, to get us to think about our role now. I think almost everyone in that photograph is probably dead now; so we are their legacy."



Nina Elder

Ancestor Hands, 2023

Graphite on paper

"Moving to the right, is the drawing called "Ancestors Hands," it's based on a historic photograph of a man named Chief Hump, who was the lead strategist for the Sioux in the Battle of Little Bighorn. I met his great grandson, who's also Chief Hump. I got, Chief Hump, the great grandson to model for the photograph with his hands in the position of the famous photograph. The original photograph was really blurry. It was taken when Custer was defeated. That image definitely led to some of the civil rights conversations that are much more activated now."

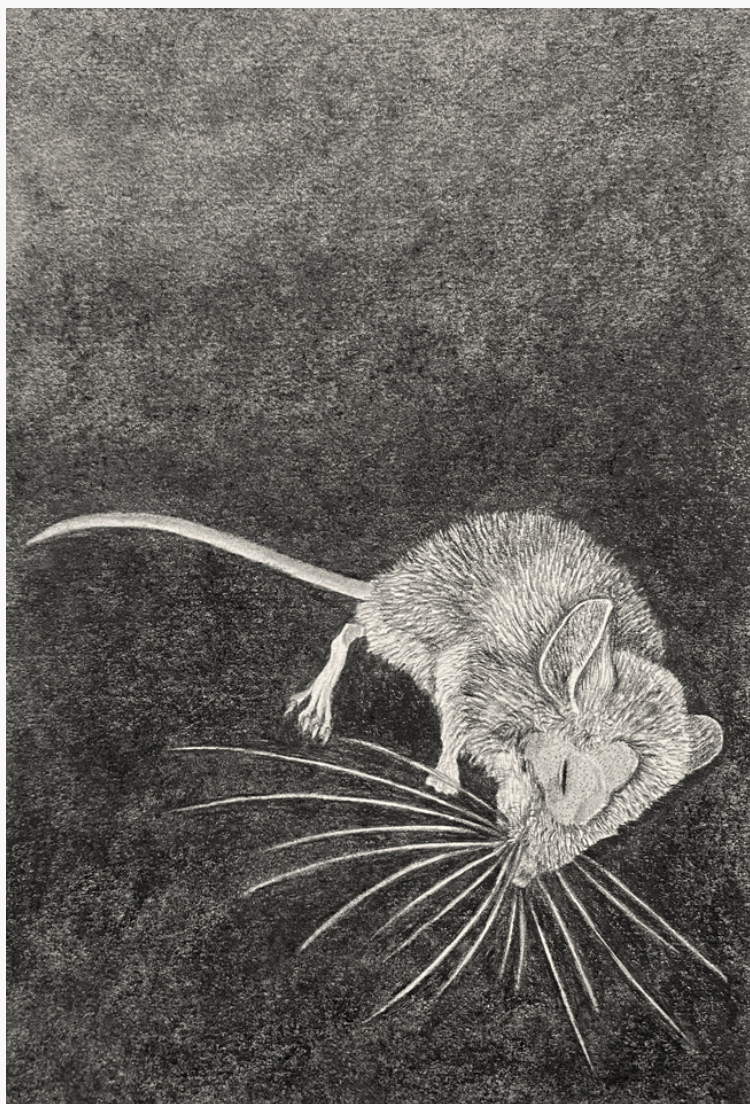


Nina Elder

Harriet's Hands, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is made from a photograph of Harriet Tubman's hands. Some people don't know that when she was active in the Underground Railroad, she became an official spy for the North during the Civil War and was employed by the US Army, but she never got her retirement package. This image is of her hands during her retirement ceremony from the army. You can see the tension in her hands. You know, they look a little bit at peace, but you can see that the hands are kind of pushing into her skin. There's a little bit of tension in them. She was such a strong woman. I think she's just kind of gritting her teeth. There's a lot of paradox in that."



Nina Elder

Mouse, 2023

Graphite on paper

"Moving down to the next alcove, we have a drawing of a dead mouse. That's obvious. All things die, even little things that are cute."

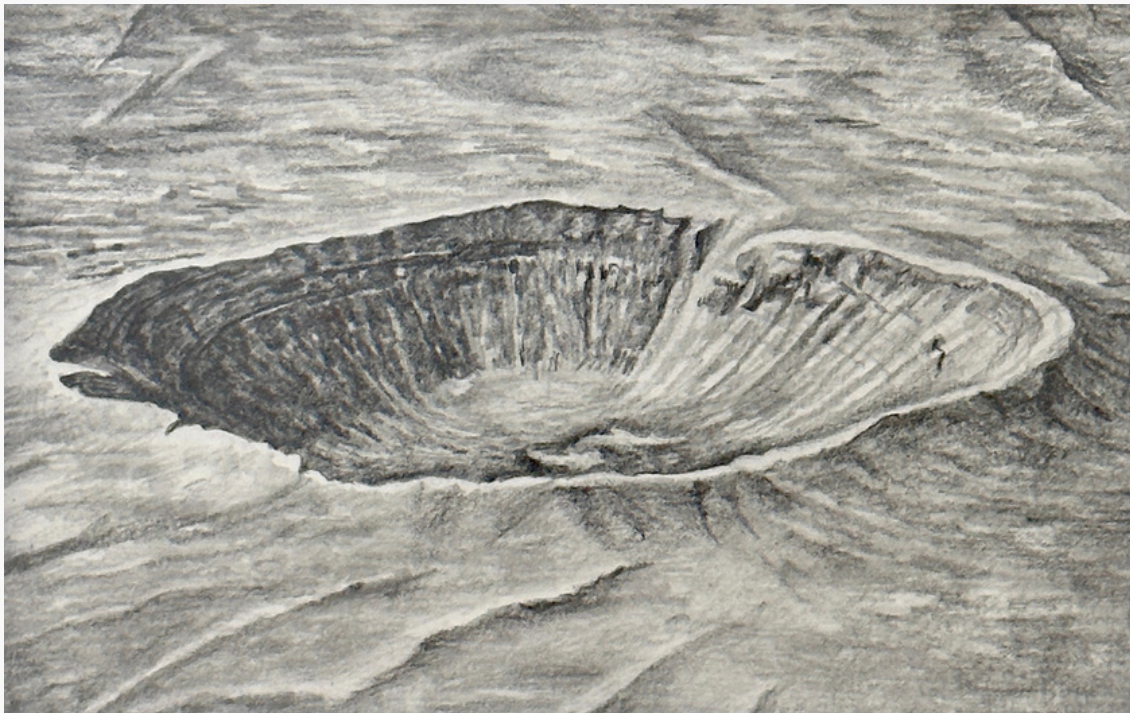


Nina Elder

Yucca Monsoon, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next one is a monsoon, also in the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Monsoons are the spring /summer storms that we get and can see but that often don't actually rain on the ground. This drawing is a symbol of what we used to be able to expect and can't expect anymore."



Nina Elder

Meteorite Crater

(Almost Always an Apocalypse), 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next piece is a drawing of Chicxulub Crater, which is the crater in the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico – in Oaxaca – the crater is from the meteorite that killed all the dinosaurs and caused the volcano eruptions that led to the end of that geologic era and it's the only photograph I've ever drawn that is from a LiDAR scan. So, drones flying over with LiDAR radars to see what they can't see remotely. You can't see the crater anymore. It's covered with trees. So, this is a scan. And obviously that's just a fascinating moment in the Earth's history."



Nina Elder

Tumbleweed, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is a tumbleweed also over the Sandias. There are a lot of images of the Sandia Mountains in these drawings. The tumbleweeds are especially interesting because they start life as Russian Thistles, which are beautiful flowers, and then they become these ... kind of annoying, horrible, bane-of-our-existence—but also icons of living in the Southwest. There's this moment every winter when all the tumbleweeds become airborne and wind-blown, and they're just everywhere. Anyone who's lived in the Southwest understands that a tumbleweed is a calendar. I love tumbleweeds but I'm not supposed to. "

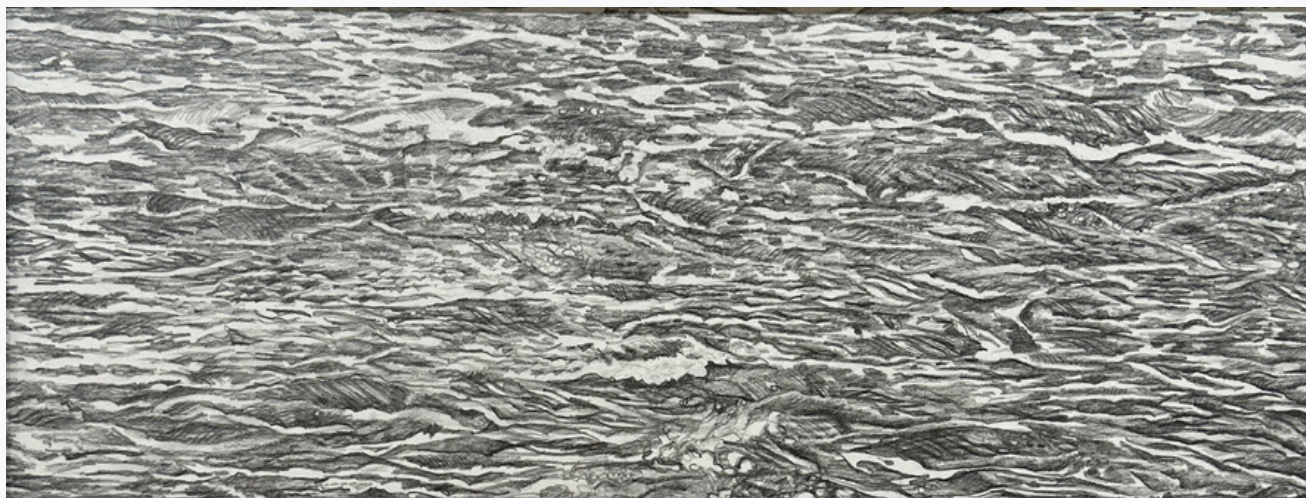


Nina Elder

Iris (from Van Gogh), 2023

Graphite on paper

"This next drawing of the irises is the only time I've ever done something like this. It's a recreation of Van Gogh's painting of the irises, which he painted shortly before he committed suicide. He was in a mental hospital, but they provided him with gorgeous grounds and oil paint and canvas. If you study the painting in art history, it's referred to as a metaphor for a man reflecting on the end of his life. These irises are just past their full bloom. To me, I was also really reflecting on how poor our mental healthcare is in this country and what a huge change from his [Van Gogh's] time. I don't think a person in his mental state would be cared for. They most likely would be arrested or incarcerated now, and so that kind of loving care that was once given to people having mental health issues is very different."

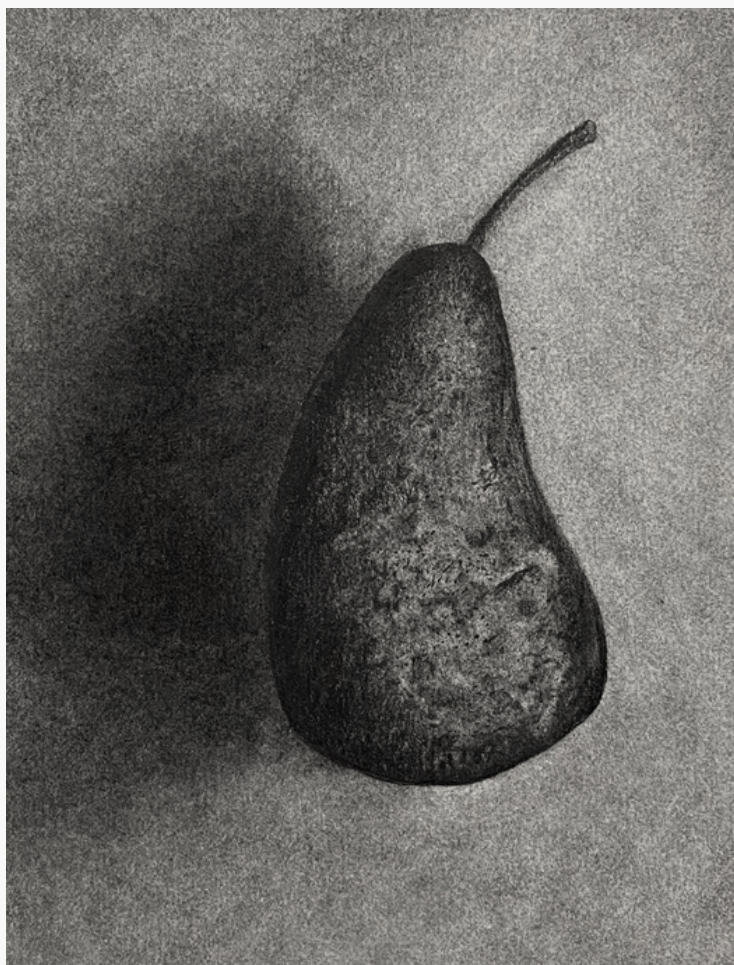


Nina Elder

Surface, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is kind of obvious.
It's the surface of the sea right before a storm when
it's starting to swell."

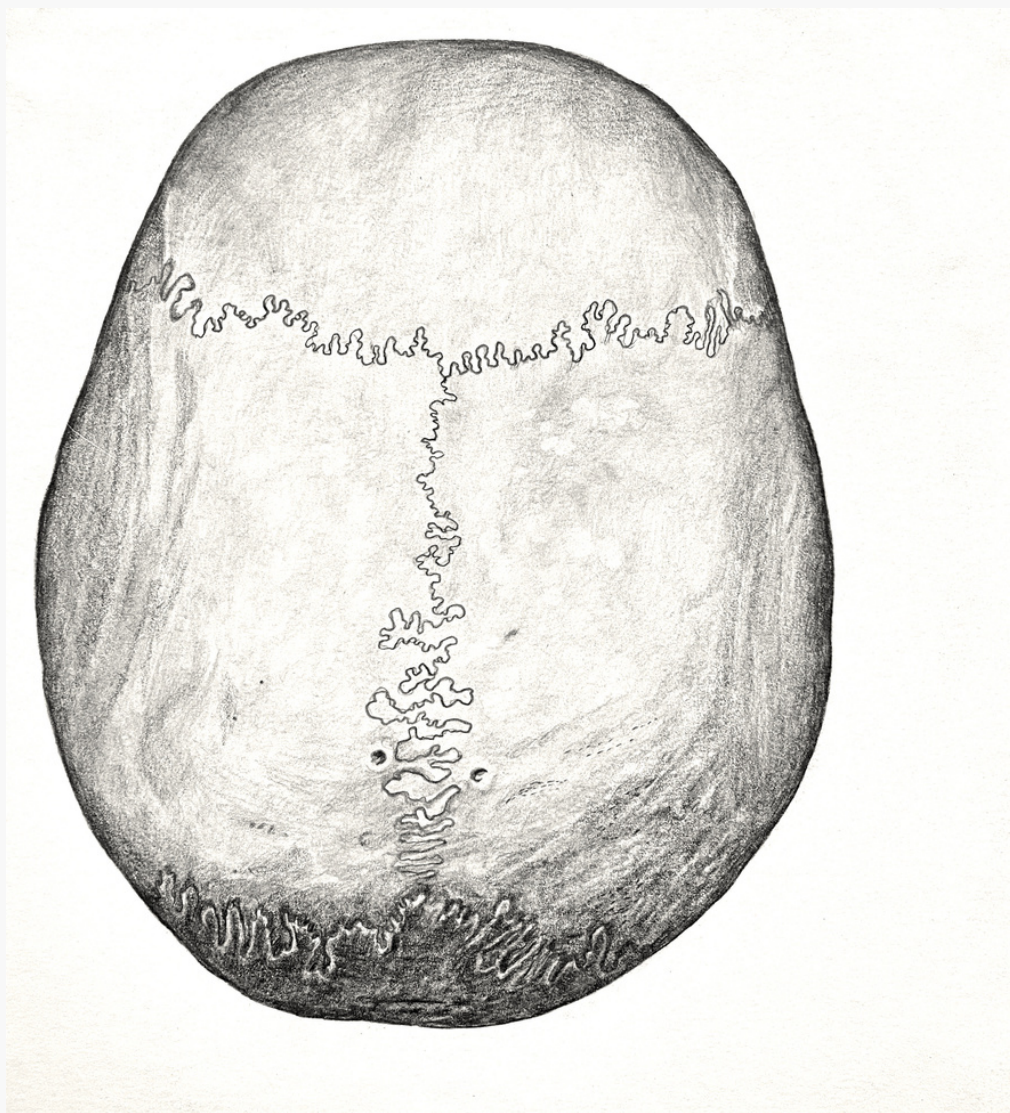


Nina Elder

Pear, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing right above is a perfectly ripe pear, and pears have such a fleeting perfection."



Nina Elder

Skull, 2023

Mechanical pencil on paper

"The next piece is the drawing of a top of a human skull. And what I ... what I love about that and how it's sort of a clock to me is that we will never see the top of our own skulls, but we know that we all have a unique confluence of bones and shapes, but it's something we'll never see and that we kind of don't, can't really even consider. I don't know why I love this drawing so much, but I do love it so much."

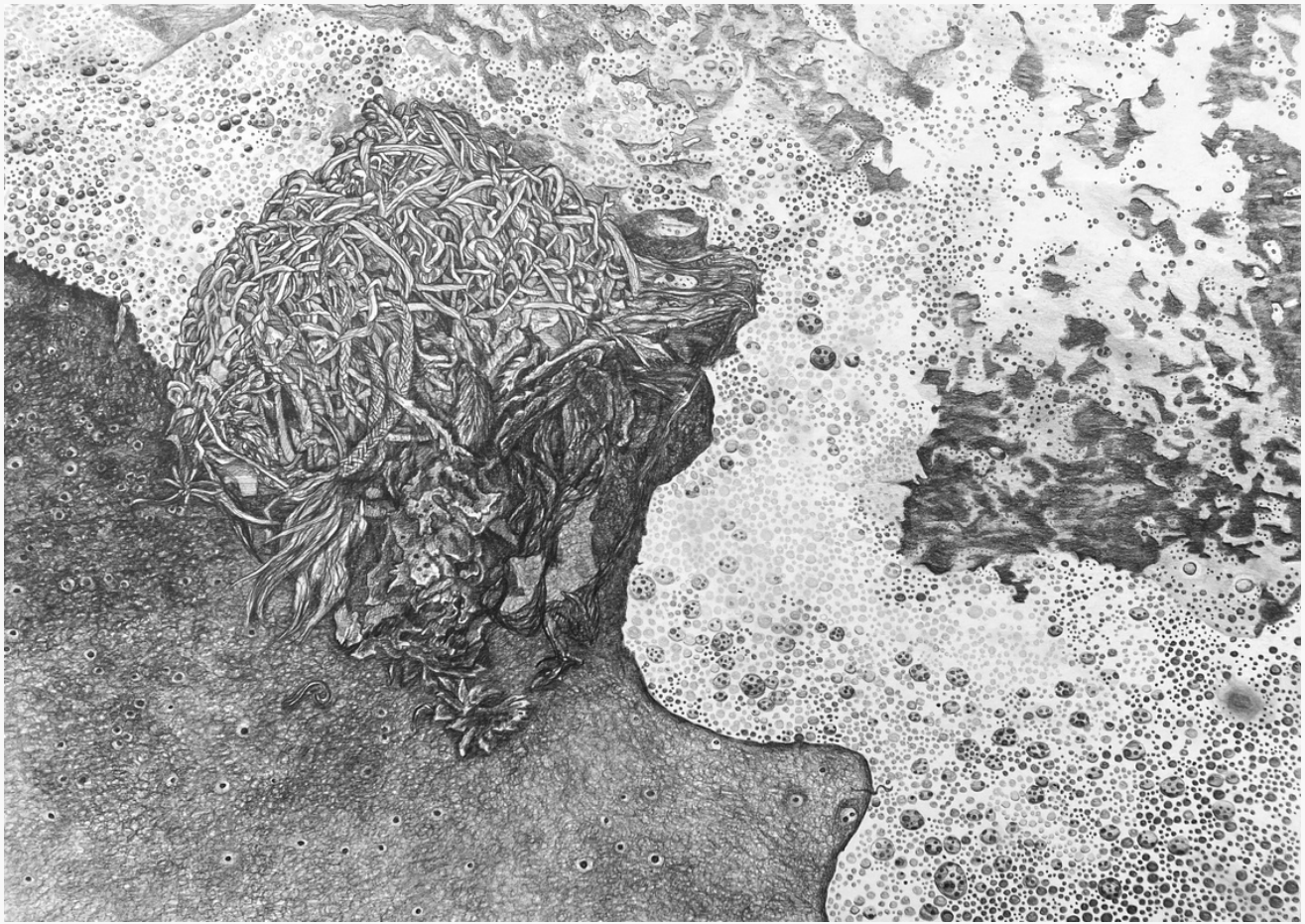


Nina Elder

Vultures, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is of soaring vultures. I took the photo for this piece on the side of a volcano where I live in southern New Mexico. I adore vultures because I think they're beautiful. They're very communal. I always call them the 'life of death makers.' I think a lot of people think vultures are horrible because they're attracted to death, but death is such a fact of life. We've got to appreciate these birds that live in symbiotic relationship with death. I think we have a lot to learn from vultures."



Nina Elder

Sea Foam and Snarl, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next piece I call sea foam and snarl. A superficial reading of it is like, oh yeah, the tide is a measure of time. But if you look closely at the snarl, it's full of plastic trash, and shoelaces, and human waste. And so, to me, this drawing is a sign of a kind of timeless rhythm of the ocean combined with the detritus and living in the Anthropocene. Plastic is just everywhere; everything has a little bit of plastic in it, including us."



Nina Elder

Cicada, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next one is cicada and cicadas, I think it's increasingly known, cicadas have a 17-year brood cycle, which means that they somehow know that after 17 years, it's time to emerge from the soil and start doing what cicadas do. In many cultures cicadas are the gods of time. A lot of cultures bury people with a cicada in their mouth or in their orifices. I've always loved that. And they're just beautiful."



Nina Elder

Web, 2023

Graphite on paper

"And the next drawing is of a spider web; it was drawn from an Orb spider web in my outhouse. Spider webs are these incredible works of art that are also homes that depict another species' sense of time. There's no way to talk to a spider and ask, "did it take you a long time to make this?" But if you watch a spider weave a web, it seems so fast. They're so beautiful. Spider time!"

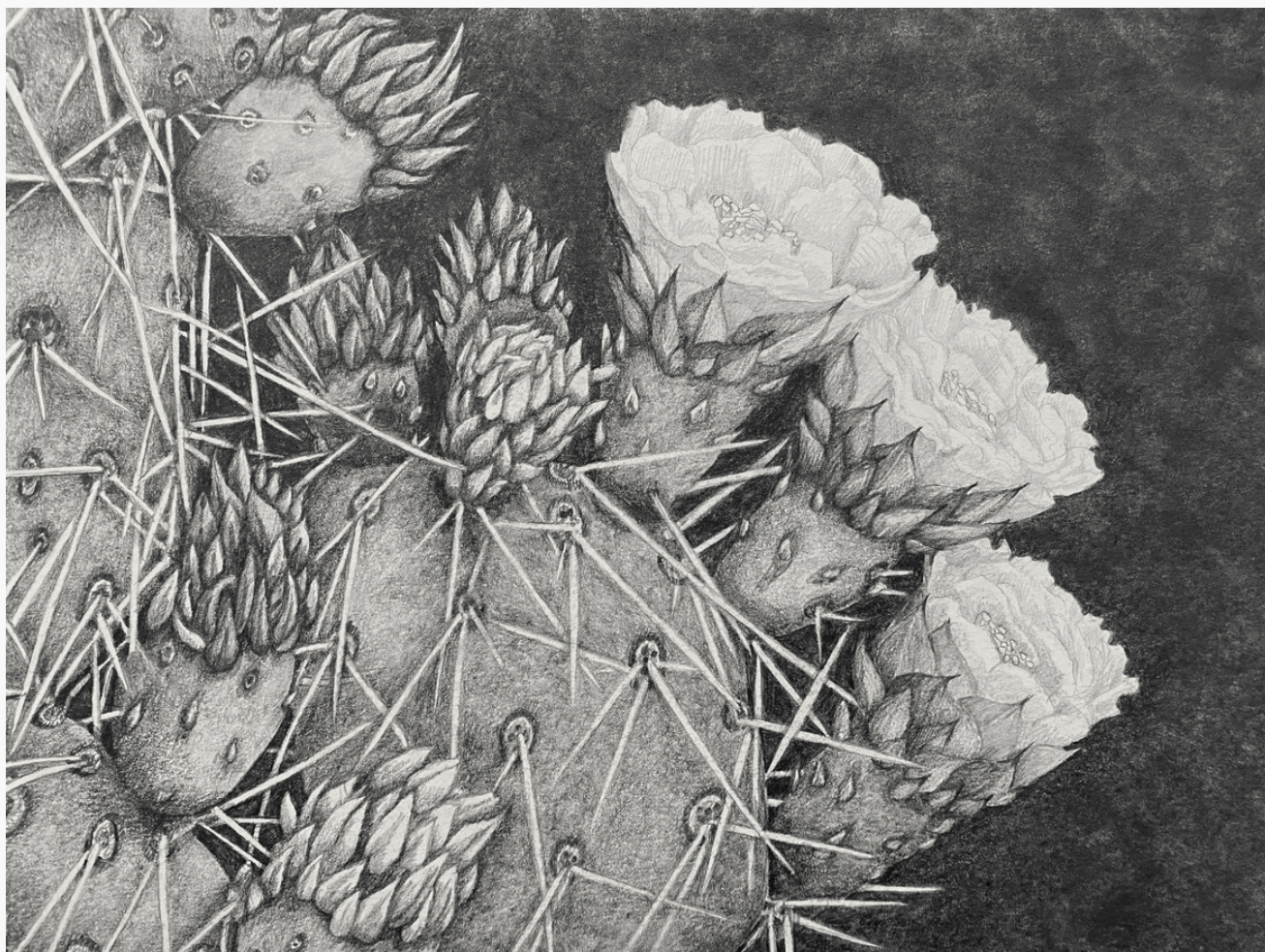


Nina Elder

Shells and Granite, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next one, I think I call it, or at least in my head, I call it, future geology and it's a bunch of snail and oceanic shells and seaweed and granite on the coast of Maine. I'm always amazed to remember that limestone is all ground up shells that were compressed at the bottom of the ocean, and that becomes the bones in our body. So, we really are full of seashells and rocks and stardust. I love this quiet moment of seeing the granite with the shells."



Nina Elder

Opuntia, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is Opuntia; opuntia is the scientific name, the Spanish name for prickly pear. Many prickly pears just bloom for one day or two days. It's a really fleeting blossom and I've always loved them because they think that they're one of the softest, most delicate of flowers. But they're surrounded by thorns and so are not appreciated by everyone."



Nina Elder

Reflection, 2023

Graphite on paper

"I found out that Einstein was standing next to the Chicago River when he came up with his theory of relativity in his mind, and then he ran home to his lab and scribbled it down. I wanted to find out where he was standing when this happened. And strangely enough, it's right in front of where Trump Tower is now. I went to that spot in Chicago, and I was just thinking about how much the world has changed and how Einstein lived through so much conflict in his own life and how much conflict we're living through right now. So, this looks like just the reflection of light on a river, but it's actually the reflection of Trump Tower on the Chicago River, from where Einstein came up with the theory of relativity. This is the drawing that inspired me to tell you the story of these drawings because they all have something more."

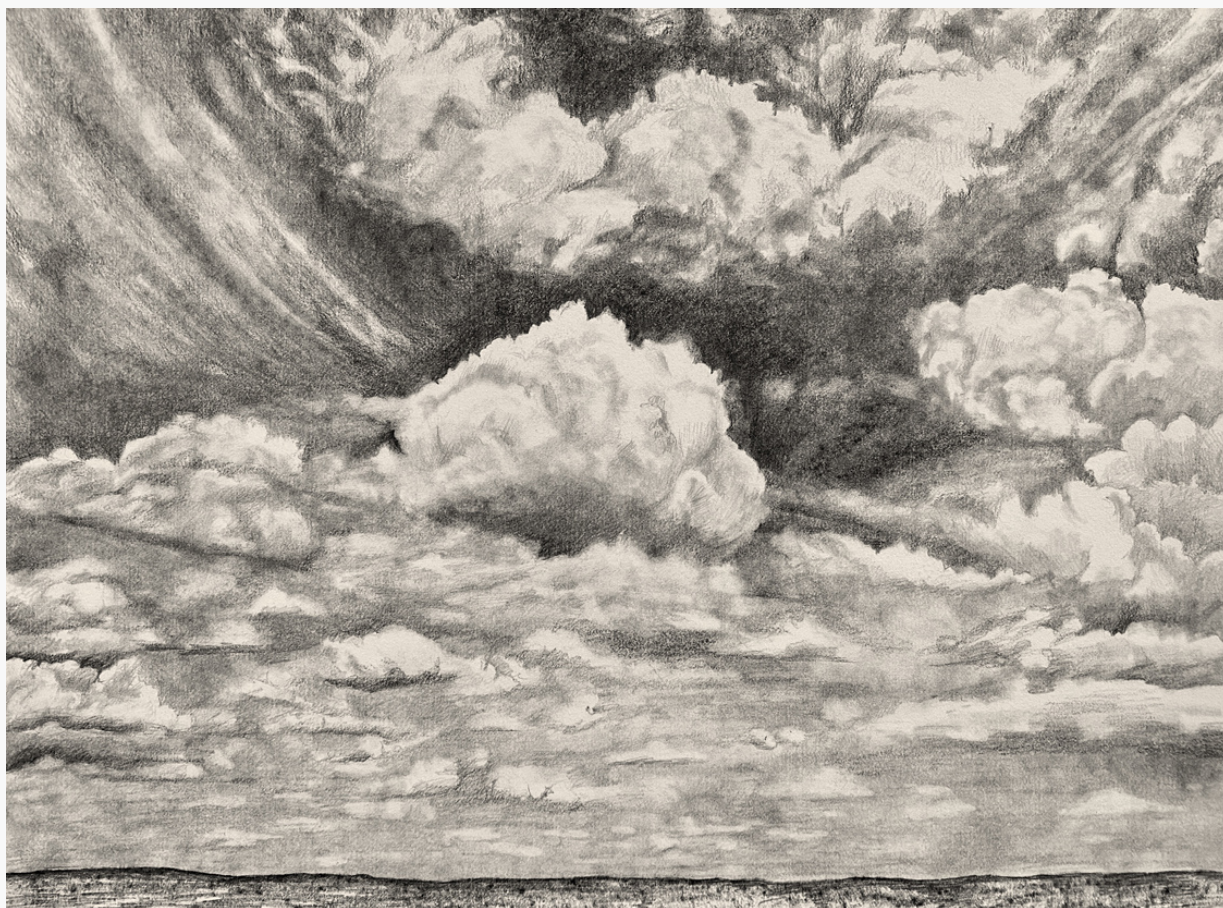


Nina Elder

Moths, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is of Miller Moths, which are also called Army Moths. These moths have a seven-year swarm cycle in the Rocky Mountains. I don't know what it is out here in Appalachia, or if you have Miller Moths. They are really common where I live. Every seven years there will be a mass migration and you'll have a night or two where your windows are just thoroughly covered. I had an experience where I was like, oh, is this just something that happens in cities or where there's a lot of man-made light. But during this swarm, I was in a tent by myself in the Rocky Mountains. It was a little bit terrifying because anytime I turned on a light, I was just covered with moths. So that answered my question that the moths are just moving and eating and doing what they can. They have an ancestral memory that makes them do this migration every seven years because they only live for 10 days. It's very interesting that they have these 10-day life cycles, but every seven years they have a huge migration and population boom, so they have a calendar somewhere inside of themselves."



Nina Elder

Sky over Standing Rock, 2023

Graphite on paper

"OK, so the next drawing is the Sky over Standing Rock. We are all aware of the incredible struggles that the Standing Rock people have gone through to protect their water. I wanted to honor that. I also thinking that the cycles of clouds and the water cycle are so much bigger than the pollution and the corporate manipulation of water. I have hope that the clouds will exist long after all the corporate use of indigenous land—theft of indigenous land, is over. I wanted to depict this huge, beautiful thundercloud hovering over Standing Rock and not the river and not the pipeline and not all the indigenous sovereignty fights that have been depicted. I wanted to say look at these big systems we are all part of, all responsible for."



Nina Elder

Dandelion, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The next drawing is of a dandelion. I've always just been enchanted that these symbols of wishing are also weeds and that they can grow to full grown in less than a week and people should not cut them all down. They are so necessary for pollination. They are not really weeds. They're an ecosystem in and of themselves. So that is simple and beautiful."



Nina Elder

Great Unconformity, 2023

Graphite on paper

"The second last drawing is a view from down inside the Grand Canyon. There is a global phenomenon called the Great Inconformity; about 1.2 billion years of geology is missing from the earth's crust. What's missing is what led Christian people to create the story of Noah's flood. There are flood stories throughout world religions. But it's very interesting, thinking about this massive erosion, what made it take place? Where did everything go? Was it cosmic wind? Was it an Ice Age of unthinkable proportions? Was it just a huge glacial scrape? We still don't know. It's truly a mystery. Because the Grand Canyon is such a clean cut down into the earth's crust, you can lay your hands on either side of the Great Inconformity. One hand is touching rock from 2.8 billion years ago, and the other hand is touching rock from 1.2 billion years ago. And you're missing all that space in between. Thousands of feet of the crust of the earth were erased in an unknown event. In the drawing, it's the dark line on the right-hand side where you can really see the erasure of time. Actually, in this photo I could easily stand in that crack. The scope and the scale of the Grand Canyon is really an amazing thing."



Nina Elder

Flicker Foot, 2023

Graphite on paper

"And then the last drawing is the foot of a dead flicker. I was doing a project in Oregon when a flicker hit the window of my studio and died. I went outside and held the bird in my hands as it died. I had this intense sensation of how lucky I was to see it up close and to hold a warm, beautiful bird, but also how sad it was that the bird was dying. To me this is living in climate change. How lucky we are to see this world intact, somewhat intact, knowing it's going to change so much. For this series, I drew from photos I took that are 10-15 years old that and that I've just been waiting to draw. I was especially glad to finally draw this one."

An invitation to reflect

Passage / Time Pieces seeks to bring viewers “into a state of concentrated listening as a meditative experience.” While lingering in the gallery space, try a mindfulness meditation using these tips from App State Counseling & Psychological Services:

- 1** Find a comfortable seated position, back erect but not stiff.
- 2** Focus on what's going on in the present, setting aside thoughts about the past and future.
- 3** Bring awareness to your breath, following it as it moves in and out. Notice the rise and fall of the abdomen.
- 4** As thoughts come and go, notice them and watch them pass, as though you were standing behind a waterfall watching them flow away.
- 5** Continue to approach your thoughts with an attitude of curiosity, openness, acceptance, and love. If you find your mind wanting to follow the thoughts, say to yourself, "That's okay. That's what minds do." and bring awareness back to the breath.
- 6** As you bring the meditation to a close, allow yourself some transition time to gradually reorient yourself to the room. Sit for a few moments before opening your eyes.

If you prefer a guided meditation, try one of the recordings on their page, here:

<https://counseling.appstate.edu/pagesmith/187>

Behind the Scenes



Behind the Scenes



Behind the Scenes



Installation Images



Additional Resources

<https://www.ninaelder.com/>

<https://www.michaelharrison.com/>

<https://canadacouncil.ca/>

<https://www.calq.gouv.qc.ca/en/>

<https://www.elliottcolemusic.com/about>

<https://www.inafilip.ca/>

<https://www.benoitrolland.com/>



Conseil des arts
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The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

SHARE YOUR WORK WITH US AT #TCVAATHOME !

