



Embodied terrain

Matthew Rangel

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Matthew Rangel

College of the Sequoias, California, USA

EXPERIENCE

I've been trying to comprehend and communicate the vastness and complexity of mountainous landscapes. When I learn of a place or see a distant peak with an interesting feature and a particular proximity to the surrounding land, I need to go there and stand before it, get on it, see it from as many different vantage points as possible to thoroughly understand its spatial dynamic and, most importantly, gain an intimate sense of the role the landform has within a wider physical system. My approach is to embody the landforms I depict through direct contact and proximity. Walking, scrambling and climbing in both summers and winters, often returning to the same remote river canyons, alpine lakes, jagged ridges and peaks over and over again, enriches my connectedness to the landscape.

I begin my work with navigational research and then carry out adventurous topographic field research involving extended cross-country hiking, mountaineering, field drawing and photography. The scope of creative activities that I engage in as I gather source material, do research and process visual ideas for my art work are writing, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, wilderness backpacking and rock climbing. Multiple levels of understanding and connection stimulate insight that arises out of curiosity, creative inquiry and physically navigating across vast spaces and complex terrain.

Sometimes I do elevation drawings using topographical maps to further my familiarity with a specific landmark, so that when I'm finally in the place, I have a good spatial understanding of my surroundings. Problem solving is crucial within every stage of my work, from preparing for a specific route to climbing a mountain to printing various layers of graphic information using traditional techniques.

MEASURE

Measurement in my work is central to both the physical distances I travel overland and to my creative inquiry. A route idea that I have might take four or five days. This is a measurement and a practical logistical concern, in addition to a concept. My explorations are immersive and palpable, an embodied measure of the lands I travel through.

At the same time, in my drawing practice, a technique I consistently use is observed sight-measurement, followed by line and tonal applications. I make objective measurements of my subjects within an intended composition with a thin bamboo skewer. I always transcribe sight-measurements using precise lines that subdivide or relate large shapes to an intended composition, essentially making a map of correspondences that another might never have noticed. These measurements serve as both compositional cues and as a means of furthering an understanding of landscape.

Measured drawings extend my physical exploration of landscape, becoming a contemplative layer of content in my work.

NARRATIVE

Narrative, whether it's told to us in a story or we create it through our own experience, is a human construct that influences our experience and embodiment of land. It's often times what transforms what we call land into what we call place. One can build a meaningful attachment to a place rooted in tangible experiences that form layers of personal and historical significance on the land.

I found that I could create my own culturally relevant anecdote about a place in a tangible way through a physical endeavour of my own invention and a visual inquiry. Is there something about my perception of place that also contributes to the dialogue of culture and society in a substantive way? Will the image have the potential to imply multiple levels of contemplation or serve as a catalyst for a discussion about the ways that human constructs of the land influence our experience of place? I learn about various recreational, cultural, philosophical, ecological and economic constructs assigned to a particular place while simultaneously questioning how these human events have shaped my own history and perceptions of a place.

A meaningful attachment to place is rooted in tangible personal experiences interleaved with historical events. Lithography and occasionally etching and screen printing enable me to encode each layer of a work with place-based research and meaning. Scholarly study of the land consisting of referencing ecology, ethnology, geology, history, cartography and environmental philosophy is carried out while practicing perceptual human constructs such as writing, drawing, photography and printmaking. My work synthesizes my multidisciplinary experiences into a single art form.

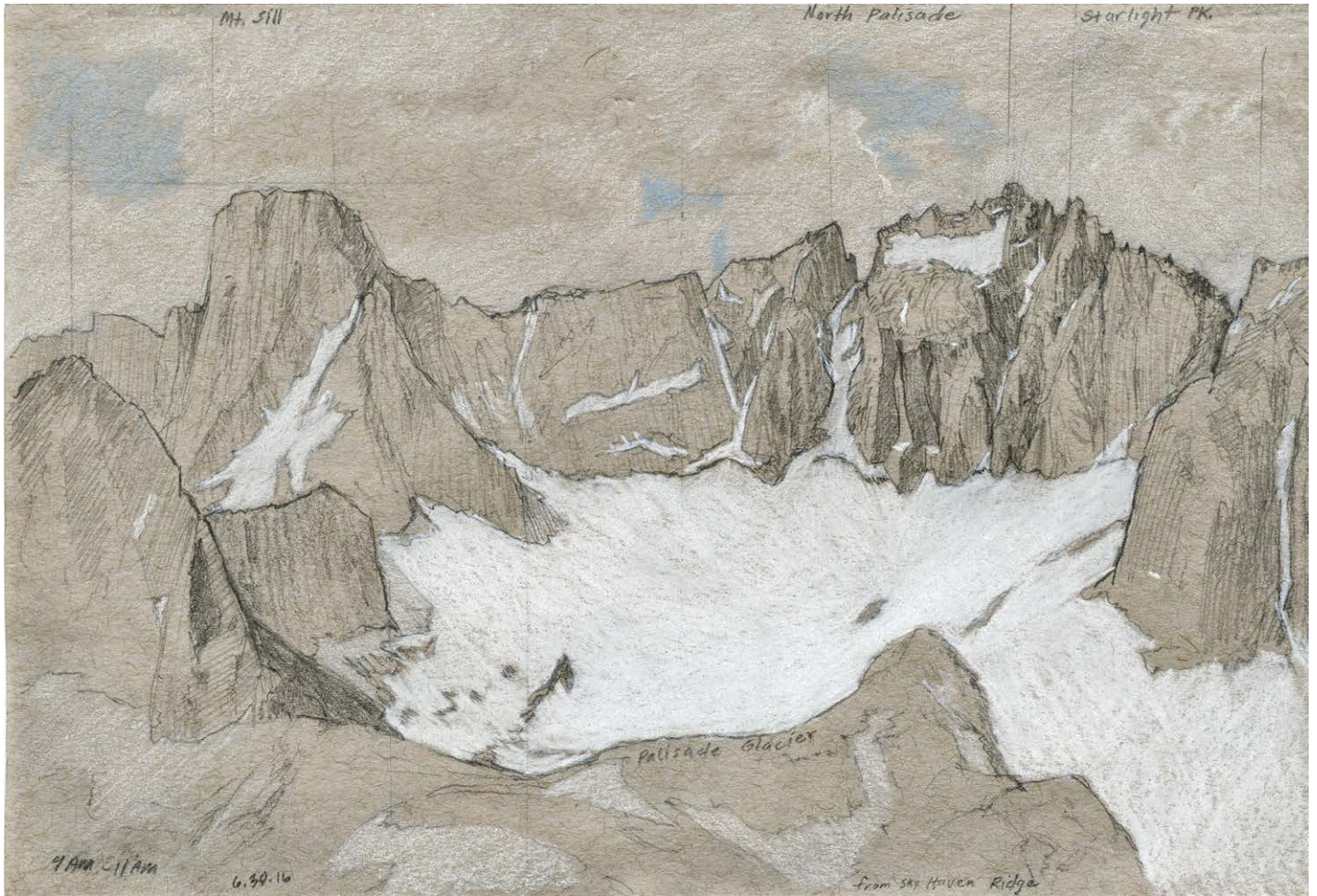
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Matthew Rangel was formerly an assistant professor of Printmaking at the University of New Mexico (2013–2018). He is currently a professor of Art for drawing, painting and lithography at the College of the Sequoias in Visalia, California. His work has been featured in numerous shows nationally and internationally, and is included in collections such as the Stonehouse Residency for the Contemporary Arts, the White House in Washington, DC, and the Urban Land Institute in Washington, DC. Notable publications that feature his work are: *Elephant Magazine*, *Print Magazine*, *A Map of the World: According to Illustrators and Storytellers*, and editorials in *Adventure Journal (Print)*, *GEO magazine* and *Walden magazine* (Hamburg, Germany). Rangel's works are also prominently displayed in the El Capitan Hotel, The Darling Hotel and The Nomad Los Angeles.

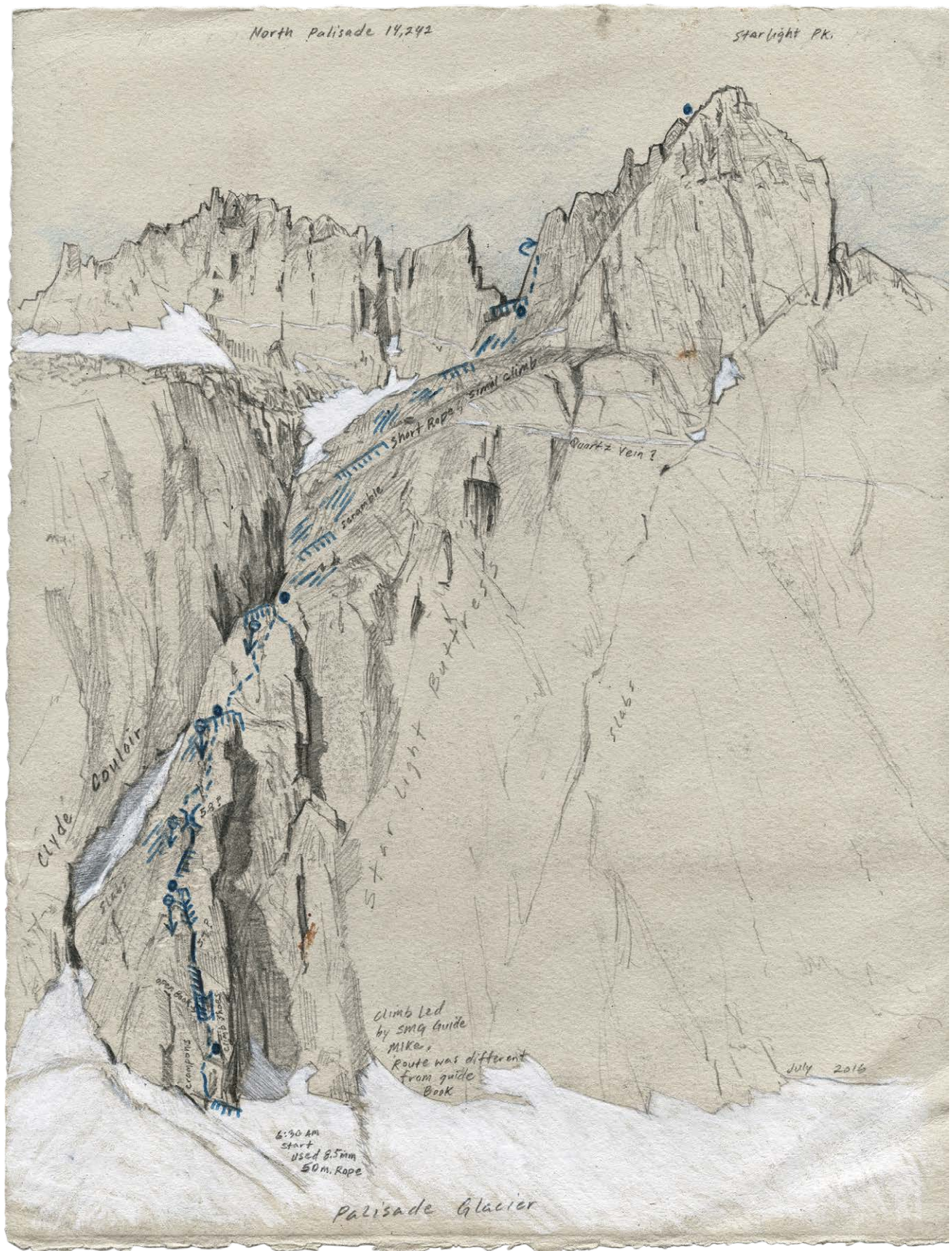
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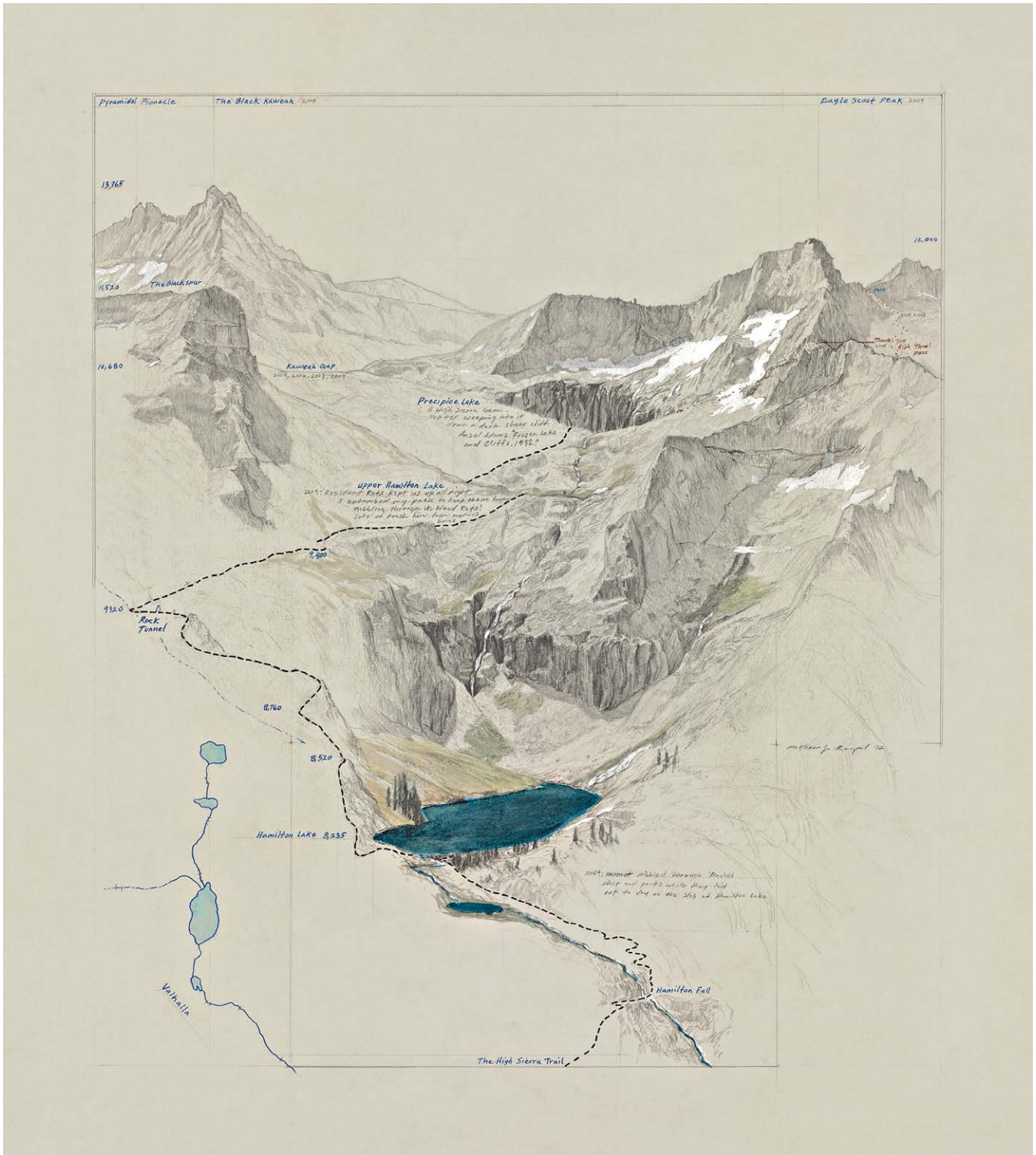
All artwork © Matthew Rangel



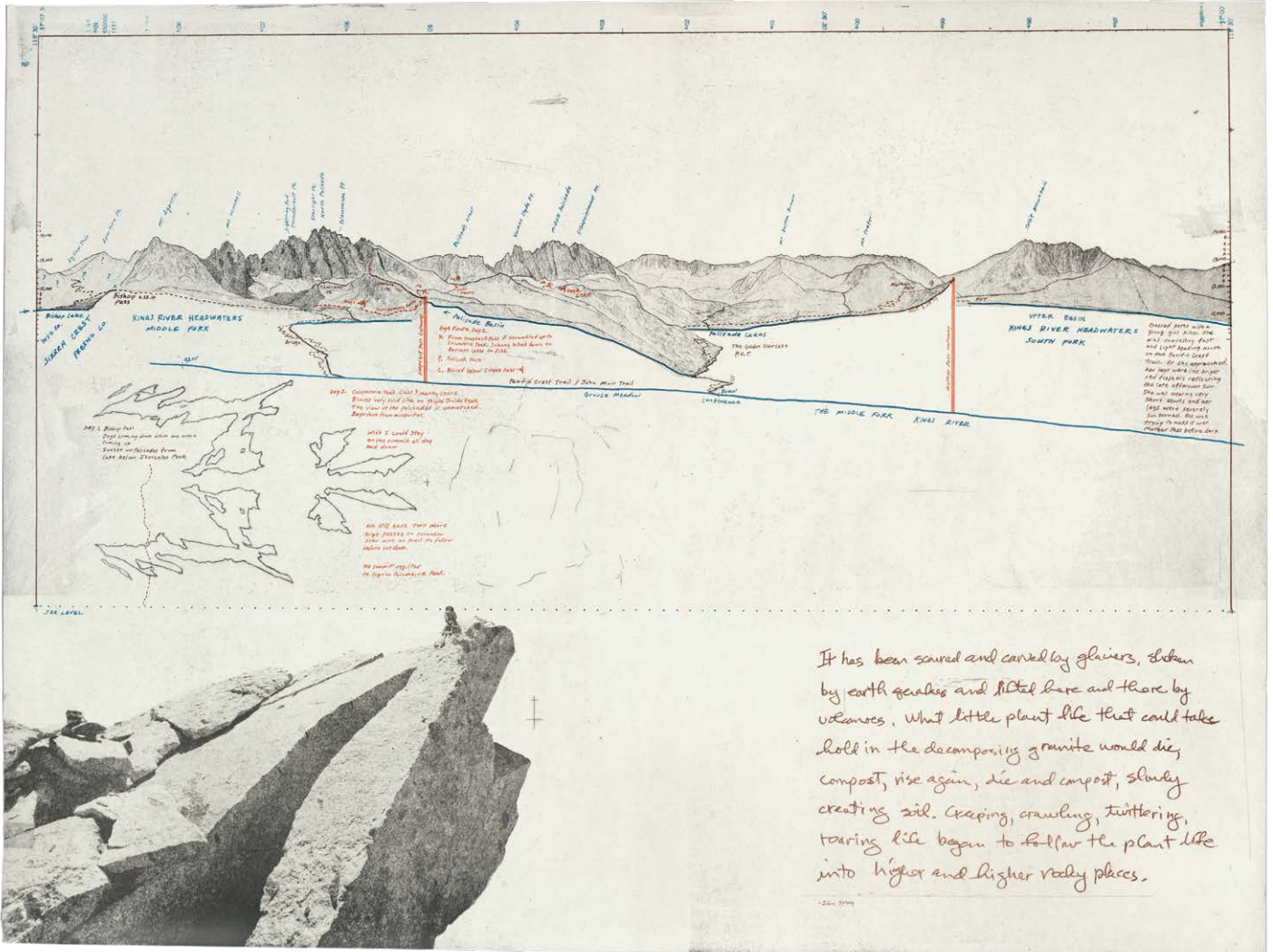
The Palisades and Palisade Glacier, field study from Sky Haven Ridge
2016, Graphite with Prisma pencil, 17.8 x 25.4 cm



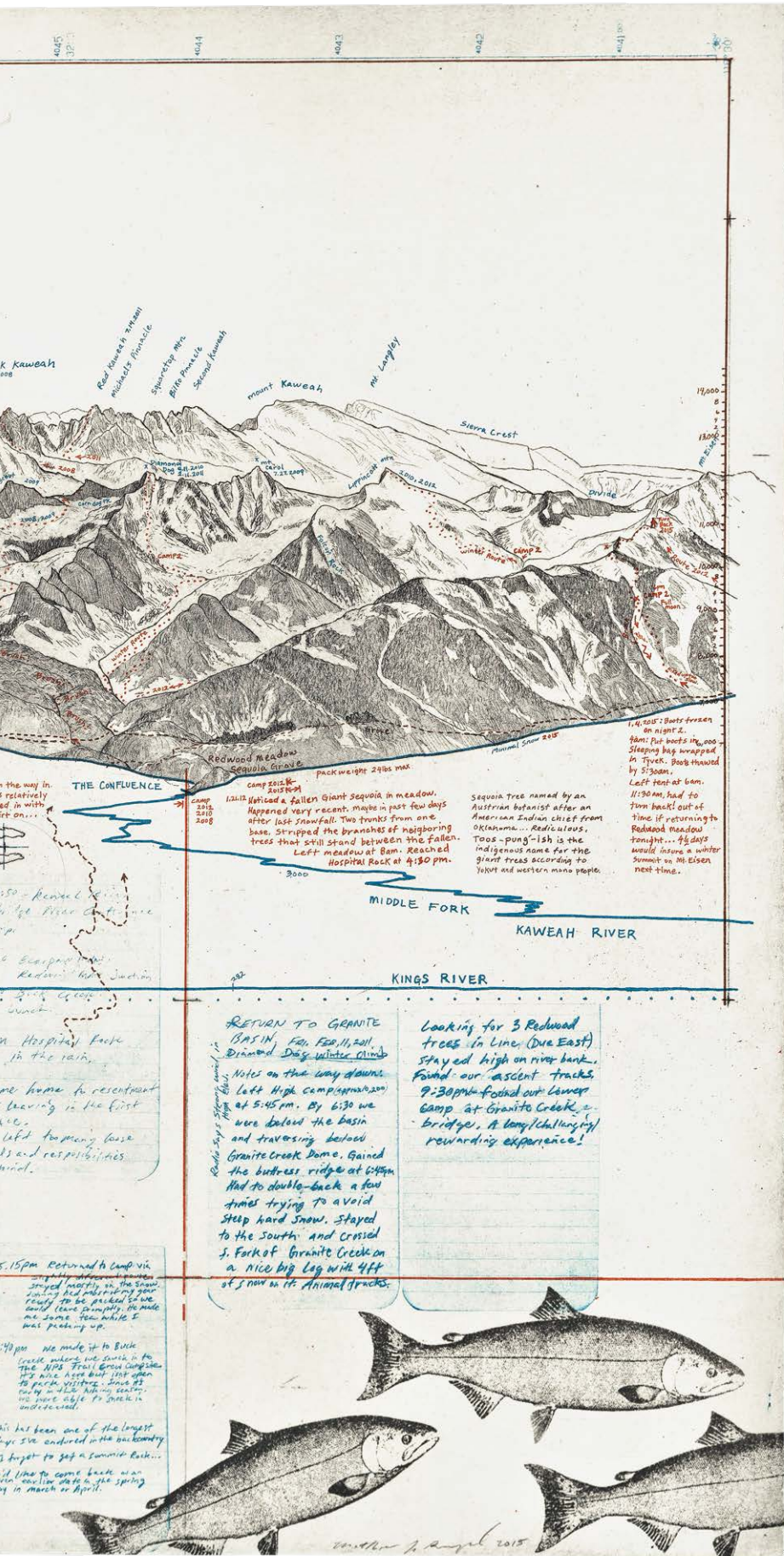
Starlight Buttress Climb, The Palisades
2016, Graphite, pen and ink and Prisma pencil, 25.4 x 34.3 cm



Kaweah Headwaters, Valhalla
2013, Mixed-media drawing, 48.3 x 55.9 cm



Sierra Nevada Codex: The Palisades
2015, Etching and lithograph, 61 x 48 cm



Sierra Nevada Codex: Kaweah
 2015, Etching and lithograph, 61 x 48 cm



Where the Kaweah River emerged from the granite keep of the Sierra the water divided and divided again and formed a vast delta that flowed into Tulare Lake, a valley oak forest - over two hundred square miles - covered the delta land, the oaks interspersed with sycamore along the banks of the streams.

-John Spivey

Sierra Nevada Codex: Mineral King
2015, Etching and lithograph, 61 x 48 cm



Cristal Mtn.
6,518 ft.

Rancho Mtn.
6,227 ft.

G.W.O.

Franklin Pass

Flournoy Pk.

Franklin lakes

Farwell dam

Rock Boundary

"The Dennisson Mountain landslide"
by William C. Tweed

On the evening of
December 20th [1867]
a landslide began near the
summit of Dennisson Mountain...
The top edge of flow
came down
through the Geyfield Grove,
uprooting or snapping off full-sized
Giant Sequoia trees.

The swiftly moving mess
it reached the bottom of the
Kaweah River.

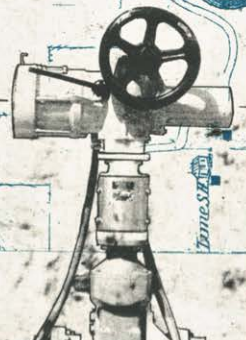
Came to an abrupt halt when
the canyon of the South Fork of the
There, it created a debris dam
about 700 feet high...
The river stopped flowing
in the middle of the following night.

A wall of water and debris
fourty feet high came down the
canyon in the darkness...
when the flood reached
Visalia, the leading edge of
the water was still 5-6 feet
deep. As the water moved
on toward Tulare Lake,
huge shattered pieces of
Giant Sequoia wood settled into
the mud around Visalia Valley
Oak trees.

Terminus Dam
Foss 1895
Built 2002-2004

26

27



Tone

RESERVOIR

OSBORN DAM

WUCHURMUNA HILL

LOWER

ROCKY HILL 83 MI.
VISALIA 10 MI.

H. WALLACE

J. M.

POGUE

10

11

POGUE

RESERVOIR

OSBORN DAM

WUCHURMUNA HILL

LOWER

ROCKY HILL 83 MI.
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POGUE

RESERVOIR

OSBORN DAM

WUCHURMUNA HILL

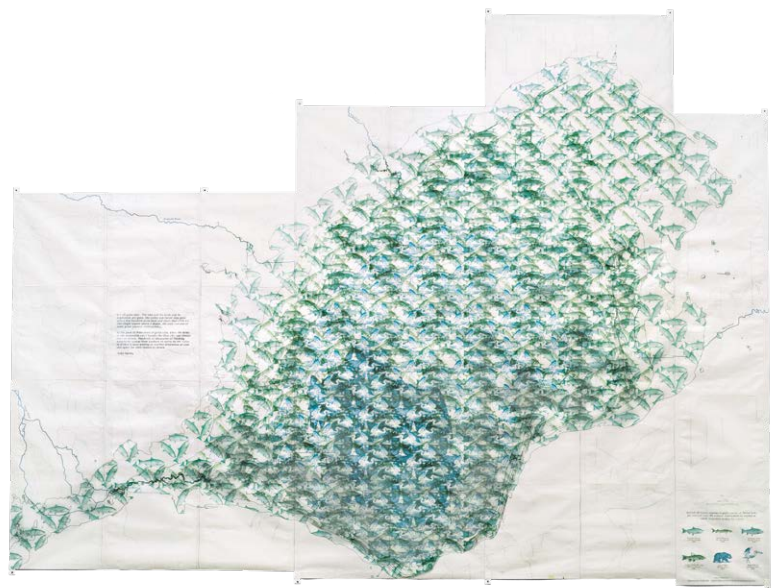
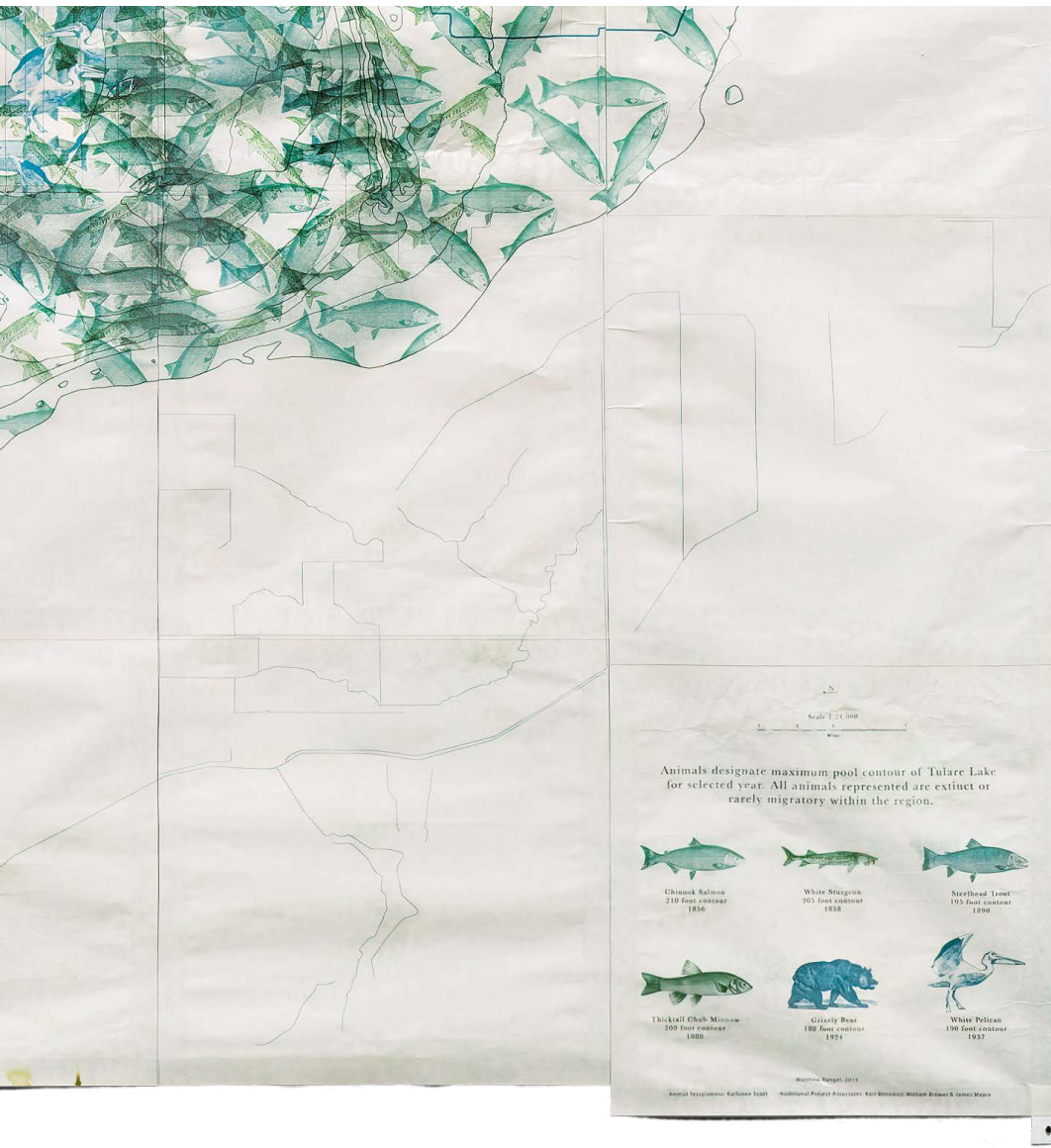
LOWER

ROCKY HILL 83 MI.
VISALIA 10 MI.

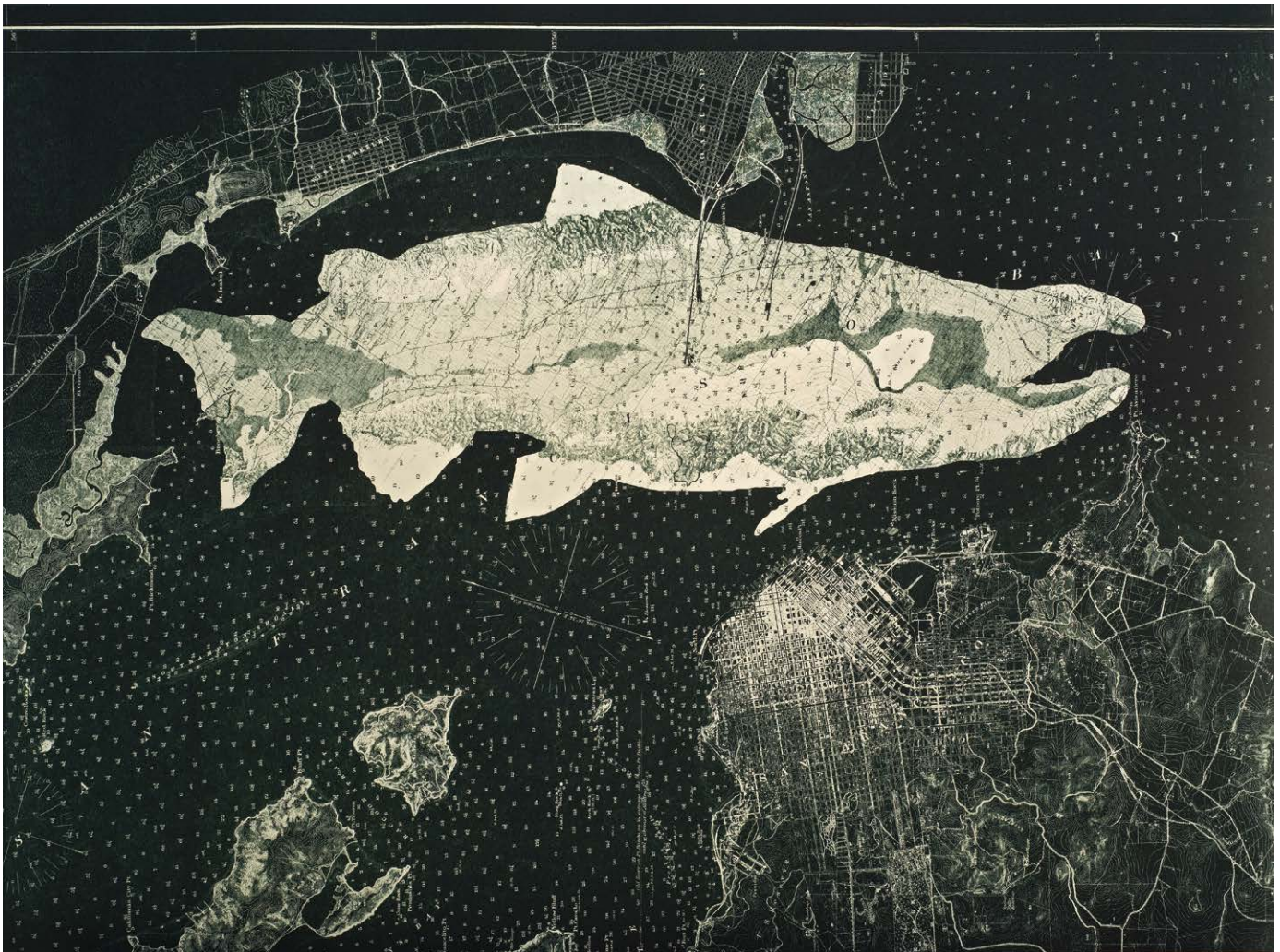


Tulare Lake

2015, Inkjet pigment print on Asuka Kozo paper,
41 x 41 cm panels, 325.1 x 243 cm with irregular edges
(unframed)



California Chinook Salmon, In Search of Ancestral Grounds
2019, Lithograph, 51 x 38 cm





El Capitan, Tu-tok-a-nu-la
2019, Lithograph, 40.6 x 72.4 cm