

# DRAWING A MOUNTAIN

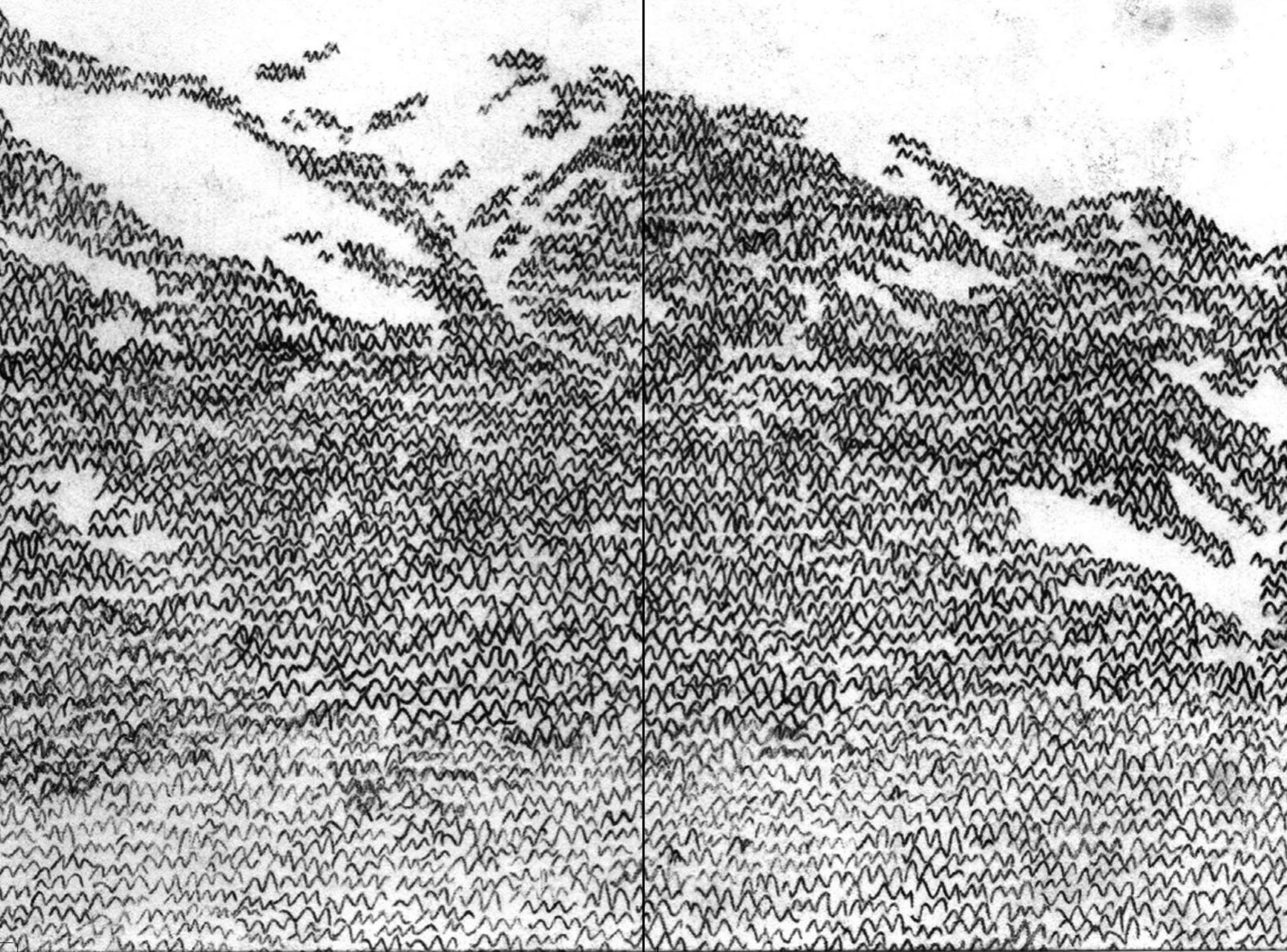


An expanded-drawing project about  
mountains and impossibilities by  
Laura F. Gibellini



“WE ALWAYS THINK OF THE IMAGINATION AS THE FACULTY THAT FORMS IMAGES. ON THE CONTRARY, IT DEFORMS WHAT WE PERCEIVE; IT IS, ABOVE ALL, THE FACULTY THAT FREES US FROM IMMEDIATE IMAGES AND CHANGES THEM. IF THERE IS NO CHANGE, OR UNEXPECTED FUSION OF IMAGES, THERE IS NO IMAGINATION; THERE IS NO IMAGINATIVE ACT.”

GASTON BACHELARD  
(*AIR AND DREAMS*)



# IN LIGHT OF THE TREE-STAINS

## Oriol Fontdevila

It's best if we step into the shade now. It's not the tree that stops you from seeing the wood. Throughout the long winter on Sulphur Mountain, the shady side of every fir tree illuminates the oregano. You can't distinguish figure from background. The delicate shadow that these trees project, monotonous as an echo and repetitive as the cells in a beehive, applies a kind of double negative to the mountain: it reveals its profile in every wrinkle and, seen from a distance, breaks it down into at least a million other ranges.

Light never comes alone. It came to Goethe along with his death: 'Licht, mehr licht!' were the last words the poet uttered on his deathbed. In the far-off night of time, a dot of pigmentation—a mere insignificant freckle—took advantage of sunlight falling on the skin to grow more complex and eventually evolve into the eye. And so light managed to penetrate into the bodies of humans and many other animals for the very first time, and help generate the sense of sight.

This hypothesis, formulated by Henri Bergson at the beginning of the twentieth century, is also only a step away from the claim which Jacques Lacan made a few years later about the scopic field: everything visual turns on a stain, which the psychoanalyst identified in this case with the observing subject, with his own shadow. This provides a limit as well as a point of support at the moment when self-consciousness begins to develop. Light, then, has no sense of being as it stands at the edge of

How do we embody an atmospheric space?

"My perception itself is a thinking, and my thinking a perception"

Goethe

Colors as gestures

How does light appear?

What if colors are portals to understand the nature of light?

1. Look for an understanding of the PLACE you are in — Try to embody this perception.
2. Look at the colours — the eye will decompose them for you.
3. Your eye writes independently from your brain.
4. As | within you become co-producer of reality | observe | yourself.
5. During this observation light overflows your body —

could we INVOKE THEM?

Feel the rationality of the colors surrounding yourself.

NOTES FOR DRAWING A MOUNTAIN  
IRENE CANTERO  
IRENE CANTERO WORKS IN THE PERFORMING ARTS. THE HUMAN BODY AND LIGHT ARE HER PREFERRED SUBJECTS.

the cavern's darkness, for all that Western thought has tried to amplify light into the one ideal above all others, the epitome of revealed ontology, the pinnacle of human truth.

One example of this attitude is the epitaph which Alexander Pope wrote for Isaac Newton in 1727:

Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night:  
God said, 'Let Newton be!' and all was light.

Irreverent, perhaps: the monks at Westminster Abbey did not allow this poem to be engraved on the memorials there. But it is undeniable that this text shares with its English dedicatee the elation felt at the possibility of transforming the world into a fistful of laws that are no longer seen as divine, but rather natural. Among these laws were the laws of optics, which Newton established by observing the breakdown of light into the seven colours of the rainbow via crystal prisms. And so, even though the rainbow, the *arco Iris* as it is known in Spanish, still holds within itself the name of the goddess Iris, Newton removed the magic from the rainbow and discovered within it the constitution of all the colours that make up the world, pure and direct derivations of the reflection of light.

When spring came, Laura F. Gibellini observed from the heights of her studio in Banff how the thaw appeared on the Rocky Mountains. The landscape was filled with all kinds of colour ('God said, 'Let Newton be!' and all was light. '), and the firs abandoned their role as hybrid trees and stains ('Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night'). As the season changed, it was not only the landscape that changed its appearance, but theories of light and colour once again stepped out of the shadows, leaving a winter that was wrapped up, not in divine obscurantism, but in the darkness of modern individualism, according to which colours appear only as a result of the eye that looks at them. With the arrival of good weather, the mountain seemed to recover its colours and its naturalistic

reasonableness, encouraging the idea that it was formed out of particles which played their own part in the formulation of the visible.

It is a sign of our times that artists are returning to sense impressions *qua* sense impressions, and are interrogating them in relation to the process by which they become thought. After months looking out at the gaze looking back, and observing her observations under the dark light of the tree-stains, nature as Newton saw it reappeared suddenly in Gibellini's window. But then where are we to draw the line between nature and the phenomena of perception? Or is it that the darkness which the eye projects onto its surroundings is not also participating in nature in its savage state? Or is it Newton who reappears now, a simple ghost of a higher order? Or does it have something to do with the spring equinox?

ORIOLE FONTDEVILLA IS A CURATOR, WRITER AND RESEARCHER, AS WELL AS A TEACHER. MEDIATION FOR HIM IS THE SPACE OF IMMANENCE IN ANY ARTISTIC PRACTICE.

Translated by James Womack