

CONSILIENCE ARTIST STATEMENT

"For a homebody surrounded by the familiar or a traveler exploring the strange, there can be no better guide to a place than the weight of its air, the behavior of its light, the shape of its water, the textures of rock and feather, leaf and fur, and the ways that humans bless, mark or obliterate them. Each of us possesses five fundamental, enthralling maps to the natural world: sight, touch, taste, hearing, smell. As we unravel the threads that bind us to nature, as denizens of data and artifice, amid crowds and clutter, we become miserly with these loyal and exquisite guides, we numb our sensory intelligence. This failure of attention will make orphans of us all." – Ellen Meloy

Consilience: A Sensory Map of the Natural World is my homage to the very essence of a natural place through memory and object, and my invitation to others to treasure, protect and preserve such natural places. The work is an installation environment where the viewer becomes a participant in the creation: an old box of collected natural ephemera and a field guide of altered text and image embody the excitement of discovery and the draw of nostalgia that occur when a physical place is held close to one's heart. The work peels back the layers of, and examines the ties between, memory and landscape. Using a small lake in the Eastern Sierra and my memories of summers spent there as a lens to focus the exploration, I hope to give viewers a full sensory experience of the place, but also to awaken personal recollections of natural places that have figured prominently in their memories and lives. By evoking these memories, I hope to inspire viewers to return to those places, or to seek new ones, in order to revel in the true wonder and beauty of the natural world.

By committing the essence of this place to collective memory and urging others to take direct action through their personal experience of, and relation to, the objects and memories contained in the work, I aim to effect positive social change in support of preserving these natural spaces. The work is tangible, experiential, and provides an interactive experience for the viewer. You cannot stand idly by and view *Consilience* hanging upon a wall; it requires you to turn pages, open drawers, lift panels, navigate word and image. It invites exploration and discovery, much in the same way that the natural world invites one to explore and discover. There is no better way to understand and know a place than by its natural elements and textures. Our maps to the natural world are our senses; if we abandon them, the ties that bind us to these natural spaces will be unravelled and lost. If we lose these ties, then we risk losing the places themselves, and with them, our memories, forever.

In the words of writer Robert Michael Pyle: "Those who care, conserve. Those who don't know, don't care. What's the extinction of the condor to a child who has never known a wren?" Because we now inhabit an intensely digital, two-dimensional world that often lacks the profound and tangible sense of magical wonder that nature provides, I hope to rekindle this wonder, resensitize viewers to natural elements and reacquaint them with the natural world. Through *Consilience*, I hope to inspire people to remember, know, and care, in order to conserve.

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