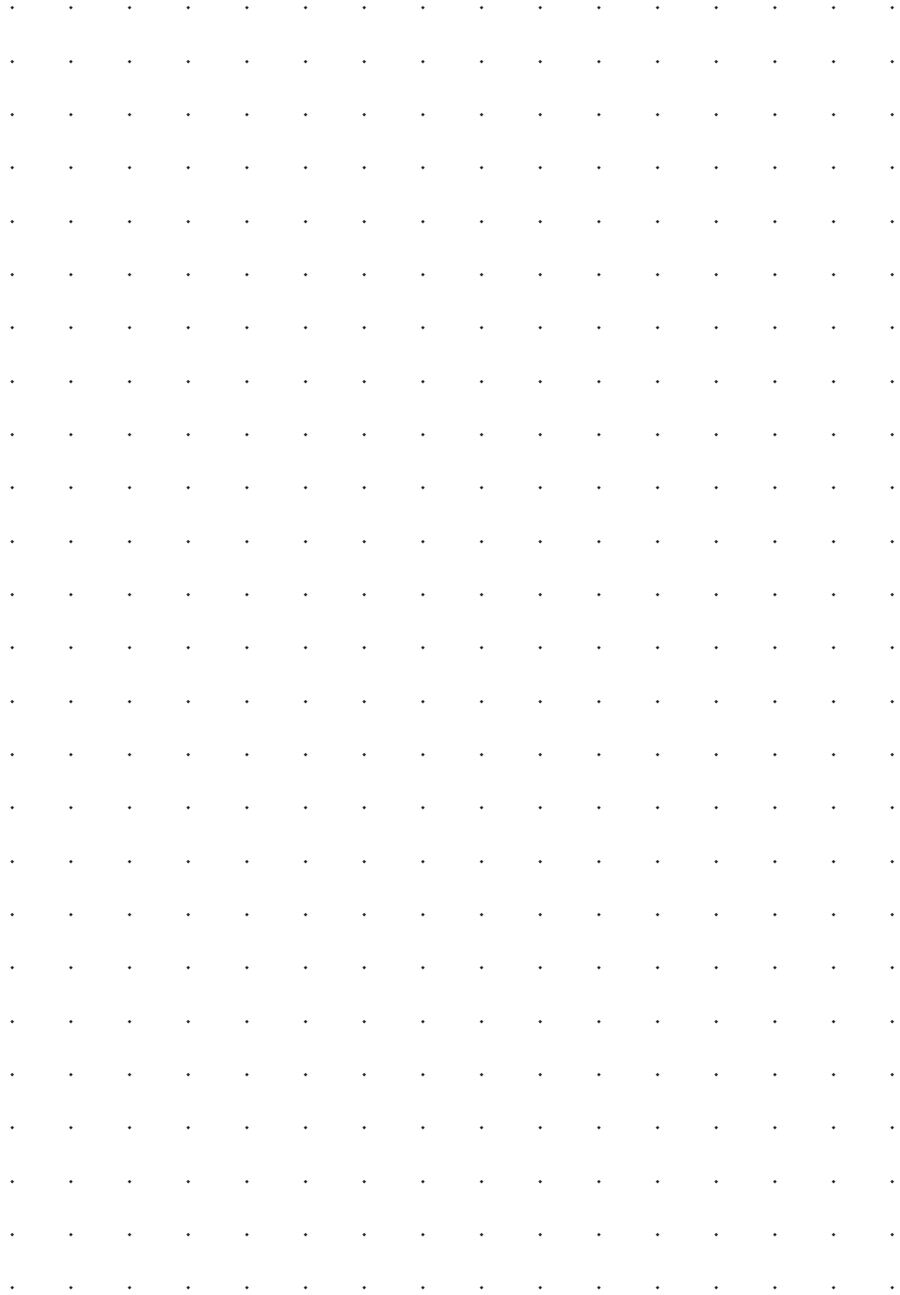


FIELD STUDY

FIELD STUDY, 16X25



LAND ART & SPECTACLE IN THE CURRENT GEOLOGICAL
EPOCH

.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
half steel poles half grasses and holes
.
one part cracked earth one part insect swarms
.
one element is height and another is perspective
.
.
.
.
my element is stone
a seed a bite a pit a nick
.
my element is perceptive
.
.

CONTEXT

T h e w o r k i s l o c a t e d
i n W e s t C e n t r a l N e w
M e x i c o . P h o t o g r a p
h y o f *T h e L i g h t n i n g*
F i e l d . . . i s p r o h i b
i t e d . V i s i t o r s a r e
e n c o u r a g e d t o s p e n
d a s m u c h t i m e a s p o s
s i b l e i n t h e f i e l d ,
e s p e c i a l l y d u r i n g
s u n s e t a n d s u n r i s e
. T h e l a n d i s n o t t h e
s e t t i n g f o r t h e w o r
k b u t a p a r t o f t h e w o
r k . I n A u g u s t w e w e r
e n o t i f i e d o f a l a s t
m i n u t e a v a i l a b i l i
t y a t W a l t e r D e M a r i
a ' s *T h e L i g h t n i n g F*
i e l d (1 9 7 7) . O n A u g
u s t 3 1 a n d S e p t e m b e
r 1 , w e d r o v e . F i n a l
l y , a r u t t e d d i r t r o
a d b r o u g h t u s t o *T h e*
L i g h t n i n g F i e l d . *

3:30-4pm ON SEPTEMBER 1ST

where I stand at the northeast corner, I am able to locate myself against the field

I know there are 400 poles and I know where I stood

behind the northeast-est pole:	deer scat
on the way from the mid-north-est pole:	flowers (list them)
	some mud
	a horny toad
	flies
	a few bees

at the northeast corner:	a swarm of mosquitoes
mosquitoes all over	my legs and back and forearms

.

I tried to make it to the middle

8 poles in from the north	12½ poles in from the east
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east of the midpoint:	so many burrows
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.

the mounds are inches, maybe a foot higher than the rest	of the ground
their visible holes are one or two feet down, making their mounds	feel like mountains

the sun is high	and it's 83 degrees	
sweaty	and 83.2 degrees	
	mosquitoes hover	
	it's not	even dusk

.

then I see an animal

.

the animal stands, looking



AT SUNRISE AND SUNSET

.
.
. light hits the tips
.
. of some poles
. differently
.
. a line shines
. one quarter of the way down
. on others, a bright band
.
. the entire field begins
. and reflects
.
. from the back porch
. I see human figures
.
. in the field
. in light: two
. sets of twos
. black-jacketed, moving
. slowly in rows, offering
. perspective
.
. I see you
. southwest
. by the third/eleventh pole

. when sunlight starts
. to hit
. you crouch and your
. orange hoodie disappears
. a moment
. from my view
. a bird, powered
. by some shifting
.
. whirr
. flies by
. and a late summer jackrabbit
. with common ears
. bounces out over brush
. also activated
. by sunlight

THE LIST OF PROBABLE FLOWERS

Rocky Mountain Bee Plant

Scarlet Globemallow

Rabbit Brush

Yucca

Common Sunflower

New Mexico Thistle

Beard Tongue (looks like Red Bugler)

Mountain Dandelion or Desert Marigold

Sticky Aster

Blue Violet

Cowpen Daisy



SOUNDS ARE JUST BARER SPOTS

grasses brushing shins and knees
footsteps on the hard layer of top dirt, a level of crunch
a bird
the high-pitched chirp
coyotes in the distance, a wail that sounds like a plead
a shuffle, some grasses with little bird beaks, arrows
atop and pointing the opposite direction of the wind

.

when the wind blows, grasses listen and adjust
they listen and resist

.

I come to a pole with a blemish, a smudge
at forehead height, and a white touch of excrement
yes, poop, up near its pointed top
I hear the whine of mosquitoes, it's early
morning, 60 degrees but they've activated
their bites already covering the soft backs of my knees
my lower thighs

.

there aren't any trails, just barer spots
where anthills have erupted, dirt-er patches
where small mammals
build tunnels and homes
cracked dusty surfaces where very small lakes
have evaporated and plant life hasn't grown in

yet that's where I encounter the black beetle, the horny
toad by the road the one a vehicle would use
to arrive there's the striped hummingbird moth using its antennae
to linger among the sunflowers

MY LEGS

.
.
.
.
.

I'd dared
wearing shorts in the field
feeling
each beak of grass bite
against thigh
as I'd pass through
suspecting mountains
molehills
mosquitos
~~that~~ would collapse
the (that) distance

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*Some language in “Context” comes directly from

Walter De Maria, “*The Lightning Field: Some Facts, Notes, Data, Information, Statistics and Statements*,” *ArtForum*. April, 1980.

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The Dia Foundation website: <https://diaart.org/visit/visit-our-locations-sites/walter-de-maria-the-lightning-field>

GENEVIEVE KAPLAN

Genevieve Kaplan is the author of *(aviary)* (Veliz Books, 2020); *In the ice house* (Red Hen Press, 2011), winner of the A Room of Her Own Foundation's poetry publication prize; and five chapbooks, most recently *Felines, which sounds like feelings* (above/ground press, 2022). Her poems can be found in *Third Coast*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Oversound*, *South Dakota Review*, and other journals. Genevieve lives in Southern California.