

Mountain Water
Mirror Displacements 1-9

Incidents of Mirror-Travel
at Mountain Water

Noah Travis Phillips
Spring 2023

Mountain Water *Mirror Displacements 1-9*

feat. *Incidents of Mirror-Travel*
at Mountain Water

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@ Mountain Water
Artist & meditation Residency
Retreat / Refuge

Huerfano County, Colorado
Spring 2023

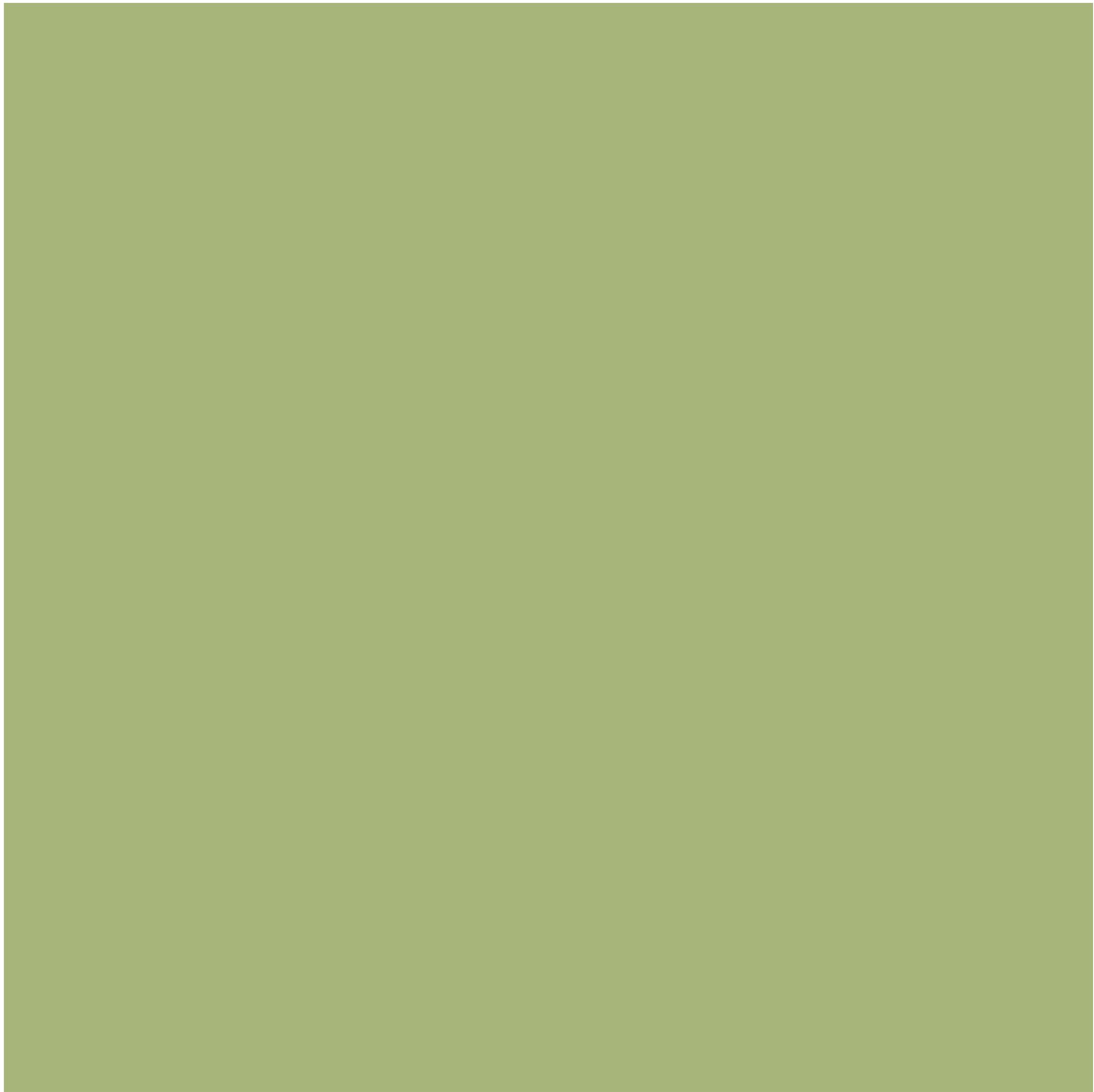
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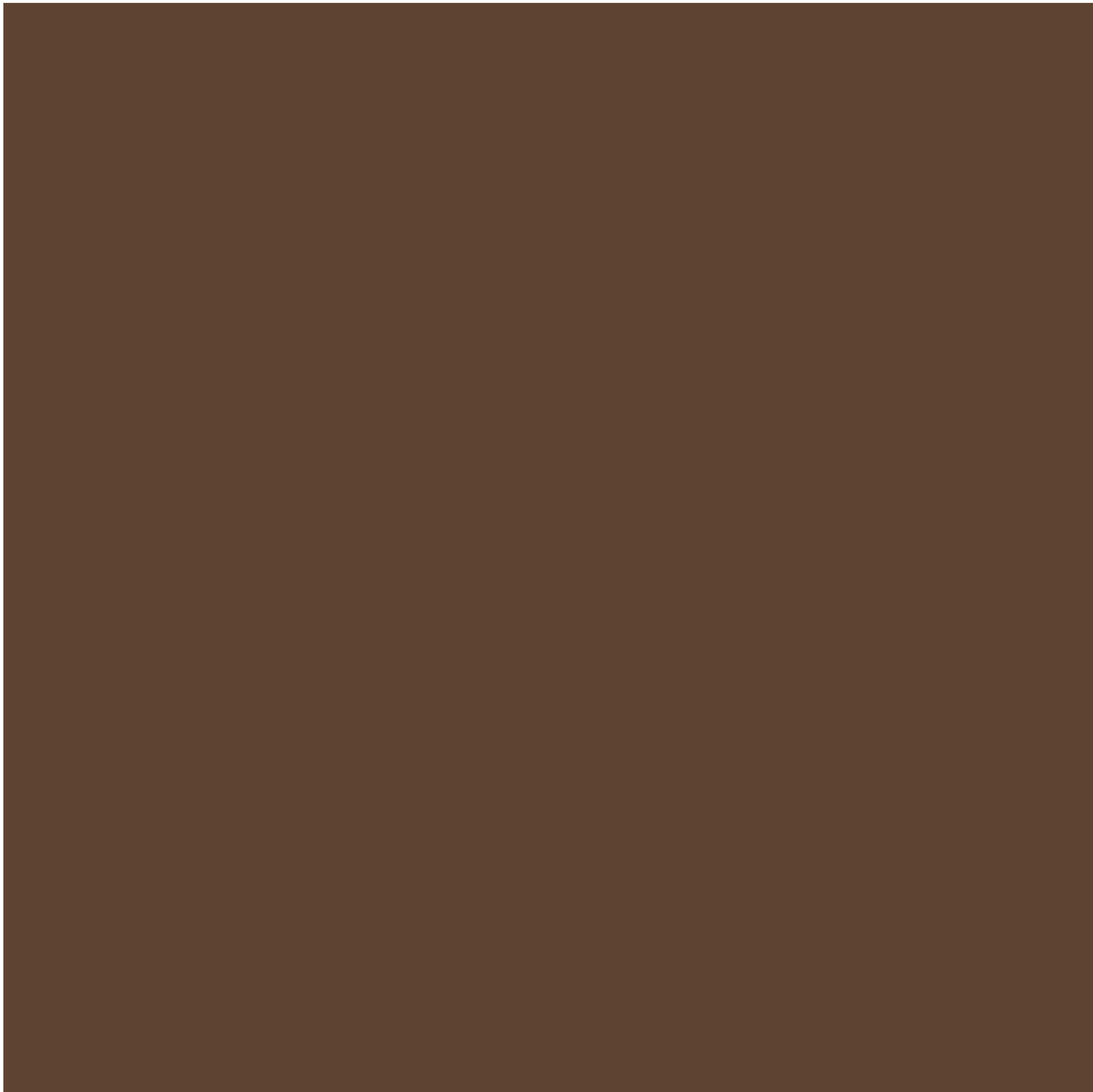
“The landscape (Earth) supports the mirrors and us, the mirrors reflect the sky (air) and clouds (water) into the land, as our minds mirror the landscape, reflecting us back into ourselves.”

- NTP

“Nature does not proceed in a straight line, it is rather a sprawling development.”
& “Establish enigmas, not explanations.”

- Robert Smithson





Below Tanglewood (#1)



tuft in north gully (#2)



ruddy vertical branches and flat gold grass (#3)



found pseudo-silueta (for Ana Mendieta) (#4)



up the hill / edge of the bramble (#5)



in the salt wash (#6)



at the root of fallen tree (#7)



corner of the old building (#8)



Orphan Temple (fireplace) (#9)







“Incidents of Mirror-Travel at Mountain Water”¹ (2023)

“The mirror is a perfect symbol of emptiness and pure consciousness. It is clear, bright, and shining, and reflects all phenomenal appearances impartially, yet remains completely unaffected by the images that arise in it, revealing all phenomena to be void in essence. ... As an offering the mirror represents both the faculty of sight and the object of sight, visible form”

Robert Beer, *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbolism*, 198.

“This reciprocity of perspectives, in which [humans] and the world mirror each other and which seems to us the only possible explanation of the properties and capacities of the savage mind, we thus find transposed to the plane of mechanized civilization. ... The beings confront each other face to face as subjects and objects at the same time; and, in the code they employ, a simple variation in the distance separating them has the force of a silent adjuration.”

Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 222.

Driving toward Mountain Water, [REDACTED], one becomes aware of the different horizons, multiple and varied. (Some like shark teeth.) Quite perky, it sits on the Earth embracing (reflecting (reaching out to)) ~~devouring~~ everything that looks like something. One is always crossing the horizon, often atop it even, one is always becoming the horizon(s), yet it remains ever distant. (With)in this line (→ zone) where sky meets earth, objects come in and out of existence. Since the car was at all times on some shifting horizon, we might say (feel) that the car was becoming the line, entangled with(in) the line(s), a line that is in no way linear. The distance seemed to destroy all restrictions on movement, thus bringing the explorer to a sequence of actions/events. How could one advance on the horizon, if it is already present under one’s feet? A horizon is something else other than and as well as a horizon; it is openness in closedness, an enchanting region, where in is out. Space + time can be approached, but are far away (and always persist, and are returned to). Objects are timeless and ancient, gesturing toward the future, as the Earth enfolds and welcomes. I keep moving between and among horizons.

Looking into the map (Mountain Water wasn’t even there), a tangled network of horizon lines called “trails”, some red, some black, some green, some blue and calligraphic threads, water, the river valley. The map legend contains signs: Dorje Khyung Dzong (Impenetrable Garuda Fortress), Oak Creek, Huerfano, Blood, Blueberry, Los Encinos Cemetery (you can have me), Arroyo Hondo, the old ranch, Libré (w/ its zones & domes), old places with no names anymore, the Paranormally Illuminated Oak Grove, and this Orphan Temple ... on the map of the area they are scattered like jewels in a web (or droppings of one of the various animals of the area: Deer, Horse, Cows, Elk, & so on). The locations of the displacements are close (to one another) more intimate and organic in their placement, echoing the lack of grids and infrastructure here.

The road becomes soft at its edges, smearing into horizons, the clouds touching the peaks with rain blurs mountain and water. One couldn’t help but feeling that they were supported from above and below, surrounded by nowhere. As it embraces and is embraced by the horizons, a

¹ This essay and the accompanying artwork *Mountain Water Mirror Displacements* mirrors Robert Smithson’s “Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan” originally published in *Artforum*, September 1969 and *Yucatan Mirror Displacements* 1–9.

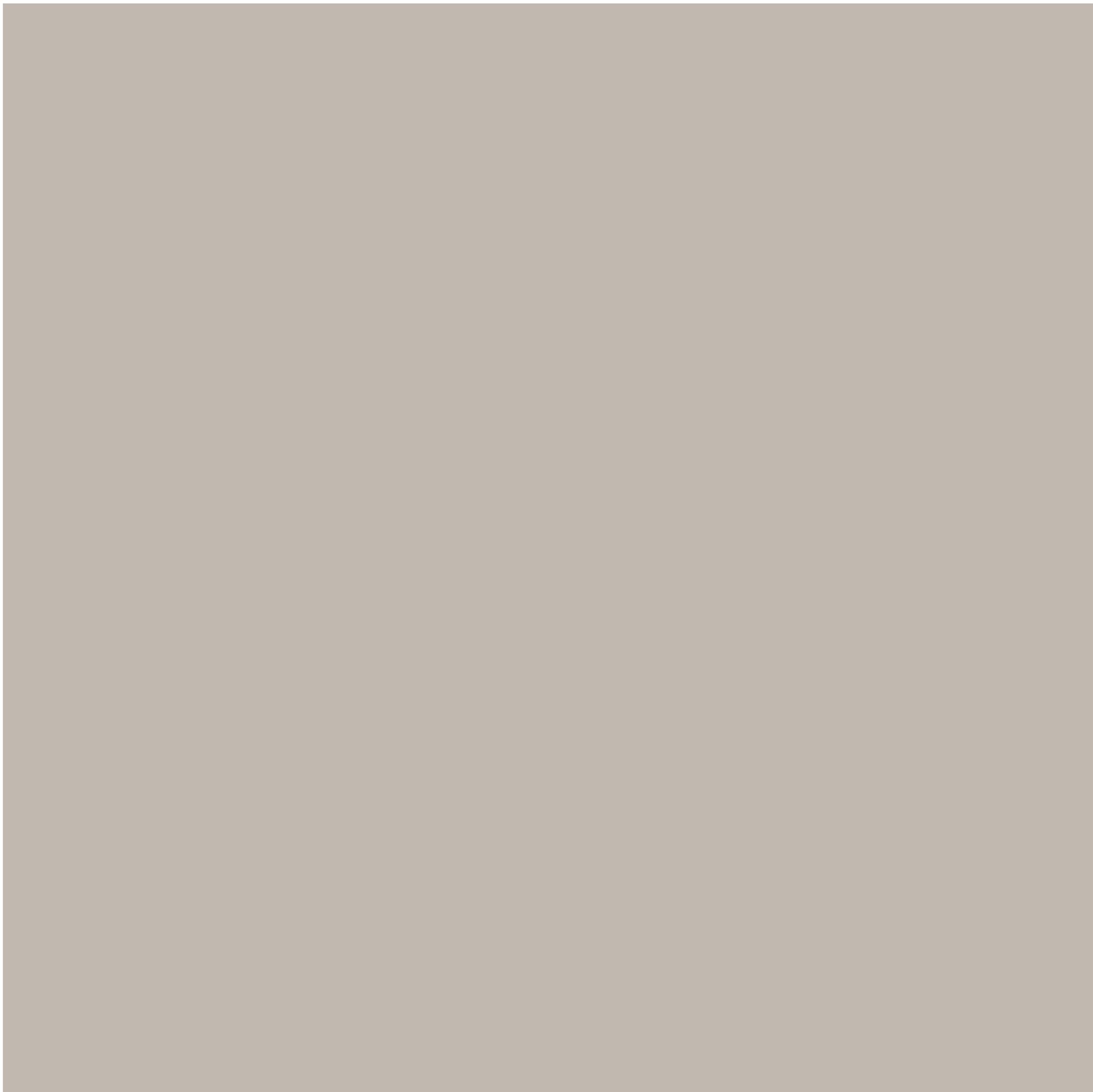
the heart of a terrestrial being. This peaceful and dramatic dance between the elements is ever-present in Mountain Water – echoing, perhaps, our own internal landscapes.

There will always be those who will say “that’s getting close to nature”. But what is meant by such a “nature” is anything but natural. These time-beings are trying to wake up. When the conscious artist perceives “nature” everywhere they start to detect illusion in the apparent bramble, in the apparent appearance(s) of the real, and in the end they are skeptical of all notions of existence, things, reality, mental constructs, &etc. Art arises from the inexplicable. Contrary to affirmations of nature, art is inclined to semblances and masks, it flourishes on compatibility and (inter)relationships. Certain modes of judgment and opinion in the area of art are doubtable murmurs in mental mud. Appearances can be fertile; they are gateways to something primordial. Every artist owes their existence to such mirages and phantasm. The illusions of solidity, the (non-)existence of things, is what the artist has for “materials”. It is this absence of objects that weighs heavy on them, causing them to invoke gravity, or enlightenment. Earth takes us to heart at Mountain Water. You can directly experience the vibrant life rhythms of the place and embody them with your breath/breathing. Travel through the unfathomable is the only necessity.

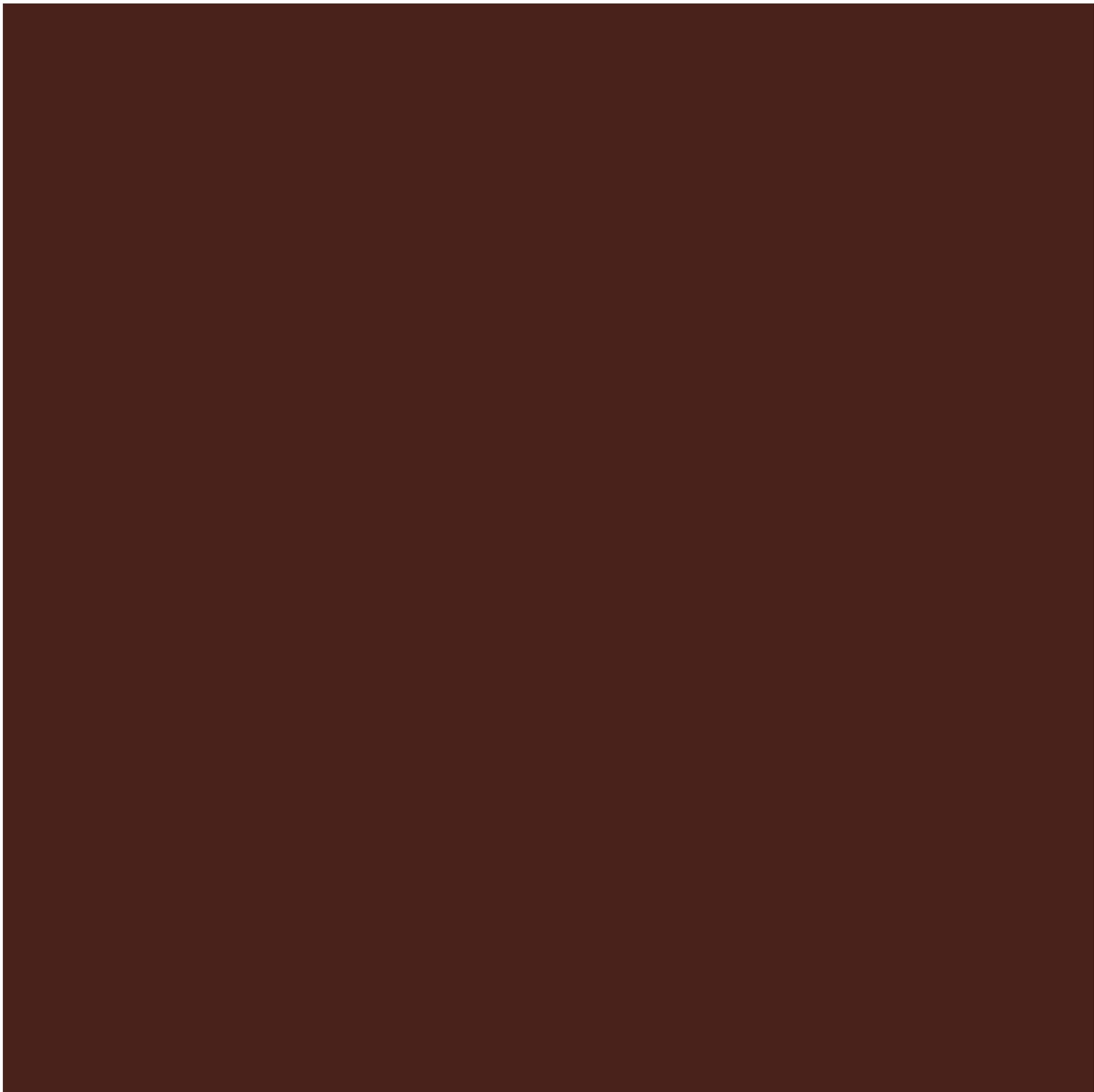
“Through the gateway of our senses, we can enter a realm infinitely wider and deeper, where the limitations of time and space dissolve and the whole universe is present in one moment, in one single point. Forms are released from the constraints of solidity; floating in dimensionless space, they become transparent and interpenetrating.”

Francesca Fremantle, “Through the Gateway of the Senses”.

If you visit these sites (a doubtful probability) you find nothing but memory traces, for the Mirror Displacements were disintegrated right after they were recorded. The mirrors are somewhere in Boulder. The reflected light has come and gone and been documented. Remembrances are but bits on a hard-drive, extant (for now) memories constellating the intangible terrains in impermanent territory. It is the dimension of reflection that remains to be (re)discovered. The fictitious color(s) waiting to be seen. The genuine voices of these patterns have no arguments. Mountain Water is elsewhere.









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