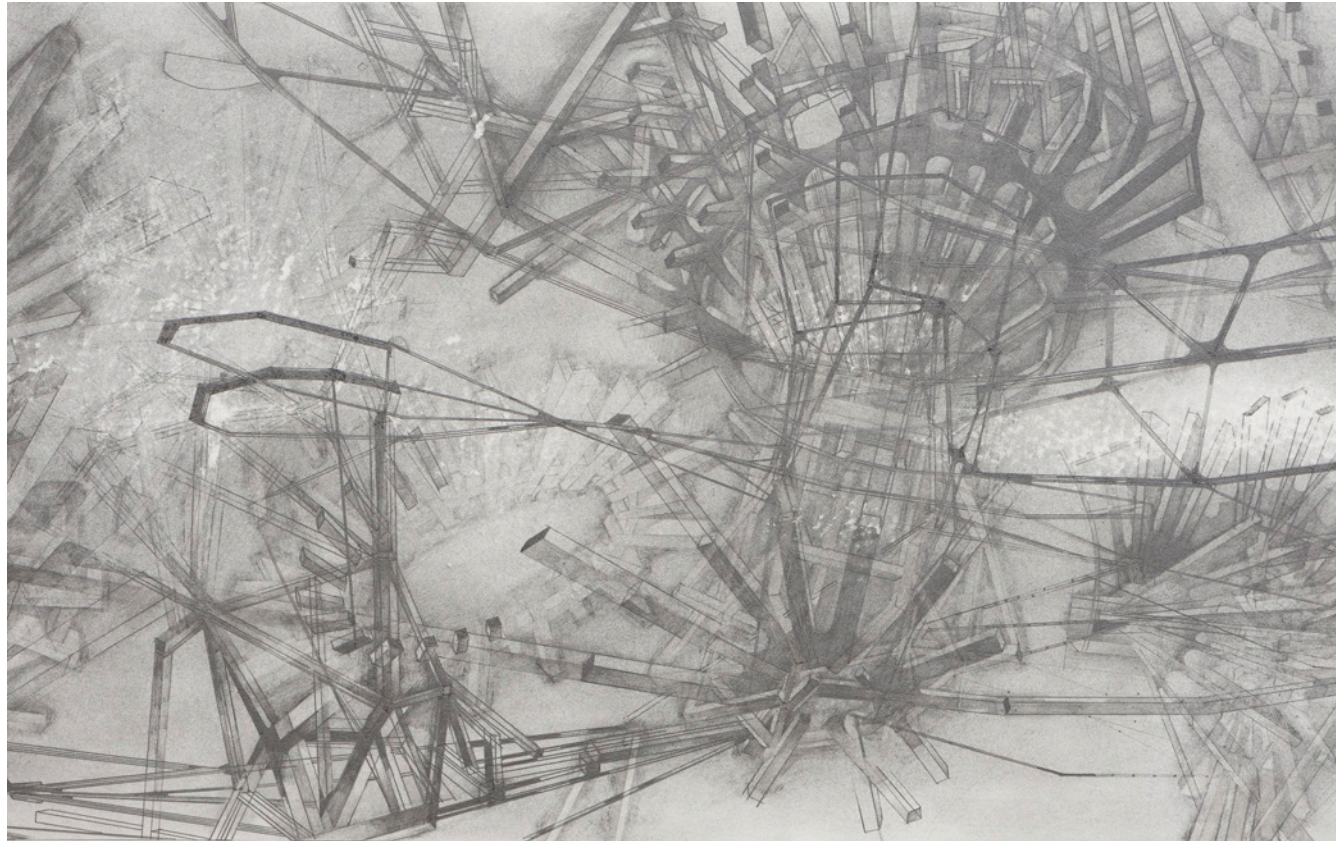


STEPHEN TALASNIK

Memory (with detail), 2015-2016
Pencil, 16 x 50 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST. PHOTO CREDIT: JEFFREY SCOTT FRENCH

CAROLINE GOODWIN

Amaranth

The Language of Memory

for Scott Hewicker

Any kind of wind in a hedge reminds me of the dancers I saw in London at a small theater next to the Opera House. They wore leotards that matched their skin. Also the raven, way off to the east, and pigeons. The oil-colored throats. The urban wilderness.

There is a street artist named ROA who painted three enormous sea lions on a wall on Bartlett Street in San Francisco, and a family of opossums at Fifteenth and Valencia.

Every other weekend, I ride my bike north for an hour in order to admire the fields of brussels sprouts along the coast.

I have a friend whose husband does embroidery. He taught me that there is such thing as a “widow’s sampler”—traditionally made by the grieving woman in honor of her husband lost at sea. I might like to learn embroidery myself someday.

I see the white emptiness at the center of the painting and cloud shapes in every muted color. A true anthem where the sun is a hole. Wagon wheels and gold coins, they burn us equally. I understand this now. It is the canal and the gate, it is the girl next door whose parents were divorced and whose father lived in a faraway place called Sunnyvale. She was very thin. She wore blue Dr. Scholl’s sandals and big dangly earrings that looked like peacock feathers. I wanted her friendship. After school the boys swept down the long hill on their skateboards, which made a gorgeous whooshing sound. We watched from the manicured lawn, giggling. Sometimes one of them would ride the skateboard in a handstand. Bees in the thickets, their yellow legs.

There was a boy named Bret who visited me while I was babysitting and showed me the glossy photographs, the women tied up and pleading. I can see Bret now; he looks like a fat lazy slob in his profile picture.

There were blackberries at the yard’s edge, and a white trellis rose. At the corner store, a girl named Lalina, the hot dogs turning, cigarettes. Behind the Quik Stop, we hurled glass bottles into the ravine. At the intersection of Lake Otis and Tudor, we gestured for the truck drivers to sound their horns and they did. At Goose Lake, we sprinted across the sand into the water and did the American crawl out to the floating dock. The surface of the dock was gray and cement-like, very gritty. Sometimes, we floated around on the cold water in large black inner tubes and got bitten by mosquitoes.