

Nick Schroeder

I have been working on a series that deals with storytelling and the importance of “place” in stories. The series “Landscapes of the Mind” presents dreamscapes, half-recalled memories — true or imagined — or our mental image of places others have told us about. These landscapes may be nostalgic, puzzling, symbolic or perhaps even a bit fantastic. The pieces are meant to trigger storytelling about the viewer’s life.

“Landscapes of the Mind: Last Chance Gas” is meant to evoke thoughts about passing that “last” gas station somewhere in the American Southwest. There are some small details to draw the viewer in, yet much is left generic and open to allow the viewer to bring themselves and their story to the place.

Most people cannot look at an image of a man-made landscape and not begin to tell themselves a story about what they are looking at. I have not put human figures in these pieces in order to encourage the viewer to engage with the work and use their imagination to populate the landscapes. To ask “How do I fit into this landscape?” To remember how they felt as they passed the last gas station on the edge of the desert during a road trip in the American Southwest. Or how someone else would feel in that situation. I have put some small details in the works — the concrete block under the hitch for the trailer, the empty Coke cases — to draw the viewer in but I have also tried to keep the specifics to a minimum to keep the scenes as generic as possible — the sign for the gas station that is a *mélange* of filling station signs. I wanted to make the scenes as inclusive as possible. I hope people will bring their memories and imagination to these works and imagine their own stories. Or imagine the stories of others. And perhaps share these stories with each other.