

Checklist for Valises for Camp Ground: Arts, Corrections and Fire Management in the Santa Monica Mountains (CAMP)

The sculptural and instructional valises are used by the National Park Service and County Fire Department to teach about fire prevention, national forests, and our relationship to nature. Each valise has a theme with specific talking points, and all of them circle back to teach issues about fire abatement and our connection to wilderness.

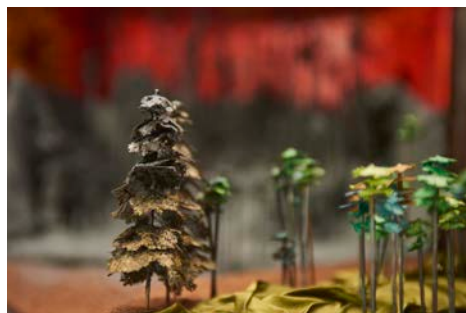
The female inmates at Camp 13 who have been trained as firefighters supplied the content for the valises through their experiences with firefighting and fire abatement methods. The process was organic in the sense that there was a two-way conversation between artist Kim Abeles and the inmates regarding the development of the valises. Along with the talking points, the firefighters also responded to the artistic, content-driven outcomes. Participants worked alongside as well as with the artist on the elements of the valises.

Some of the valises respond to discussions with park rangers regarding issues including fire prevention in residential areas especially those adjacent to forests; securing homes from wildlife entering and getting trapped, and conversely, encouraging wildlife through habitats; invasive plants vs native species; and citizen's responsible use of parks and national forests.

Valises for Camp Ground: Arts, Corrections and Fire Management in the Santa Monica Mountains (CAMP) embeds artists in the Los Angeles County Fire Department to work in collaboration with the paid and inmate workforces, and community stakeholders that service the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The artworks and creative programs are developed to explore new models in two core areas: increasing public awareness, engagement and responsible stewardship through the County's wildfire management programs; and providing skills development and job readiness opportunities for incarcerated women through creative activities related to the Santa Monica Mountains. This was funded by the **National Endowment for the Arts, Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, and led by **The Armory Center for the Arts** at Conservation Camp 13 with Kim Abeles as the first commissioned artist. (2017-18)

Following is a list of ten valises and notes about the visual elements and talking points:

VALISE 1 – FIRE LINE



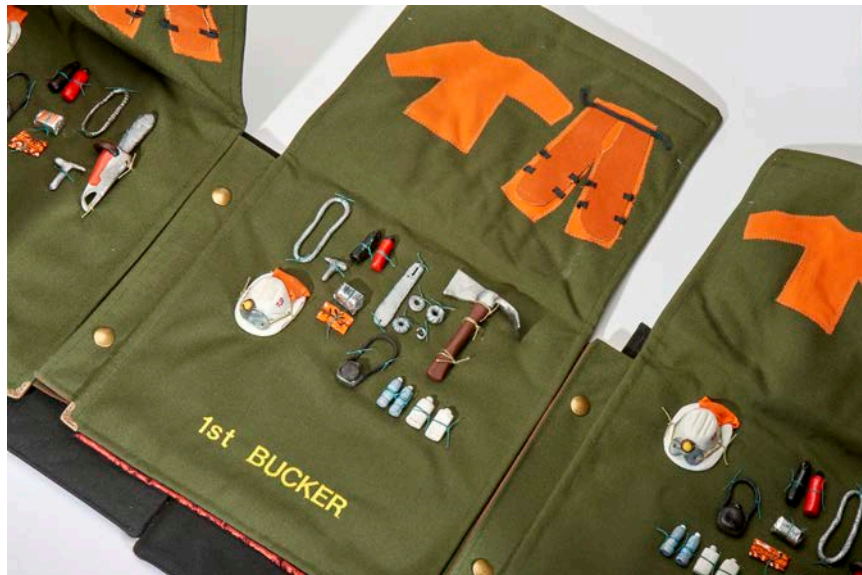


VALISE 1 – FIRE LINE

This valise is specific to firefighting. The exterior is adorned with the first names of the women Abeles worked with at Camp 13.

- firebreak (cutting 15-20 feet wide for fire prevention), and fire lines (4-feet wide) or cut lines between the burnt and live landscape
- photograph of a cedar is surrounded by a welded cage-like structure
- names of all the women at CAMP 13 who participated are written as rings of the tree
- encourages discussion of fire abatement, fire hazard reduction tips, and about the paid and inmate workforces who clear the area and fight our fires

A black carrying case for the 'The Simpsons' board game, shown open to reveal the game board and components. The board features the Simpson family and the text 'THE SIMPSONS' and 'THE SIMPSONS BOARD GAME'.





VALISE 2 – TOOLS

This valise encourages discussion about fire abatement and the paid and inmate workforces who clear the area and fight our fires. It is in the form of a backpack and contains a miniature of each tool used for clearing and firefighting. A representation of Camp 13 uniforms made by an inmate from an actual uniform is at the top of each panel, and each position in a crew is embroidered on the bottom of the cordura fabric.

- a valise in the form of a backpack that the CAMP 13 firefighters use
- each tool used for clearing and firefighting has been created in clay
- a uniform has been repurposed along with its tag
- each position in a crew is embroidered on the cordura fabric; some of these names refer to the primary tool used by that crew member (tools like the McCleod or Pulaski, for instance)
- encourages discussion of fire abatement, fire hazard reduction tips, and about the paid and inmate workforces who clear the area and fight our fires
- speaks to the important safety needs of firefighters and a tangible look at all the equipment required for this task
- each section is removeable with snaps, and the reverse is created in velvet to feel like forest moss

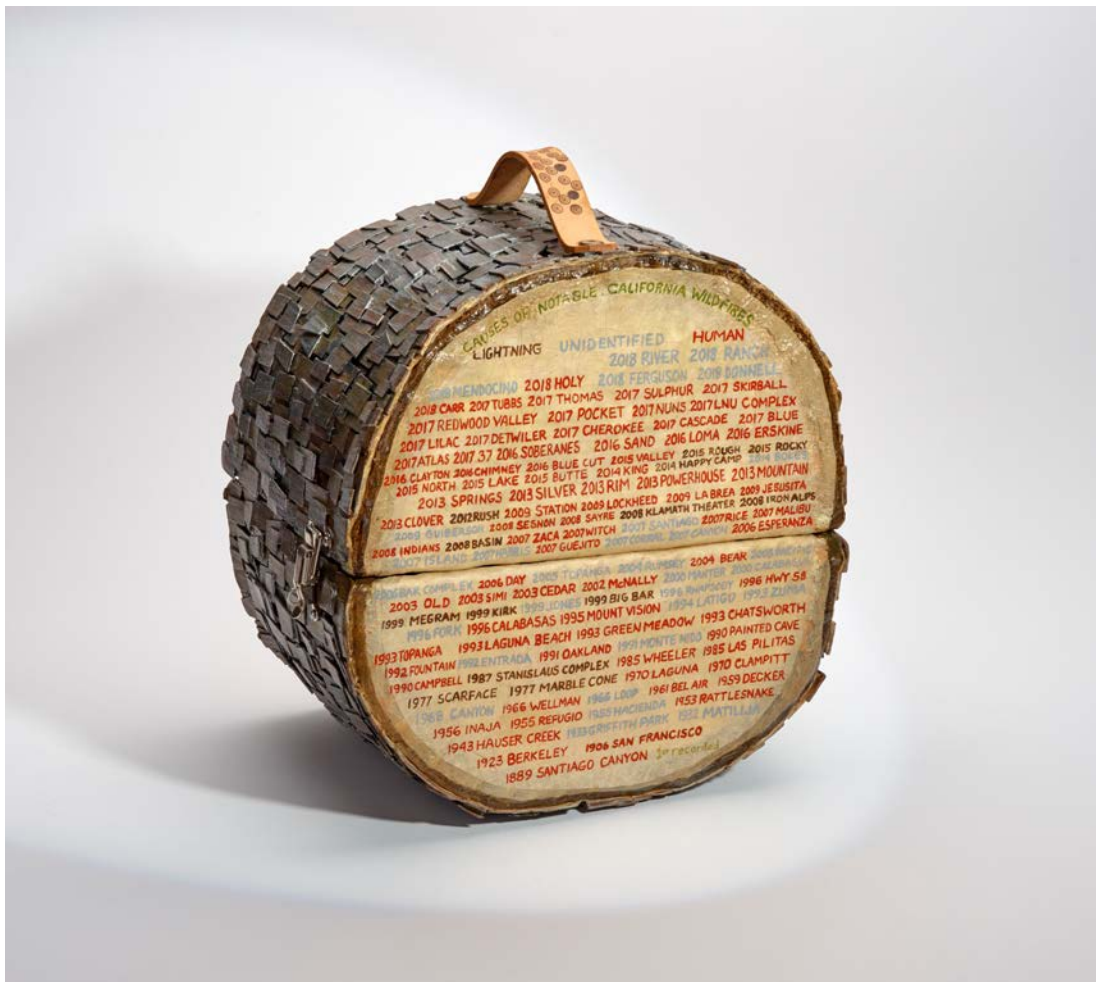
VALISE 3 – INVASIVE



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- differentiates between invasive plants and native species, along with the problems and fire hazards that arise from invasive plants
- invasive plants overcome the areas, including the growth following fires
- the idea is to admire the beauty of trees but understand that hazards result when forest resilience is ignored
- the cards inside the “lunchbox” include practical steps to avoid the problem of bringing invasive plants into an area
- encourages discussion of fire abatement and fire hazard reduction tips

VALISE 4 – PREVENTION





VALISE 4 – PREVENTION

- focusses on causes of fires and fire prevention
- draught and severe climate changes have increased the danger of fires, yet people are still the primary cause of fires
- includes a list of fires before and since the year 2000, the causes of these fires and the extent of the damage
- the "bark" is created from painted cardboard, and the inside is created with crocheted cord, and as such there is a balance of conversation to be made about constructive and destructive actions by people
- the inset tray has whittled branches, each noting a source of fires (from arson to burning cars to sparks from trains where clearing has not been maintained)
- encourages discussion of fire abatement and fire hazard reduction tips

VALISE 5 – ABATEMENT





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This valise focusses on causes of fires and fire prevention around homes and neighborhoods adjacent to wilderness and is an interactive piece to have viewers identify the problems with the right side of the property; on the left side, proper distances for clearing and plantings are noted.

- focusses on causes of fires and fire prevention around homes and neighborhoods adjacent to wilderness
- encourages discussion of fire abatement and fire hazard reduction tips, including preventable measures that protect homes that come in range to active fires
- the house and property are divided in half to show the right and wrong way to handle plants, stored wood and other flammables, and trimming of trees as examples
- an interactive piece to have viewers identify the problems with the right side of the property; on the left side, proper distances for clearing and plantings are noted
- the outside of the valise has images of uncleared plant and furniture "fuel"
- the piece includes a pocket for flashcards that emphasize the instruction of fire abatement (cutting tree "ladders" and clearing rain gutters for example)

VALISE 6 – COULTER



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The Coulter pine is native to the coastal mountains of Southern California and it speaks to the majesty of pines as well as the endangered and decreasing population of this species. This Coulter pine cone weighs 3 pounds, 12" x 7", and is displayed as if it's the Hope Diamond.

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- numerous Coulter pines were destroyed in the recent Thomas fire, and now, one of the few remaining stands of this tree is in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada
- a discussion of the wilderness and "ecosystem management" is part of this discussion
- this Coulter pine cone is meant to involve the viewer, and it weighs 3 pounds, 12" x 7", and will be displayed as if it's the Hope Diamond. Wearing a helmet is required to recover these, and it has been boiled so that the sap has covered it
- the relationship of decorative pine cones is a talking point to draw the viewer into a better understanding of wilderness fires (including the way seeds emerge during the fires)
- encourages discussion of fire abatement, fire hazard reduction tips, and an understanding of controlled fires with the use of drip torches

VALISE 7 – NATURE



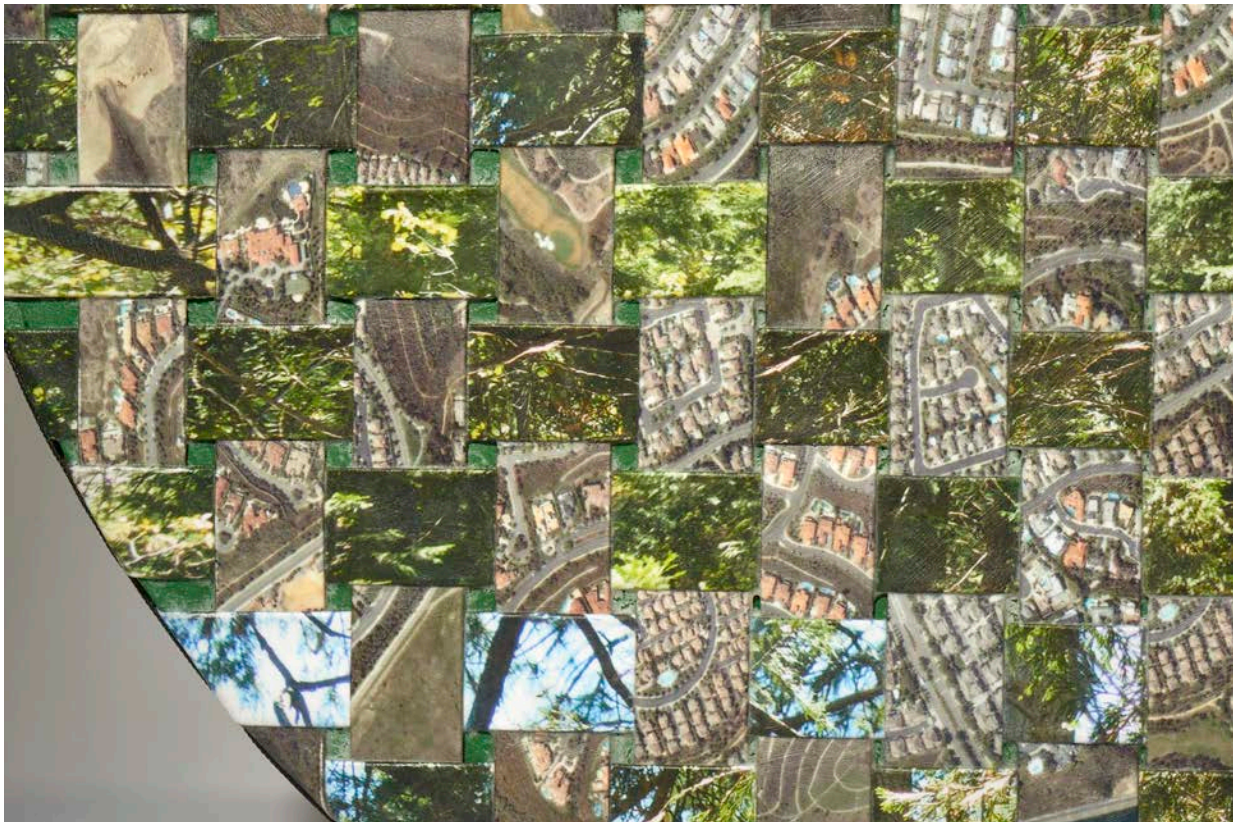


VALISE 7 – NATURE

- hydrastone plaster cast from a tree bark collected by one of the women at Camp 13
- Citizen Science has become an important way of involving people with the wilderness
- in the discussion of wilderness fires, it is important to establish our relationship: what is nature, and are we part of it?
- people need to see how they fit into nature and that they are not separate from it
- this is an opportunity to talk about air and water pollution caused by wilderness fires
- encourages discussion of fire abatement, fire hazard reduction tips, and in particular a sense that we are all part this larger picture

VALISE 8 – HOME







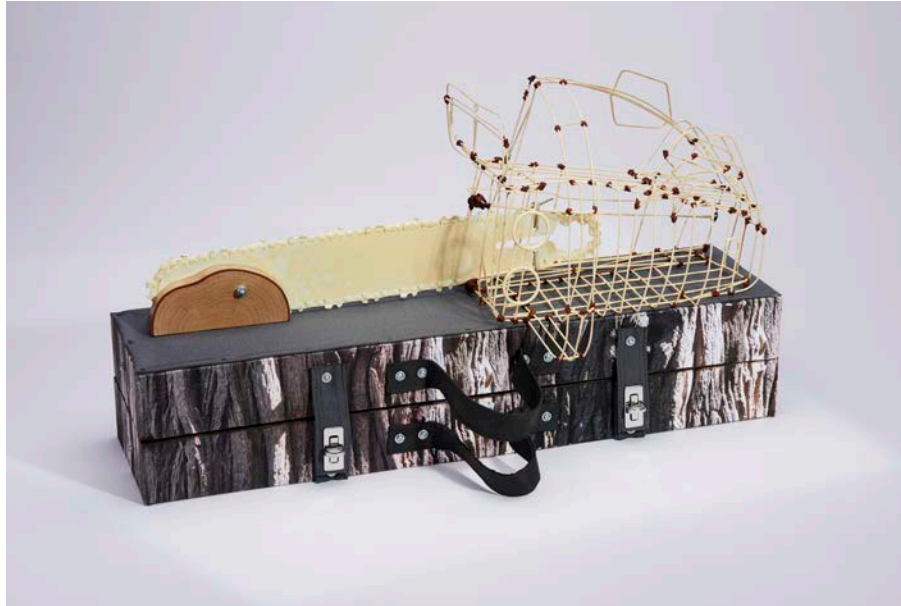
VALISE 8 – HOME

Made in conversation with a National Park Service ranger and volunteers, this valise depicts creatures we often attempt to keep out of our yards, and others we try to promote by building habitat boxes (owls and bats), or by planting flowers to attract bees and hummingbirds (California Sunflower and the California Fuschia).

- this valise incorporates the photographs used to create the 3-dimensional house in VALISE 5 – ABATEMENT, but it is being constructed larger in size
- the content is to focus only on methods around the home to keep animals from entering homes and property, however, it will also address our efforts to encourage other creatures from bats to butterflies and bees (the question becomes, why one and not the other?)
- this piece is particular to Phase Two of valise project that were developed through discussions with park rangers

VALISE 9 – ABATEMENT





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- this valise follows the same dialogue as VALISE 5 – Abatement, but takes the form of a chainsaw to speak about clearing and tools for clearing used by firefighters as well as citizens on their property

VALISE 10 – STEWARDSHIP





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- this valise is to encourage conversation about people's responsibilities to the environment and the wilderness
- various species of pine cones are cast in hydrastone plaster and the sky image fused onto metal creates the lid and lower section of the round valise
- stewardship speaks of society's role in both the built and unbuilt environment
- for youth, the National Park Service provides a Junior Rangers program
- this speaks to our relationships with other citizens as well as healthy forests
- encourages discussion of fire abatement and fire hazard reduction tips