



**Smithsonian Institution**

*Archives of American Art*

## **Reuben Tam Diary (Loose Pages), circa 1966-1970**

Extracted on Apr-17-2024 11:34:50

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Moon over the Athabaska, in front of Cabin 3.

Mon Aug 29 '66 - A big, memorable day. Took the "sky tram" up the Whistlers (mountain) just outside of Jasper at noon to the 7500' station + hiked to the summit, 8080 ft of bleak mountain height, above timberline, above anything familiar as terrain. Not black cinders, like Batchelor Butte, not red cinders like Haleakala (1940?) but shale in sharply broken sheets, and blocky moraine boulders, shards of white + rose quartz and quartzite. Towering, sharply defined mountains 380° - Mt. Hardisty, Mt. Tekarra, the Colin Range (!), the Maligre Mts., the Seven Sisters, Pyramid Mt., etc. - and way way off to the northwest the faint dome of Mt. Robson, highest of all. It was such a world as can never be easily recalled after it is witnessed, being beyond all known scope of distance + height + color. The climb to the summit, to the cairn was not too difficult but it was very cold and windy. At the summit it seemed the surrounding peaks were of less height than where one stood. One's position became truly egocentric. Stayed 6 hours on the mountain + later on the lower level of the train station. Sketched. Fed squirrels that look like chipmunks, saw picas or rock rabbits, saw only a few last blooms of wildflowers.

At the top there appeared 2 distant "Alpine" valleys that showed green, and the panorama of the rivers winding thru long troughs between ranges, and the town of Jasper.

Altogether one of the great vistas of the world!

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