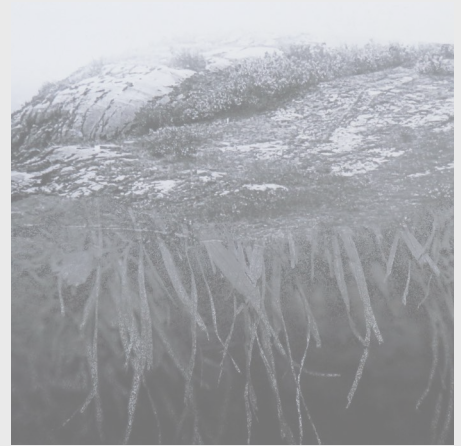
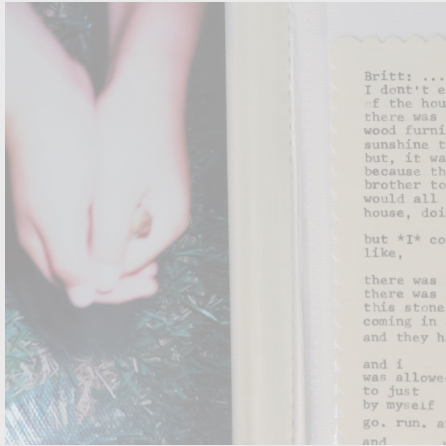


LIVING WITH WORLDS

as they end





Obituary

He learnt to read snow,
to trace footprints in ice.
Sea melted his books.
He went missing last winter
when the path became water —
The end of his story
is known to the sea.

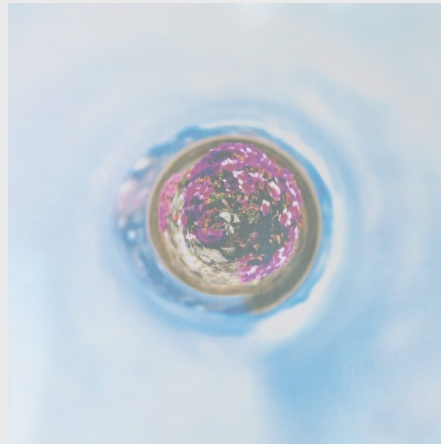
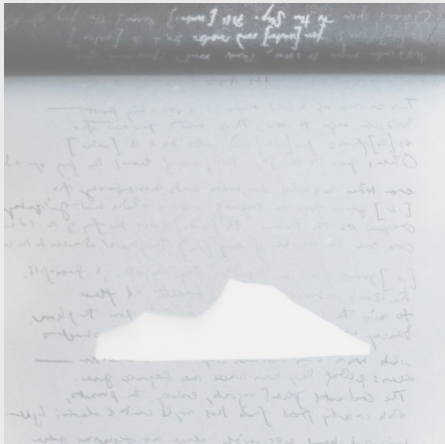


ICE AGE

This example of a cold bank is a variety point.
Molecules begin to slow, their bonds few and far
as [ice] forms from [water] and water bonds to [water].
Oceans open to the sky. All [water] turns the way of tide
even when molecules slow, when bonds momentarily fly
[ice] grows from an impurity, a brown shadow behind a shining
crystal, or the seams. An [ice] knows the way of the tide,
can be the weight of any [ice], the threat advances to the sea.

[ice] grows from an impurity, tiny, crystalline & feverish.
The sea's leden cannot slip beneath all flows
to mix the serenity of [ice] being split from the glacier,
banging with new partners, and turning like the planets

While water can correct slip on hot correction
oceans of [ice] being born when one separates grain.
The [ice] holds impurities, eddies, the planets,
with carefully found foods that might catch electric light
by its bond, a molecule, when one separates grain
before this example of a cold bank, a variety point.
Children of [ice] and [ice], refusing to find on rivers,
[ice] forms from [ice] and will not back to [water].



LIVING WITH WORLDS

as they end

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East Stroudsburg University
Fine and Performing Arts Center
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www.livingwithworlds.com

Worlds end slowly, then all at once.

When we began working together on this exhibition, we were focused on one slow-moving catastrophe: sea-level rise and the concomitant threat of climate change. As an interdisciplinary group of artists, scholars, and writers, we wanted to explore what it means to live in a world that is ending around us, with our full knowledge. We understood climate change to be a meta-catastrophe: a collection of devastations that affected different people at different rates and in different places, but all stemming off the same branch.

Yvonne Love brought us together to work in conversation, making the process of our artistic dialogue both the method and one of the goals of our project. We began by circulating five bundles of folio pages via the mail in a predetermined sequence. Each member filled a single page in any way they chose, then sent the bundle along for a response from the next artist. In the process we created folios that are as much a form (and record) of multimodal communication as they are finished artistic creations in themselves. These folios became the basis for further works, as we reflected on the process, our relationships with each other, and our living with the world during these years. These final works, as well as selected folio pages, make up the content of *Living with Worlds (As They End)*.

The natural world does not exist independent of us as actors and organisms, of our choices and ethics, our stewardship or negligence. Worlds are necessarily melanges, of plants and animals and fungi and weather systems and tectonic plates and people, and they

are created by their definitions: their borders, their values, their members, and how they care (or don't) for one another. Love's work as a sculptor and multimedia artist focuses on this care. Her repeated imagery of birds—of flight and feathers, of flocking and migration—led us with an ethos of consideration, like a pair of wings stretched out to both guide and to embrace. When she picked up the red thread from several folio pages and made it the central material of her installation pieces, the theme of our animal bodies—and how our bodies' needs tie us together—became central.

Gabrielle Russomagno's photographs and composites, which combine historical photographs with her own renderings, imagine a possible future that is inflected with the loss and the memories of the past and the present. Her instinct for capturing and transforming intimate moments is mirrored in Darlene Farris-LaBar's multimedia work, which examines and plays with nature at scale; Farris-LaBar magnifies and minimizes plants, gardens, and her own human body, disambiguating layers so they can be viewed individually, or as a differently imagined collective than the one we think we know.

Britt Dahlberg, an anthropologist, responded to the group's questions with more questions, gathering together bits of photography, oral histories, and her own journals and field notes, finding meaning in juxtaposition and curiosity rather than in firm answers. In turn, writer and historian Deanna Day elaborated on individual folio pages with a series of short stories, discovering in fictional worlds a way to find the truth of this one. Finally, poet Nancy Campbell was a guiding voice throughout, mixing sketches and prose to create an alchemical mix in which we all can scry for insight.

Our work on this exhibition concluded in 2020, during a time when such insight seemed impossible and impotent. Our long-simmering concern about climate change was meeting the acute flares of anger, panic, and grief that came with the COVID-19 pandemic, the righteous protests that followed multiple high-profile murders of Black Americans by police, and the potential reelection of an American president who has made his singular mission the degradation of human (and all other) life on our planet. Climate change, our long-time subject, did not create these crises; they, like it, were born from the twinned seeds of imperialist greed and white supremacy. In this case climate change is not a source of catastrophe, but an accelerant.

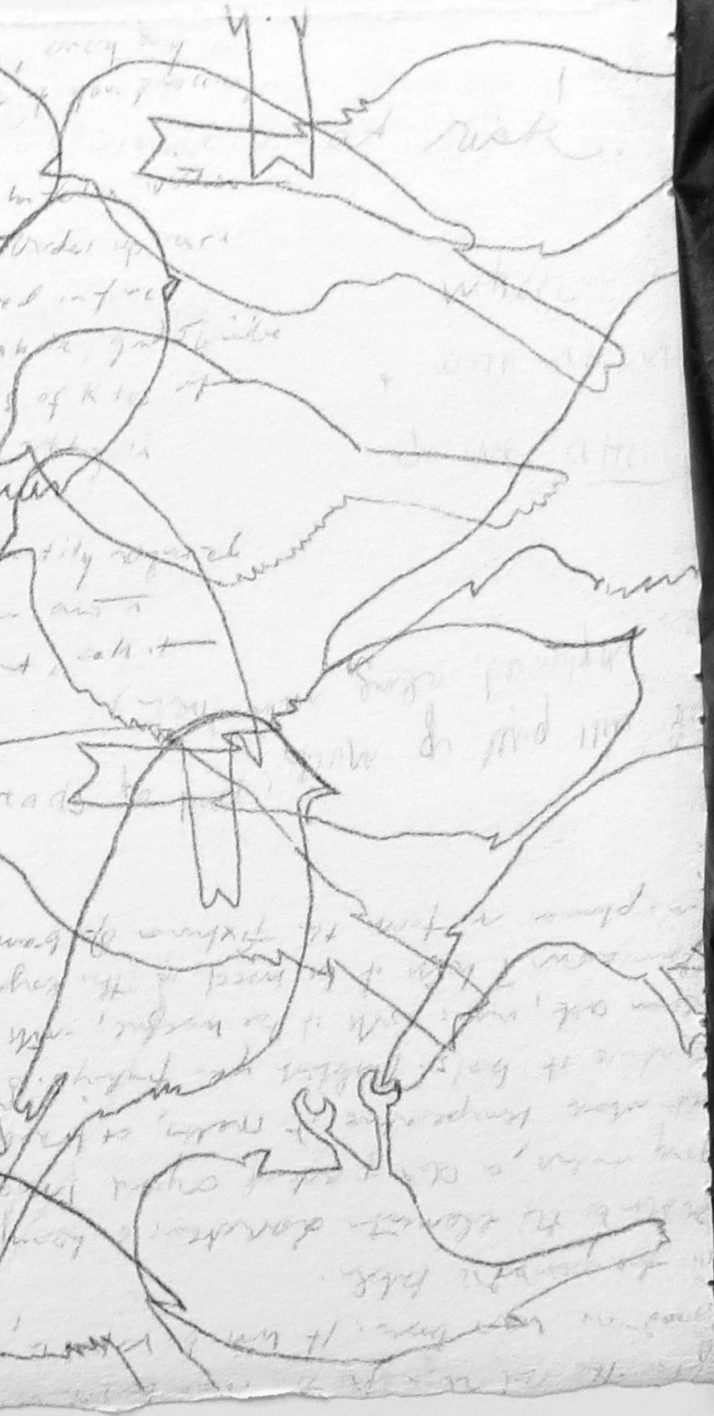
Campbell's culminating poem focuses on one of these immediacies: our current pandemic. Her poem's intimacy calls on us to examine how, in our aging western worlds, we have adapted to the pandemic with the same strategy we have been using to adapt to climate change: by loading the burden of change and consequence onto the least powerful among us. Life has changed aggressively for some—for essential workers, for people of color, for the elderly and disabled—who are forced to accept deadly risks so that “the world” can survive. But what world is saved by this action? And for whom?

With apologies to Orwell for the paraphrase: worlds end slowly, then all at once. But sometimes, they don't end at all. We have been facing the end of our world with fear, anxiety, and dread. But is it possible that

the scarier, more worrying fate is that we may have to continue living in this one?

As we attend to what it means to live in a world as it ends, we also must face the truth of that world: that the problems with the power to end it are the problems that were baked into it from the beginning, the problems that are in fact constitutive of it. And if we see the world as it is—with its commitments to structural and environmental racism, to violence that we naturalize as inevitable—how does that change our commitment to saving it?

Many of us will survive the end of this world, and many of us will not. In order to live through this ending we will need to define our worlds—our communities and our borders, who we will care for, what we will value—so that we may bring them with us. The most important way to live through the end of the world may be to ask, what do we want to build for the next one?



Yvonne Love
Carbon Chickadees
Folio No. 6
Carbon paper, Rives, and thread

A Compass Rose

①
We draw together
as the world pulls apart.
Friends, I'd cross the coldest
continents with you.

②
The red needle points north,
the blue points south.
A rotating circle at the heart.



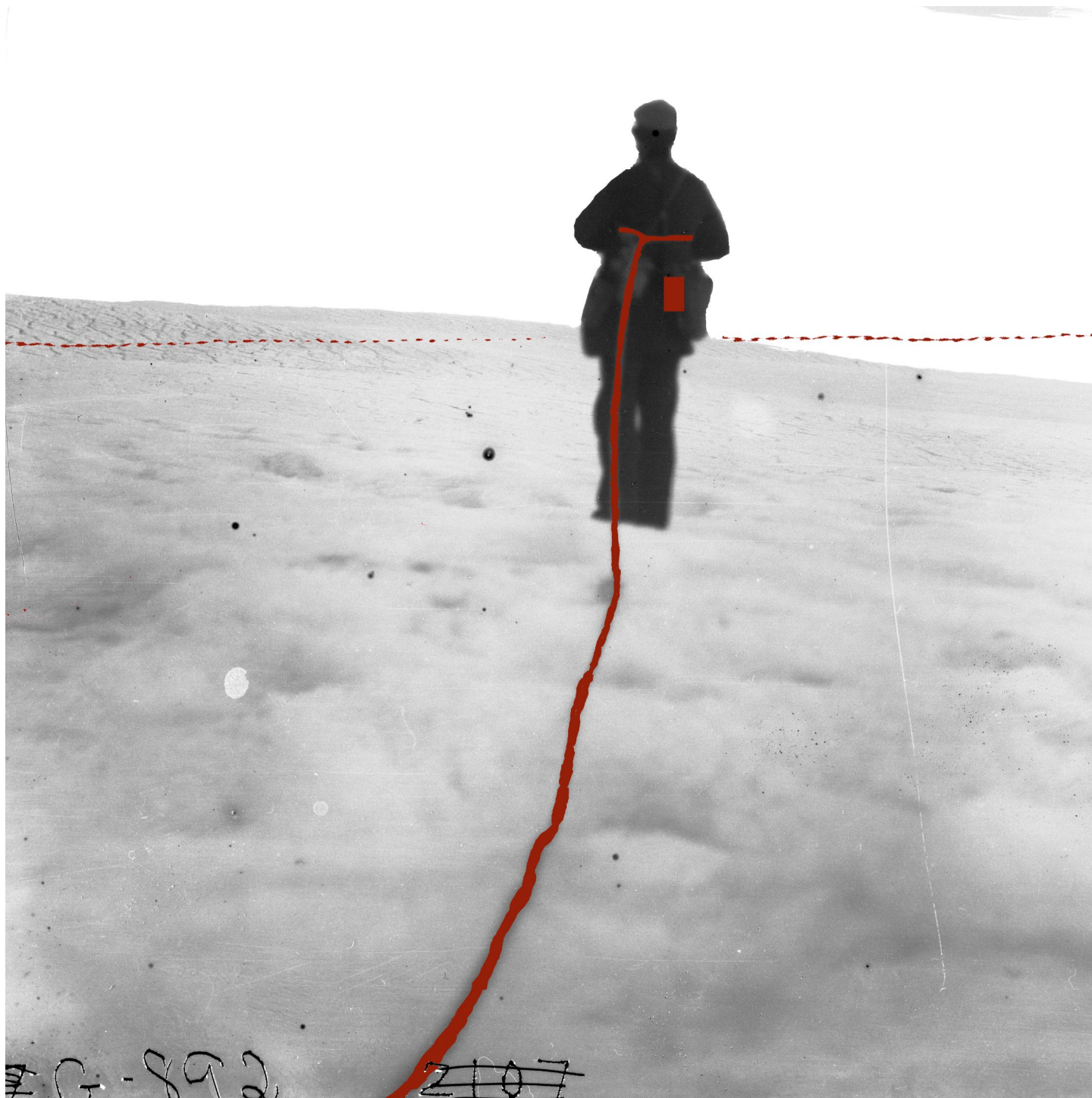
a red vein—brings back the old blood
a radar—tracks what's too far off to see
a red thread—binds us together

③

④
We thought we were here to map the ice
but we are walking on clouds
as they are burning away.

⑤
This cord between us saves us both.
If one of us slips into a crevasse
I can't save you, you can't save me—

④



Gabrielle Russomagno
Folio No. 3
Archival Digital Print from
Composite Digital File



Yvonne Love
Bell Jar with Red Thread
Glass bell jar and red thread
6"x6"x10"

Make Alone / Making Together / Making Space
Britt Dahlberg

August 24, 2019:

The other artists have studios long set up. I'm making one around myself and this work as I go. I feel slow. I'm also delighted to do this, and have an inkling this collaboration is helping reshape and reorder my work, my life, a bit, in ways I've needed and are more me.

I delight in thinking towards this project. My journal has ideas interspersed when they arise, and small sketches. I delight in gathering and buying some supplies, and envisioning space to step away and dwell with just our pages, and *away* for a time, from other interactions or interruptions - there's a stillness, a safety to soften and focus and play, without half attending to a million other things happening, or to be scanning, reading, noticing.

I say goodbye to others, and head to the basement. I'll just play, work alone for a bit, but all the while, knowing I'm making a page for Darlene, and that she's awaiting it.

September 7, 2020:

Ideas grew a bit more. They had their timing.
(do I write about the photo album? or the cut outs or the torn away piece?)

When I created the torn piece I imagined the salmon ripped out of its webs of relations, but they still follow and sneak in. When I view it now in September, I also see pulling out of places that didn't fit, to some freedom.

How do the salmon feel about these different settings where they find themselves?

Thinking of our adaptability.

Britt Dahlberg
Journal (selections)
September 20, 2020

I felt a longing for doing slow things, that grow.

Now, I've lost the hope that there is space for that. It needs a community, or I need some.

The nature of these relationships where things can pour out unedited and a friend writes it down, and sees brilliance, and maybe I do too.

but in most terrains not.

share: photo perhaps of destroyed work? in this realm I start and stop -

I kill things off before I ever see fully what it becomes, definitely before others do. / showing others.

and sometimes I just watch the caterpillars.

"I" planted this fennel, "I" created the conditions for their growth,

and I marveled and sparkled at the first, second, third batch of small caterpillars.

they started out no longer than the tip of a pencil, or rather, I first noticed them at that size. the next round of them I was looking for them, and learned to spot the eggs. Translucent. But they disappeared each time.

I think birds ate them.

This time I find them on different fennel than prior rounds: closer to the house or hidden among the branches of the lemon tree. Not in the main landing place of the sparrows.

and they've gotten big.

so big that they've eaten nearly all of the fennel plants they're on.

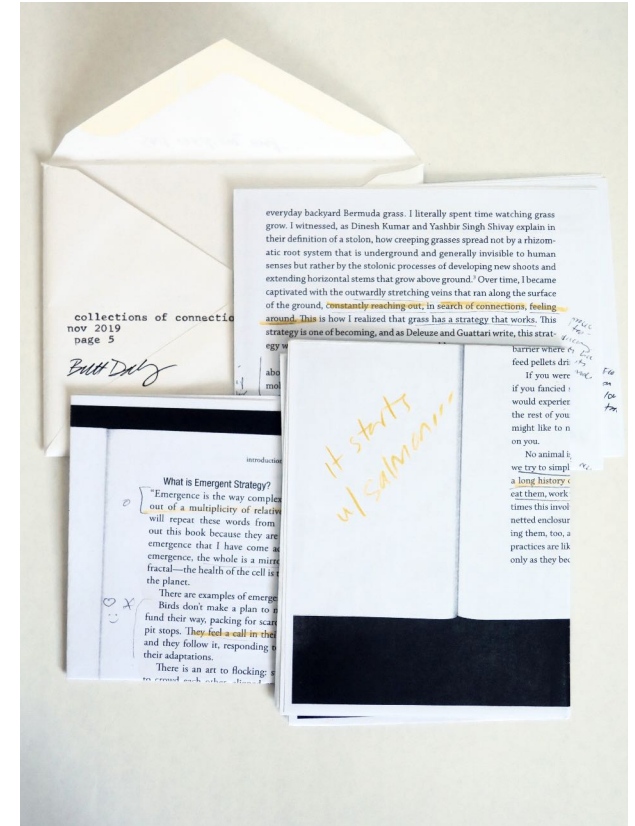
I moved just a few - not sure I really know or see any more than the caterpillars do - I can see the breadth of the garden: that the remaining leaves and seeds to eat are in other areas, just not here (they've nearly completed the plants they're on). But I'm pretty sure at this point they are also attuned to things I am not.

(and that I risk returning them into harms reach of the birds. or, are they safely TOO big at this point for these birds to comfortably eat?

and sufficiently threatening with their new gel like bright orange ANTLERS that sprout out of nowhere when touched?)



Gabrielle Russomagno
No. 5 and No. 2 from the Series *Twenty Five Days in May*, May 2020
Archival Digital Photograph
2' x 2'



Britt Dahlberg
Still Reaching Out
Folio No. 5
November 2019

Deanna Day
The Window

I don't notice the hole until I turn it over.

We've always passed the book between us, making notes, sketching in the margins. It doesn't matter if we black out sections, tear through them, spill our tea on the pages by accident or on purpose; every word has long since become fixed in our memories, through no real effort beyond endless repetition. The text is habit. At some point you underlined the word "nurture," first with one tentative line and then, again, with a new pen, harder. I skipped over that bit, using one of my turns to underline "coexistence," which, to be fair, you did, too. I don't remember who did it first.

I used to have a routine: I would scour the pages for every new change you'd made—not reading yet, just noting where they were—then go back to the beginning and sit with each one. But I'm not methodical about anything anymore. I open the book at random, running my fingers down the page to feel the slight relief of the printing, the grooves where a pen or pencil was pressed, where I can read your emotions by depth rather than articulation. There's a passage about progress; you left a note there, but I can't read it. You're always putting

words to the things I can't say. Even when I can't read them.

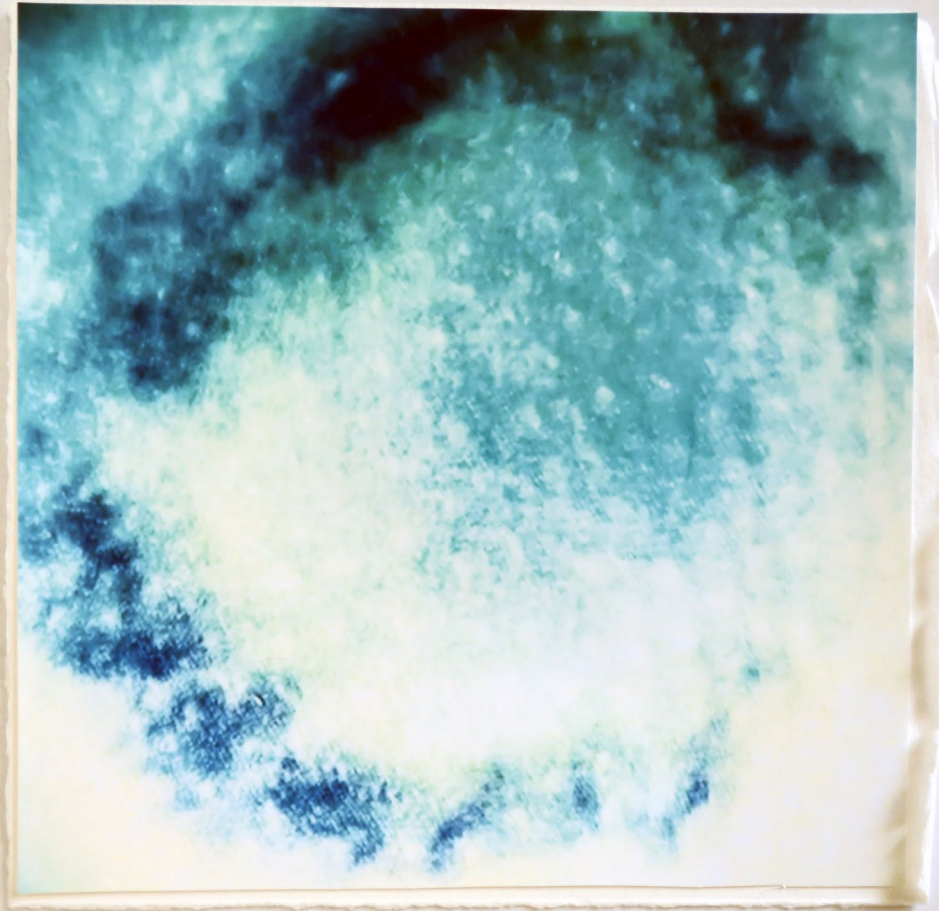
This time, when I flip the book upside down to hide it between my mattress and the floor, there's a flash of white. I know this cover like I still know your face, so I pull, carefully, so carefully, on this new piece of thread peeking out of a small hole at the crease where the cover meets the spine; I don't want the entire binding to unravel. But with the slightest tug, a clump of netting falls into my hand, and behind it I see the tip of a square of intricately folded, subcutaneous paper.

It's a page from a different book. There's a section ringed (not circled) in yellow crayon, short strokes jutting out like a sun. You've underlined: "A fence itself bears a promise of control." "They feel a call in their bodies." "Grass has a strategy that works." Beyond the yellow crayon are whips of red, and I remember you, once, treading water well past the buoy line, cawing at a seagull.

I try, but I can't recreate the complicated folds of the page. If I try to squeeze it back where I found it, I'm certain I'll destroy the page and the cover both.



Gabrielle Russomagno
No. 3 from the Series *Twenty Five Days
in May*, May 2020
Archival Digital Photograph
2' x 2'



Darlene Farris-LaBar
Attempting to Heal... Bruised Surface Ice
Folio No. 2

Deanna Day

Ducts

While I was growing her, I couldn't help but dream up possible lives she might live. They sprouted, unbidden, incessant and iterative, linking together in an impossible web of futures. "Like a daisy chain," I say, remembering.

"Like weeds," she says, laughing. "When there were weeds."

She trawls her eyes through the charred underbrush, and gently places another mushroom in the sack. She spots the changes in texture and light that I usually miss; I tell myself it's because she's so much smaller. Closer to the ground. But it feels like we have different kinds of eyes.

I let her peer into piles of leaves, and I watch her hair as the wind blows it over one shoulder. While I was growing her, I knew what my body was for. And before it was growing her, my body was growing me. I haven't figured out yet what I'm growing now. I watch her digging gently through the earth, and my body feels like all the gas pumps, plinthed into cracked concrete, tubes ossified where they reach for empty tanks.

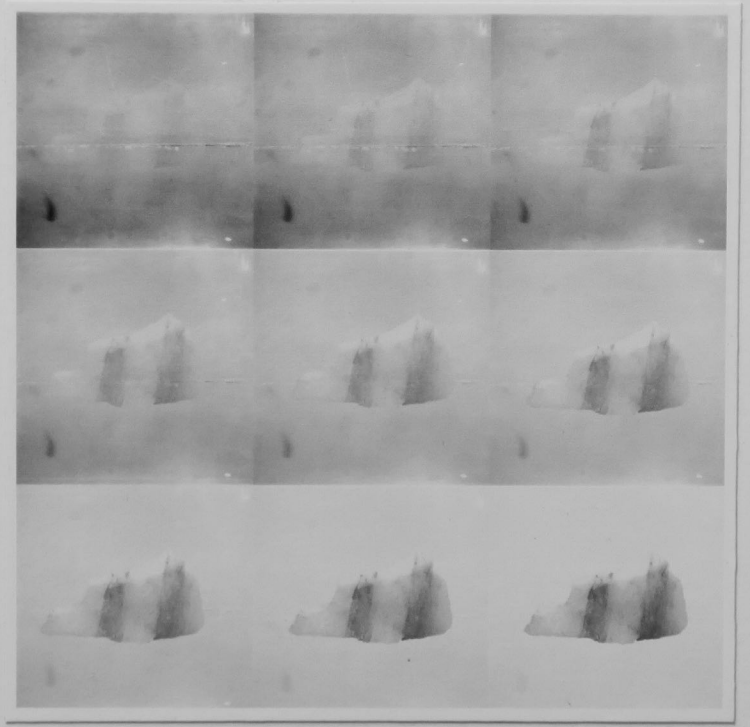
I crouch down and drag my finger through a patch of old ash, drawing a crude, childish flower: a circle, five loops around it, a stem. "Love me, love me not," I say, and she looks back at me. "We used to pull the petals off, to predict the future." I thought she would be shocked, or angry, by the violence or the waste, but instead she tilts her head.

"But you knew the future," she says carefully, and I think of my mother, the time I broke my arm in three places, the way she stared at the x-ray like something wasn't adding up. In front of me, my daughter's eyes squint. We live on opposite sides of the end of the world. She turns back, and drops another mushroom into the sack.



*The bare-breasted bow
spirits were placed in the
front of the ships in search
for the lands of milk and
honey. Landscapes formed
and then changed forever.*

Darlene Farris-LaBar
3D Printed Breast,
Milk Ducts, and Tumor
Folio No. 6



Gabrielle Russomagno
Folio No. 4
Archival digital print

Deanna Day
Structure

“We’re inevitable,” you’d always say. I would laugh, counting the cash in the drawer, or stacking the trays, but watching you, always watching you. You used to complain about being stuck inside when we were working, but I never felt trapped. I got to watch you coming from a mile away, walking slowly down the long hall between the food court and your game store that used to be a music store that used to be a video store. You would visit me, leaning against the pickup counter and flirting through your break, even though I always smelled like sweet grease. You liked to say that the smell was still better than the taste, which was true.

They say that dead malls sprawl across America, to the extent that a monolith can sprawl, I guess. Apparently malls are being killed by big box stores, or gentrification, or Amazon, depending on who you ask. (You’d say, “Is it really killing, if they’re dying anyway?”) The malls, though, were killers, too. An old man used to stand outside the exit by the movie theater with a sign, yelling how the mall killed all the mom ’n’ pops.

The food courts always seemed to hang on longest. After the game store closed you still came to visit me at ours, even though our ring of counters only threw off just enough light to make the darkened hallways spooky. “Like dead limbs,” you’d say. I would shiver, or laugh, or ignore you.

Until one day you dropped me off and I got all the way to the doors before I realized they were chained shut. “Mall’s finished, honey,” Tracy from the smoothie shop called from her car. I looked at her, then back at the padlock in my hand, like it might still fall open and let me inside. “Roof collapsed, down by the old Christmas shop. Too expensive to fix.”

Through the windows, the fluorescents were still lit, making long stripes across the floor. I turned around to look for you, but I could already see your car at the far end of the parking lot, taking a right on red out onto the road. “You need a ride, baby girl?” Tracy asked, opening the passenger door. I took a deep breath, the opposite of a sigh, and turned back to her, and nodded.



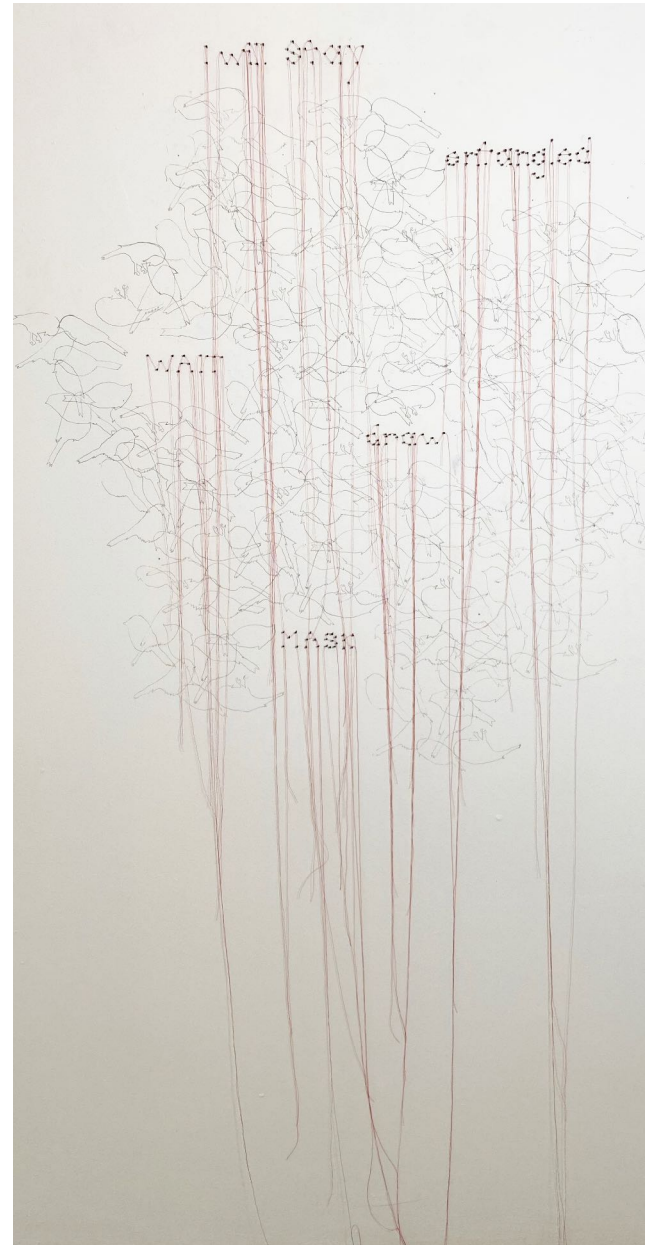
Yvonne Love
I will Stay (detail)
Red thread, carbon, nails
4'x 9'

Red thread appeared in Nancy Campbell's *A Compass Rose* and Gabrielle Russomagno's third folio, and then again in one of Britt Dahlberg's assemblages. Visualizing the thread's ability to bind us together, to deliver blood, to point us north while the world falls apart—the cord that saves us—I knew it needed to be the primary material for my response not only to this project but to what was happening around us.

* * *

The world continues to unfold in monstrous ways. I have a bell jar full of thread to wrap myself in. I have a bell jar full of thread to sheath my chickadees, send out a few studded messages, and throw out as a life preserver. I am grateful for this collaboration, for the sightlines each of my collaborators shared and then revealed.

Yvonne Love

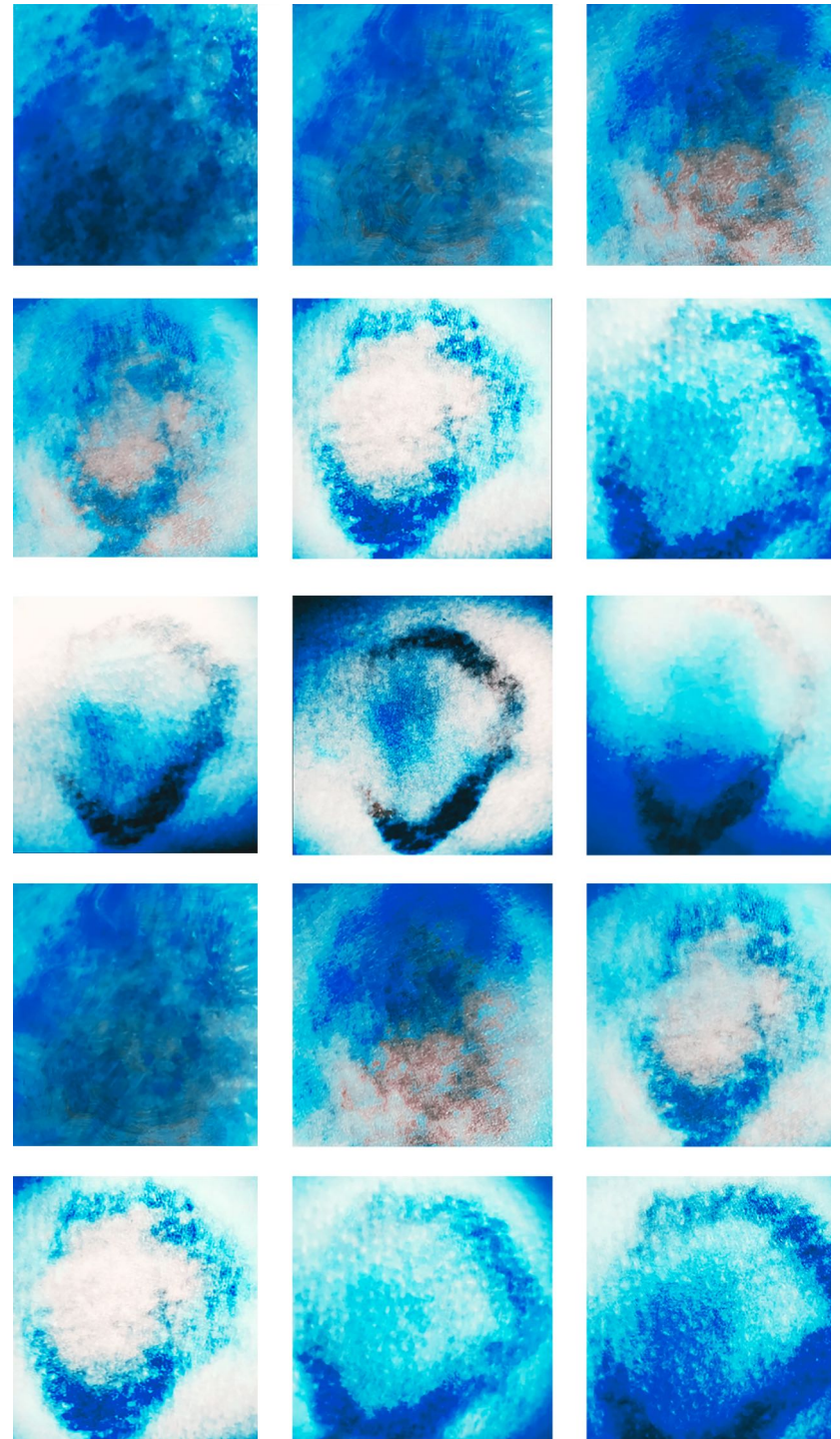


Yvonne Love
I Will Stay
Red thread, carbon, nails
4'x 9'

This video artwork, "Blood Beneath the Ice," represents the death of the first Icelandic glacier. My work during *Living with Worlds* found comparisons to both the human body and the planet. We are a mirror of each other. The work, "Blood Beneath the Ice," began by documenting the evolutionary stages of a large bruise on my body from impact and through the healing phases. I noticed similar visual patterns beneath my skin with a glacier's demise. The surface of my skin was like the surface of the ice that melted into water.

My contribution for *Living with Worlds* represented locations of the body such as the eye in "Earth's Eye: Layers of Landscapes and Time," the breast in "3D Printed Breast," the lungs in the video artwork called "Glacier's Last Breath," and the brain in the work called "Neurons." The neurons represented memories and experiences of planetary landscapes and waterways. These works were intertwined with feelings of climate change, the melting of the glaciers, pollution, and destruction of the land. When the planet was then inflicted by a virus, my work had a newer category to address, and thus "Vessels Within: The Breath Becomes Night" was created.

Darlene Farris-LaBar



Darlene Farris-LaBar
Video Stills from *Blood Beneath the Ice*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRv9N_H5jIQ

ICE AGE

This encounter at a cold border is a vanishing point.
Molecules begin to slow, their bonds fuse and fix
as [ice] forms from [water] and melts back to [water].
Oceans open to the sky. All [water] knows the fury of tides
even when molecules slow, when bonds momentarily fix.
[ice] grows from an impurity, a brine solution limit of dignity
creeping over the oceans. All [water] knows the fury of the tides,
can bear the weight of any [ice]. The glacier advances to the coast.
[ice] grows from an impurity: tiny, crystalline, & seven-fold.
The ocean's leader cannot slip beneath old floor
to mix the secrecy of [ice]. Bergs split from the glacier,
dancing with new partners, and turning like the planets
while warm ocean currents slip no dark crevasses —
seams of deep deep know when once separations grow.
The continental plates migrate, edging the planets,
dark concealing fossil fuels that might conduct electric light
lying rock-bound, inaccessible, when once separations grow
before this encounter at a cold border, a vanishing point.
Conductors of stars and silence, refusing to fuel or raise,
[ice] forms from [water] and will melt back to [water].

...of a moon
Kolah Dal
a steep slo
Sj Sijf Sid
Tik'eh Go
'Jhi'na' Ha'
Chaghshic
evanescent s
Dy' Bigoway
and many mor

...of a moon
gone out of control, and each concludes with a stark
reminder that trouble would not have occurred if people had be-
haved in ways they knew they should. Each depicts the anguish of
those who erred and the depth of their regret. For me, riveted and moved,
the country takes on a different cast, a density of meaning—and with it
a formidable strength—it did not have before. Here, there, and over there,
the imminence of chaos and the preventive wisdom of moral norms.
"Don't make mistakes," these places seem to say. "Think sensibly and do
what is right. For therein goodness lies, the goodness inherent in estab-
lished patterns of social order, and therein lies survival."

practices, often in violent ways? Geology is a mode of accumula-
tion, on one hand, and of dispossession, on the other, depending
on which side of the geologic color line you end up on. In this
book, I ask how geology is being reestablished in the Anthropocene
and consider what historicity would resist framing this epoch as
a "new" condition that forgets its histories of oppression and dis-
possession. This project seeks to write a prehistory that is suffi-
cient to the radical ambivalence of the afterlives of geology—of
indigenous dispossession of land and sovereignty in the invasion
of the Americas through to the onerous legacies of colo-
nialism: of slavery, "break

What does it mean to die?
Queer theorists have begun to take a critical stance towards a dominant politics of
contemporary western culture that makes appeals based on the projected needs of
future. Often, this future becomes ideologically embodied in the form of an ideal
child. As Lee Edelman describes, our politics is in the service of a child who "rema-
ins on the perpetual horizon, ... the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political interven-
tion."
For that Child, our entire conservative politics "works to affirm a structure, to

Quote in
SEA / AAA page

http://adnewmedia.org/2013/11/issue3-day/

Geology, Race, and Matter

Let's start with the end of the world, why don't we?
—N. K. JEMISIN, *The Fifth Season*

Every generation confronts the task of choosing its past.
Inheritances are chosen as much as they are passed on. The
past depends less on "what happened then" than on the
desires and discontents of the present. Strivings and failures
shape the stories we tell. What we recall has as much to do
with the terrible things we hope to avoid as with the good
life for which we yearn. But when does one decide to stop
looking to the past and instead conceive of a new order?
When is it time to dream of another country or to embrace
other strangers as allies or to make an opening, an overture,
where there is none? When is it clear that the old life is over,
a new one has begun, and there is no looking back? From
the holding cell was it possible to see beyond the end of the
world and to imagine living and breathing again?

—SAIDIYA HARTMAN, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the
Atlantic Slave Route*

(we what
can be said
left more truly
in Fiction,
the most
the season
[Red me])

could
explain
deals
series
area of loss
appears -
+ dist. [unclear]
[unclear]

where, + with women, do we attend
to climate -
anticipated, modeled?

...refuse to reduce either economy or ecology to the other,
connection between economy and environment that seems
introduce up front: the history of the human concentra-
through making both humans and nonhumans into re-
vestment. This history has inspired investors to imbue both
things with alienation, that is, the ability to stand alone, as if
agents of living did not matter.³ Through alienation, people
some mobile assets; they can be removed from their life
space-defying transport to be exchanged with other assets
worlds, elsewhere.⁴ This is quite different from merely
part of a life world—for example, in eating and being
se, multispecies living spaces remain in place. Alienation
space entanglement. The dream of alienation inspires
fication in which only one stands—it matters.

...leaves traces, some of which are
bodies, censuses, monuments,
that limit the range and signifi-
This is one of many reasons why
ty: the materiality of the socio-

to living-space
en its singular
d. The timber
nger supports
on for
action.
i. Still,
; aban-
cultural
n look-
e sim-
ss are
learn,

two borders
Ppl kept -
[unclear] gone pros
[unclear]

CENTRAL
CONCEPT

AAA
[unclear]

could
explain
deals
series
area of loss
appears -
+ dist. [unclear]
[unclear]

what
which threads to
that will pull up
explained along with

Britt Dahlberg
Letter to Sara
August 21, 2020

Dear Sara,

Is this still your email address? Where to reach you these days? I was driving yesterday and

Dear Sara -

I'm driving today, by myself, in the mini van I borrowed from my dad during the pandemic. I'd wanted to dwell again with the oral history you did with me a year ago.

August 21, 2020
6:04pm EST
French Creek State Park & Philadelphia, PA, USA

Dear Sara,

I'm driving today to French Creek State Park and thinking of you. I brought out the audio of that oral history interview you conducted with me a year ago now, and played it back to myself on the drive.

When we sat together (in person) last year (a world ago), you and I took turns. We set up the space. We sat positioned best for sound. In this interview, for once in the last fifteen years, I was interviewed, not interviewing. How odd. And what a gift.

I listened to almost all of it on the drive out, then returned to the last ten minutes on my way home.

“S: I am hearing you talk about your relationship with your own instincts. And I'm wondering if you'd want to talk about a time, maybe like an early time you remember like really listening to, recognizing, and responding to your instincts?”

The drive was beautiful. Listening was too.

“B: I love that. I remember some summer, maybe high school or junior high, and it was only like a week or maybe two weeks, but it stood out...”

I drove out alone. I haven't been alone out in the world for awhile now, since movements became difficult and burdened with extra decisions. On the ride home I could picture my new partner in the

passenger seat and our future puppy strapped safely in the back, next to our future inflatable kayak, after a day on the lake together.

(Do we forget we are capable when always with another? With each of us having comments for the other, wondering if they (or we) remembered X, or thought of Y, simply because it's not visible in their (our) movements quite yet, and because we want to help, want to prevent harm, keep safe? I wanted a day without the commentary - without being seen or being asked to make sense. And on the ride home, I looked forward to reuniting.)

(Is it about company or something else? Do we stop being *able* to forget when we also need to be vigilant? Did *I* remember my mask, to pack what I need to stay outdoors, what did I touch last? What did I connect with touch or breath?)

On the drive I'm alone. But also with myself. And with you. Or with myself, in ways you helped me encounter. Sara, thank you for that whole gift of experience together: the paired interviews, the presence.

In the whole 1 hour 17 minutes you ask just three questions, and you listen a lot. They are questions I needed, we needed - not precisely what I would have thought to pose to myself, but deeply responsive to the core of what I was raising or talking around and towards. What was most important to me. I'm struck by this, and by that skillful presence you brought. (What is different in speaking or writing when another is asking versus when just alone? It is different. Letters can be similar I think. I am alone, writing, but I imagining you too. Not just writing, but writing *to*. Much like creating folio pages in the basement studio to send to Darlene. Alone, and imagining her receiving them.)

I started creating this studio space last summer. Or really, I started when I began house and apartment hunting after my divorce - wanting first and foremost to finally have a little outdoor space of my own. (Or perhaps I started years before that, with a want and vision, one that got put on hold, all the while spending little on rent and actively saving, with the vision tucked away.)

We are thinking of getting a puppy, and raising them together, I think I mentioned that.

A friend remarked today: you look and sound happier now than I ever saw you in that past job, as close to a dream, or good on paper, as it was / seemed. I've felt some of that freedom and aliveness I

described to you in that high school summer, one rare week not working, and instead working on my own projects, passions, in my world. 'You seem more clear, unabashed, unhindered in your work. Maybe some loss is also a gift.'

"B: It was like two weeks. I remember that space to do what I wanted to do. And it's probably not factually true but it sure felt like that was unique. Like the rest of my time was all mapped out. But in these weeks, the memory I have is of this *freedom*. This unique span. And like a *flying* feeling of there was just - there was projects that I wanted to do... And I did."

Simple.

But here I am wandering away from, around, what I wanted to tell you and why I wanted to write you with thanks. I'm not sure what the thing at core is that there is to say, but there is something.

I teared up again today, driving and listening. Is it just response to emotion? Empathy with past self? Or the way tears can be an immediate response saying: "this is real, this matters, pay attention"?

On the recording I heard myself pause, suck in breath, start to cry (the recording is such good quality, by the way, thanks for your effort in setting up the space and recorder, and laying soft things around to help cushion vibrations). It's the first and only time I've ever liked the sound of my recorded voice. And I like the tempo and strength and rhythm too. I think you - or we together, and a larger "we" of that workshop - made a patience none of us typically get from each other or ourselves. It's like you can hear the other person listening when playing back the recording. Does that make sense?

So today I was driving, listening to us, listening to me from just over a year ago - 13 months and 21 days - talking of how I was "wanting to spend less time pitching, convincing, assuring others" that we should even take a first step, or of my vision or instinct. And more time just starting with that as a given, gathering around myself lovely, creative people, and seeing: what then? What would you *grow* together from that place?

"B: ...what if you just *start*? ... I need to not just live in those spaces where I'm just defending or making the case ... I also need places to develop the work and have space to *run* with it and not spend the whole time assuring someone else that it's OK and it will go somewhere and that it's safe to do."

And here I was driving, hearing in my voice of a year ago the pleasure of being further in this direction than I had before, and clearer in my conviction, and yet longing and wanting (for so long! or “so long” if 30 years, maybe 32 years? - when did that want, that unmet need and gap, first start? - is long.) (I think in fact any span and moment of fundamental self denial is “long.” It matters.)

These landscapes are so so beautiful and offering refuge and sense of space while we dodge the virus as best we can, and dodge unknowingly infecting others - the green around me was built atop the Pennsylvania industrial sites, dump sites, and places where toxicity was too much or too apparent. It made space.

“S: I’m struck by you stopping to indulge in observing a ladybug. And I’m wondering if you recall other things that really held your attention when you were younger?”

Also! I saw three miniature toads today, did I mention that?

They are some of my favorite critters - I’ve probably only seen them three or so prior times in my life - a few different kinds - but each time was pure delight and joy and remembered. I always keep an eye out, scanning and ready to encounter them.

I saw a hummingbird hawk moth for the first time in my life in my small 10 x 10 foot concrete backyard this week! (The space I’d dreamed up.) I’ve - and now we’ve - gathered and grown this container garden over the last two years, and this summer in particular so much LIFE has come!

“B: One time when I was a kid we visited friends’ of my grandparents. All the adults gathered inside. But *I could go!* - like there was this *rolling* backyard and there was flowers around and this stone fence that had snakes coming in and out of it and they had a pool out there and *I* was allowed to just *by myself* go run and explore and be in this space.”

Daily the birds cluster around us, perched on the highway paths of cable, electric, and phone wires interlaced between the houses, running down the alleyway behind the house. And they watch and swoop to catch bugs. We built a sweet cedar bird house this year and attached it to the new arbor archway but don’t yet know if future birds will treat it as home. But certainly this space is home - or part of their homes - in various ways, and for this increasingly teeming ecosystem.

How do they all get here I wonder each time? You move a pot and there’s tons more worms, snails, slugs - and nothing much but concrete nearby. Where did they come from? How do they travel? A hummingbird visited one day. Species of bees I’d never heard of. One is gray-blue and cuts perfect circles in leaves and flies away with them. How do they each find this place? I’ve started learning of the ways things travel, and each story makes my mind more creative or just more open: there are many ways I don’t know of, don’t think of. Just because I don’t (yet) know how doesn’t actually make things impossible, just beyond the current limits of my imagination or what I’ve yet seen.

Life is feeling this way recently too.

I’m noticing my partner will say ‘we could find a way you know, if you want’ - to so many things that I’d totally habitually just write off.

The danger is that for years I learned to silence and dismiss away a deep want or direction to head, just because I couldn’t yet see how it could even be possible or within reach. A way to not feel the hurt of that longing. (You may not “hurt” but also, then no one ever gives you that thing.)

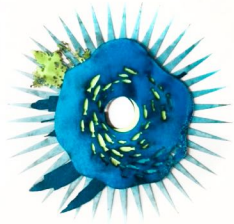
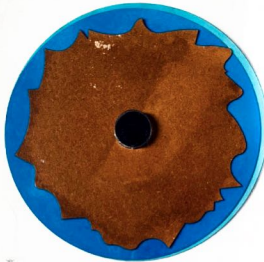
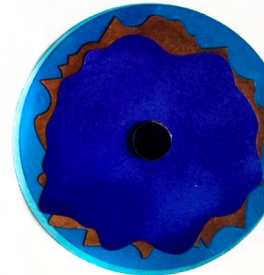
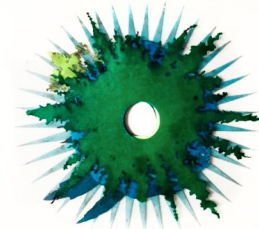
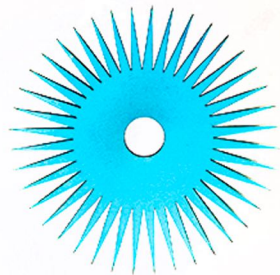
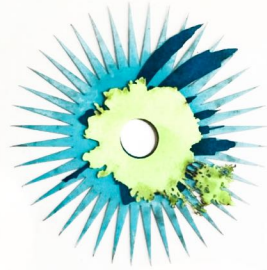
“S: So we are just at an hour and we have a little more time, and I wanted to ask: Where are you finding those communities now - to meet you where you’re at, to build?”

What is asking for form? For spaciousness? Who does it need to witness it, to ask questions, to listen as it unfolds?

So I’m reaching out. In weird odd forms. Connection from afar during a pandemic.

Sara, where are you these days? What is alive in your world? What has unfolded, what has called to you since we last sat? What of the treasured memories and items you’d talked about, and were caring for and wondering what to make of at the time? Where are they and you? Shall we continue our conversation, in letters?

- Britt



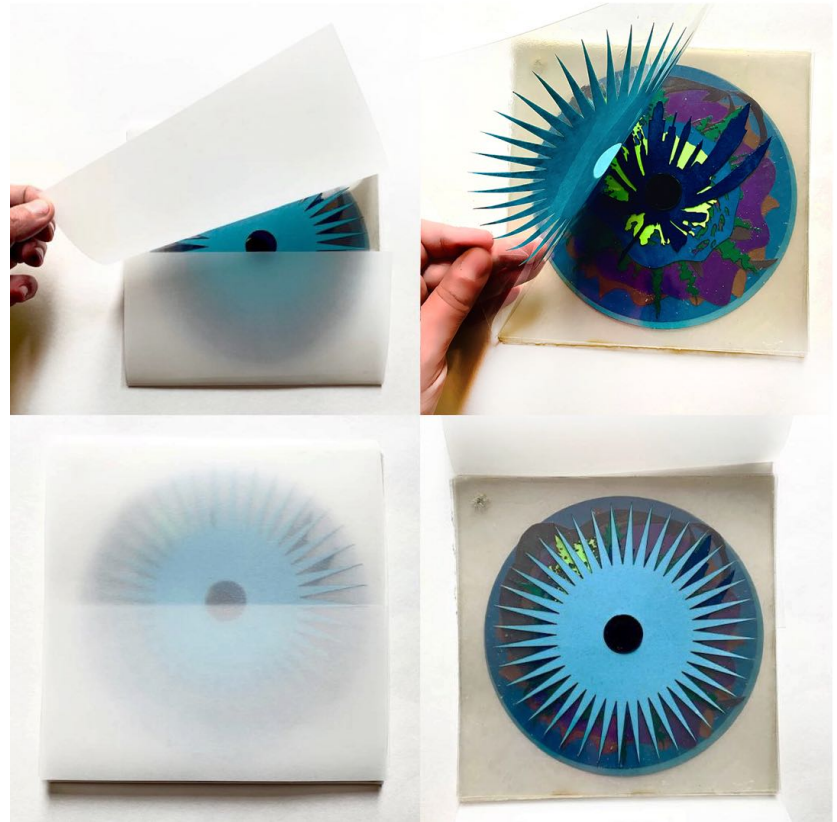
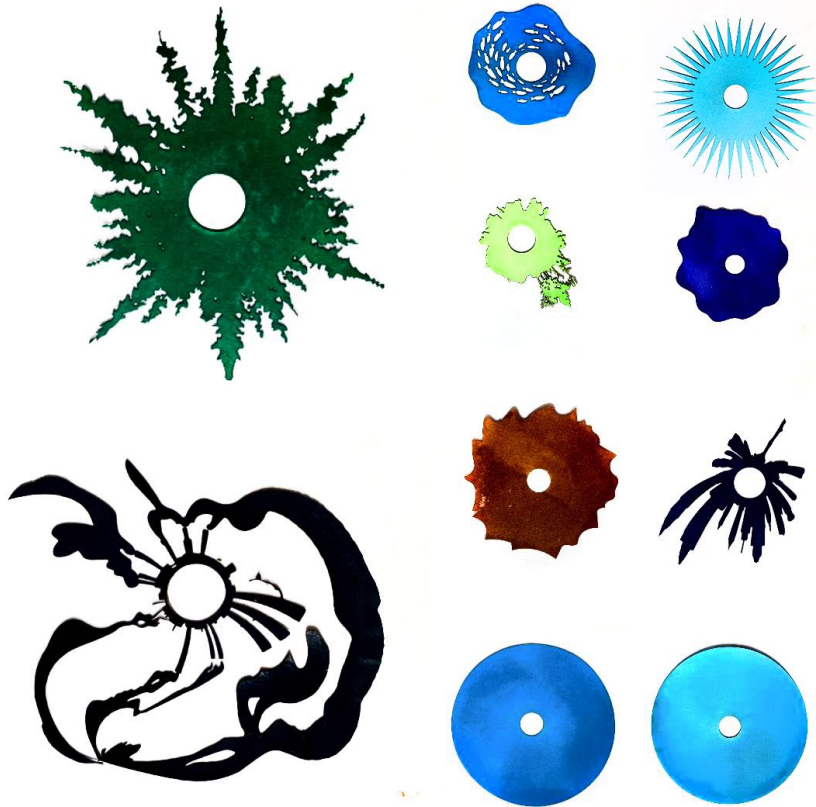
*Like thin layers from an MRI,
billions of landscapes can be seen.*

*With the scan of the eye,
All is shown.*

*Time is then translated,
The past, present, and future are all the same.*

Darlene Farris-LaBar
*Earth's Eye: Layers of Landscapes
and Time*

Darlene Farris-LaBar
Earth's Eye: Layers of Landscapes and Time (detail)
Folio No. 1



Yvonne Love
Knots
Folio No. 6
Knotted thread and
Audubon book pages



Deanna Day
Knots

Inside Mama is packing the last of their things, but the frantic running around from earlier in the week has faded. Every one of Mama's movements now is slow and sad and heavy, and it makes the air feel like jam, gummy and foggy. Once when she was a little girl it had snowed, and the whole world went quiet and still. Every sound was muffled, but in a way that felt sharp, exciting. This is the opposite.

She's sitting in the yard, looking over the water, with the quilt draped around her shoulders and the corners gathered in a pile in her lap. It's the kind of quilt that's messier on the front, a riot of knots spitting out baby-fine threads that tangle every which way. The back, though, is methodical: endless rows of tiny, exact stitches. Sometimes Mama rubs them like a rosary, muttering names she can never fully make out, but she prefers to swim her fingers around in the loose threads until they're matted, then slowly smooth them back out into a new and different chaos.

Every time she tugs a little on the strings, the knots get tighter instead of looser; they're a kind of knot she doesn't know or understand, nothing like the knots that Sully teaches her out on the boat. She has sleepy memories of Mama making the quilt—the way Mama would sing and stitch on one end even as she was napping under the other—but she had always paid more attention to Mama's voice than hands. She asked Sully once, and he just said that Mama's kind of

knots weren't for doing, but remembering.

A few steps from the house, all she can hear is the shushing of the water as it curls over and over itself, the way the waves burrow into the rocks and pull silt back out into the sea. A little of the water always gets left behind, in crevices that fill and bloom and rot and dry in barely the time it takes to notice. At least, so far. Mama says the yard smells saltier than it used to and so they need to go, but she doesn't remember it ever being any different.



Gabrielle Russomagno
No. 1 from the Series *Twenty Five Days in May*, May 2020
Archival Digital Photograph
2' x 2'

Twenty Five Days in May is in some ways an accidental work of art, one that insisted on itself while I was busy exploring other ideas. Made as a discrete piece for exhibition, separate from the *Living With Worlds As They End* folio project, it recognizes individual loss subsumed by collective grief. What began for me as a search for meaning on a dying planet shifted abruptly—our pre and post COVID world demanded documentation.

The photographs in *Twenty Five Days in May* were made during daily walks in my village graveyard where in those handful of days more burials took place than in the preceding 500—proof that the pandemic was real, a protest against politicized news coverage and failures of the State. In one way, making these pictures was an act of data collection and an archive of a particular and immediate loss. In another, they are a meditation, a way to reflect upon the frailty of life and to reckon with an incomprehensible event.

Gabrielle Russomagno



Gabrielle Russomagno
Twenty Five Days in May,
May 2020
Archival Digital Photographs
10' x 10'

Sometimes a single photograph stops the world. A month ago, this indistinct image on the front page of every newspaper: a ring of fire. It shines brightest at the base, a gaseous grimace. Nothing so simple as a photograph, no! it's a file forged of algorithms, an astral truth drawn from data held on half-a-tonne of hard drives, from telescopes in eight locations.

The distant ring is just the beginning: the burning dust and gas that hovers on the horizon of a black hole, an infinitely small space into which it will be sucked and crushed. No matter can escape that central silhouette, not even light. Other images of black holes will follow, the newspapers say, scientists are working on the Milky Way today, but no one thinks we will ever observe the activity within.

I barely not-
A wreck of
lost in a
small countries.



on my watch forward sixty minutes; I circled the streets of a new city. Each day my orbit increased another mile: the market, the cafes; the garden, the old island, the seven hills. I became human in a new language.

I watched Spring arrive. The lilac bloomed and died in various colours, a few swifts darted above the river. Life as kaleidoscope grit, fragments shaken into patterns on the planet's surface. All the while, into black holes furious time rushes, taking with it the clichés, the best efforts. The Compass spins on north. The Serpent eats its tail. Where the ring appears to burn most brightly, that's where it's closest to us. Closest to our sometime stopping world.

iced this phenomenon.
politics and progress
more between two
I turned the how hand

- If the sky were infinite, would it be so full of stars that, from our perspective, there would be no space between them?
- + I'm not sure. Would the planets get in the way? Other things? Hold this up to the line for me.
- Wouldn't it be pretty though? If the sky were all stars?
- + Maybe, for a bit. It might be overwhelming if the sky were so bright, all of the time.
- Maybe. Do you think the sky is infinite?
- + I'm not sure I could tell you. It looks finite to me, but so does everything. I can only see so far. Come along, next up.
- But if the sky is finite, then this other book says that means it's growing. Where's it growing into?
- + More sky? I don't know. What is anything growing into?
- Well, like how, when you're a person, you're growing into a new person all the time?
- + You're certainly bigger now than you used to be.
- Don't splash! I mean, our cells and stuff are always turning over, aren't they? Like, we make new skin under scabs. New blood. Our bits are always dying and growing back.
- + So, we're living in new bodies all the time?
- Yeah. Is the sky a new sky all time?
- + By that logic.
- If the sky is finite.
- + Are we new people all the time?
- Yeah?
- + Why?
- Because... we are our bits?
- + Are we anything else? Where did you put those—
- Here. You mean like how we have all these bacteria in our guts?
- + Sure. We're made up of a lot of things we can't see. All the things in the spaces between.
- Between what?
- + Between all the things.
- But there's always more space between things? Like under a microscope. Are there always more things? Where do they go?
- + Different parts of us grow in different directions.
- In different dimensions!
- + Now who's splashing? How do we grow in different dimensions? Like the bubbles?
- I guess?
- + What did you mean? Which dimensions?
- Like... we grow up? In time?
- + I like that. What else?
- What about, like, us. The us that isn't our bodies. Can that grow?
- + Yes.
- Where? Into what space?
- + The space between us.
- For how far?

The great pause...
A moment some have waited for
We breathe

As breath becomes night
Those dark places are revealed
We continue to breathe

Tree branches reach far to the sky
Networked, intertwined, reaching
They are breathing

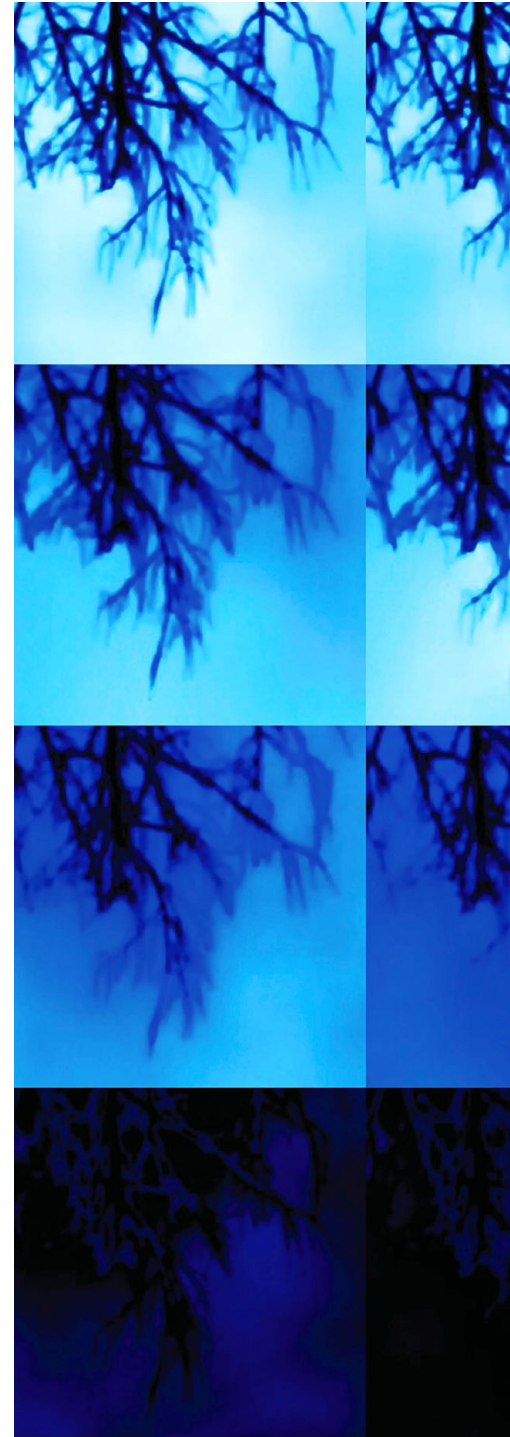
We hope for more
But we grasp for a chance to survive
We savor to just breathe

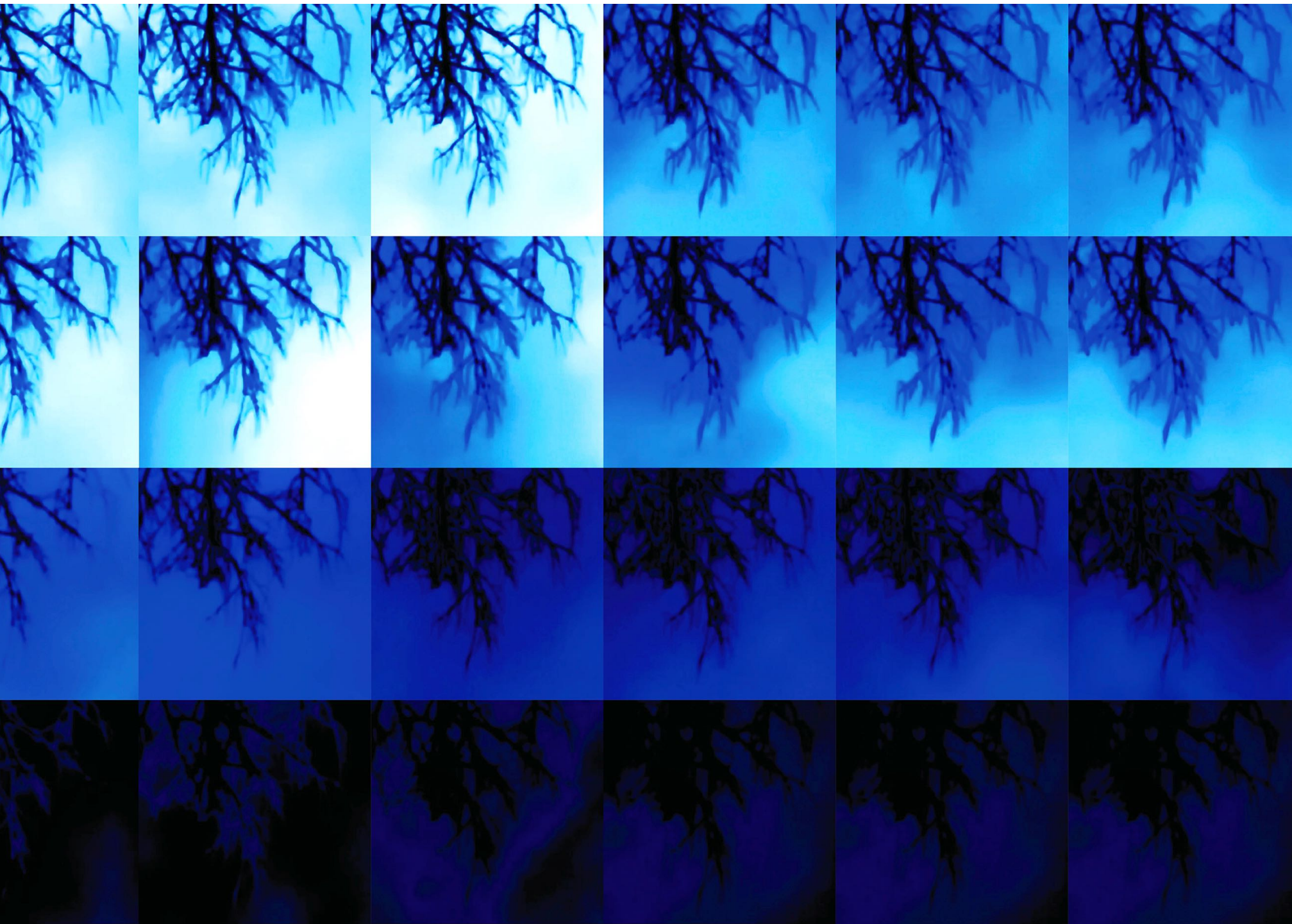
New dimensions and realities are felt
We gasp for air and the chest becomes heavy
A breath is worth more than anything

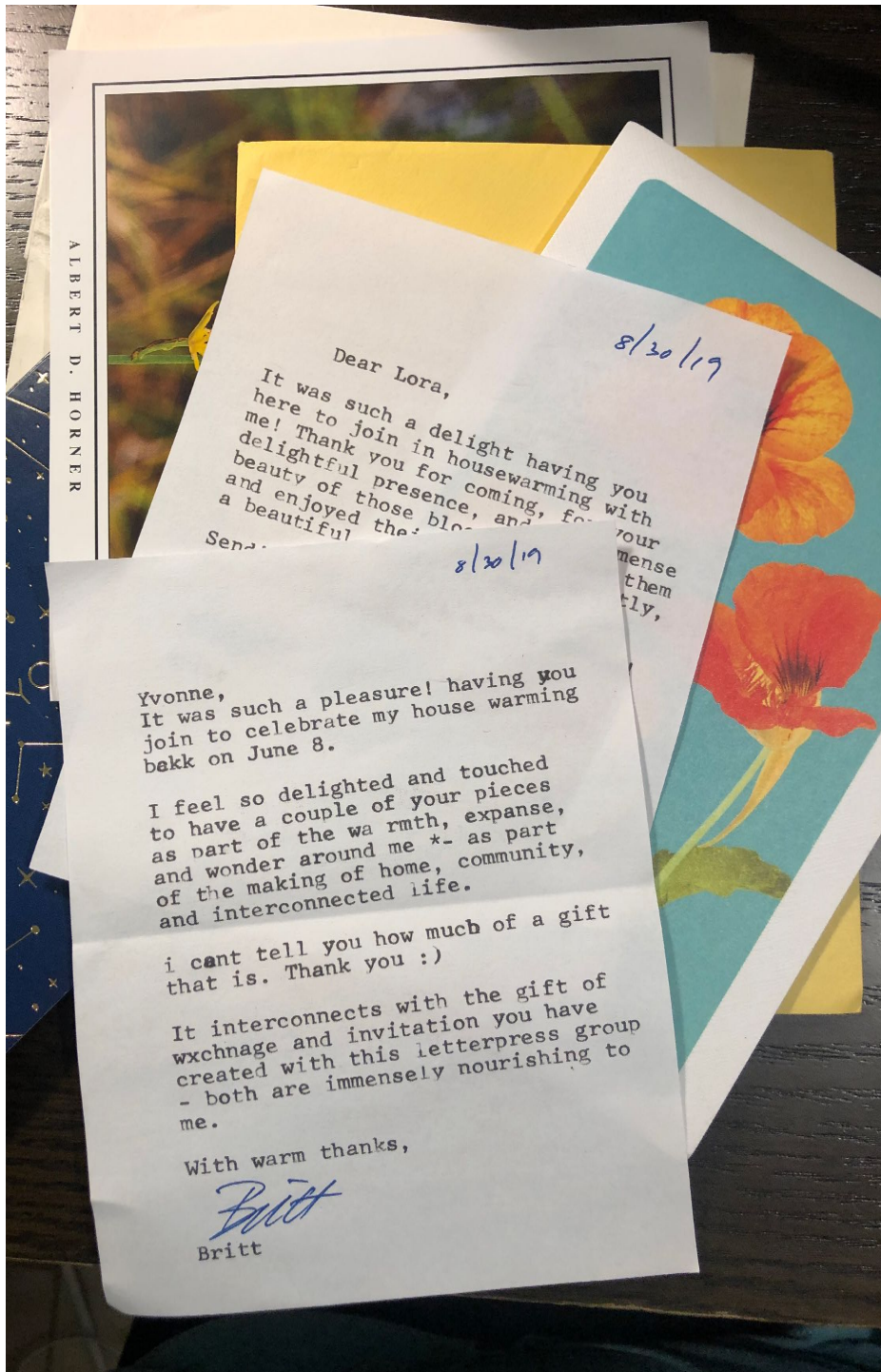
As darkness closes during this great pause
We begin to see everything clearer
A slow breath... then another... and another

Nerves reach out like branches
There is a pause between inspiration and expiration
A final breath disappears

Darlene Farris-LaBar
Video Stills from *Vessels Within (Breathe Becomes Night)*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOOgkMAOdWA>







8/30/19

Dear Lora,

It was such a delight having you here to join in housewarming with me! Thank you for coming, for your delightful presence, and for your beauty of those blooms, and for your and enjoyed their presence. I am so a beautiful thing.

8/30/19

Yvonne,
It was such a pleasure! having you join to celebrate my house warming bakk on June 8.

I feel so delighted and touched to have a couple of your pieces as part of the wa rmth, expanse, and wonder around me *- as part of the making of home, community, and interconnected life.

i cant tell you how much of a gift that is. Thank you :)

It interconnects with the gift of wxchnage and invitation you have created with this letterpress group - both are immensely nourishing to me.

With warm thanks,

Britt
Britt

Britt Dahlberg
Correspondences: Received, and not yet sent
October 2020

Nancy Campbell
Lockdown:
51.7326° N, 1.2272° W

In those first days, when death was still unusual, we became obsessed with rolls of toilet paper sold in multiples of twelve and twenty-four. We did not go to supermarkets, but everyone could see the news: the shelves empty, where a few people had bought up everything in store.

Surely there were other things that should have concerned us more.

Cherry trees blossomed and the avenues grew greener. Children painted rainbows in windows facing the street. It did not rain.

On Thursday evenings we heard the sound of applause drift over the suburbs; sometimes the beating of a saucepan, a car horn; a scattered clapping in praise of an unseen, underpaid performance.

Strangers began to edge away from one another. We acted like people on the verge of becoming lovers, afraid a touch might give away desire. We began to walk in zigzags, switching from pavement to opposite pavement.

The act of crossing the road to avoid someone was a courtesy now, rather than an affront.

We were ordered not to touch our faces. We began to mask the holes in our faces. There were debates about the kind of masks we should wear.

We covered our noses and mouths with little strips of cloth or cut-up socks because there were not enough masks to go around.

There were not enough scrubs or ventilators or hospital beds to go around.

People *stayed home, shielding* and spoke of *flattening the curve*. The curve was death. The figures that made up the curve confused us. Did they include the elderly in care? Should we subtract the people who might have died regardless?

And what of those who died alone at home, whose bodies had not yet been found?

I began to see a therapist. I woke myself in the night to write down my dreams.

I dreamed the world had been taken over by a pandemic.

The fact of living through a pandemic seemed so impossible that I disbelieved the dream even as I dreamed it, and when I woke it was the only aspect of the dream true to reality.

Reality became virtual and moved online to smaller and smaller screens, and work became streams and threads and scrolls from which people could never go home –

People were already at home. And they stayed at home, unless they were in hospital – and there were more people in the hospitals than the hospitals could hold.

In the capital a new hospital was established in a former convention centre. It was called Nightingale – not after the bird. Global infections reached five million.

The ambulance sirens sounded more frequent but further away. The ice cream van twinkled round its flat lure at four o'clock each day.

The crisis seemed immediate – then interminable. We began to talk of *things not ever going back to normal*. After ten weeks we quarrelled about the Thursday evening applause.

The government worked to evacuate people from abroad and return them to their homes. My passport drifted to the back of the drawer.

I made fewer trips to the post office.

Attention skittered. Our minds leapt from thought to thought. On television we watched twelve drag queens compete for prizes; one by one, they left the stage.

Queues grew longer as people *distanced* in order that infection could not pass between them. No one pushed in as they might have done before. Security guards were hired to make sure people obeyed the rules.

I planted lettuce seeds, placing each seed gently in a shallow trench a few millimetres away from the next. Two weeks later, tiny leaves sprouted from the soil.

Our government eased restrictions. The horseracing season started, and children returned to school on a date when they should have been breaking up.

One afternoon I heard the sound of chopping from next door: Top Wok had reopened. I ordered spicy aubergine as usual. Take-aways were classed as essential businesses. Many restaurants reopened as take-aways. The virus continued to spread.

It was the hottest spring on record, again. People held street parties in their cul-de-sacs and set up distanced deckchairs in the road. It felt as if we were experiencing the very slow explosion of a nuclear bomb.

On the 57th day of lockdown I finished the second bottle of whisky.

On social media some people voiced their frustration and fears; others pinned photographs of the first roses.

The mornings were so bright that rose petals hurt the eyes. The hours of daylight grew longer and the number of fatalities soared. Most shops remained closed.

Tree surgeons continued to operate. We heard their chainsaws and the crash of branches; suddenly there was more sky.

The skies were blue, without contrails, and the sunsets we saw (on our screens, through our windows) were extraordinary.

At night the police helicopters sounded so close, I wondered if the house was under attack.

We thought the food would run out. It did not. (It has not, yet.)

My skin prickled and I found it difficult to breathe. The mornings came with horrible regularity. Then it was the first day of June.

A family of foxes dug an earth in the scrubland behind our shed. The goldfinches and sparrows and the fox with half a tail were our only companions.

At night I was woken by our neighbour's garage light, which flickered on every time a wild creature passed. It stayed lit for longer than any animal would linger, and then there was darkness again.



Gabrielle Russomagno
Folio No. 1
Archival Digital Print from
Composite Digital File

A note: how and why we each met:

I met her because a landscape and the people I met there, called for forms of attention and genres I hadn't planned upon. I met her because I responded.

There, I connected with a woman who worked in federal toxicology and public health, who also listened, felt deeply, had an attention to those around her, to what was said and unsaid.

And she *traveled* to other sites and spaces,

And Yvonne had deep personal experience, and engagement.
And they connected,

And she connected us,

And we met.

And we tried things. And wondered what form our collaborations and friendship could take.

And when one didn't "work" - didn't fit us both at that time - we took on another. Or we waited. But we didn't abandon the seed spark of interest and care and knowing there was a sharedness.

And she too listened to things said and unsaid, to instincts and needs she felt. And she responded: And brought us all together.

Britt Dahlberg is an anthropologist and public humanities scholar. Her ethnographic work has explored life amidst environmental risk and uncertainty. Across projects, she is interested in the practice and relationships involved in research, and explores different forms of attending to, knowing, and relating to worlds around us. In addition to published writing and formal talks, she has used anthropological research as the basis of creating oral history collections, public programs and dialogues, in-person and online exhibits, and theater performance. Her work has been supported by numerous grants and awards from NIH, NSF, Wenner Gren, ACLS/Mellon, RWJ and others. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania and currently resides in Philadelphia, PA.

Deanna Day is a writer and historian whose work centers on questions of embodiment, identity, and the tools we use to manipulate both. She writes fiction and non-fiction; gives lectures and runs workshops; conducts interviews and oral histories; and curates exhibits and excellent playlists. What she likes best is collaborating with scholars, writers, artists, and museum professionals to make cool things. She has a PhD in the history and sociology of science from the University of Pennsylvania, and currently lives in Los Angeles. deannaday.net

Nancy Campbell is a Scottish poet and non-fiction writer described as 'deft, dangerous and dazzling' by the former Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy. Her work has engaged with the polar environment since a winter spent as Artist in Residence at the most northern museum in the world on Upernavik in Greenland in 2010. Her books include *The Library of Ice: Readings in a Cold Climate*, *Disko Bay* and *How to Say 'I Love You' in Greenlandic*. She was appointed Canal Laureate by The Poetry Society in 2018, writing poems for installation across the UK waterways from London to the Severn, and received the Ness Award from the Royal Geographical Society in 2020.

Darlene Farris-LaBar is known for using 3D printing and other emerging technologies to focus her art on various plant species. Her art requires research

through environmental interaction and the study of a variety of eco-systems. It focuses on preserving plant and flower species through digitally designing and 3D printing. As one of the top 30 most influential women in 3D printing, she has been represented by Women in 3D, The Additivist Cookbook, Whitney Museum, New York Hall of Science, Athens Onassis Cultural Center, 3D Pioneers, 3D PrintShow. Her work has been exhibited worldwide, such as Assam State Art Museum in India, "Tomorrows" at Les Uniques in Nantes, France, and "EcoVisionaries" at Matadero Madrid, in Spain. Here, she represented endangered species on the red-list through 3D printed work called "Ancient Mediterranean Flowers." Her work of 3D printed rain formed from flowers, titled *Atmospheric Chords*, was shown in Vancouver, Houston, and Brasilia.

Yvonne Love is an American sculptor and installation artist. Her work observes, records, and responds to, the beauty of nature and the anthropogenic issues that have become acute in recent years, from water contamination to the climate crisis. In exploring these issues, her work is often in collaboration with biologists, environmentalists, poets, musicians, as well as other visual artists. Love received her MFA from the University of Pennsylvania and is currently represented by Brenda Taylor Gallery in Boston and through an affiliation with LG Tripp Gallery in Philadelphia. Recent solo exhibitions include, LG Tripp Gallery, Philadelphia, Ruffin Gallery at the University of Virginia, Madelon Powers Gallery at East Stroudsburg University, Taller Graphica Experimental, Havana Cuba, Salon at the Neighborhood House, Philadelphia, and Gallery 221 at Brown University.

Gabrielle Russomagno is an American photographer and installation artist who has explored a range of subjects from the signposts and artifacts of American culture to the emotional landscape of coming of age. Exhibiting internationally since 1985. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the University of New Mexico Museum of Art Albuquerque, The Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, Yale University Beineke Library in New Haven, Brown Fine Art Center at Smith College in Massachusetts, the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

For more information about the exhibit and the Living with Worlds collaborative, visit www.livingwithworlds.com



To grasp. Ordinary matter is comprehensible, being composed of elements. Even so, these elements are infinitesimal, sequestered; many were formed eons ago by star dust. Heavy, stuff, but the numbers on paper — they are constants.

To be a bit of the curious humans, curious people who looked closely at the earth and found carbon, gold, silver and copper, found and named them, and learnt their uses; then study recent research, the work of the previous generation. Some assumptions will go unquestioned; question them. Develop your own version of Mendeleev's organizational chart of known elements. Believe in unknown elements.

Believe in endless transformation, have a vision of fitness. Even as the world itself fractures, believe in integrity at the core, believe in the future.

Work with someone you trust. Build your laboratory where you can: in a cellar, in a corridor, in a deserted castle. Soon there will be many who cannot work, anywhere at all.

Experiment. Every day, the same routine, every day a step of a procedure. Make risk part of your process,

