

YOU ARE A TENDER HISTORY OF ICE

KATIE IONE CRANEY

Note: Katie Ione Craney's images, described below, will be found interspersed among the pages of "If Your House Is on Fire," Mary DeMocker's interview with Kathleen Dean Moore, in this issue of Minding Nature.

Walking out our front door is like stepping in. I'm constantly reminded, and overwhelmed, by the abundance of this glacially carved valley. We share our evenings with moose and brown bear casually walking through the yard. Eagles soar high overhead; varied thrushes remind us we made it through another winter. The vibrant hues of blueberries, cranberries, and salmon fill our shelves and freezers. We bring outside in. We share this bounty with friends and family and rejoice in how lucky we are to have such delicacies. We hardly know our own good fortune until we leave home to visit other places, and then we are fully reminded of the gift of good land—reminded to listen, practice patience, honor tradition and culture, and pay close attention to the interwoven connections of this place.

In my work, I reflect on loss, memory, rebound, and change, as well as long distances, the unknown, and unpredictability. I pay close attention to materials and application by layering encaustic wax, silver leaf, tissue paper, line drawings, photographs, found objects, and blueberry-dyed gauze to hand-cut scrap metal. The juxtaposition between the ephemeral quality of my subject matter and the longevity of human-made metal offers a physical layer to the conceptual loss I'm interested in.

TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF WORKS SUBMITTED:

SACRIFICE ZONE

Found salmon gill plate and fin bones, found moose tooth and fur, and encaustic on scrap metal; 2018.

The Chilkat Valley, where I live in Southeast Alaska, is experiencing a series of cumulative impacts that, in turn are affecting our waterways, our deeply rooted traditions, and our way of life. A proposed large-scale copper and zinc mine has been exploring and drilling test holes near a tributary of the Chilkat River—Chilkat in the Tlingit language translates to "salmon storehouse," as it hosts all five species of Pacific salmon. Meanwhile, thirteen thousand acres of University of Alaska owned land, much of it right along the river corridor, was abruptly offered to the timber industry for clear-cut.

"WITH IT, WE ARE JOINED, AND CONTINUE," FOR JOAN NAVIYUK KANE

Photographs, blueberry-dyed gauze and paper, fish leather, and encaustic on scrap metal; 2017.

The title of this piece is from Joan Kane's poem "Anchorage," in her book, *The Cormorant Hunter's Wife*. While at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, I attended a reading by Joan. I hadn't heard of her or her work. As she began to speak, the

room fell silent; her presence and voice demanded all attention, and her inflections and tone were haunting. I don't remember which poems she read that day, but when I read "Anchorage," I felt a similar presence. I was reminded of how difficult it is to speak of loss and displacement, and to witness a place and its people change and disappear.

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Silver leaf, gauze, ink, pencil, found images, photographs, blueberry-dyed gauze, and encaustic on scrap metal; 2016.

Fifty hand-cut scrap metal plates, each plate 2.5 x 3 inches, represent the long history humans have had with icescapes, and that our lives as we know them depend on ice, whether we realize it or not.

"THERE ARE MOMENTS THAT KEEP THEMSELVES IN OUR MEMORIES," FOR ERNESTINE SAANAKALXT' HAYES

Found images, silver leaf, photograph, gauze, and encaustic on scrap metal; 2017.

How do we decide what to hold on to, or is it even our decision to make? This piece is dedicated to Tlingit author and former Alaska State Writer Laureate Ernestine Hayes, and includes words from her book, *The Toa of Raven*. It is part of a series of

dedications to Alaskan women writers and storytellers, a solo exhibition that is currently traveling in Alaska.

"There are moments that keep themselves in our memories," for Ernestine Saanakalxt' Hayes, previously appeared in *Dark Mountain 13*, April 2018.

A SERIES OF LANDFALLS #4

World War II military bandage, found images, gauze, Icelandic Arctic cotton seed, and encaustic on scrap metal; 2017.

This piece is an accumulation of discovery. In September 2017, I attended a month-long artist residency in northern Iceland, where I witnessed striking similarities between the North Atlantic and my home in Alaska: eider ducks, blueberries, cotton grass, and the brilliance of September light fading into winter, Aurora borealis and endless arctic skies.

Katie Ione Craney lives in a small town just over the mountains from Glacier Bay National Park. Her work has been featured by the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, and published in *Alaska Women Speak, Artists and Climate Change, Camas, Dark Mountain*, and the Icelandic journal *Iceview*. She recently attended artist residencies in Iceland and Denali National Park. Learn more at: www.katieionecraney.com.