Works

Mark Adams
Jean Barberis
Joshua Edwards
Marie Lorenz
Nancy Nowacek
Kendra Sullivan
& Dylan Gauthier
Jeff Williams
Lynn Xu
Marina Zurkow
Mark Adams

mean high
8.52 ft

mean sea level
5.03 ft

mean low
0.33 ft
Provincetown tide station, mackerel, oil pencil on wood, 2018
Horned larks, beach grass yellow/black ink on mylar, 2018
A Recipe for Crab à la JoJo Which Can Be Adapted for Any Seafood (For 4 People)

6 medium potatoes
8 tomatoes
2 large crabs
1 onion
1 head of garlic
1/2 cup white wine
1 jalapeño or piment d’espelette
1 pinch of saffron
1 egg yolk
olive oil
butter

1. Oil and salt your cast-iron pan.

2. Preheat oven to 400°.

3. Cut the potatoes in 1/4-inch slices, lay face down in the pan with the jalapeño (cut in half lengthwise) and the garlic (whole garlic cloves, unpeeled) Bake till the potatoes are done (about 30 minutes).

4. In a saucepan, sauté onions and combine peeled, chopped tomatoes, bring to a boil, then let them to simmer in a saucepan with a little bit of water until you have yourself a nice tomato sauce.

5. Cook the crab in boiling water or bouillon for 5 minutes, cut and pick the flesh. Save the guts and carcass to make a bouillon, add onions, garlic, and
herbs.

6. Once the potatoes garlic and jalapeño are done, set them aside.

7. Peel the garlic cloves and chop the half jalapeño finely (you can substitute piment d’espelette). Grind to a creamy paste in a mortar. Add the egg yolk, a pinch of saffron, and salt and keep grinding till the mixture emulsifies. Add olive oil until the you obtain a roasted garlic aioli.

8. Filter the bouillon, and whisk a cup of it into the aioli, along with a spoonful of flour and white wine. The result should be a creamy white sauce. Add your tomato sauce to the mix.

9. In your pan or a baking tray, layer the potatoes, crabs, and sauce. add freshly chopped parsley. Bake for 10 minutes.

10. Serve with a crisp white wine like Picpoul de Pinet.

Crab à la JoJo was prepared by Jean Barberis at Kugel/Gips House as part of a dinner with Mark Adams, Marina Zurkow, Nancy Nowacek, Peter McMahon, Kendra Sullivan, Anthony Lee, Keith Vincent, Dylan Gauthier, and Katherine McLeod.
Joshua Edwards
Joshua Edwards, Hölderlin Elegy #18, photograph, 2017
Joshua Edwards, Hölderlin Elegy #37, photograph, 2017
Marie Lorenz
The Tide and Current Taxi is a rowboat taxi operated by Brooklyn-based artist Marie Lorenz. Each trip is planned to coincide with strong tidal currents in the New York harbor, all documented with pictures and stories at www.tideandcurrenttaxi.org. For the Researchers-in-Residence program at the Cape Cod Modern House Trust, Lorenz documented a day in the life of the Herring River, starting in the Wellfleet Harbor, and following its path back to the kettle ponds. Her blog post about the day explores ideas about conservation, stewardship, and the unintended consequences of progress, and can be found online here: http://www.tideandcurrenttaxi.org/?p=11426
Marie Lorenz

macker tidal
Perring River
1909 dike installed
1900's barge ship

maps of forcing river restoration
potential restoration

so ho

document's current condition and show progress

potential restoration
Curator’s Note: Inspired by the intersection of nature and culture in Cape Cod, Nowacek developed two projects. The first draws parallels between the impact of microplastic particles, their chemical composition, and tongue twisters. The second postures a possible ethic of care for ocean plastics.
Mononomore

More and more plastics flow into our oceans each year — an estimated 8,000,000 tons annually. Plastics corrupt all bodies they encounter: bodies of water, bodies of sea animals, human bodies.

*She sells seashells by the seashore.*

Tongue twisters test the plasticity or malleability of the mouth: the ability of the tongue, teeth, lips, and breath to bend, align, and coordinate movement and position through unnatural speech formations. In this way, they corrupt the reproduction of language in the mouth, most often resulting in malaprop, or in more extreme instances, arresting the ability to speak at all.

Tongue twisters were originally designed to improve the social and economic status of the speaker by forced muscular reform — as illustrated in *My Fair Lady.* Although today we can consider this process of institutionalizing the mouth a form of biopower practiced on those who don’t linguistically conform to dominant cultural standards — who aren’t naturally “easy to understand,” who might require more focused listening and attention. In the early 20th century, this form of rehabilitation was connected to social and economic advancement and elevation. The same can be said of plastics in the same era: they were regarded as a wonder-material and unfettered conduit of progress.

*She shells sea hells by the seashore*
Plastics are strings of monomers configured into polymers that exhibit extreme malleability and the ability to take any imagined form, but once hardened hold shape for 1000 years or more. As plastics begin to degrade, these same chemical compounds drift into the waterways of human and animal biology, inhibiting endocrine function and ultimately reproduction. Likewise, tongue twisters are synthetic compounds, phrases that are not naturally occurring. Focused more on sound-forming than logic-making, these engineered strings of phonemes result in absurd (or absurdly banal) statements: “How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?”

The origins of plastics and the origins of tongue twisters parallel one another in time: both began in the mid-1800s; having a major surge in the early 1900s (tongue twisters in vaudeville acts and a world of plastic in the form of bakelite accessories). For the scientists developing plastics in the early 1900s — at the same time as these linguistic therapies — the idea of a plastisphere exerting massive global damage most would have been received as an absurd proposition.

In Monononomore, plastics waft into common tongue twisters. Simulating cellular mutation in the mouth, they embody the ecological corruption wrought the world over by ocean plastics.

*She shells PVC swells by the sleashrre*
The current crisis of plastics is familiar to most Cape residents. The intimate and systematic exchange between coastal geography, oceanic life, and late capitalist consumption is also a familiar set of relationships. The damaging effects of plastic on the environment is not a difficult argument to make — especially single-use plastics — nor to be acknowledged. However, the radical forms of behavioral change necessary if our oceans are to survive may be more difficult to hear.

Before coming to Cape Cod, I thought I was aware of these conditions and arguments. As a religious plastic recycler — plastic film as well as the numbered hard plastics — I thought I was an agent of change,
but my first ever walk along the beach in Wellfleet changed my understanding of the scale and scope of the problem. In a thirty-minute walk, I collected more beach plastics (of an incredible variety of size and nature) than I’d ever seen washed ashore on any beach in my lifetime of beaches. I wasn’t even able to collect all the plastic I encountered — but I carried as much as I could. I bagged them up — 3 large garbage bags filled with lobster line, plastic cups, bottles, straws, buoys amongst the catch — and drove them back to Brooklyn, 21st-century seaside souvenirs.

In the months since, I have felt their presence in the bedroom closet. They have impelled me to learn more about the specifics of their far-reaching geographic and infinite existence. I now know more than I want to know about polymers and the environmental effects of their degradation. I also know that it will be impossible to eradicate all plastics from the planet.

Object-oriented ontologists have for years invested effort in shifting a human-centered approach to the world at large to an object-centered approach, where there is no hierarchy: humans are no more or no less important than any other thing. Every thing is a thing. And every thing has relationships and desires. When these ideas meet current queer theory — one that posits that we learn to love and care for non-familial others — and are applied to plastics in the environment, a proposition: can we adopt and care for the orphaned plastics that currently roam the planet via tide and current? Can we learn to love and care for them as we do our dogs and cats and birds?
and plants and children? Can we pledge to keep them from garbage and ocean, harm and hatred, and give them protection worthy of 1000-year lifespans?

Nancy Nowacek, Tongue Twisters, 2018
The Institute for Ocean Art and Science (IOAS) was conceived of while in residence at CCMHT as a platform for curatorial exploration, artistic research, and participatory adventures around waterways and coastlines. Inspired by the range of projects being undertaken at the NPS and the CCS, the framework of the Institute picks up on the research on urban waterways of the Brooklyn-based boatbuilding and publishing collective Mare Liberum and extends this work out to sea.
Fallen Ledge

The forest is dying, or so Peter and other locals fear. The moths have ravaged the leaves of the trees for two years now, and it’s unclear if the trees will bloom again this year. It’s already the middle of May, so by now the bloom should have happened, only everywhere you see dead trees.

Before the arrival of Europeans, the Cape was covered in a thick forest of old growth, from ocean to bay, with many small glacial ponds in between. By the 19th-century the settlers had cut down every tree to build houses, ships, and clear the land for farming. In the 20th-century, bringing back Cape Cod’s forest became a priority as researchers found that the rapidly eroding dunes were now eroding more rapidly that they didn’t have roots to hold them together. The roots were added by modernists who brought native saplings and their favorite trees from Europe and replanted where cows had grazed just years before. In such a short timeframe, the Cape went from forest, to pastureland, to forest again, albeit younger. These young forests of New England are a scraggly bunch. Now they may be receding again.

On the north side of the cape are the province lands, the parabolic dunes, the dune shacks. We join friends from smudge studio for tea in a nylon camping shell perched at the side of a dune they call “mother dune” because she is the largest, tallest, greatest. We wait eight minutes for tea to brew.
It is something to think that the constructed ecosystem could only exist through management, as Jedediah Purdy and others have suggested. Effective management brought nature under control, but unfortunately if the bureaucracy that manages is dismantled, will the forest survive?

The NPS Archive presents a record of all of the attempts to explain, test, prove, as well as observe, listen, record, the Outer Cape over the years since European occupation of these lands. The records are incomplete, and often include stubs of other records. Like Borges's library of babel, the full archive would have to contain information about everything that ever could be. We were initially drawn to the typology of the NPS archive. The particular aesthetic choices that had been made over the years. What Vito Acconci or Edward Tufte might have called the "aesthetics of information." As many of the studies taking place at the NPS are multi-year or even multi-decade, these forms of presentation have gone through tectonic shifts in the technologies in which they are represented, as well as the lexicon they employ to make these studies legible by the public and by other scientists.

An audio recording of pond ice melting after a deep freeze, recorded at Kugel/Gips House on January 11, 2018: https://tinyurl.com/y325c955
But some things are familiar, even if not entirely the same.

Is it fair to say then that Thoreau never visited Cape Cod? Or that the Cape Cod that Thoreau knew no longer exists?

Sullivan & Gauthier, *fallen ledge*, stills from a video (r/t: 23m10s), 2018
Sullivan & Gauthier, fallen ledge, 2017
In 1986, the Monterey Aquarium was the first to display the Ocean Sunfish (*Mola mola*) in the US. I was fortunate to visit that very year, completely by chance, as an 8-year-old. Initially looking for sharks in the largest attraction at the aquarium, I was taken by surprise by an amorphous vertical oval wagging by. It has similar dorsal fins to a shark, but looks like the first failed attempt at something. The Sunfish was radically different than everything else in the tank, than anything I had seen before. I was most agitated by the brow of the Sunfish and how alive its eyes were, felt human. The *Mola* became my favorite fish, mine in the same way that other favorites were: pizza, the color green, the number four.

Thirty-four years later, I don’t think about Sunfish ever, it’s a childhood memory. Which is why when I found them dead all over Wellfleet, MA in October 2017, I was in a kind of nightmarish shock. First, a well picked over and dried up corpse on the beach, where I wasn’t certain what I was looking at until days later. Then the fin of a large Mola thrashing around as it was beached near the Herring River dam. The local fisherman reassured me that at 500–1000 pounds, nothing could be done. Marie Lorenz and I rowed out to the area at low tide, trekked through the mud to find out what happened to the Sunfish, hoping it somehow freed itself.

What we encountered is illustrated in the drawing, cell phone for scale. A 5 foot long, 6 foot tall, 1 foot wide freshly asphyxiated Sunfish. We pretended to be scientific about the find, taking measurements and documenting the circumstances of its death. But real-
ly it was a morbid curiosity and a sincere empathy for something I had made part of my developing identity. We documented it as thoroughly as possible, thinking maybe some of our data could be useful to the National Parks scientists working in Wellfleet.

We left the site as the tide came in. As we rowed, looking to move on, we saw what appeared to be a birch tree branch floating in the water. As we paddled closer, the tree branch transformed in our minds. It was a quick flash from branch to a large Mola corpse floating upside down with its nose up. At this point what we eventually found out from the park scientists became clear. This is a massive die-off of the planet’s heaviest bony fish. Due to changes in climate, warmer waters keep the Sunfish from migrating when they should and then there is a shift in ocean temperature, with that shift a drop in oxygen levels leading to death.
We spent our time mainly at the Weidlinger House lifted ten feet in the air by a thicket of pine. During the day, I worked in the small room facing Higgins Pond typing poems I’d been muddling (middling) over about the endless aperture of birth while Josh (my husband) took Issa (our daughter) into town. In the night, we would cook with Kendra and Dylan (who were also staying at Weidlinger) or convene with Peter, Mark and the others at Hatch or Kugel/Gips. Somehow, at this time, it was always sunset. Or, the sun was always just setting or about to set, and there was always wine.

I am rereading Peter’s book this morning and it strikes me (as it does always) how much these experiments in building (and building as/with living) returns to or
is resolved by a thinking with kinship, which is somehow outside of time. In 2003, Knopf published *The Collected Poems of Robert Lowell* and, the summer before that, the *New Yorker* ran a feature which published, in its entirety, an early poem by Lowell called “The Quaker’s Graveyard in Nantucket,” which Kendra recited to me one night when we were somewhere and not yet twenty, a recitation which (in my mind) wrested the poem from itself and, as it were, in spite itself, restored the wildness of its composition. Later and often I would remember it, this poem, which borrows heavily from Thoreau’s *Cape Cod* (exposition of the corpse) and is a thinking with the archive.

It is a time of deep dreaming. And, for me, Kendra has always been a part of this kind of time, which is to say: I am interested in the way ideas move not as ideas but as kin. In his proposal to “translate Utopia into action,” Moholy-Nagy emphasizes the importance of living together: “They [the scientists, sociologists, artist, writers, musicians, technicians, and craftsmen] would work either for a long or limited period of time together, in daily contact, in their studios and laboratories.” In this thinking, space is itself a movement of the mind and there is something else that happens (that cannot actually be recapitulated by and/or as ideas) when we are trying, as Barthes says, to live alone together.

So, when we were thinking about what to make for our time there, Josh and I wanted to create something that returns the space to itself, to the houses, the sea, the research, and history of place. We wanted to find a way (and, in a way, to think with Goethe’s idea of
observation as experiment) to borrow reading for listening and listening, a way to hear space (as history, as archive, as light and shadow) and — as it were — the various ways in which kinship can be experienced and thought.
Lynn Xu, Cape Sea 1, 2018
Lynn Xu, Cape Sea 2, 2018
Lynn Xu
Marina Zurkow
Right whale identification relies on the distinct pattern, known as a callosity, that each whale displays like a blazon on the back of their head. These are rough skin patches — callouses. Whalers called them “bonnets.” Each whale is born with their callous-formation, which grows pitted and grooved like volcanic terrain over time. Callosities would not be visible were it not for the species of cyamids who colonize them, eating algae and the whale’s sloughing outer skin.

Whalers used to think these cyamids were lice, and the name stuck (“whale louse”) but they are actually amphipod crustaceans. These cyamids are white or yellowish, or orange, whereas the callosities are gray like the rest of the right whale. In effect, the cyamids allow us to uniquely identify each whale, which we do, from surveying airplanes. This identification is important to us humans, in order to track, quantify, characterize — and some might suggest care more about — the whales and their success or demise as a species. One could say the cyamids are producing signs that humans want to read. In fact, it’s a nuanced set of signs:

- White bonnets: the whale is healthy.
- Orange bonnets: the whale is ill, injured, or dying.

The poetry of this isn’t lost on anyone working in the field: cyamid species move around and relocate when the right whale is sick: *C. erraticus* move out of their genital folds and creases, and migrate into the
wounds, signing sickness.

On each right whale around 5000 *Cyamus ovalis* coat the callosities and give them their white color. In the spaces between the raised callosities live around 500 *C. gracilis*. On adult whales approximately 2000 *C. erraticus* live in the genital and mammary slits. *C. erraticus* is highly mobile though often occupying wounds, and living in large concentrations on the heads of young calves. Of these *C. gracilis* is the smallest with ~6mm long adults and with the other two species measuring ~12-15mm long as adults. (Heupel)
Cyamids spend all phases of their life cycle on their cetacean hosts. The cyamids who live on North Atlantic right whales know no other species or environment. They can’t swim. They are passed from whale to whale — for instance, from a mother to calf, or while mating.

After spending so much time thinking about, drawing, and positioning cyamids in their uniquely identifiable callosity patterns on right whale diagrams, I equally feel sadness for the loss of these tiny crustacea as for their enormous, charismatic hosts. When I browse the right whale catalog (from which I have been drawing) I see both an individually identified whale and its cyamid symbionts; when the whale data states “last seen” or “death year,” I experience the tensions between our capacity to care, to not care, to prefer nameable species, to shun the nameless or “uncharismatic” swarm. These cyamid portraits were uncomfortable to assemble. I could physically feel the otherness of the swarm as I assembled the bonnet groupings, for these are animals, and not simply signs.

These banners honor a colony of commensal animals who, coincidental to their lives on the whale, inadvertently “sign” the whale’s individuality to us human creatures. We who love both science and story tend to care more when we can identify individuals; the swarm of crustaceans, on the other hand, is grotesque because their form and their mass behavior is so alien to us. The cyamids perform a beautiful gift with their accidental labor of signing to us, helping us care about marine creatures who,
ironically, are too large and submerged for humans to identify or interface with in any other way than through both the aid of tiny crustaceans and the distancing means of aerial photography.

I feel compassion for both right whale and *C. ovalis*, *C. gracilis*, and *C. erraticus*, whose numbers are declining, who all may very well disappear in our lifetimes from the earth (ocean), if we don’t significantly (there’s that word again, sign/significance) change our fishing and shipping practices that cause net entanglement, marine noise pollution, and ship-related injuries. Both right whales and their cyamid symbionts deserve to be honored and preserved, advocated for. Part of this advocacy is toward a change of mindset: find kinship with the horde, they who don’t speak, but who give us the whales’ names with which we quantify, identify (with), and defend.

Sources:


Marina Zurkow, A Swarm is my Bonnet
Nylon banners, 42” x 84” each 2018