

I am writing to express my interest in participating in the Ocean Fellowship program from June 21 – October 17th 2021. I am an interdisciplinary artist and researcher originally from Canada, currently based in Oslo, Norway while undertaking a Masters in Fine Art in the Art and Public Space program at Oslo National Academy of the Arts.

Broadly my artistic research focuses on the conditions for and products of collectivity, often using concrete material practices to think through the ephemeral nature of collective social forms. Prior and current lines of inquiry have investigated fermentation processes as a method to think through time, temporality and notions of collective productivity and collaboration with other-than-human agents, the shopping mall as an unexpected site of resistance to capitalist consumption narratives, the nail salon as a site for intersectional feminist organizing, maintenance labour as a catalyst for community engagement, and ad hoc community developed economic infrastructures as both networks of care and rich expressions of collective agency and desire.

My projects can perhaps best be described as situated auto-ethnographies. Borrowing methodologies from the fields of anthropology and the natural and physical sciences, I mine personal histories and the outcomes of deeply embedded observation from a position situated in my particular experience of the world as a queer femme intersectional feminist.

Currently I am developing a new body of research thinking through the role of friction within the collective, approaching the materiality of the ocean and traditional maritime industries as a means to expand upon this notion. I am excited to further develop this research within the Ocean Fellowship program, with the support of other fellows and mentors engaged with various aspects of the oceanic. It seems particularly apt to continue developing this work in Venice, a location with a singular and intimate relationship to the sea. I am particularly motivated to apply for this year's fellowship, as the focus on storytelling falls inline with my practice - storytelling, auto-theoretical writing and expanded personal narratives play a central role in both the development and dissemination of my research-oriented works.

While this body of work represents the first artistic engagement with the ocean I have undertaken, the sea has long been a powerful influence on my life. I grew up on the coast, on the ocean, on small islands floating in the Pacific, in boats, molded by the motions of the sea. Where community is a necessity. Where a force much more powerful than humans shapes the life and working rhythms of place. Prior to undertaking arts education, I worked for over a decade as an expedition sea kayak guide, leading groups on wilderness expeditions in remote areas of the British Columbia coast, watching the sea shape and form a group of

strangers, of individuals, into something more than their individual parts. I was a kayak guide long before I was an artist. I learned to plan my days with the wind and tide, and watched these groups of strangers be transformed into something more by the magic of salt water, long before I understood social structures as aesthetic forms or had gained the language to think through collectivity, temporality, failure and time in a nuanced manner. All I knew was that the ocean, or perhaps the act of ceding ones personal desires to the whims of a force much more the oneself creates space for something else, some new, or rather very old, form of social relation. This something else is what matters, something beyond individual whims and desires.

I look forward to continuing to look for this something else within the Ocean Fellowship program, working with and supporting other practioners in their research in a mutually beneficial manner.

Friction is a force that resists movement.

Points of friction are created between bodies or objects in motion. Friction is the result of contact or connection. It is also evidence of labour.

Friction reveals deeper material truths. It shows us that water is stronger than rock, That rope can cut through wood. It lets us know we are in contact with someone else. We cannot be together without it.

Points of friction lay in interstitial spaces, spaces between things, between people. Points of friction help us delineate our boundaries and borders. Borders are often friction points between nations states, between inside and outside, between one body and another.

Friction is a source of pleasure and pain, ease and discomfort. It is not one or the other, simply a sensation to be experienced and interpreted within situated and contextual understanding.

Friction can hold us still, bind us in place. Friction can hold us still, keep us safe.

Friction creates the material and immaterial worlds we inhabit. It carves river canyons, smooths rocks to sand, creates political enmity, delineates territories and lets us know someone else cares for us.

Friction is pressure between discrete objects.

Friction lets us know we are not alone.

The body of research I propose to develop under the aegis of the Ocean Fellowship approaches notions of friction and the oceanic from multiple perspectives, with multiple projected outputs.

Informed by both my practical oceanic experience and artistic interests, this body of research began to ferment during *The Dinghy*, an artist residency I undertook in Summer 2020 in Northern Norway. For one month I joined 7 other artists and artistic researchers on an expedition that saw us come together to learn to sail a 43 foot Åfjord boat, a traditional 18th century Norwegian vessel powered exclusively through sail and oar. Living, working, rowing, sailing, cooking, and caring for each other and Skårungen, our boat, together for a month, in sometimes challenging and difficult environmental and collective conditions lead me to consider the important productive and sometimes destructive role friction holds within collective environments, as I watched our proximity to the ocean transform us into something else, as we became a form.

While on the residency I began to write an autotheoretical text exploring my embodied relationship to the ocean, encompassing geological and social histories, exploring the tensions and frictions that form between desire and the necessity of ceding control within the oceanic environment through the lens of planetary hydrological systems. This draft text is the basis of much of my research, and further developing it will be a major component of the inquiry undertaken during the fellowship.

Additionally I will study traditional and contemporary industries related to the oceanic environment, with an initial interest in rope making. I am curious to explore the possibilities of using rope and rope making as a secondary material to think through friction and collectivity, and plan to incorporate the material outcomes of this research in a sculptural installation, which will also include castings of the various physical friction points on the vessel *Skårungen*.

The final component of the individual research I intend to complete during the fellowship is the development of a choreographic score for a performance based on collective gestures collected both during *The Dinghy* residency, and through my broader research into friction within oceanic systems. Ultimately I envision this performance animating the aforementioned installation.

Additionally, I look forward to contributing to and participating in the collective research aspects of the fellowship, co-learning with other fellows and mentors in a rich pedagogical environment. I bring to the fellowship both rigorous academic and practical experience, and look forward to expanding my knowledge and understanding of the oceanic and its relationship to the arts through the diverse perspectives brought to the fellowship by other participants.