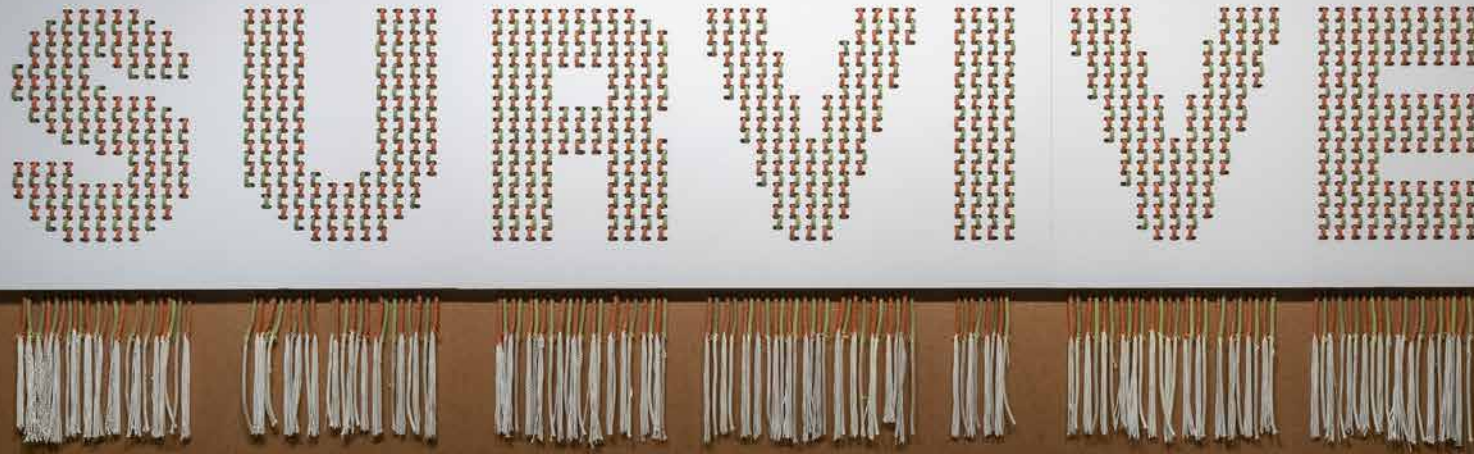




How to Survive
October 6, 2023 – January 19, 2025

**ANCHORAGE
MUSEUM**

How to



“The only way to survive is by taking care of one another.”

—Grace Lee Boggs, Chinese American activist and philosopher

As the Arctic continues to warm at four times the rate of the rest of the planet, Northerners are grappling with the practical and existential consequences of climate change. The destabilizing effects are numerous – melting permafrost, vanishing sea ice, unpredictable weather patterns, and struggling wildlife species – all of which are playing a role in reshaping Northern lifeways. While so much of this story is one of sadness and loss, stories of resilience, ingenuity, and hope are embedded throughout. Our collective story of survival is written by those creating space for hope, encouraging innovation, and envisioning sustainable futures grounded in equity and justice. Often, these stories, initiatives, and efforts are guided by Indigenous knowledges that remind us how we might live in reciprocity with the land, as Alaska Native peoples and global Indigenous communities have done since time immemorial.

How to Survive considers the idea of survival through hope and care, and asks how gestures and practices of love, protection, nurturing, and sharing can help us face the climate crisis. Examining ideas of interconnectedness, listening, and caretaking, works on display invite reflection, encourage action, and urge us to consider our responsibilities to each other as well as to the plants, animals, lands, and waters of our shared planet.

Installations by contemporary artists, cultural belongings from the museum’s collection, recent design innovations, and a Community Climate Archive featuring voices from across Alaska prompt us to consider the habits we must nurture to bring forth more positive futures.

We hope this exhibition offers many opportunities for discussion with yourself, or with your fellow visitors. There are no easy answers here, only gestures that show us other ways of being are possible, and within our power to imagine and enact.

Previous page:
Brain Adams, *Forest* (detail), 2020
Anchorage Museum, 2021.217

Above: *How to Survive* title wall

Participating artists:

- Martha Atienza**
- Christi Belcourt**
- Andrea Bowers**
- Carolina Caycedo**
- Gaye Chan**
- Minerva Cuevas**
- Jessie French**
- Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich**
- Las Hermanas Iglesias**
(Lisa Iglesias and Janelle Iglesias)
- Intelligent Mischief**
(Aisha Shillingford and Terry Marshall)
- Mary Mattingly**
- Nicole McLaughlin**
- Amy Meissner**
- Audie Murray**
- Ellie Schmidt**
- Marie Watt**

Making How to Survive

A central concern in creating *How to Survive* was to explore how ideas of care and reciprocity presented within artworks could extend to the practice of exhibition-making. Many of the large installations were fabricated in Anchorage through long-distance collaboration with artists, using local repurposed and waste materials. This greatly reduced our shipping footprint. We chose to work primarily with artists who have social, educational, skill-sharing, or activist elements embedded in their practices, which helped to prioritize relationships and embrace risk over aesthetic perfection. Acknowledging that we are by no means perfect in this process and being willing to share our successes and failures is part of our commitment to embodying the ideas of *How to Survive*.

Throughout the exhibition, you will see labels explaining some of the material and fabrication choices we made, as well as reflection prompts and guiding questions for children and caregivers in colorful bubbles next to artist panels.

Photographs of upcycled materials gathered by Museum staff: discarded and dyed nets for Carolina Caycedo's sculpture, repurposed lumber for Mary Mattingly's *River Lab*, and plastic baling straps collected from the local Costco for Gaye Chan's basket-weaving installation.



Living in Reciprocity

Indigenous peoples of Alaska have flourished for millennia by maximizing natural resources in locations where these materials are typically seasonal or scarce, and by respecting the process of harvest, taking only what is needed and using all of a particular plant or animal. Items for daily living such as clothing, tools, and utensils were carefully repaired to prolong their use, and beliefs around the essential life force existing in all things promoted respect towards objects as well as people and animals. In other words, Alaska Native peoples' cultural values are grounded in practices that we would now call "sustainable."

These Alaska Native cultural belongings show evidence of adaptation, innovation, and repair as a form of care. In addition to animal gut and hide, fish skin, and grass, Indigenous communities integrated materials arriving with colonization – such as commercial flour sacks used for clothing or worn-out saw blades repurposed into an ulu. Examples of repair are found in the carefully patched or mended sealskin boots, birchbark basket, and driftwood bowl, which also demonstrates the value of wood as a precious material in Western Alaska and the High Arctic.

The items on display evidence values of care and sustainability in their making, and they also represent tools and technologies that people invented to survive and live in reciprocity with a land known for extreme weather. We are reminded that many of the values and ideas we explore in *How to Survive* have been present in Alaska since time immemorial, and that Alaska's future depends on the leadership, wisdom, and cultural knowledge of Native peoples.



Display of cultural belongings from the collection. *How to Survive* opens with this installation as a way of showing how Alaska's cultural values have always been grounded in repair, reuse, and material innovation.

This selection of the cultural belongings and detail images shows examples of repair, reuse, and material innovation.

The well-used Athabascan birchbark basket has a circular repair on the inside to patch a small hole, tear, or knot in the bark. The snow goggles have also been mended, using baleen to reconnect broken pieces of ivory. Unlike modern sunglasses, the snow goggles have the advantage of never fogging up. Crucial in preventing snow blindness, they were used by hunters on sea ice and vast expanses of snowy tundra.

The harpoon demonstrates an innovative use of materials, with a leftover Chevron bottle used in place of a traditional float, which would have been made from the stomach of a seal. Flour sacks, an inexpensive and sturdy shipping material, were among the first widely available commercial textiles in Alaska. The parka cover is made of repurposed flour sack and was meant to protect a carefully crafted child-sized skin and fur parka.



1 Birchbark basket, n.d.
Unrecorded Athabascan artist
Birchbark and spruce root
Anchorage Museum, Gift of Joe Smith, 1970.1.1

2 Snow goggles, n.d.
Unrecorded Yup'ik or Iñupiaq artist
Ivory, baleen, and hide
Anchorage Museum, 1971.132.2

3 Toggling harpoon, c. 1980
Unrecorded Yup'ik artist
Wood, paint, plastic, bronze, nylon cord, and iron
Anchorage Museum, Gift of Father René Astruc, S.J., 1996.65.3

4 Vera Roberts Giese (b. 1900)
Parka cover, c. 1943
Cotton, beaver fur, plastic, and commercial flour sack
Anchorage Museum, gift of the artist, 2011.18.1

Martha Atienza (b. 1981)

Who owns the land? Who owns the sea? In her *Protectors* series, Danish-Filipina artist Martha Atienza considers these questions in relation to her home in Bantayan, Philippines. Atienza focuses on the island of Mambacayao Dako, which has been home to fisherfolk for generations. As tourism interests in the area expand and climate change continues to adversely affect the health of reefs and fish populations, coastal communities are facing grave challenges. Many have been forcibly relocated to inland housing projects, losing access to their ancestral homes and way of life.

Proudly standing on the *banka* (fishing boat), nong Antonio Turib embodies the stories of his family, who came from the surrounding islands of Cebu and Negros several generations ago following the seasonal movements of the fish. Embedded in his story are issues of land ownership and class, as families like Turib's are currently being displaced to make way for tourism development. The *Protectors* series is a willful act of remembering, carefully documenting the importance of fisherfolk's histories and stories in relationship to the land and water. As Atienza says, "The places we come from carry our memories and our knowledge. The dispossession of people from their lands and ocean is characteristic of the ways that modern life and capitalist economies decenter fisherfolk and farming communities. Places such as Bantayan Island show us that the act of remembering is imperative to the continuation of cultural knowledge and being."

Alongside a community of fisherfolk, youth, artists, non-government workers, engineers, and artists, Atienza established GOODLand, a nonprofit working to create alternative stewardship plans for the island that uphold the integrity of local communities and customs. In 2022, following years of advocacy, May 31 was established as the annual Bantayan Fisherfolks Day, *Adlaw sa Mga Mananagat*. This annual celebration is meant to be a platform where everyone connected to the sea comes together to share knowledge, address concerns, and explore ways to collaborate towards the preservation, protection, and eventual augmentation of healthy marine ecosystems and food sources.



Tigpanalipod (the Protectors)
11°02'06.4"N 123°36'24.1"E, 2022
Digital video, 37 minutes, 41 seconds
On loan from the artist

Learn more about [GOODLand](#).

[Hear Martha Atienza](#) talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Christi Belcourt (b. 1966)

Christi Belcourt (*apihtâwikosisâniskwêw / mânitow sâkahikanihk*) is an artist, designer, community organizer, environmentalist, social justice advocate, and avid land-based arts and language learner. Her ancestry originates from the Métis community of mânitow sâkahikan (Lac Ste. Anne) in Alberta, Canada. Belcourt's meticulously rendered paintings draw on traditions of Métis floral beadwork, celebrating the beauty of the natural world as well as Indigenous knowledge systems and spirituality. Her practice melds a sense of careful and loving attention to the plants, animals, and ecosystems of her home with an acknowledgement of responsibility, respect, and reciprocity. She sees her paintings as calls to action to protect and defend the rights of Mother Nature.

This artwork is an enlarged reproduction of the acrylic original. Belcourt states, "Some of my large paintings can contain over 200,000 dots. The raised dots simulate beadwork. Their circular shapes represent the cycle of life, the parts that make up the whole, molecules and stars." In this way, the painting becomes an entire universe, encompassing all aspects of creation – from the micro to the macro.

The title of the work, *This Painting is a Mirror*, sets up a direct relationship between the viewer and the vibrant world of plants, insects, birds, air, and soil depicted in the painting. Belcourt asks us to consider that "we are the plants. We are the earth. We are the water. We are the sky. Everything is not just interconnected, but literally, we are these things...we are part and parcel of it all. We're looking at ourselves when we look at nature."



This Painting is a Mirror, 2012
Digital reproduction of acrylic painting
Collection of Indigenous and Northern
Affairs Canada

[Hear Christi Belcourt](#) talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Andrea Bowers (b. 1964)

For over two decades, Los Angeles-based artist Andrea Bowers has been recording and amplifying the work of activists through drawing, video, sculpture, and installation. Her work foregrounds the experience of the people who dedicate their time and energy to the struggle for gender, racial, environmental, labor, and immigration justice and those who are directly affected by systemic inequality. Often, she spends months or years working with individuals, organizations, and archives. “I’m literally making work about activism and activists,” she explains. “I just offer my services, if they’re useful, and see if they’re okay with me also making some art.” Over time, her different bodies of work have become a document of the changing language, prerogatives, and dynamics of social justice movements.

Created in 2017, the year following protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline in North Dakota, this work evokes slogans tied to environmental justice and divestment campaigns, as well global support of Indigenous rights. The three phrases – *Water Is Life*, *Tierra y Libertad* (“land and liberty” in Spanish), and *Mni Wiconi* (“water is life” in Lakota) – reinforce the notion that human wellbeing is inseparable from the wellbeing of nonhuman entities such as animals, plants, water, and air, while also contending that these issues are intertwined with all movements for justice and equity.



It Gives Me Life, 2017
LED lights and repurposed cardboard
On loan from the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles
Graphic design by Marcelinda del Norte

[Hear Andrea Bowers](#) talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Carolina Caycedo (b. 1978)

Carolina Caycedo, a Los Angeles-based artist of Colombian descent, creates artworks that examine environmental and social issues. Her installations, sculptures, videos, and performances often involve extensive fieldwork and engagement with activist movements aimed at defending human rights and the rights of nature. Caycedo sees her *Cosmotarraya* series as “embodiments of people I’ve met during travels, and their stories of dispossession and resistance” – advocating to protect rivers from dams and pollution, and for the rights of Indigenous peoples who rely on healthy waterways to exist. According to the artist, everyday fishing nets used in the series represent a combination of “porousness and strength, reflecting the inherent connectivity among beings.”

To create this sculpture, Caycedo worked with the Anchorage Museum team to source used dipnets, gill nets, floats, and buoys from local fishermen, fishing supply stores, and beach clean-up nonprofits. The use of common fishing gear speaks to the fundamental importance of fish to northern lifeways, while the delicately balanced elements of the sculpture suggest that life-sustaining salmon fisheries require care, stewardship, and consideration of the entire ecosystem as a living whole. Her work urges us to “reimagine and reorient our relationship to water, to resist notions of the river as a resource to be exploited and, rather, to understand it as a living thing that has an almost endless capacity for giving and sustaining when cared for.”



Celestial Autonomy, the dance of Big Dipper and North Star, 2023
Hand-dyed used dipnets, gill nets, floats, buoys, fishing rod, tackle, and cord
On loan from the artist

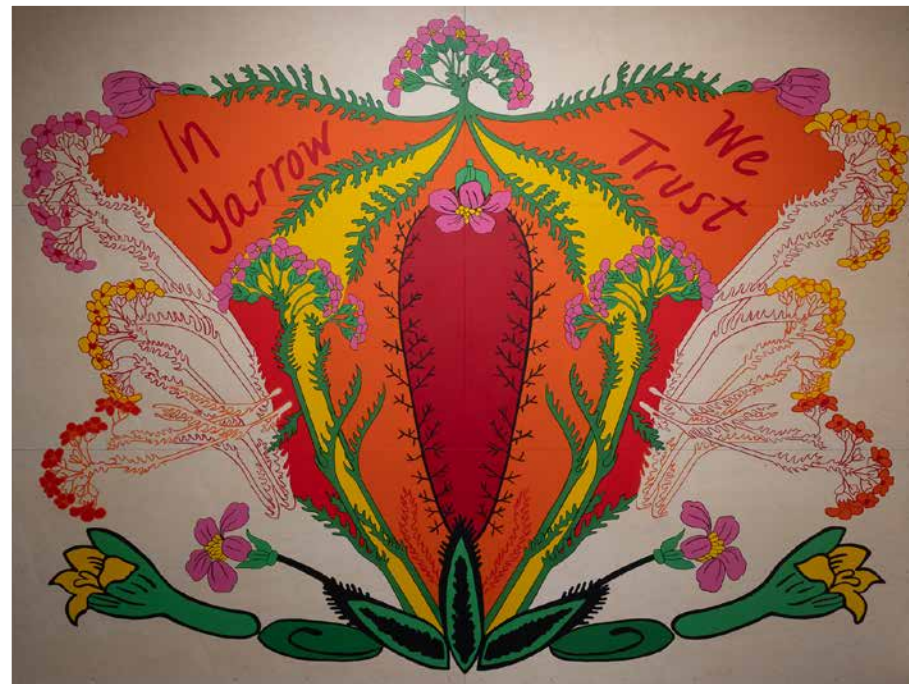
Hear Carolina Caycedo talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Carolina Caycedo (b. 1978)

Caycedo describes her *plant portrait* series as “part of an ongoing attempt to unlearn the colonial gaze and offer alternative ways of seeing, representing, and relating to peoples and places.” Instead of depicting landscapes within a western art historical framework of horizontality, Caycedo focuses on individual plants to render their unique physical characteristics in colorful detail. Both yarrow and sphagnum moss have important applications within Indigenous medicinal practices and female reproductive health.

Local muralist Rejoy Armamento created large reproductions based on Caycedo’s *plant portrait* designs. Rather than paint directly on the gallery walls, the murals use exterior-grade plywood as a substrate so that they can have a second life in a different community space at the conclusion of this exhibition.

Serpent River Book combines archival images, maps, poems, lyrics, and satellite images with the artist’s own photographs and texts on river bio-cultural diversity. As a book, it can be opened, pleated, and read in many directions, and it can also function as a score or as a workshop tool. Caycedo gathered visual and written material for the book while working in Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico with communities affected by the industrialization and privatization of river systems. The book is part of the ongoing body of work, *Be Damned*, that investigates the effects of extractivism on natural and social landscapes.



Carolina Caycedo and
Rejoy Armamento
In Yarrow WE TRUST, 2021
Paint on plywood

Serpent River Book (detail), 2017
Artist book, 72-page accordion
fold, offset, printed canvas
hardcover
On loan from the artist

Gaye Chan (b. 1957)

Hawai'i-based artist Gaye Chan develops projects that create opportunities for exchange outside of market and state control, such as free stores, guerilla gardens, and community meals. *Carrying Capacity* is a durational project Chan began in 2012, stemming from a chance encounter at a produce distribution company. Chan had gone with the intention of getting a case of overripe tomatoes for pasta sauce when she noticed heaps of baling straps in the loading area. As commodities move across the globe, baling straps like these are found binding box to box, paper to paper, and everything to pallets, which are tucked into containers for shipping. They are used once and then discarded into the waste stream. Unable to simply walk away, Chan gave herself the task of figuring out how to reuse the mountains of plastic straps. After watching countless YouTube videos on basket-making methods from around the world, she developed a basic weaving technique.

Eleven years and over a thousand baskets later, Chan continues to extend the life of this 'waste' material through making and skill-sharing. She says, "I think I'm coming at this material not only to get it out of the waste stream, but to ask why we end up with all this junk in the first place. The obvious answer is the dysfunctional global capitalist system of moving goods around, and the residue that gets left in the wake of commerce. I use this material in a very tangible way, but each strap embodies the broader systems of violence and exploitation."

Today, an estimated 90 percent of the world's goods are transported by sea. In 2020, about 1.85 billion metric tons of cargo were shipped globally, up from some 0.1 billion metric tons just 40 years earlier in 1980. It follows that baling straps are found in abundance almost anywhere in the world, including remote Alaska villages as well as in Chan's home in Hawai'i. The Alaska iteration of *Carrying Capacity* partners Chan and her students over Zoom with basket makers and novices in the Anchorage area to learn, experiment, and create baskets together.



Carrying Capacity, 2012–ongoing
On loan from the artist

Lower left image by Rae Huo

Hear Gaye Chan talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Minerva Cuevas (b. 1975)

Mexican artist Minerva Cuevas creates research-based projects that examine the economic and political organization of the social sphere through site-specific interventions and artworks. She seeks to “interrupt or hack the system... finding spaces of freedom where you can still react, especially in the urban realm.” Cuevas often incorporates familiar visual languages and symbols, such as advertising motifs, government propaganda, or corporate logos. The series presented here takes the form of internet memes. For Cuevas, “a viral meme replicates natural selection in that the funniest become the most prevalent. Memes act as the antithesis to the fixed, self-serving advertising industry centered on controlling one unique message. They establish an expectation of constant change, untethered to their origin, as they mutate and spread.”

By combining direct language with the deadpan expression of featured animals, the memes gesture at the uncomfortable reality that some of our most pressing existential concerns are also some of the most mundane and pervasive. For Cuevas, the use of humor in this work is strategic. She explains, “In my work, I add different layers of research and personal engagement to generate something that audiences can read that is ultimately a positive political reflection. I tend to avoid moral statements as I think moral statements often disregard social agency.”

Originally installed on phone booths throughout New York City in 2022, Cuevas recently collaborated with Anchorage Museum Teen Climate Communicators to create a fourth meme featuring an Arctic animal. The orca meme is based on White Gladis, a pregnant whale that first became famous in the summer of 2020 for ramming boats off the coast of Spain. The updated series of memes is displayed in the gallery as well as on bilingual banners at the Museum’s entrance.

Teen collaborators for *Female*: Gemma Alderfer, Salma Dehgan, Ellenia Dommek, Zaiden Joseph-Mosley, Thea Offrink, Makenna Offrink, Haven White



Capitalism, 2020
Climate Change, 2020
Apocalypse, 2020
Digital reproduction

Female, 2023
Digital reproduction
On loan from the artist

Hear Minerva Cuevas talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Jessie French (b. 1988)

Australia-based artist and designer Jessie French creates work that proposes solutions to environmental problems while also prompting reflection on the ways we engage with the material world. Challenging our obsession with the idea of “built-to-last,” which largely fails to consider the ecological and social impacts of everlasting durability, French encourages an embrace of the ephemeral and the circular.

Her algae-based bioplastics, which she developed from long-term experiments in isolation in her home during the pandemic, are created from sustainably sourced algae and then dried into rigid or semi-rigid molded forms. The bioplastic is “closed loop,” which means it can be melted down and turned into new objects. Through her experimental design studio Other Matter, she is testing the material for a variety of applications, including for food consumption, packing material, and vinyl alternatives. French sees her artworks made from the bioplastic as both aesthetic objects and “outcomes of the research... They are a marker of this point in time.”

In *We Are Always Here, Always Knew, Always Part of You*, French used microalgae to create the tonal shift in the lower portion of the artwork. The use of microalgae is significant because microalgae are found in fossil fuels. She explains, “These fossil spirits are in the material as well. They’re our deep ancestors. They were the first organism to begin producing oxygen on the planet. And their DNA is within every green plant that can perform photosynthesis. They’ve been here for 3 billion years. So, they’ve seen a lot.” She adds, jokingly, “They’re just, like, ‘guys sort it out! Stop using our dead ancestors as packing material for your cornflakes.’”



We Are Always Here, Always Knew, Always Part of You, 2023
Algae-based bioplastic, *Athrospira platensis* microalgae, and mineral pigment
Courtesy of the artist

Hear Jessie French talk about art and climate change.

Top image by Annika Kafcaloudis
Bottom image by Philip Huynh

Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich (b. 1990)

Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich is a Koyukon Athabascan and Inupiaq artist creating work about the importance of connection to land and wild plants and animals. Through the process of harvest, Ivalu examines what it means to have a truly reciprocal and interdependent relationship with nature. She explains, “Subsistence has always fed me. I am made of moose that were harvested and hunted generations ago. I’m made of berries that were harvested in the 60s. I’m made of salmon that were caught last year. What I do is part of a discourse that has been ongoing in my cultures for millennia, representing these beings that make us and take care of us, these gifts we get to gather from the land.”

Kuukmiñ and *Apunmiñ* depict animals and ecosystems vital to Northern lifeways: the waters that feed and nurture salmon, as well as the forests and winter snows that support ptarmigan. These creatures physically transform and adapt to their environment – in the case of salmon, from freshwater rivers to salty ocean and back again, and in the case of ptarmigan, a process of molting between brown plumage in the summer and white plumage in the winter. Ivalu is interested in this power of transformation and how humans might learn from wild beings by honoring their innate intelligence and interconnectedness with the land. “When the dark comes, the ptarmigan turn white. They become winter beings. This part of them cannot be separated, selected, or shifted.” Drawing a parallel between herself and the ptarmigan, Ivalu insists, “I need snow to come home to, I need dark winters to be where I am from. The loss of snow is a loss of self.”

Ivalu’s carved and beaded installations of riverine and winter worlds speak of a desire to care for and learn from wild beings in a time when their habitats are becoming more and more unstable due to climate change. She says, “My ancestors were inspired by the change in the wild beings around them. Change in relationship to environment, to lifecycle, to growth – it’s a natural process. Wild beings have this power. It’s adaptive, and it helps them navigate this world...we could learn so much if we were willing to honor the ability to adapt, transform, and live in a different way than we have been.”



Kuukmiñ (From the River), 2023
Basswood, beads, fabric, natural materials, and audio
On loan from the artist

[Hear Erin Ggaadimits Ivalu Gingrich](#) talk about art and climate change in her own words.

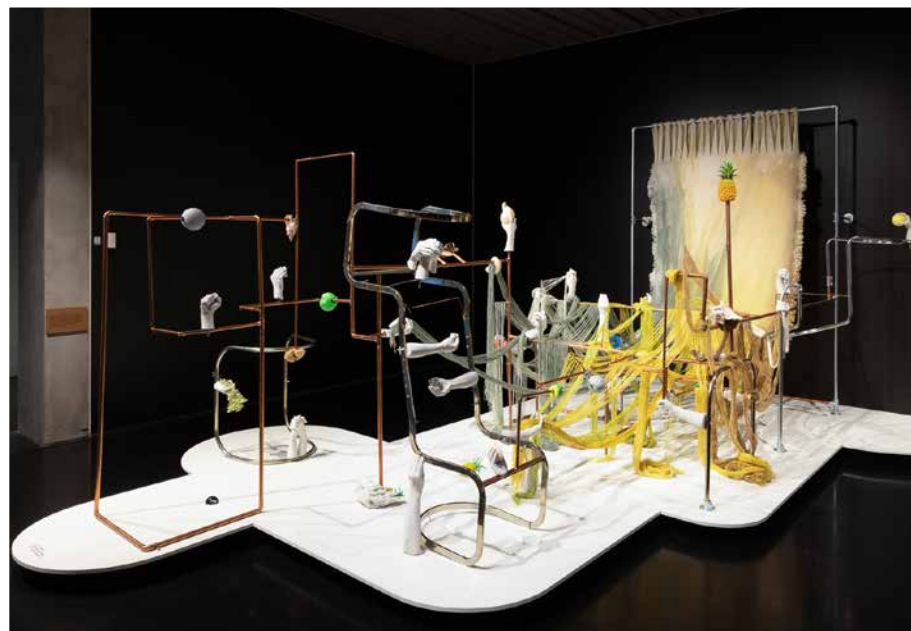
Las Hermanas Iglesias

(Lisa Iglesias, b. 1979, and Janelle Iglesias, b. 1980)

Sisters Lisa and Janelle Iglesias have collaborated artistically as Las Hermanas Iglesias since 2005, alongside their individual studio practices. Working on opposite coasts, the artists produce playful works in a variety of mediums, centering on themes of community, feminism, and cultural hybridity. Las Hermanas' artworks draw on their identities as the children of Dominican and Norwegian immigrants and highlight relationships between family members as well as individuals in society, tying the personal to larger cultural and ecological concerns.

plumb and fathom is inspired by the networks of care and solidarity that biological and chosen families provide each other. Its tubular pathways evoke the plumbing systems of domestic interiors as well as human anatomy. Both “plumb” and “fathom” suggest a process of comprehension through close examination. “Fathom” derives from an Old English word meaning “outstretched arms,” and while its noun form now describes a nautical unit of measurement (roughly fingertip to fingertip), it once meant to embrace someone in a hug.

The sculptural installation connects a variety of objects – a young family member’s cast hand, a conch shell, ceramic fruit – that the artists consider symbols for family planning and parenting. Woven throughout the installation are the threads from *sea change*, a textile the artists hand dyed with various plants and herbs, including those used to manage fertility. The color and choreography of the threads allude to ideas of collectivity and cooperation between and among humans as well as in relationship to the natural world. Woven, crisscrossing, and intertwining fibers emphasize ideas of interdependence and visualize the complex constellation of relationships that make life possible.



plumb and fathom, 2022

Copper and steel pipe and fittings, furniture parts, found objects, and cast hands of the artists and their family

On loan from the artists

sea change, 2022

Hand-dyed custom woven wool with parsley, eucalyptus, weld, chlorophyllin, indigo, and copper

On loan from the artists

Hear Las Hermanas Iglesias talk about art and climate change in their own words.

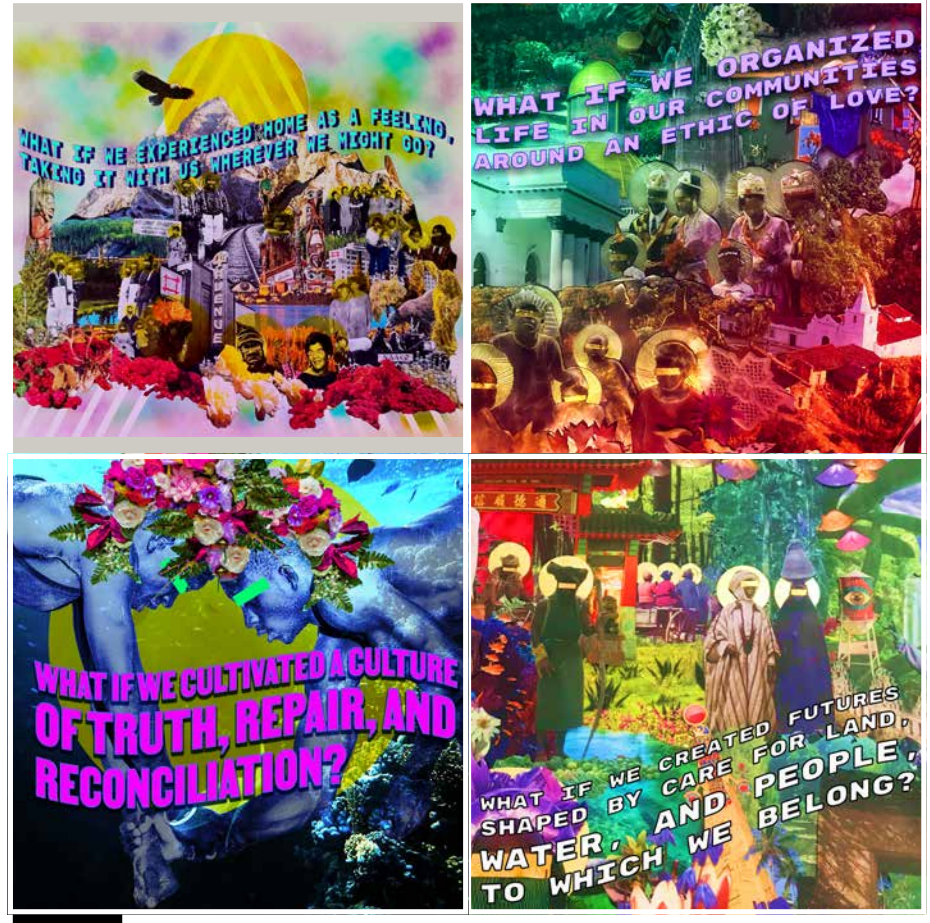
Intelligent Mischief

(Aisha Shillingford, b. 1979, and Terry Marshall, b. 1976)

A creative collaboration between Afro-Caribbean artists and organizers Aisha Shillingford and Terry Marshall, Intelligent Mischief engages communities to unleash the power of Black imagination to shape the future. Through art, design, dream salons, imagination labs, and immersive interventions in the urban space, Intelligent Mischief seeks to cultivate imagination, joy, and mental spaciousness for the collective visioning of more just and equitable societies.

This meme series grew out of a Black imagination study group the artists launched in 2020, in which they and a small group of co-conspirators began creating questions inspired by writers like bell hooks, Frantz Fanon, Norma Wong, Adrienne Maree Brown, Bayo Akomolafe, and Robin Wall Kimmerer. The questions are intended as world-building prompts, asking the reader to envision wildly utopic possibilities for humanity and its relationship to Mother Earth. The artists see this invitation to dream as a form of care but also a necessary political tool for liberation, consciousness-raising, and social transformation. Shillingford says, "It's our collective responsibility to leave a world that people can survive and thrive within. We need to expand our ideas of care beyond the personal and beyond just humans. I care about future generations and people on the other side of the world who must deal with our collective trash, or the creature downstream on this river who must navigate what I put in it. Our interventions are an invitation to broaden ideas about who is within our circle of concern. We are resisting the culture of individualism embedded within capitalism."

As part of this project, Intelligent Mischief collaborated with local artists Sequoya Hayes and Jovell Rennie to create a new meme considering the idea of home. Responding to the question, "What if we embraced home as a feeling?" the work explores various emotional and psychological facets of home. Inspired by shared personal and familial histories of diaspora, the artists consider what it means to locate home and why cultivating a sense of home can help foster reciprocity and responsibility towards people and place.



What If? Cultivating Collective Imagination for a Beautiful Future, 2021–2023
Digitized hand-cut collage and digital collage
On loan from the artists

Hear Aisha Shillingford talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Mary Mattingly (b. 1978)

Artist Mary Mattingly creates images and sculptures about imagined futures that she calls “proposals.” Her practice is grounded in a desire to reframe human relationships to land, water, and one another, creating spaces where regenerative, cooperative, and future-forward thinking can grow and thrive.

What can the watersheds we are part of teach us about ecosystems and restoration? What else can restoration mean? Guided by these questions, Mattingly created *River Lab* in collaboration with dozens of artists from across the US, with the goal of developing tools for people to “get in touch with and learn from waterways.” Each artist composed prompts encouraging visitors to creatively engage with water through the five senses, as a way of conveying the idea that living with water can be a constant, thoughtful negotiation.

Designed in collaboration with Julie Chen, *River Lab*'s repurposed lumber structure mimics the natural arc of a tide chart. Throughout the structure and the gallery space, visitors encounter “tools” created by artists that offer different ways of thinking about riverine environments. Additionally, books from Mattingly's *Ecotopian Library* are available to peruse. Mattingly explains, “The library stems from the belief that art and ecotopian thought can be part of cultivating systemic social change.” It combines disciplines of forestry, botany, art, literature, philosophy, and geology, as well as titles sourced locally in Anchorage about mental wellness in relation to climate change, solastalgia, and climate anxiety.

Artists participating in this iteration of *River Lab*: Indra Arriaga, Katie Lone Craney, Jaimey Hamilton Faris, Billie Lee, Teal Gardner, Monica Kapoor, Morgan Kulas, Jenny Irene Miller, M.C. MoHagani Magnetek, Rebecca Schultz, Jen Stever, Natalie Stopka, Roberta Trentin, and Tamara Wilson.



River Lab, 2022–2023
Repurposed lumber, live plants,
and various media
On loan from the artist

Ecotopian Library, 2020–ongoing
Selection of books
On loan from the artist

Hear **Mary Mattingly** talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Nicole McLaughlin (b. 1993)

Nicole McLaughlin is an artist and designer focused on upcycling and sustainability. During a job at Reebok, she began collecting deadstock and discarded shoe components, reusing them in designs of her own creation. From there, she began creating clothes, shoes, and accessories with unexpected materials, such as Ziploc bags, repurposed volleyballs, outdoor gear, and bagels. Her designs are innovative and often humorous and irreverent, suggesting a sense of freedom: “There’s no rule book in upcycling. Every material is a challenge as to how I’m going to disassemble it and make a new thing out of it.”

Between 1960 and 2015, textile waste in the US increased more than 800 percent, meaning that much of the clothing consumers purchase ends up in landfills. McLaughlin’s practice aims to combat overconsumption and encourage others to repurpose and reuse. She teaches upcycling workshops around the world and posts TikTok tutorials showing her process under the handle @upcycle. “I always want others to feel inspired to create things themselves,” she says. “If you buy something with a hole, you can repair it, you can hem pants. These skill sets help throughout your life as a consumer.”

To produce these pieces, McLaughlin visited the Anchorage Museum and collected materials from past exhibitions no longer in use, including an old parachute uniform, metal lanyard clips, emergency blankets, camouflage material, and others. She combined these with items from her studio and donated fishing gear to create the components of a “survival suit,” the kind of gear one might need in a future further impacted by climate change. The clothes embody practicality and D.I.Y. resourcefulness, underscoring the idea that our collective survival will require being able to improvise and experiment to find solutions to emergent problems – often with what is closest at hand.



Fly By Jacket, 2023
Fishing vests and accessories
On loan from the artist

Tack Hat, 2023
Parachute bag, hat, vintage
Japanese knives
On loan from the artist

Hear **Nicole McLaughlin** talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Amy Meissner (b. 1972)

Anchorage artist Amy Meissner reclaims and reconfigures used textiles through traditional sewing, embroidery, and crochet techniques. She sees working with discarded household cloth as honoring the embroidery created by generations of Scandinavian women in her family, while also confronting societal disregard for women's handwork. These four survival suits are made from used Tyvek, abandoned quilt tops, vintage labels, and used household protective equipment. According to Meissner, this project "creates personal shelter from the merging of the domestic and the public, of inner and outer realms, of mundane and ridiculous."

Created during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, *Mother Thought of Everything* responds to ideas of isolation, journeying, and safety. Meissner designed the suits to fit her own family members, reflecting that the "physicality of constructing such protection...intensified all the unseen labor involved in loving someone fiercely – let alone saving them – during an era of environmental, political, and body failure." Meissner also collaborated with photographer Brian Adams to produce a series of photographs that show the emergency suits being used during mundane moments of daily life, underscoring the sense that in our contemporary moment there's always the potential for disaster.

Although the suits reference a state of emergency in the outer world and may conjure feelings of alarm, Meissner also sees handmade goods as objects of incredible hopefulness. She says, "We need to make things for next generations and infuse those things with the kind of care that allows them to last for the next receiver, the next owner, or the next encounterer. This needs to extend to everything we make or generate – however temporary – and this includes our ideas, too. We need to infuse all those things with an ethic of care for those complete strangers. How can we receive others through objects that show how much we care? This means making things, perhaps, from materials that aren't just sustainable but also regenerative."



Mother Thought of Everything, 2020
Textile

Anchorage Museum, 2021.2.1ab-4ab

Brian Adams, *Family Photo*, 2020

Anchorage Museum, 2021.2.17

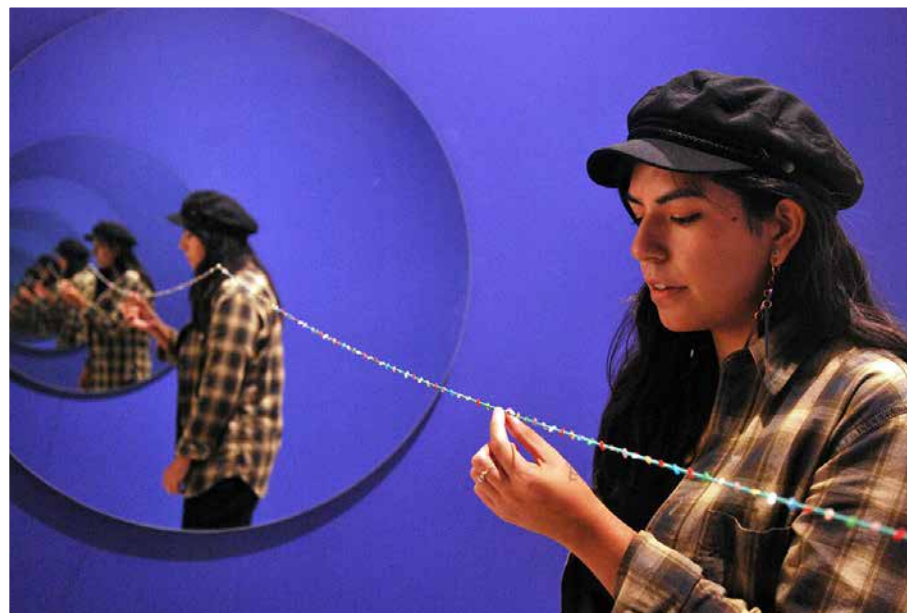
Hear [Amy Meissner](#) talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Audie Murray (b. 1992)

Audie Murray is a skin-stitcher and Michif visual artist based in Oskana kâ-asastêki (Regina, Saskatchewan; Treaty 4 territory), with ties to the Qu'Appelle and Meadow Lake regions of Saskatchewan (Treaty 4 & 6 territories). Her practice is informed by Indigenous traditions of teaching and learning through shared, embodied experiences. Her beadwork, performance, and installations often invoke a connection to the body, to ancestral knowledge, and to different ways of experiencing or perceiving time.

Within her family, Murray is nicknamed *Chi Fii*, a Michif word meaning “little girl.” In these works, she uses daisy chains as a kind of self-portrait. As a simple beading stitch to learn, the daisy chains reference youth and childhood. The diptych *Chi Fii Embraces the Old Ones* shows daisy chains encircling ancient hammer stones found in the prairies of Murray’s home region. Indigenous peoples used these stones as hammers or weights, and many of them are thousands of years old. For her, the act of wrapping the rocks in beaded daisy chains “is essentially like hugging our ancestors through material. Each rock is laid on white and black fur, extending this gesture of care and love.” The work becomes “a material exploration thinking about how we can care for our ancestors and those older than us.”

Extending this idea of care through time and space, Murray’s installation *We are always love* creates an infinity loop by stringing a daisy chain between two mirrors. When standing between the mirrors, the chain appears to extend in both directions forever. “I’m interested in thinking about how people can extend into the past and future through their actions, stories, relations.” The work prompts a consideration of our responsibility as ancestors to future generations, and how we can use the present moment to improve future outcomes.



We are always love, 2022
Installation with beads and mirrors
On loan from the artist

Chi Fii Embraces the Old Ones, 2022
Digital photographs
On loan from the artist

Hear **Audie Murray** talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Ellie Schmidt (b. 1992)

Ellie Schmidt's work explores her experiences of familial love and intimate relationships as vehicles for cultivating understanding of – and care for – the natural world. Her installations, films, writings, and paintings envision ways of relating to the natural world that make space for sustained physical engagement as well as the surfacing of complex emotions.

the tide pool room envelops the viewer in an immersive experience of the intertidal zone. Films projected on the walls and floor depict closely observed anemones, sea stars, tiny fish, barnacles, and other marine invertebrates as seawater swirls in and out of rocky pools. Local sounds of waves, seabirds, and hydrophone recordings provide the soundscape, and each film lasts six hours and thirteen minutes, the length of time between low tide and high tide on planet Earth. Schmidt explains, “*the tide pool room* is about creating and holding time to consider, and exist within, a particular site of exchange – the tide pool, the room, the body.”

Bean bags upholstered in fabrics the artist hand dyed with her mother invite repose and relaxation. Finding comfort within the gallery space allows for a different experience of time: “When we’re looking at things, especially things in nature, it’s easy to take a photo and move on. *the tide pool room* encourages us to slow down. To have fun looking at something for a long time.” For Schmidt, this act of paying attention is a form of care, a simple gesture with the power to cultivate knowledge as well as empathy and action.



the tide pool room, 2022
Digital video, 6 hours, 13 minutes, hand-dyed upholstery
On loan from the artist
Image by Kerry Tasker

[Hear Ellie Schmidt](#) talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Marie Watt (b. 1967)

Marie Watt is a Portland-based artist and member of the Seneca Nation. *Singing Everything: Crescendo (Flood)* began as a series of sewing circles at the Whitney Museum in New York in 2022. Watt's sewing circles, which she has been organizing for over a decade, are intergenerational, multicultural, and open to any level of sewing ability. Inspired by poet laureate Joy Harjo's (Mvskoke/Creek) poem *Singing Everything*, Watt asked participants to respond to the prompt, "What do you want to sing a song for in this moment?" Over 300 answers to this question were incorporated into three quilts, one of which is on display here. Watt took pains to preserve individual handwriting, which she sees as similar to a person's voice. Together, the many voices of this quilt make a chorus, honoring everything from golden retrievers to fungi to the wisdom of elders.

Blue and white fabric evokes connections to air and water, and tin jingles sewn in clusters throughout the blanket allude to sound and movement. Watt explains, "Jingles acknowledge the Jingle Dress Dance, which began as a healing ritual in the Ojibwe tribe in the 1910s during the influenza pandemic. The Jingle Dress Dance was also a radical act. In 1883, the United States banned Indigenous ceremonial gatherings. Though the ban was repealed in 1978 with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, during its century-long prohibition the Jingle Dress Dance was shared with other tribal communities. Today it is a pow-wow dance and continues to be associated with healing. Blankets are danced and so are jingles, there is something healing about them both."

Watt says that she learned early on "When your eyes are distracted because your hands are busy, stories just sort of flow... And I do think we're in a place where technology mediates so much of our communication that there is this urge to connect." It is this act of connecting that animates *Singing Everything*. Through song, story, dance, and sewing, the power of human connection is invoked as a catalyst for action, for healing, for teaching, and for learning together in community.



Singing Everything: Crescendo (Flood), 2023
Reclaimed wool blankets, tin jingles, embroidery floss, and thread
On loan from the artist and Marc Straus Gallery

Sewing circle at the Whitney Museum in New York, 2022
Image by Filip Wolak

Hear Marie Watt talk about art and climate change in her own words.

Community Climate Archive

The Community Climate Archive gathers responses from Alaskans bearing witness to climate change and reflecting on its impacts on everyday life in the North. Participants were prompted to respond with audio recordings and photographs to one of the following questions:

In what ways have you seen [yourself/others/the land] adapt during the climate crisis? Who or what has taught you about adaptation or survival? What have you noticed changing and how are you adapting to that change?

How can we care for [ourselves/others/the land] in the face of a changing climate?

What gives you hope in the face of a changing climate?

What advice would you give to a young person or your younger self about how to survive today? What reflections would you like to pass on to the future about this moment in time?



[Listen to the Community Climate Archive.](#)

Community Climate Archive

We are grateful to those that shared their thoughts and feelings in the archive. They include: Laura Atwood, Lizzy Cable, Molly Cable, Kluk Shaa Chloey Cavanaugh, Dorothy Childers, Melis Coady, Katie Lone Craney, Darcy Dugan, Rodney Evans, Thomas Farrugia, Olivia Franke, Carrie-Ann French, Meredith Gutierrez, John Hagen, James E. Hart, Patricia Holloway, Princess Daazhrai Johnson, Braylon Joseph-Mosley, Zaiden Joseph-Mosley, Young Kim, Aaron Leggett, Erica Lujan, Don Lyons, Klara Maisch, Mel McBride, Maka Monture Paki, Darcy Moxon, Thea Offrink, Carol Oliver, Jeremy Pataky, Aud Pleas, Ryan Peterson, Alyssa Quintyne, Charitie Ropati, Ainsley Sauer, Se'iga Liimii Da Ts'm Ksyen, Anahma Shannon, Bryan Smith, Ella Stenga, Haliehana Stepetin, Michaela Stith, Molly Tarby, Rick Thoman, Arin Underwood, Heidi Varga, Danielle Verna, Kayla Wagenfehr, Forest Wagner, Leah Wagner, Yaari Walker, Seth Weingarten, Sophia Weingarten, Haven White, Lydia Wies, Ben Wilkins, Kerry Wilkins, Brittany Woods-Orrison, Joanna C. Young

1 Young Kim - Anchorage

2 Brittany Woods-Orrison - Fairbanks
Photo credit: Tomás Karmelo Amaya

3 Haliehana Stepetin - Anchorage, UnangaĀ, PhD

4 Joanna C. Young - Fairbanks, Glaciologist & Environmental Educator, Director of Inspiring Girls* Expeditions Alaska, International Arctic Research Center at UAF

5 Thomas Farrugia - Anchorage, Alaska Ocean Observing System, Alaska Harmful Algal Bloom Network
Photo credit: Bethany Goodrich



Materials Library

Displaying recent innovations in climate-conscious design, the Materials Library features samples from designers and companies across the globe working to creatively address ecological distress, overconsumption, and waste issues in our society.

A range of products are represented here, including upcycled post-industrial and post-consumer scraps, repurposed food waste and manufacturing byproducts, plant-based leather alternatives, and bio-manufactured materials, a process using microorganisms and cell cultures to produce new, sustainable materials. Visitors are invited to engage with and touch materials displayed on the reader rail.

While many of the materials are made with circular design in mind, prioritizing healthy ecosystems and zero waste during the manufacturing process, some incorporate harmful chemicals and non-recyclable substances. As markets for ecologically conscious products expand, it is important for consumers to be aware of greenwashing and to carefully research how a material is produced.



Learn more about the [Materials Library](#).

Materials Library

1 Lemon Mosquito Nets
Sahra Jajarmikhayat, United States
Lemon, glycerol, and agar

2 MyHelmet
studioMOM, Netherlands
Mycelium, hemp flakes, and hemp textile

3 Grizzly Wood: Recycled Plastic Lumber
Alaska Plastic Recovery, United States
Post-consumer plastics from Seward, Soldotna, Homer, and Anchorage

4 Mango Materials PHA Biopolymer
Mango Materials, United States
Poly-hydroxyalkanoate (PHA) and proprietary ingredients

5 Solidwool
Solidwool, United Kingdom
Welsh mountain or Herdwick wool and bio-resin binders with a 50% bio-based renewable content



Thank you

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Curated by Francesca Du Brock, with Rachel Boesenberg, John Hagen, and Alex Taitt

Designed by Karen Larsen

This is Dena'ina Etnena

The Anchorage Museum sits on the traditional homeland of the Eklutna Dena'ina. The museum is committed to recognizing and celebrating the culture and language of the Dena'ina people.



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