Chatter Marks

A journal of the Anchorage Museum, dedicated to creative and critical thinking and ideas of past, present and futures for Northern Regions.

*Chatter Marks* are a series of often crescent-shaped gauges chipped out of the bedrock as a glacier drags rock fragments underneath it. Present since the last ice age, most of the world’s glaciers are now shrinking or disappearing altogether as the climate gets warmer. As they mark the passage of deep time, our landscapes are also indicators of our tomorrow.
this issue examines connections between place and people, between Alaska and Russia. It is a collaboration between the Anchorage Museum and the Arctic Art Institute in Arkhangelsk, Russia. Anchorage in the US and Arkhangelsk in Russia are cities of similar populations and latitudes.

ARTISTS
ASH ADAMS
BRIAN ADAMS
KATIE BASILE
ANNA HOOVER
SONYA KELIHER-COMBS
AMY MEISSNER
DARIA ORLOVA
ULYANA PODKORYTOVA
IGOR SAMOLET
USTINA YAKOVLEVA
SERGEY ZHIGALTSOV

TRANSLATION
MARIA RUCHYEVA
EVGENIA TANASEICHUK
EKATERINA SHAROVA

CONSULTANT
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PROJECT PARTNERS
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ESSAYISTS/ARTISTS
EVGENIA ARBUGAEVA
ARCACIA JOHNSON
TIMO JOKELA
EKATERINA SHAROVA
NIKOLAY SMIRNOV

Welcome to the fourth issue of Chatter Marks. Designer: Karen Larsen for the Anchorage Museum. Made possible, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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Amy Meissner
Birth Rope (detail), 2018

Discarded marine rope, silk organza, vintage doilies, acrylic thread
77” L x 24” W x 24” D
Photo: Brian Adams
This project connects Alaska and Russia through the work of contemporary artists, who examine landscape, identity, gender, personal narratives, memories, monuments, and colonization through their work. It is both a continuation and a beginning of connections between people and place. The artists featured here have begun conversations with each other over Zoom through a global pandemic, with virtual studio visits and exchange, and share their work and perspectives here to ignite interest and investigation into issues and to instigate new collaborations. Through their images, we can begin to see a connected landscape and connected concerns. The shared narratives cross boundaries, borders, histories, and geopolitics.

Art has long been a tie between place and people, something that can be exchanged and shared, despite perceived barriers of language and culture. We hope that this project is a spark to ideas of how we can embrace the human experience regardless of how remote or distant we might seem.

Northern places have shared histories of colonization, extreme landscapes, endurance, Indigeneity, adaptation, and resilience. The landscapes that connect Alaska and Siberia are part of an international, Circumpolar North and Arctic. In these landscapes we recognize each other, recognize a shared experience and a place that is not disconnected, but parts of a whole.
race. Hundreds of U.S. military installations were constructed in Alaska. The pace was so rapid that some military installations were abandoned when it became apparent that they would be obsolete before they were completed. Over half of all the intercepts of Soviet aircraft that took place from Alaska military bases took place during the 1980s.

The paranoia and hostility on both sides led to a total closure of the narrow border between the Soviet Union and the U.S. across the Bering Strait, just 55 miles at its narrowest point. The International Dateline is crossed on the way, creating a 24-hour time shift. Since the U.S. purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867, the US and Russia have been connected by history, religion, climate, and landscape, while divided by politics, language, and even time—today in Alaska is tomorrow in the nearest part of Russia.

For less than two cents an acre, the U.S. acquired nearly 600,000 square miles. Opponents of the Alaska Purchase persisted in calling it “Seward’s Folly,” “Seward’s Icicle,” and “Polar Bear Garden” until 1899, when the great Klondike Gold Strike convinced even the harshest skeptics that Alaska was a valuable addition to American territory. The Alaska Treaty of Cession, signed by Tsar Alexander II formally concluded the agreement for the Alaska Purchase. Russia’s territory was massive at the time of the purchase. For the Tsar, Alaska was simply a parcel on the other side of the Bering Strait.

Russia laid claim to Alaska beginning in the 1770s, occupying its coastal areas. Russia’s primary interest was fur. The Unangax people were often forced into slavery to hunt fur-bearing marine animals for Russian traders supported by the Russian government. An estimated 80 percent of the Unangax population died from diseases against which they had no immunity. Russians moved onward to Kodiak, ill-treating the Koniags, then to Southeast Alaska, where the Tinglit waged war on the Russians into the 1850s.

Russian lore maintains that Russian settlement of Alaska pre-dates Vitus Bering’s discoveries in 1741. At least three different locations in Alaska are believed to be ancient Russian settlements. Although the Alaska Purchase transferred ownership of Alaska to the U.S., a strong Russian presence continued, including place names and Russian Orthodox architecture. The proximity and history are evident today.

The first Russian Orthodox missionaries came to Alaska in 1794. Earlier, Russian fur traders brought elements of Christianity to Alaska Natives. The Tsar in St. Petersburg prohibited the poor treatment of Alaska Natives, but many fur traders ignored his orders. Alaska is still home to more than 30 Russian Orthodox churches, six of which are U.S. National Historical Landmarks.

A statue of Alexander Andreyevich Baranov in Sitka, Alaska, was relocated from its original site in 2022 after protests related to the removal of monuments that express colonial histories and ideologies and the oppression of Indigenous peoples.

Traveling to Alaska in the late 1790s, Baranov established a trading post in Sitka, which was destroyed by Tinglit clans three years later. He returned and attacked the Kiks.ádi fort in the Battle of 1804. After resisting for days and when they lost their gunpowder supply, the Kiks.ádi were forced to relocate to the east side of the island. Baranov then established a small colony on the land, New Archangel, that would later become downtown Sitka and the administrative center of the Russian Tsar’s American colony until it was sold to the United States.

When a war of ideas—a Cold War—raged between the U.S. and Russia from 1947-1991, fears of espionage and the threat of nuclear war preoccupied the public. Music, movies, books, television, and other media depicted a polarized and dangerous world. The shortest distance between the United States and the Soviet Union was over the North Pole, placing Alaska at the frontlines of the Cold War military buildup and arms

Today there is talk of new connections, despite an increase in military buildup in the Arctic. The InterContinental Railway is one transportation connection that has been discussed for years. The project would build more than 5,000 miles of new railroad to connect North America with Russia and Asia via Alaska and a 60-mile tunnel under the Bering Strait.

Youth, artists, Indigenous communities, and others have a strong interest in bridging political divides between people and place, with a shared goal of a peaceful and sustainable future for Northern regions. Climate change prompts a new imperative for working together across borders and for connecting landscapes. The boreal forest, melting sea ice and rising sea levels are not about borders or bounty, but food security, human and animal survival, and the future of not just Arctic but global communities.

We hope this project is part of an examination of stereotypes and perceptions, posting critical questions and prompting us to think about the ways we are one, despite many miles and many histories in between. This is a project born out of a collaboration between the Anchorage Museum and the Arctic Art Institute, connecting artists, institutions, and countries.

We thank the artist participants, those featured in this journal as well as others who have been part of collaborations and conversations, and project advisor Marek Ranis.
ABOUT THE ARTIST
Brian Adams is an Iñupiaq editorial and commercial photographer based in Anchorage, Alaska, specializing in environmental portraiture. His work has been featured in both national and international publications, and his work documenting Alaskan Native villages has been showcased in museums and galleries across the US and Europe. His first book of photography, I AM ALASKAN, was published in October 2013 by University of Alaska Press and his most recent book, I AM INUIT was published in December 2017 by Benteli and the Anchorage Museum. He continues his work on documenting Inuit life in Alaska and the Circumpolar North.
Amy Meissner

ABOUT THE ARTIST
Amy Meissner lives and works in Anchorage, Alaska. She combines traditional handwork, found objects, and abandoned textiles to reference the literal, physical, and emotional work of women. Her social practice focuses on the potentiality and prolonging of vulnerable objects through teaching clothing and textile repair as an alternative to a throwaway society. She holds undergraduate degrees in art and textiles, an MFA in Creative Writing, and an MA in Critical Craft Studies.
Fifty expeditions to the poles, and I still get seasick every time. The swell rocks the ship, the horizon tilts, and I know I had better go below deck. Then I empty myself and empty myself and empty my self until there's nothing left inside. Then I'm ready to go again. Then I'm free.

I wake up to the pounding of a fist on my door. The urgency of a captain's shouts that up here mean one of two things: we've seen a polar bear, or the ship is going down. I tear from bed, parka over pajamas, plunge bare feet in boots. The brass lock is still jiggling in the captain's grip when I swing open the door.

He's there, leaning into my face, charismatic gap teeth. He's the kind of man with a too-firm handshake, who crushes strangers' fingers in his grip.

“Pancake ice,” he grins. “You have to come outside.”

Our captain sank the largest cruise ship in polar history. It’s one thing I like about him. Everyone else clings to safety up here, to clean records and to rules, but our captain knows just how it goes down. I think about it sometimes, the shrill ringing of the ship's alarm, the listing. How slow we would move, time thrust underwater. No: when some people say failure I look at our captain and see someone who knows how to get us out of here alive. And so there are two ways of looking at any one thing.

Outside, the sea is a mosaic of jeweled blue discs. Each plate of the soft, porous sea ice is raised around the edges where it brushes and churns against the others. They make a sound like rustling leaves. Shhh. It’s March, the final edge of winter, and the white peaks of Spitsbergen circle the bays like glass.

Where the Svalbard Archipelago rises from the sea, about halfway between Norway and the North Pole, the Gulf Stream currents along the west coast create a warmer climate than anywhere else at its latitude. But sea ice should still crush around the islands like a jaw. It should be visible from space: the edges of the white earth spreading and reaching and swelling over the ocean and filling in the spaces between every island until there is no separation between land and sea, it all means home and it all means sustenance and the ice more than anything else.

The pancake ice rushes past us and drifts apart in the dark sea. We’ve been looking for polar bears for days and haven’t found any. Every few hours the men who chartered the ship come up to the bridge and ask me why we haven’t seen them yet, and I press my eyes to the rings of the binoculars until they feel snow-blind, like they’ll bleed, and behind the ship we leave a ribbon of open water.

Fifty expeditions, and I’ve never learned to accept confinement. My first season guiding tourists in the Arctic, I got up at five every day and ran tiny laps around the deck of the ship to feel like I was getting somewhere. Every time I saw a paying passenger I’d smile and wave, it was my job, I was good at it. My shoes grew slanted on one side. Some people say that when you breathe hard, when you run, the cells of the world around you become part of your body.
I was running like that the day I first saw the sea ice.
I didn’t understand what I was seeing. Where there was supposed to be a horizon of open ocean there was, instead, a line. A white divide, glowing through the twilight that consumed the deck of the ship where, off the coast of Somerset Island in the Canadian Arctic, I stopped to catch my breath. I squinted at the line. The clouds above it were illuminated, a blue hush.

The light drew closer. It spread itself across the sky. A plume of the ship’s exhaust unfurled overhead. Then the ice was all around us, yet we were sailing, we hadn’t sunk, pale continents unfolded across water, shape-shifting and infinite.

The ice was all around us. It rose and fell like breathing, like the rise and fall of a chest.

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There are two ways of looking at any one thing. Daisy Hildyard says we have two bodies: the body in which we live, the one that eats potatoes at this little galley table in the high seas, and the one that lives in the fields and the farms and the power plants where they produce the plastic buttons we switch to turn on the light, where they generate electricity. Our bodies generate electricity.

The onboard glaciologist says that glacier ice is a rock. He says it’s the flow under pressure that makes it transform from mineral into crystal into stone. So when the icebergs drift out to sea, when the pieces I lift from the water grow slick in my burning hands, the dull flame of my body heat is touching the passage of geologic time.

The ice breaks apart in our hands.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ARTIST**

Acacia Johnson is a photographer, artist, and writer from Anchorage, Alaska. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, Johnson received a Fulbright grant to Canada in 2014 and spent a winter on Baffin Island. Since then, she has worked extensively in the Arctic and Antarctica, telling stories about human relationships with the natural world. Her work is housed in many museum collections and has been published by numerous media outlets, including *National Geographic*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*. Johnson has made over 55 expeditions to the Polar regions for work and personal projects and in 2021 earned an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Virginia.
ABOUT THE ARTIST
The Arctic has interested me as both an artist and a researcher, starting in 1977 when I first heard about Alaska and Sitka. While studying art in Helsinki, a professor presented us with an astonishing collection in the basement storage of the National Museum of Finland. The collection consisted of clothes and other artifacts from Native cultures from the coastal regions of Alaska. We were amazed at how such a large and very special collection had ended up in Finland, and our eyes were opened to the fact that Finland, like Alaska, had belonged to the same Russian Empire and share parallel colonial history of the North.

The collection we visited later came to be known as Etholén's Ethnographic Alaska Collection. Adolf Etholén, a Finn, served as the governor of a trading company in Sitka, known in those days as New Archangelsk, from 1840 to 1845. Etholén compiled a significant ethnographic collection from Alaska's Pacific Islands and the Aleutians, which he donated to the University of Helsinki on his return to Europe. This internationally significant collection now belongs to the National Museum of Finland, but only some parts of it are on display at the Museum of Cultures.

Due to Finland’s historical colonial connection to the Arctic, this unique collection was preserved in distant Finland, and it has begun to be visited by Alaskan artists, curators, culture bearers and scientists in recent years. The Gifts from the Great Land exhibition also toured its original locations in the United States: the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, May to September 1992 and the Alaska State Museum, Juneau, April to October 1993.

The artifacts in the collection made an indelible impression on me. The familiar materials resonated with my background as a member of the fishing and hunting culture of a northern Finland village. The visual patterns stayed in my mind and later inspired my art. I have not yet visited Sitka, but I hope to get there someday. Nevertheless, Sitka is relevant to my interest in Arctic cultures and art. Experiencing the visual power and mysterious origins of the artifacts in that collection led me to visiting Alaska and Russia and the eastern parts of Siberia.

Later in my university career, Sitka popped up on another occasion. A young Finnish priest, Uno Chygnaeus, was given the task of founding a Lutheran church in Sitka and creating a congregation to support the religious life of the numerous Finns living there. Chygnaeus spent eight months sailing to Sitka with the governor Etholén, touring the whole of South America. Chygnaeus worked in Sitka until 1845, after which he returned to St. Petersburg. He made the return trip across Siberia using horse-drawn carriages, and for part of the trip, he sailed on a riverboat along the Lena River in Sakha (Yakutia).

Chygnaeus later became one of Finland’s great names. Based on his experience, he developed the Finnish folk education system, the elementary school, in 1857. His background was his years in Alaska. He understood the importance of education for the living conditions of Native and local peoples. He had also seen the great impact the education of women had on their lives. In Finland, Chygnaeus’s elementary schools meant a reduction in social class differences, as everyone attended the same school and were able to study using their own language.

I drifted toward exploring Chygnaeus more closely because drawing skills and making things by hand were of particular importance in his school. He saw them as skills that allowed everyone to plan, design, and build the well-being of their own daily lives. At one time, Chygnaeus’s views on education were thought to be radical, and similarly, I see comparable starting points in the mission and activities of the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design Network of University of Arctic, which I am coordinating to bring art and design to the service of the well-being of the Arctic’s inhabitants’ everyday lives.

Today, we no longer need ocean-going ships, riverboats, or horse-drawn carriages to maintain our circumpolar connections; digital communication has made this much easier. However, there are still challenges to showing to decision-makers how art and culture can play a role in crossing geographical and mental boundaries between nations and Indigenous and non-indigenous groups and building cultural understanding, well-being, and sustainable development in the Arctic.

The Russian double eagle was the imperial crest of Russia. Russian fur traders, representing the Tsar, used the double-headed eagle symbol as they explored the North Pacific. As they annexed new lands, they negotiated with the Native inhabitants in hopes of convincing them of the advantages of Russian rule. To ratify an agreement, they gave metal double-headed eagle crests to important Native leaders who were asked to wear and display them prominently. The Kiksádi clan of the Sitka Tlingit received a double-headed eagle crest as a peace offering following the 1804 Battle of Sitka.

Timo Jokela
Syktyvkar, Komi Republic, Russia, 2013

Photo by Timo Jokela

The Anchorage Museum, Alaska State Museum, and the University of Alaska Museum of the North has had many exhibitions and realized environmental and the aesthetic. He is particularly interested in the relationship between traditional, physical work within the environment and the aesthetic. He has had many exhibitions and realized several environmental art projects and community projects in Finland and internationally. He works as a professor of Art Education in Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. He has also served as a visiting professor of environmental art and art education at University of Strathclyde, in Glasgow, Scotland. He lives in Rovaniemi, Finland.
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Anna Hoover, Norwegian/Unanga, is a writer, director, and filmmaker. She produces documentary, fiction and art films via her home state of Alaska. Hoover holds master’s degree, from the University of Washington in Native American Art History and Indigenous Documentary Filmmaking. She has also trained in scriptwriting with the International Sami Film Institute, as well as with WGBH, a public radio station located in Boston, Massachusetts, and she has written four episodes for the award-winning PBS children’s animation show *Molly of Denali.*
DEAR NEWTOK

Dear Newtok is an audio/visual advice “column” produced by residents of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in Southwest Alaska, one of the first regions in the U.S. to experience forced relocation due to the climate crisis.

This chapter of the project focuses on the Yup’ik village of Newtok where the shoreline is rapidly eroding as a result of melting permafrost and an increase in storm surges. The community is relocating to the newly constructed village of Mertarvik, nine miles away.

Using words and images, Dear Newtok offers advice and insight on adapting to a changing world.

Without meaning to, Albertina Charles became one of Newtok’s main advocates. When journalists and filmmakers came to Newtok in droves, the village council would often send them her way. Albertina is open about how draining that’s been for her, but sees the value in sharing Newtok’s story through the media. She encourages other communities facing climate disasters to do the same.

Mertarvik, July 2020.

KATIE BASILE
ABOUT THE ARTIST
Katie Basile is a photojournalist, documentary photographer and filmmaker with a focus on her home, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region of Alaska. Katie began her career as a teaching artist and has more than a decade of experience collaborating on multimedia stories with rural Alaskan youth. From Yup’ik kayak building to the high teacher turnover rate, youth-led storytelling continues to expand Katie’s understanding of traditional and contemporary rural Alaska. She recently directed the award-winning short film “To Keep as One” in collaboration with the Newtok Village Council. She lives in Bethel, Alaska.

A young boy flies over an abandoned dryer on the eroding banks of the Ninglick River in Newtok.
Newtok, September 2018

Sonja Kelliher-Combs
Burgundy Slip, 2017
Acrylic polymer, cotton fabric, nylon thread, steel pin
Sonya Kelliher-Combs

Mark, Polar Bear and Walrus, 2018
Acrylic polymer, polar bear hide, cotton and nylon fabric
Collection of the Anchorage Museum

Tangerine Walrus Family Portrait, 2018
Acrylic polymer, paper, porcupine quill

Grey Curl, 2013
Acylic polymer, caribou hair, steel pin

Lemon Walrus Family Portrait, 2013
Acrylic polymer, paper, nylon thread, walrus stomach

ABOUT THE ARTIST

is an artist of Inupiaq from the North Slope of Alaska, Athabascan from Interior Alaska, German, and Irish descent. Kelliher-Combs strives to create work through a contemporary lens that addresses the importance of traditional knowledge and carries cultural traditions and values of her people, including respect for land, animals, sea and fellow humans. Her experience with traditional women’s work has taught her to appreciate the intimacy of intergenerational knowledge and material histories. She draws from historical, familial, and cultural symbolism to form imagery that speaks about abuse, marginalization, and the historical and contemporary struggles of Indigenous peoples. Kelliher-Combs received a BFA from University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and an MFA from Arizona State University. She lives and works in Anchorage, Alaska.
The Anchorage Museum sits on Dena’ina DeEłnena, or Dena’ina homeland.

“We, the Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia, and Far East of the Russian Federation, believe that the Air, the Land, and Water are blessed; Nature is the source of life, Man is but a drop in the whirlpool of life; The river of time is but a reflection of the past, present, and future and that how our ancestors lived in the past is how we now live and how our offspring will live in the future.” - RAIPON Charter

There are over 100 identified ethnic groups in Russia. Of them, 41 are legally recognized as “Indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia, and the Far East.” These are the only groups that are legally protected as Indigenous peoples; to meet the requirements, a group of peoples must number fewer than 50,000 people, maintain a traditional way of life, inhabit certain remote areas of the country, and identify as a distinct ethnic group. Some groups are disqualified because of their larger populations, such as the Sakha (Yakuts), Buryat, Komi, and Khakas; others are currently striving to get recognition.

The smallest of these Indigenous groups are the Enets and the Oroks (450 people), while the largest are the Nenets and Evenkis. Of the 41 peoples, ten have fewer than 1,000 members and eleven live beyond the Arctic Circle. At least 16 of these peoples have such small populations that they are considered to be endangered; at least eleven have been declared extinct. Though Russia’s Indigenous peoples only make up 0.2% of the total population, or 250,000 people total, they inhabit about 2/3 of Russia’s territory. The Indigenous peoples of Russia are varied and diverse.
Ледниковые штрихи (chatter marks) — это ряд тонких борозд на горной породе в форме полумесяца, прочерченных песком и гравием, унесенными ледником. Существовавшие испокон веков ледники мира сокращаются или вообще исчезают по мере того, как сегодня теплееет климат. Внимательно наблюдая за следами вековых изменений природы, мы заметим, что она может подсказать то, что произойдет с нами завтра.
В этом выпуске исследуются связи между местом и людьми, между Аляской и Россией. Это сотрудничество между Музеем Анкориджа и Арктическим институтом искусств в Архангельске, Россия. Анкоридж в США и Архангельск в России - города с одинаковым населением и широтой.

ХУДОЖНИКИ
КЕЙТИ БЕЙСИЛ
СЕРГЕЙ ЖИГАЛЬЦОВ
СОНА КЕЛЛИХЕР-КОМБС
ЭМИ МЕЙССНЕР
ДАРЬЯ ОРЛОВА
УЛЬЯНА ПОДКОРЫТОВА
ИГОРЬ САМОЛЕТ
АННА ХУВЕР
ЭШ ЭДАМС
БРАЙАН ЭДАМС
УСТИНА ЯКОВЛЕВА

АВТОРЫ СТАТЕЙ
ЕВГЕНИЯ АРБУГАЕВА
АРКАСИЯ ДЖОНСОН
ТИМО ЙОКЕЛА
НИКОЛАЙ СМИРНОВ
ЕКАТЕРИНА ШАРОВА

ПЕРЕВОД
МАРИЯ РУЧЬЕВА
ЕВГЕНИЯ ТАНАСЕЙЧУК
ЕКАТЕРИНА ШАРОВА

КОНСУЛЬТАНТ
МАРЕК РАНИС

ПАРТНЕРЫ ПРОЕКТА
МУЗЕЙ АНКОРИДЖА, ДЖУЛИЕ ДЕКЕР
АРКТИЧЕСКИЙ ИНСТИТУТ ИСКУССТВ, ЕКАТЕРИНА ШАРОВА

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Этот проект связывает Аляску и Россию через творчество современных художников, изучающих ландшафт, идентичность, гендер, личные нарративы, воспоминания и колонизацию сквозь призму своей работы. Он объединяет установление и развитие связей между людьми и местом. Художники, участвующие в проекте, начали общение друг с другом в Zoom во время глобальной пандемии, виртуального посещения студий и обмена опытом и продолжают делиться творческими достижениями и идеями для активизации интереса, погружения в исследования и формирования новых форм сотрудничества. Их произведения позволяют нам увидеть связанный ландшафт и проблемы в этой области. Совместные нарративы выходят за рамки границ, рубежей, историй и геополитики.

Искусство давно стало связующим звеном между местом и людьми, им можно обмениваться и делиться вне зависимости от предполагаемых языковых и культурных барьеров. Мы надеемся, что наш проект будет способствовать появлению идей о том, как можно охватить человеческий опыт, какими бы отчужденными и далекими мы ни казались.

Северные территории характеризуются общей историей колонизации, экстремальным ландшафтом, выносливостью, аборигенностью, адаптацией и стойкостью. Ландшафты, соединяющие Аляску и Сибирь, являются частью международного циркумполярного севера и Арктики. В этих ландшафтах мы узнаём друг друга, осознаваем общий опыт и местность как часть целого вместо чего-то обособленного.

Daria Orlova
Trees with a Big Heart, Apatity, Russia, 2015
Performance
АЛЯСКА

пушнина. Коренное население – унанган.

Основным интересом для России была Россия заявила о своих правах на Аляску другой стороне Берингова пролива.

российская территория была огромной, и для договором о покупке Аляски. В тот период Александра II, стала официальным том, что Аляска была ценным дополнением убедило даже самых суровых скептиков в.

менее двух центов за акр. Противники Соединенные Штаты Америки приобрели сегодня в Аляске – это завтра в ближайшем история, религия, климат и ландшафт, а у России Аляску в 1867 году, их объединяет.

миль в самом узком месте. По нему проходят на протяжении более 150 лет через Берингов пролив, ширина которого составляет всего 55 против них. Русские перебрались в Кадьяк, не обладая иммунитетом новой болезни, которую они перенесли от дикой природы.

Полюс холодной войны, Аляска и северные регионы России объединяет понятие холода. Холод на Алясских и в России – это не просто физическое явление, а историческое, культурно-мифологическое понятие. В Сибири и на Аляске люди научились адаптироваться и благополучно жить в суровых арктических условиях. На национальных территориях Аляска и Сиера были зафиксированы самые низкие температуры воздуха в мире на протяжении более 150 лет через Берингов пролив, ширина которого составляет всего 55

Аляска совершены в 1980-е годы.

Сопротивление враждебности, и во многих странах, бореальные леса играют важную роль в регулировании климата и биоразнообразия планеты. В России бореальные леса называют тайгой. Бореальные леса покрывают больше чем волшебная страна, национальных парках на Аляске – национальном парке «Мыс Крузенштерна» и национальном парке «Моря Сен-Виктора».

СОВРЕМЕННОСТЬ

Сегодня ведется обсуждение новых связей, несмотря на увеличение военного присутствия в Арктике. В течение многих лет ведутся, в частности, дискуссии о трансконтинентальной железнодорожной магистрали через Северный полюс, поэтому Аляска ОСВЕТЛЯЕТСЯ и демографии планеты. В России бореальные леса называют тайгой. Бореальные леса покрывают большую часть материковых ученых и представители, помогают поставить значимые вопросы и поразмышлять о том, в чем мы едины, несмотря на географические барьеры, а также консультант проекта Мареку Ранису. Молодежь, люди искусства, коренные народы по обе стороны границы международного приоритета.

Данный проект появился в результате сотрудничества между музеем Арктики и ГЭВА, образованным на основе искусств, учреждения и страны. Мы выражаем благодарность художникам, участвовавшим в проекте, как представителям разных культур, так и тем, кто внес вклад в сотрудничество и обсуждение, а также консультанту проекта Мареку Ранису.
ABOUT THE ARTIST
Ustina Yakovleva lives and works in Moscow. Graduated from Moscow State Pedagogical University (Graphics Faculty, 2009) and in the same year graduated from the Institute of Contemporary Art, Moscow. Ustina was resident in Gridchin hall residency, NCCA residency in Kronstadt, Zarya residency in Vladivostok, Vyksa AiR in Vyksa, Russia, and PROGR residency in Bern, Switzerland, Garage residency in Moscow.

Ustina Yakovleva
Prototype III, 2020
Photo print, beads and monothread on linen, 165 x 230 cm
Photo: Yackov Petchenin

Ustina Yakovleva
Untitled, 2019
From the series Embroideries
Beads, natural pearls, cotton, and synthetic thread, mono thread on homespun fabric, 110 x 51 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

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Untitled, 2020
Photo print, beads and monothread on linen, 165 x 230 cm
Photo: Anastasia Soboleva / Spasibo Studio

Ustina Yakovleva
Untitled, 2019
From the series Chakola
Beads and mono thread on photo print, 10 x 15 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist
ABOUT THE ARTIST
Ulyana Podkorytova is a Moscow-based multidisciplinary artist. She received a degree in Graphic Arts from the Moscow State University of Printing Arts and studied with Natalia Pshenichnikova at the Voice Laboratory of the Theatre Institute. She also took Olga Tsvetkova and Alexandra Denisova’s DANCE/DOC masterclass in acting and graduated from the Rodchenko Art School, where she studied video art with Kirill Preobrazhensky. Her work has been part of numerous festivals and solo exhibitions.
People say that once you have the Arctic in your system, it will always be calling you. I spent my childhood running about the tundra and watching the northern lights as I walked to school in the polar night, the poetic name for the two months of darkness that’s not just winter here but also a state of mind. I left my hometown of Tiksi, a remote seaport on the shore of Russia’s Laptev Sea—years ago to live in big cities and different countries. But the Arctic has been calling me back. I crave its isolation and slower pace of life. In this frozen northern landscape, my imagination flies like the wind, with no obstacles. Every object becomes symbolic, every shade of color meaningful. I am my real self only when I am here.

It’s much the same for those I photograph. Sometimes I think their stories are like chapters in a book, each revealing a different dream but each also connected to a love of this land. There’s the hermit who imagines he’s living on a vessel at sea, and the young woman who dreamed of living with her beloved at the edge of the world. Then there’s the community that’s keeping its past and future alive as its members follow the traditions and retell the myths of their ancestors. And finally there’s the old Soviet dream of polar exploration and conquest. Each dream has its own color palette and atmosphere. Each person who is here is here for a reason.

The first dream belongs to Vyacheslav Korotki. He was the longtime chief of the Khodvarthka Meteorological Station on an isolated peninsula on the Barents Sea—a slender, barren spit of land that, Korotki says, feels like a ship. When I first met him, I instantly recognized his tarpaulin jacket, the kind all men wore back in Soviet times in my hometown. He is what is known as a polyarnik—a specialist of the polar north—and has dedicated his life to work in the Arctic. He still helps report the weather. Outside the station I could hear ice shifting and grinding and the wind making the radio wires whistle. Inside it was quiet, with only Korotki’s footsteps and a squeaking door marking the passage of time. Every three hours he’d leave, then return, muttering to himself—“Wind south southwest, 12 meters per second, gusts up to 18 meters, getting stronger, pressure falls, snowstorm is coming”—which he would then report over a crackling old radio to a person he has never seen.

One day I felt sad, the polar night causing the aurora borealis and a very rare phenomenon of thin ice covering the sea. Wasn’t it great to see the stars tonight, after you saw the bright aurora borealis and a very rare phenomenon of thin ice covering the sea. Isn’t it great to see the stars tonight, after you saw the bright aurora borealis and a very rare phenomenon of thin ice covering the sea. People say that once you have the Arctic in your system, it will always be calling you. I spent my childhood running about the tundra and watching the northern lights as I walked to school in the polar night, the poetic name for the two months of darkness that’s not just winter here but also a state of mind. I left my hometown of Tiksi, a remote seaport on the shore of Russia’s Laptev Sea—years ago to live in big cities and different countries. But the Arctic has been calling me back. I crave its isolation and slower pace of life. In this frozen northern landscape, my imagination flies like the wind, with no obstacles. Every object becomes symbolic, every shade of color meaningful. I am my real self only when I am here.

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One month I lived with a young couple, Evgenia Kostikova and Ivan Sivkov, who were collecting meteorological data at another frozen edge of Russia. Kostikova had asked her beloved Sivkov to join her up north after their first year together in a Siberian city. They monitored the weather, chopped wood, cooked, tended the lighthouse, and looked after each other. For medical help they relied only on a distant helicopter, but it could be delayed for weeks in rough weather. Kostikova called her mother almost every day, but as there was little news to report, she’d often ask her mother to leave the phone on speaker and to go about her housework. Kostikova would just sit and listen to the sounds of her faraway home. Perhaps partly because of their isolation, the 300 Chukchi in the village of Enurmino have kept their traditions, living off the land and sea as their ancestors did, hewing to the same myths and legends passed through the generations. It is an honor to be a hunter, and the villagers follow federal and international quotas as they hunt for walrus and whale to sustain their community through the long winters. Not far from Enurmino, I spent two weeks in a wooden hut with a scientific who was studying walruses. We were trapped inside for three of those days, careful not to set off a panic among the estimated 100,000 walruses that had hauled out around us, their movements and fighting shaking our hut.

The dream of Soviet greatness is covered in frost in Dikson, on the shore of the Kara Sea. During its heyday in the 1980s it was called the capital of the Russian Arctic, but since the demise of the U.S.S.R. it has become almost a ghost town. Perhaps there will be new towns as the region warms, but it pains me to see the failure of human effort on such a scale.

During my first weeks I was disappointed with the photos I shot in Dikson’s endless darkness, but then the aurora borealis suddenly exploded in the sky, coloring everything in neon hues for several hours. Cast in a green light, a monument to soldiers looked like Frankenstein’s monster, who, after all, at the end of Mary Shelley’s book, escaped to the isolation of the Arctic. Then the aurora faded, and the town started to slowly disappear back into darkness until finally it was invisible.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ARTIST
Evgenia Arbugaeva grew up in the secluded port town of Tiksi on the shore of the Laptev Sea, Russia, and, although now based in London, remains deeply connected to her birthplace. Her work is often located within the tradition of magical realism, and her approach combines documentary and narrative styles to create a distinctive visual iconography rooted in real experience but resonant with fable, myth and romanticism.
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Igor Samolet was born in northern Russia. He graduated from the Rodchenko Moscow School of Photography and Multimedia. He published a book of his photography titled Be Happy!, which received a German Photobook award. His work has been included in several publications and has received numerous awards. He has participated in the grant program of the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art and project Energy of Mistake was shown at the Multimedia Art Museum in Moscow. His work has been included in numerous exhibitions and festivals as well as in the Ural Industrial Biennale.
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sergey Zhigaltsov was born in Arkhangelsk, Russia. Educated as a carpenter and a TV-technician, he has most recently been working with film production. He started to produce films while working as the head of the film library at the Naval School named after V. Voronin in Arkhangelsk and has worked at the Arkhangelsk regional television station as a videographer. He has created numerous short films as well as performance works with dancer and actor Nikolay Schetnev. He has created installations, sound and film projects, video works, and performances for numerous festivals and events.
The concept of *geoculture* was formulated by Immanuel Wallerstein and attributes the location of sovereignty (linked culture and territory) to the modern era. The unified liberal geoculture finds itself in a systemic crisis, reflecting the current state of affairs in the modern capitalist world system. A diagnostician and critic, Wallerstein did not offer a positive solution, though. This is only logical, given the hierarchical nature of Wallerstein’s ontology: Using the dynamics of a center-periphery model, the world-systems analysis describes things with complete determination. One possible way out of this methodological impasse is to reinterpret the concept of geoculture, in particular, in terms of flat ontology, as an ongoing process.

Our interpretation of geocultures is that of self-organizing systems or ontogenesis in Simondon’s theory, where the dynamic properties of matter produce a set of complex relationships and singularities, which sometimes leads to the creation of new, unique events, but more often to repeated orders and practices. The material is understood here as a sophisticated agent surface, which brings into being memory, images, ruins, processes, people, objects. This is where are continuous processes of geocultural individuation occur through composition and decomposition. Geoculture itself is an event-space, a place of individuation on a material surface. Two modes are important in this process – the recurrence of similar orders and practices (cliches in Deleuze’s theory) and the emergence of new, unique relationships and singularities. Flat ontology does not exclude identity altogether, but perceives it as a permanent entity, turning geoculture into a work of art, a result of “complicity with anonymous materials.” Geocultural analysis deals with emerging patterns and the relationships they form.

Three recurring orders have been identified as a result of our expeditions to Taimyr (Dudinka, Tukhard village, Tukhard tundra) and Chukotka (Anadyr, Providence, Lavrentyia, Uelen). Associated with different waves of colonization, these orders have formed similar material forms, traditions and cultures in different parts of the Arctic that exist in a variety of the forms including ruins, memories, active environments, revived customs, everyday practices or new processes, mixed in a variety of ways.

These cliche orders are:

1. **Geoculture of the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic**
2. **Geoculture of permanent settlements of Soviet colonization**
3. **Post-Soviet neoliberal Geoculture with the rhetoric of traditions**
The forms of this geoculture emerged as a result of long and numerous colonizations. In Chukotka, for example, Paleoesiacic, Eskimo and Chukchi periods are distinguished. It is important to emphasize the depth of this horizon and the fact that disciplinary knowledge about it first took shape in the late 19th-20th centuries, within what Edward Said referred to as “secular order of disciplinary methodologists.” Long and diverse, each period had been accumulating itself in the form of a generalized “indigenous culture” with some important divisions inside.

The analysis of Geoculture 1 has revealed its most essential features, the first one being the nomadism, the second defining it as a geoculture of eternal presence (in the definition given by Levi-Strauss), not a sign, but an identity. As a result of Soviet modernization, when traditional identities were being reforged the Soviet identities, many nomadic forms of existence were replaced by sedentary. The market economy hit reindeer husbandry the hardest, having devastated it almost completely in the 1990s. The return to traditional subsistence took place in the 2000s took place against the backdrop of the collapsing non-traditional forms of economic management and the need for survival.

Geoculture 2
(permanent settlements of Soviet colonization)

The Soviet era has left a deep mark on the Arctic by giving rise to a new singularity in the form of permanent settlements and cities (Geoculture 2) and transforming Geoculture 1. Swept by the wave of Soviet influence, the Arctic became exposed to the realities it never knew before – cultural outreach houses, Northern Sea Route ports, civic centers, national settlement, military units, communication devices, shift camps, and penal camps.

Geoculture 3
(post-Soviet neoliberal geoculture with the rhetoric of traditions)

The latest wave of colonization operates largely on a symbolic level, advancing a large-scale restructuring of material and descriptive assets. In the postmodern economy, the most important criterion of which is efficiency, everything becomes a resource and an identity is seen as a commodity.

One example is Chukotka. Vibrantly rebranded by mogul Roman Abramovich, appointed Governor of Chukotka after the disastrous 1990s, the capital of Chukotka, Anadyr, became the flagship of the process, with multi-colored buildings, bike stands, hipster aesthetics, revived Orthodox churches, and monuments to old and new “heroes” amid other objects of a postmodern eclectic mix.

The authentic identity of the peoples of the Arctic, whose descriptions are found in the books by archaeologists and Soviet scientists, among other contemporary and historical sources, represents an important resource. However, essentializing it through geocultural coupling of its identity and territory may, according to Wallerstein’s diagnosis, escalate the conflict. Therefore, the question today is how to find new grounds for describing the local, that is how to move, in the terms of Bruno Latour, from the global to the planetary, from the globe to the earth? In addition, it is important to provincialize such total abstract principles as the globe, understood as a space of essentialist localization of sovereignty.

This narrative has been prepared based on the works published by LCGRA (Laboratory for Comprehensive Geocultural Research in the Arctic), Yakutsk, Moscow, 2014-2016.
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Daria Orlova is interested in the art of interaction, self-organization, and nomadic approaches. Composing and assembling her installations from various objects, she leaves room not only for imagination, but also for action, calling on the beholder to participate. Utopian dating clubs, exhibitions of imaginary artists, collective performances—these are worlds that the artist creates for the viewer, in an endless search for her own identity. By personifying herself with a red plastic ball, a man or an amorphous image, the artist raises the topic of queer ecology. Since 2020, she has been a member of the self-organized female art group ShishSh (ШШШ ШШШ in Russian). Orlova has degrees from the Murmansk State Technological University (MSTU) and the Krasnodar Institute of Contemporary Art. She lives and works in Murmansk and St. Petersburg.
Decolonization is a long and painful process. In Russia, the situation is different from other areas in the Arctic, since the people are still recovering from the unsustainable solutions suggested by Soviet innovators. Maximalist ideas of the Soviet revolution expressed in the text of The International:

Arise ye workers from your slumbers
Arise ye prisoners of want
For reason in revolt now thunders
And at last, ends the age of cant.
Away with all your superstitions
Servile masses arise, arise
We'll change henceforth the old tradition
And spurn the dust to win the prize.

The old tradition: The old knowledge was gone, and we were surrounded by grey blocks and growing shopping malls in the middle of the town. It destroyed the dreams of our disillusioned parents and created a chaotic future. Releasing our past through contemporary art and design became a goal and a therapy.

In the twentieth century, the cultural ecosystem of Euro-Arctic Russia was destroyed and re-created twice: once after the 1917 October Revolution and again after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The traumatic consequences are still being processed through relearning family histories. You can hardly find a family in Northern Russia not touched by the Gulag. The former main architect of the town, the well-known folklore singer, the Soviet artist who created most of the public art in town, museum directors—many cultural leaders had a relative who went through this. However, this could be learned in private conversations rather than in a museum. Despite all this, some conservative groups attempted to raise a monument to Stalin in the middle of Arkhangelsk (without any success). In this context, art could provide a space for critical conversation and dialogue.

The Northern ecosystem has been rich in its exquisite embroideries—at least thirteen folk painting styles, furniture, house decoration—but, a hundred years later, material objects could be found in museums while everyday life was designed in a Soviet and a Post-Soviet time. To imagine the new, sustainable future, the Arctic Art Institute develops workshops and art projects around the local culture where new design can be created for this very context and can interact with the environment.

The goal of this project is to produce new knowledge necessary in the context of communication gaps. Culture can provide places for a dialogue, which seems necessary in the Arctic today—for our sustainable future.