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Summoning Black Beach

*MFA Sculpture & Ceramics Dept, Studio Arts
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*Thesis Exhibition and Text
Kuh Del Rosario*

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The artist makes a sculpture for everyone to see but hates to explain when asked. Populating the studio are failures and successes, mirroring life in manageable increments. Making skins out of paper pulps and mesh screens for mountains makes sense here. Thermoformed plastics are moulds for fruiting bodies and mortared charcoal shadow walls. Coffee grounds flock furniture cradling ideas, not bodies. Spices make for teary-looking but can never touch lips. You'll have to taste my work in other ways.

I would like to hear the bats again, that fertilize the soil nightly except during monsoon months. Perhaps you've stopped believing that stuff about love. But I came to say that you are the hero of your own story if you are a sculptor or a liar.¹ Anyways.

¹ "Art shows us how a disturbingly ambiguous pretence is woven into aesthetic experience: wonderment is based on the capacity to be deceived."

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PREFACE

In many ways, my work is about *retelling* through materials. Because of this, remembering is an essential part of my practice, though oftentimes I forget. It is for this reason that I depend on *things* to contribute and fill in parts that are missing. Working towards collaboration is then complicated by the endless intersecting relations that connect my stories to those of the materials I am engaging with.

The following stories are recollections of key moments from places I attempted to root myself in, shaping my understanding of belonging, and building relationships with land and the psychic waters between them.

I have decided to title this book, as well as the exhibition¹ it is accompanying, *Summoning Black Beach*. In reference to a place my father once took me to and never found again, this place I call black beach also signifies a set of interrelations I try to capture in my work.

Perhaps eaten by the sea or mined for its abundance of iron ore, this particular spot has disappeared from geography. Through this exhibition and my insistence to retain the details of this afternoon with my father who has since passed, I can summon this place through the remnants gathered from my surroundings. Reconstructed through sculptural forms made of materials collected from my every day, I am resolved to find alternate strategies for summoning this black beach.

I was born in Manila, Philippines and immigrated to Canada with my mother at an early age. We settled in Calgary, Alberta where I grew up and learned an incomplete history of Canada. After several years we were granted status as landed immigrants, becoming Canadian citizens at the cost of surrendering our citizenship to the motherland. Over a decade later after the laws changed, was I able to re-apply for my Philippine citizen status in preparation for an extended stay in Batan, Aklan, where my father lived.

The bureaucracy of borders and belonging, the privilege of carrying dual passports that opened up access to both countries has affected my notion of self in relation to the lands I *landed* on.

Attempting to follow the steps of remarkable artists such as Candice Lin¹, Tanya Perez Cordova², Amy Ching-Yan Lam³, and Tsēmā Igharas⁴ to name a few, all of whom have distinct relationships to their materials of choice, are extremely precise, deeply personal, unapologetically political yet otherworldly. I am careful to cite such a grouping of women and persons of colour, tackling questions relating to their racialized bodies in relationship to place and cultural belonging, memories and fraught histories. Not long ago, my artists of inspiration were influenced by my introduction to contemporary art through a Euro-centric lens, leading me to focus on formalist concerns, minimizing my own encounters with materials.

To this end, I am using my stories as meaningful allegories that have shaped my becoming, and continue to fortify my work as a sculptor.

1 The list of materials Candice Lin works with is testament to the intensive research into histories and alchemic processes she delves into, drawing potent lines between seemingly disparate materials that become impossible to unravel. I first encountered her work through a friend who sent me a link to, *A Hard White Body*. She has since become the figure in the back of my mind that both inspires and haunts me while making in the studio and when I feel like there are no more stories left to tell.

2 Captivated by what's left behind, I am naturally drawn to Tanya Perez Cordova's sculptural installations that seem to distill materials into their purest form while retaining the integrity of the medium. What transformations the objects undergo in her studio complicates the narrative and presents common objects as fantastical agents.

3 The humour in Amy Lam's practice is generous and expands references that are deeply personal into larger conversations about colonialism, poverty and the Canadian immigrant experience. Her work is touching and extremely smart. Earlier this year, Lam exhibited alongside HaeAhn Woo Kwon at the Richmond Art Gallery titled, *a small but comfy house and maybe a dog*, referencing the freshness of her child-self's imagination, tinted by prevailing forces perhaps felt, but not entirely understood.

4 I met Tsēmā years ago, although at the time I didn't know the influence she would have on the ways I think about land and body today. I admire her long, ongoing investigations into complex matters that are pressing and relevant. Most recently I saw *Great Bear Money Rock* in collaboration with Erin Siddall. The rocks encased in blown glass were deceptively beautiful. Though my impulses and personal aesthetic would never allow me to produce such a paired down installation, I admire the confidence in the materials to speak for themselves.

A GOOD DISTANCE

I can hardly remember exactly how the question goes since it has been many years since it was first posed to me. But the answer remains the same.

I write this three weeks into a summer-long artist residency¹ in Gotland, an island in the middle of the Baltic Sea. The sun is hearty and sustained here, well beyond the evening. In Bronze Age cosmology² the sun's movements were explained through solarships that ferried the sun back and forth across the earth. There is the dayship for the sun's ascent and for the star's descent, is the night-ship. Both vessels are in perpetual choreography of faithful duty. Observing the place between sea and sky, I can almost make out a majestic ship on the horizon, sailing the sun towards a new day.

Under this canopy of cirrus clouds, occupying a small plot on this moving island³ I formed a ritual for grounding. Before setting to work in the studio, I run along the shore, following the endless skyline, greeting the trees and rocks along the way.

Running the same route almost daily, I tasked myself with getting acquainted with the terrain and the living things that reside there. In turn, I hoped the twisting forests of pines and juniper, the rolling *alvars*⁴ and the ever-changing wetlands would get acquainted with me too.

From my cottage, I cross a small patch of green, through a short alley, then onto *Själsovägen* road⁵, down a winding bluff overlooking the pasture and harbour below, before taking the first left toward *hamn*⁶. I pass the field with a team of unbothered horses, a parking lot, some marooned tugboats and through an open gate, fishing huts lining a little dock, before continuing past a modest sea wall already hosting a few sunbathers eager for some rays. I persist along the rocky coast until I see a large boulder half submerged by the low tides, and then I trace my way back.

One morning, I noticed a desire line leading into the woods. Feeling ready to increase my time I decided to explore. The path cut through a wooded area, out a gravel trail before ending back again onto *Själsovägen*. Being a one-lane road, cars, bikes and people are accustomed to sharing the lane without much trouble. However, living many years in a city has left me mistrustful of cars and I was not entirely comfortable staying this course.

I noticed a field running the length of the road to my left though it was unclear if it was private property.

1 Between mid-June and end of August 2023, I lived and worked in Gotland, Sweden, supported by *The Brucebo Fine Art Summer Residency*. There, I completed the short stories in this book as well as the accompanying drawings. There are works also completed in Gotland that is integrated into the exhibition, *Summoning Black Beach*.

2 The myth of the solarships is significantly more complex than what I can include in this text. Danish archeologist K. Kristiansen writes at length of the possible origins of the solarships, linking it with the saga of the sun god's daughter who needs the protection of the Divine twins that shapeshift to ships, horses and other carrying vessels to aid the daughter's safe passage across the sea. Kristian Kristiansen, "Rock art and religion," in *From: Representations and communications: Creating an archaeological matrix of laet prehistoric rock art*, ed. Å. Fredell, K. Kristiansen and F. Criado Boado (Oxbow Books, 2010), 93-115.

3 Attributed to continental drift, Gotland is said to be moving at the rate of a *fingermails'* growth.
<https://naturumgotland.se/exhibition-texts/>

4 "These *alvars* are developed over more or less horizontal limestone bedrock with only an extremely shallow or even absent soil layer. They are very rich in bryophyte and lichen species, but also have a unique vascular plant flora composed of a unusual mixture of temperate, arctic-alpine, steppic and (sub)Mediterranean species."

Iwona Dembiczl & Jürgen Dengler, "Gotland - a grassland paradise in the middle of the Baltic Sea," *Palaearctic Grasslands - Journal of the Eurasian Dry Grassland Group* 54-55 (Dec 2022): 48-58, DOI:10.21570/EDGG.PG.54-55.48-58.

5 *Själso* according to google translate means 'soul island', *vägen* meaning road.

6 *Hamn*, one of the first Swedish words I learned, meaning harbour. *Själso hamn* can be seen from my bedroom window.



The next day a woman happened to be walking through this green lot at the same time I was running past. We caught each others' gaze and I resolved to follow her lead the next day. This small change to my running route could be seen as an unremarkable event, though I was also ready to see its magic. This moment completed an answer I had to the long-ago question I struggle to remember.

Perhaps, it went like -

what is something you've never done before but always wanted to?

or -

What would make you feel the most free?

or maybe it's -

What is an imagined place you often think about?

Important is the vision this query inspired, becoming significant enough that I've held on to this until its actualization. Shared with the amiable sun and light breeze from the sea, I ran the field.

Open and flat under my feet, I sprinted straight on, covering a good distance free of obstruction or restriction. Through a confluence of circumstances, I found the moment that to me, epitomized freedom and oneness with the earth. Carried through by the strength of my lungs and limbs I crossed a dewy meadow somewhere in the central region of Gotland.

When I first arrived on this island, I was told about *allemansrätten*¹. Functioning like the solarships, this law ensures safe and rightful passage through meandering paths, dissolving property lines for passersby. Translated to English, *allemansrätten* means freedom to roam, or everyone's right. A beautiful proposition that an aimless wander is a right to be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of private ownership.

*I am free only if the land is*²

- is an answer to a new question I'd like to ask.

7 During my time in Gotland, I benefited from *allemansrätten*, hiking through forests and countryside that cut through private lands as well as picking wild blueberries and lingonberries. A source of pride for the Swedish people, this law outlines the rights and responsibilities to nature. The psychic implication of this freedom was not lost on me and affected me deeply. Exploring slowly and with intent, I was able to connect more profoundly with my surroundings.

2 I am reminded of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's retelling of *Kwezans makes a lovely discovery*, in which her relations to the story is clearly defined, as well as the themes of love and knowledge from the land and its many inhabitants. Such relations I believe is rooted in freedom and agency.

Leanne B. Simpson, "Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (2014): 1-25, <http://whereareyouquetzalcoatl.com/mesofigurineproject/EthnicAndIndigenousStudiesArticles/Simpson2014.pdf>

TRIMMINGS LIKE LIVING

These days my garden fits neatly along the windowsill of my studio, comprised of plants propagated from cuttings. I learned this method of building a green community from my elders¹ in the Philippines, who would ask for a little of this plant or that, every time they passed by the house. In return, they would sometimes recount a story from long-gone days. Sometimes there would be no words exchanged at all, but a cheeky smile while a stem is pinched off. I continued with this tradition when I arrived in Montréal, collecting trimmings like living keepsakes to maintain connections.

One prolific and tenacious plant I acquired - a fuzzy oregano² - has an origin story I've come to regard with affection. Offered by an alleyway, abandoned amongst broken chairs and other orphaned things, my friend kindly accepted. She positioned the plant prominently in her studio atop an old writing desk, allowing it to snake every which way, leaning its great weight against the window. Even though my friend referred to it as her garbage plant, I recognized it immediately. It was the very same kind I had planted around the house in Batan, to keep the mosquitos at bay. I've never seen this type of oregano before and to have it again in this new city feels significant.

Just a few years before I was tending to my grandmother's plants and trees without much experience. I did what I could with a help of a groundskeeper who knew better. There were dancing lady orchids and other flowers I have no names for, a chilli plant, a tall but struggling *malunggay*³, and a pine tree shipped all the way from *Baguio*⁴. There were also papaya trees that sprouted up unexpectedly from seeds I casually tossed in the soil. Once occupied with managing the constant rush of life in the garden, nowadays I struggle to keep things alive.

I also began saving seeds from the fresh and dried foods I bought. Perhaps this was a response borne from the limitations the pandemic⁵ incited at the height of quarantine. Products from grocers became some of my most trusted materials and savouring whatever life was left of the fruit felt good. Seeds from pumpkin, avocados, tomatoes, chia, flax, cucumbers, oranges and others were gathered for their potential.

1 I have many elders in Batan, Aklan, Philippines, most dear to my heart is my great aunt Lola Purita with whom I grew close with after my father's passing. Through her involvement with the *Prayer warriors* (a self-appointed group of mostly retired school teachers), she alongside a dozen elders prayed over my father's ashes every Saturday morning at my home for several weeks. The prayers were recited in the old language of *Hiligaynon*. Before or after the prayers, they would admire my garden and take clippings as keepsakes for their own collection. If I was lucky, they would tell me about their youth and what Batan was like before my time.

2 I had never before seen this type of Oregano plant prior to Batan. Brought to the house by Nancy who helped me tend to the house and garden, she knew this plant can detract mosquitos by the scent it gives off. *Origanum ambainicus* or the Philippine Oregano has many healing benefits and antioxidant properties. It was truly synchronistic to see this plant again in my friend's studio.

3 This *malunggay* is one of the original trees from my grandmother's time. Also known as *moringa* (*Moringa oleifera*), in powder form or pills, it has been marketed as a superfood, known to promote healing and aid in muscle growth. Almost hidden behind an old tree trunk used as a utility pole located at the corner of the garden, it produced a few branches and struggled to grow in the shade.

4 *Baguio* is a city located in the Northern part of Luzon island in the Philippines. It was a favourite vacation spot of my grandparents and is known for its cooler climate as it is high up in the mountains. It is known for its pine forests. It is quite unusual to have a pine tree in Batan and must have been a source of pride for my grandmother to have in her garden. It was prominently located at the front of the house and towers at almost 20 feet in height. Far from its origins, can this tree be considered *naturalized*?

5 Arriving in Montreal January 6, 2020, I got to know the city through the restrictions of the pandemic. I would be remiss not to mention this at least briefly, since my intuitive response to my new surroundings in quarantine led to rethinking processes in the studio.



With the materials mingling together, the borders between the garden and studio obfuscated over time. Seeds were planted in layers of gyprock and pulped paper. Tops of aubergine and courgettes nipped the skins of boats made of twined plastics. Sculptures are now vessels for life forms and a future of material transformation is ensured.

In the romantic period, the term daemon often refers to the temperament that drives an individual to its destiny—a temperament that may be infused in the objects with which that individual chooses to be surrounded.¹

In this nursery of eclectic life, there are many meanings to be derived, from each object or sprouting seed, fuzzy moulds and composting materials. Each relation complicates understandings and invested intentions, most of which I do not have complete control over. Tending life in the artwork is not a noble occupation but a realistic way of thinking through how I can manage my personal *daemon*. I negotiate between what I want the work to do with how the materials respond. Maybe I am still in my romantic period.

And it makes her feel at home in a place, to have her hands in the earth. I ask her, “Do you love your garden?” even though I already know the answer.²

¹ Referred to me by Karen Kraven, I have come to refer to passages of this book often. Schwenger has put on paper some concepts that I was challenged to capture in words. Particularly, this passage provides a chimerical reference to the sometimes inexplicable bond to things. Peter Schwenger, *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects* (Minnesota: Univ of Minnesota Press, 2006), 77.

² Passage taken from the chapter, *Epiphany in the Beans*. Dr. Wall Kimmerer recounts a story about her daughter's garden, as a parable to consider the sacred bond between people and the earth. Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2013), 125.

TO FIX A GREAT THING

In the sitting room of my father's house¹ is a great stone wall stretching over twenty feet high, featuring a low-relief mural of two fish² in an underwater scene. After his passing, it became my habit to sit here in the afternoons when the heat was most intense. I would watch the sun's rays struggle to flood the room from the high windows that frame passing clouds and the peak of the neighbour's roof.

Within a great fissure (likely from a past earthquake) running two feet diagonally across this stone wall are patches of latex mottled and pressed into the gap. I often observed this beige plasticky material during those quiet afternoons, though it was my cousin who pointed out its peculiar materiality. He claimed it was my father's way of disposing of his expired chewing gum. Certainly, the accumulated mass was from a long habit of chewing, then sticking, a casual attempt to fix a great thing³.

My father's DNA is still preserved in the structure of this latex, now part of the walls I was regarding, hurtling me back into moments in his life accessible only through this unexpected portal.

Is there a way to pry open this entry even more?

Recognizing my fathers' gesture as a kindred act, I want to reciprocate.

Searching for more, led me to precolonial Americas in the Yucatán Peninsula. Here, the Mayans and the Aztecs harvested natural latex from the Sapodilla tree (or wounded noble tree)⁴. Hundreds of years later, American corporations⁵ saw the lucrative potential of *chicle* (one of its many names), creating the rise of chewing gum as a symbol for the 'All-American' in the 1920s. As part of the military rations, chewing gum was integral to the daily life of the US soldier, staving off hunger and quenching their thirst. WWII solidified gum as a global product. Although these days, gum is made from synthetic formulas instead of *chicle*.⁶

1 Between the beginning of 2017 until the end of 2019, I lived in Batan, Aklan, Philippines. I stayed in the house my grandfather built, which was significantly expanded and renovated by my father over decades. After my father's health declined, he built himself a small bungalow a few minutes walk from the original house. With such a cavernous and multi-room house, I decided to run a modest artist residency where I invited artists to live/work for a month or longer. Despite this, there were many months of solitude and quiet, a period that felt to be a time for healing, reassessing what it is I really wanted out of life. My father and I have always lived apart, save for visits every 2-4 years. It wasn't until living in this house - studying the walls and things he has collected, books he's read, music he listened to, that I grew to know this man I called papa. Especially after his death and after carefully sorting through all of his things, did I realize how much we were so similar.

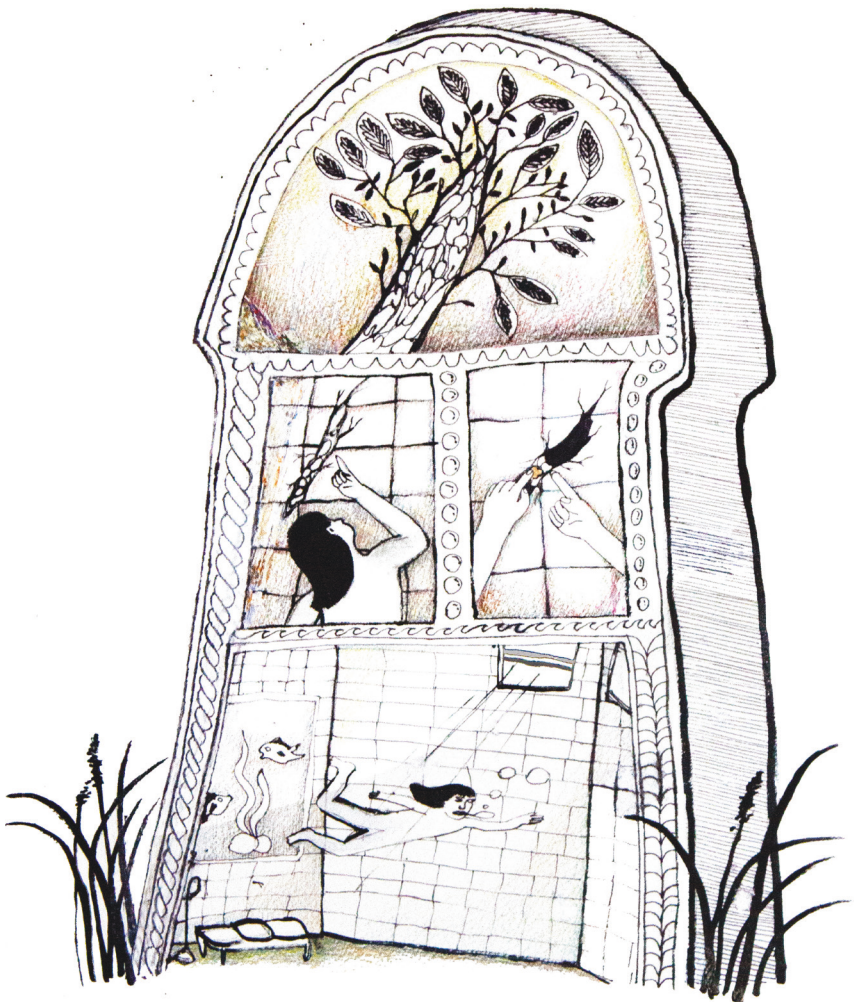
2 I was told one of my uncles made this concrete relief, which I found impressive considering all my father's brothers were either in law or medicine. It is nice to think somehow artistic expression had a way of manifesting.

3 So many times, neighbors and family tried to tell me that my father was inaccessible, peculiar and singular in his actions. He kept his thoughts and motivations to himself and was likely to give a witty joke instead of a straightforward answer. Such is the case with the gum patching. I don't know why he did this, or if there was a deeper meaning for this gesture.

4 Through Spanish occupation in South America and the Philippines, the Sapodilla tree was exported to the Philippines. There the Sapodilla is more valued for its fruit - *chico*. My lola told me if you see a *chico* tree, bats are sure to be nearby. *Chico* is a custardy fruit with a fuzzy skin like a kiwi. Not too sweet with a bit of grainy texture, it is a flavour I associate with my childhood.

5 Though this paper does not outright claim gum as a symbol for the All-American, Robinson does address semiotics as it relates to the effects of Wrigley's extensive marketing blitz on the American people. Perhaps this statement is more from personal experience of being a small child in Manila, reading and studying imagery from Bazoooka and Archie comics whose characters are known to blow bubble gum. Daniel Robinson, "Marketing Gum, Making Meanings: Wrigley in North America, 1890—1930," *Enterprise & Society* 5, no. 1 (March 2004): 4-44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23700378>.

6 This book excavates the history of chicle in the Americas, as the title suggests. Chicle is one of the many names for this latex substance but one I use exclusively as it relates to *chico* and *chiclet*, the fruit and product from personal encounters. Jennifer P. Mathews, *Chicle: The Chewing Gum of the Americas, from the Ancient Maya to William Wrigley* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2009).



2018 Eimo's House / DIGGING / CHICLE / death / entangle / fissure / kindred / noble / portal / thinglike / waters / wounded

As a child in Canada, I dreaded the aftermath - *the wad* that needed to be expelled afterwards. Unlike my father, I did not want to leave such an imprint in this place I was then still new to. There is a part of me that envies my fathers' bold gesture. There was no mistaking - the house and the patch of earth it stood on - is his home and land. The accumulation of gum declares it so.

For three years I was the keeper of my father's house charged with its daily maintenance and care. I grew sensitive to the many quirks that were once mysteries to me and though I've visited this house a few times growing up, only by living there did the cracks slowly reveal themselves. At my lowest, the ocean the two fish inhabited became the waters I felt submerged in - inescapable and consuming. It took a long time to learn the strokes needed to keep afloat, finally swimming only at the very end of my stay.

In my art, I incorporate *chicle* carefully using every bit with purpose. I bought a modest amount from a small supplier in Mexico after some sleuthing online. I remember emailing to ask when the *chicle* would arrive and my contact replied apologizing for the late response. He was in the jungle just days before.

Theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli when proposing the world is made up of events wrote -

*On closer inspection, in fact, even the things that are most "thinglike" are nothing more than long events.*¹

The assemblage of gum nestled within a rupture in my father's house is an event that continues to unfold. I've inserted myself in the story, though possibly my father imagined it would happen just like this. Our stories will go on finding ways to entangle time and again, events collapsing a great expanse not even death can impede.

¹ I was interested in reading about time, not as a scientific measurement, but as a subjective experience through a series of events and sets of particular conditions. Somehow this relates to Timothy Morton's *Hyperobjects* for me, but I enjoy Rovelli's poetic way of writing about time. Similarly I think of the materials I use as keepers of time, eroding and degrading slowly. Carlo Rovelli, *The Order of Time* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2018)98.

OBSERVING KAPWA

What is the thing that holds everything together, keeps us in community, tethering us in kinship?

My father once told me - *We don't need to talk for me to know who you are. You are my blood. I only need to observe you to understand you.*¹

It has taken a long time for these words to settle in, take root and truly mature. At first, I was resistant to receiving this statement that felt too abstract, a strategy I took as a way of evading my request to get to the heart of our impasse. But the journey to decolonize² and fine-tune the questions I am asking³ through my art practice, is helping his words reach piercing clarity.

I grew up understanding *kapwa*⁴ to mean - the people we are in community *with*. However, within Filipino indigenous psychology (*Sikolohiyang Pilipino*)⁵, *kapwa* is a concept that goes much deeper. Writer and scholar Lenny Strobel describes this succinctly -

*You and I are one, you and I are connected, you and I are connected to the divine within, so kapwa is connected to your loob, which is your inner self, and your connection is strengthened by your ability to empathize, your ability to feel with the other. It's individual, but also it's familial, it's cultural, it's historical, and then it's cosmic.*⁶

1 There was a time when I felt disconnected from my father, and that I believed we can only come to some kind of understanding through words. Because we had spent much of our lives apart, I thought he couldn't possibly know me. But it was not in his nature to engage in this way. During his visit to Vancouver, we came to a head aggravated by my uncontainable anger. This was what he said.

2 Decolonizing is a weighted term and I feel apprehensive to use this term in case I fail to carry it. Am I doing it right? How can I truly de-colonize while existing in a system that does not always support this endeavour? But I am pursuing on, albeit slowly and with flaws and rerouting. I was pushing a kind of exchange with my father that privileges a rigid way of communicating - hearing and speaking / speaking then hearing. But this is not the only way. Undoing learned beliefs about myself and the world I choose to exist in, means listening to communication that does not always come through speech.

As a minority settler, I have to consider the conditions from which my mother was driven to relocate us to this stolen land while ensuring I understand the violent histories and current conditions that make this land *livable* in the first place. Starting with my internalized colonialism expands for me what my father said many years ago, and gives me the ability to learn from the things around me. I am trying to understand the seminal writing of Tuck and Yang -

When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future.

Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor," *Decolonization Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1 (May 2012): 3 <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>

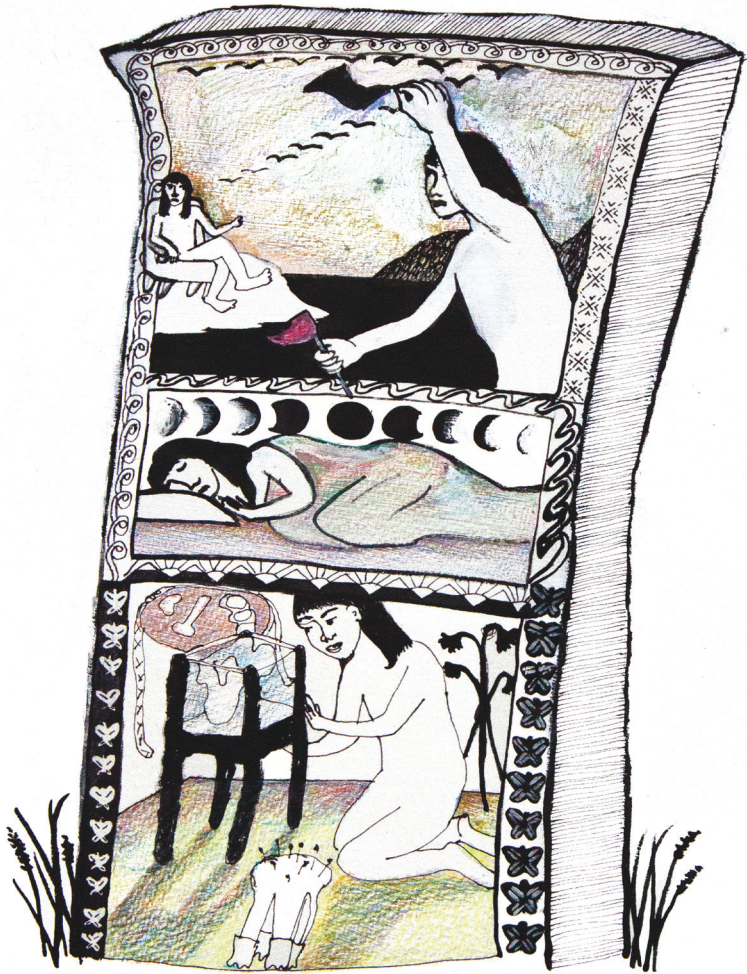
3 There was a time when I didn't ask questions for fear of being found out I know nothing. In the studio, I am free to have as many questions as possible.

4 *Kapwa* is a tagalog word meaning people we are in kinship with, neighbours, or more broadly, our fellow people.

5 I was introduced to the concept of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* through the book, *Brown Skin, White Minds*, "With such goals, *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* advocated for the use of research methods that are deemed to be more culturally-appropriate for the Filipino people, methods that are more empowering for the Filipino people and ones that may lead to more accurate understanding of their psychological realities, and concerns." E.J.R. David, *Brown Skin, White Minds: Filipino - American Postcolonial Psychology* (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2013), 373.

6 In 2016, I attended the 3rd International *Babaylan Conference Makasaysayang Pagtatagpo (Historic Encounters) Filipino and Indigenous Turtle Islanders Revitalizing Ancestral Traditions Together*, hosted by the Centre for *Babaylan Studies*. One of the founding and active members is writer and scholar Leni Strobel. Listening to her speak has been nourishing and affirming. The quote is from the transcript of a speaker series hosted by *advaya* featuring Leni Strobel in conversation about the concept of *kapwa* and decolonization.

advaya, "DR. LENY STROBEL: Decolonisation as Re-membering, *Kapwa* Psychology, and Wells of Liminality," *KINSHIP*, last modified January 4, 2023, <https://you.ou.be/QFB3r-DJGgc?si=j5p-cqvHMsqTXRH>



Perhaps I am using blood and *kapwa* interchangeably, but considering *kapwa* as a life force makes material this idea that is hard to hold otherwise. In my art practice, there is an arterial system of relations that link *chicle*, fallen branches, plastic packaging, rocks, coffee, salt, etc.¹, together in a confluence of stories my practice allows me to pursue. I am looking to situate myself between ancestors and descendants, beyond humans. This is my place-making project. Using the things from my surroundings in my art practice strengthens my roots through understanding and relation.

Just as my father has done, observation and sensing² become essential tools in and outside the studio.

1 I have attempted to list all the materials I use in the back of this book. This is a living list and will change and grow accordingly.

2 My father once sent me a poem by Max Ehrmann, *Desiderata* (latin for, Things Desired). It was printed from a website on a letter sized paper. It was one of his favourite poems. In designing his grave marker, my then partner and I included this quote from this prose, "Go placidly amid the noise, and remember what peace there may be in silence."

SUMMONING BLACK BEACH

Back in undergrad¹, I completed a painting, inspired by a photo I took of my dad and cousin at the beach. I don't know where this artwork is now and the photos are long gone. But the memory of painting this image is one of the few assurances I have that this day happened and the place we went to is/was real.

Chauffeured by a sputtering *tricycle*² festooned with red pompoms, we made our way down a bumpy route through a mangrove forest (or maybe a coconut forest?). The way was not paved but both the driver and my dad seemed to know where to go. The tricycle had a hard time going over the rocks and roots but we persevered until we saw the blue horizon between the trees. Dad said something to the driver in *Akeanon*³ and he rode off, leaving us in the middle of this oasis we had all to ourselves.

I say beach when recounting this story but I don't know how else to describe it. The seawater came right up to the land's edge, the stretch of sand completely submerged in shallow, warm waters. I remember setting our things on a bank while we lapped in the ocean just a few inches deep. The sun, though quite strong could not penetrate the shade of rustling palms bowing over us. Against the blackest sand and the clearest waters, the blue and orange minnows darted around us as if suspended in air.

Since then, I have gone a few more times to the Philippines, asking my father every time to take me back to that place without success. Eventually, he simply forgot about the whole thing.⁴ He passed without us ever going back. While living in Batan I explored the nearby terrain within an hour's drive radius. But I never found the black beach from my memory. After returning to Canada, I conceded to the possibility this beach no longer exists. I have to find alternative ways to continue the search.

Is there a way to summon black beach instead?

Black sand in the Philippines is highly sought after for its magnetite content. Magnetite has many applications in construction and other industries. Most significantly, this commodified natural resource is needed for the production of steel.

As a result, much of the Philippine coast is composed of black sand beaches. In response to the demand for magnetite, black sand mining and processing activities have significantly increased in recent years and the extracted magnetite is largely exported to China's steel mills.⁵

1 I completed my BFA in Painting at the *Alberta College of Art Design* (now AUARTS) in 2003. It's now a million years ago, although my sensibilities as a painter have influenced my aesthetics as a sculptor.

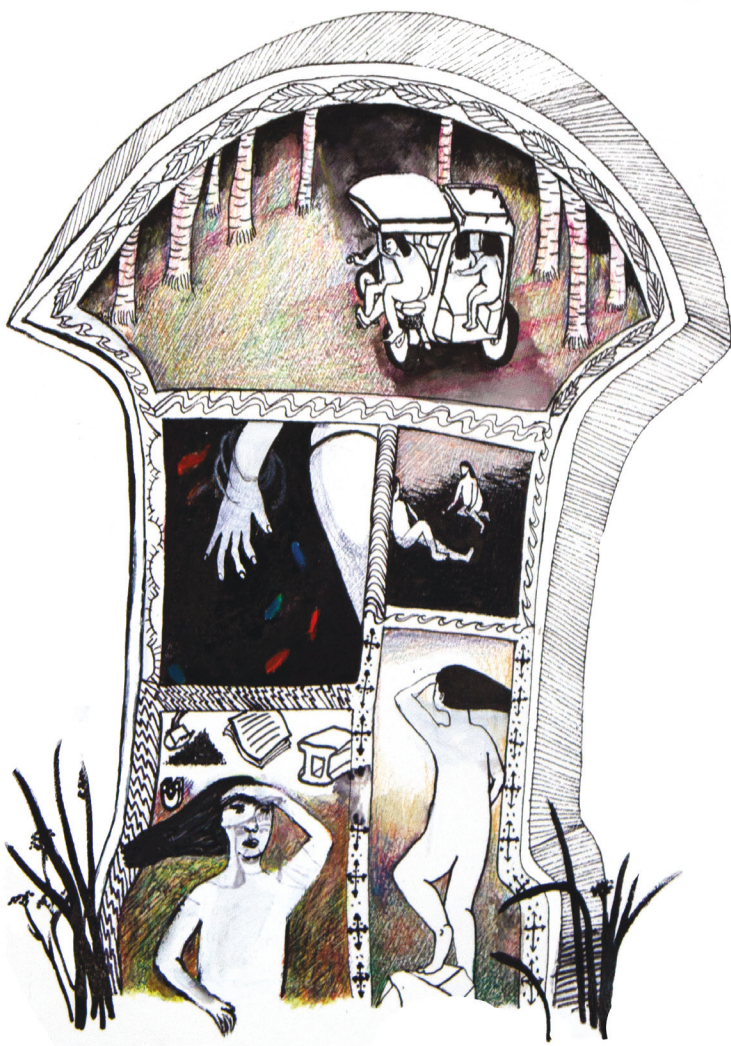
2 *Tricycles* are small three-wheel vehicles used for private transportation services. Its basic structure is a motorcycle with a bespoke covered sidecar with wheels. Different regions in the Philippines have distinct styles in form and decoration.

3 *Akeanon* or *Aklanon* is the language spoken in the province of Aklan located in the island of Panay. The digraph 'ea' is unique to this language and pronounced with the 'r' rolling in the back of the tongue.

4 In the beginning of my query, my father would humour me and take me to many beaches, but it was never the right one. Later, he would get irritated with my constant pestering about this lost place, finally claiming he can't remember.

5 This paper confirms what I've read in many articles I found online, that black sand mining happens regardless of its legality. As well, the speed of erosion is markedly accelerated, as is the case in Songcolan, one of the municipalities in Batan, Aklan. Songcolan has a long stretch of beach that faces the Subayan Sea. Many locals have stressed the rising sea levels, most coming to terms that loss of land is imminent.

Estelle Chaussard, and Sara Kerosky Guenther, "Characterization of Black Sand Mining Activities and Their Environmental Impacts in the Philippines Using Remote Sensing," *Remote Sensing* 8, no. 2 (January 2016): 1, doi: 10.3390/rs8020100.



2000 Batan / ASSEMBLAGE / MAGNETTE / alter life / beach / black / changed / gathered / imagine / rebuild / search

Imagine the mining of this beloved site, churned for profit into a variety of products and then imported across the world. It seems an impossible task to rebuild this place. At first, I thought of an assemblage of things that contain magnetite possibly originating from my black beach. To widen the net, perhaps the materials could be from any beach in the Philippines. To radiate the net wider still, perhaps any products that contain even a trace of magnetite, sourced from any shore of any country could be gathered. This means everywhere and nowhere.¹

Alterlife names life already altered, which is also life open to alteration. It indexes collectivities of life recomposed by the molecular productions of capitalism in our own pasts and the pasts of our ancestors, as well as into the future. It is a figure of life entangled within community, ecological, colonial, racial, gendered, military, and infrastructural histories that have profoundly shaped the susceptibilities and potentials of future life. Alterlife is a figuration of chemical exposures that attempts to be as much about figuring life and responsibilities beyond the individualized body as it is about acknowledging extensive chemical relations.²

Forever changed, the beach is something else entirely now.

1 Perhaps this project is not completely impossible and with more time and resource, there is a future for this research. For now, it will have to wait.

2 Though Murphy writes at length about harmful chemical exposures and its effects, the concept of Alterlife, as it seeps from colonial oppression and extraction, is fitting here when thinking about the mining of black sand. The conversations around the harmful effects of such activity is never correlated in any meaningful way, thus there is no accountability and people most affected are blamed for cutting a few trees, even though there is a more sinister, bigger player in the midst.

Michelle Murphy, 2017. "Alterlife and Decolonial Chemical Relations." *Cultural Anthropology* 32, no. 4: 494–503. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca32.4.02>.

PLASTIC GHOST

To defer to the words of Stuart Hall once more, "You have to go to art, you have to go to culture - to where people imagine, where they fantasize, where they symbolize" - to see how difference really operates inside each of our minds.¹

The school bus I rode as a child was not the big yellow kind, but a van stripped down to two benches running its length on either side². The windows have no glass but clear plastic covers that slap to the rhythm of the road. Stepping onto the bus sounds the metal underfoot, another movement to the symphony of this porous vehicle.

While sloshing across the pleather seat³ during a particularly bumpy transit, a powder blue thing caught my eye, partly concealed by the dark folds of the rusty floor. Before much thinking, I took it in my hand and felt the soft plastic skin, folded and affixed with a single snap button. I dropped it quickly in my bookbag between the pages of my binder. This act was like a sobering alarm, jolting me into startling alertness. With heart racing, I scrambled to think how to undo what I'd just done.

But soon after one of the girls cried in a panic - *her wallet is gone*. The whole bus devolved into a frenzy until we came to a stop. Then the girl's father boarded heavily onto the cab. Angry, he demanded everyone open their bags for a thorough inspection. He looked in each person's belongings until finally he got to mine. I held open my bag and watched his index finger push the pages right to left until he spotted the blue billfold tucked at the very bottom.

He stopped, looked up and held my eyes for a long time.⁴ *It's not here* - he grumbling, grabbed his daughter's hand and disembarked empty-handed.

Once home, I hurried upstairs and fished out the contraband - a blue-padded Sanrio wallet, Little Twin Stars⁵. I loved it, and I felt very sorry.

1 Amy Fung, *Before I Was a Critic I Was a Human Being* (Toronto: Book*hug Press, 2019), 19.

2 Because of where I lived and the congested traffic in Manila, I was the first to be picked up before the sun and the last to be dropped off in the evening. This meant I was always groggy on the bus. Already shy and quiet, my constant state of disorientation meant most information I was able to absorb were ambient noises and touch. I rarely talked with anyone unless spoken to.

3 This story contains many sensorial encounters with plastic that was completely unintentional. Writing revealed to me just how omnipresent plastics has been in mediating my experience of the world at a young age.

4 Truthfully, if not for his stare, I would have long forgotten about this incident.

5 Sanrio products and stationary had a strong grip on the grade-school girls in the Philippines at the time. Having a Little Twin Stars wallet was extremely enviable. I knew I couldn't show it to anyone.



Inside was a fifty peso bill with fake cards in the slots. I quickly folded the cash into my pocket before wrapping the shiny blue evidence in a grocery bag I twisted over and around itself. Maybe there was some string too, or tape. I bound the package even more until it was an unrecognizable lump. I snuck outside to the end of my alley where the dirty stream of blackish sludge runs through¹. Disintegrating cardboard, straws stuck in glowing mould, skins of plastics with faded logos and rotting food drifted lazily down this sick river. Crouching down, I carefully dropped the package into the oily brook. I'm not sure what I thought would happen but I was surprised by the buoyancy of my secret. It was so heavy just moments before.²

Later that evening huddled with my cousins in front of Lola's TV³, my mom confronted us demanding whoever took the fifty pesos out of her wallet speak up now! We looked around at one another, wide-eyed and silent. Mom continued to stand in the doorway waiting. Sensing the impasse and seizing the symmetry of the events, I told her it was me. In front of the whole family, I stood up and fished out the folded fifty from my pocket. I should have been humiliated but all I felt was relief.⁴

After that day the girls on my bus ignored me and as a child, I accepted this as my failure at being liked. It's only when recalling this period with more wisdom that it occurred to me that I did get my sentence, perhaps more severe and lasting than I could have imagined. The garbage river did not carry away my shame and the father knew exactly what I did.

While grieving her recently departed husband, Christina Stead wrote,

*Every story is a ghost story.*⁵

Indeed, this story is populated with many ghosts urging me to come to terms with long-ago mistakes and finally give them their rightful burial. The canal I hard-learned, was not a place where things disappear. In fact, it holds on to things greedily, festering and rotting and growing into something bigger than what it started with. Forgotten but not gone. The blue wallet haunts my dreams, reappears in other scenarios, and is reproduced back into my work - insisting on another outcome, a different end. So continues the ritual of appeasing the ghosts.

1 Usually referred to as a 'kanal', this stream is a collection of dirty water emptied from the houses, drifting garbage and other discarded materials. Sometimes there is no flow at all and after a rainfall, the stream rises and floods over. I lived near Pasig River, which was black and reeked intensely. This must have been where the kanal water dispensed. A remediation project was completed since then, and the river is no longer black, though nobody recommends swimming in it.

2 This was quite a devious plan, especially for a seven year old. I'm not sure how I was able to sneak around without notice, since my Lola Turing was very strict. My neighborhood is made up of narrow alleyways that open up onto the street. Each alleyway consists of dozens of houses that share walls which means all the families that share this path are extremely closeknit and treat each other like extended family. Outsiders that enter the alleyway will never go unnoticed and every movement is noticed by all.

3 My mother and I lived in her mother's very small house, along with her brother and his family. Other extended family lived nearby and we would often gather together at night at Lola's house for dinner.

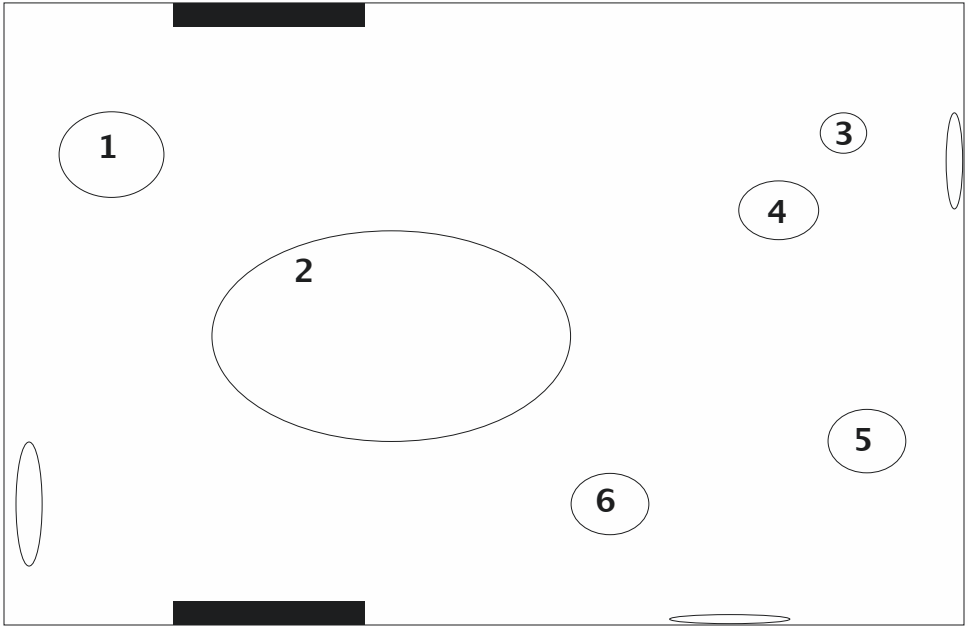
4 Looking back, I don't think 50 pesos was much money even back then. But it was still noticed and I was glad to help solve the mystery. Whoever took her money never admitted it, but I knew they were in that room that night.

5 Though Christina Stead authored many books, this passage is from a letter she wrote a friend about her grief at the loss of her husband William Blake. I am understanding the meaning of her words to events recounted as always coming from history, hauntings from long ago or even recently, but always occurring in past tense.



Summoning Black Beach





GALLERY MAP

1. *fantôme na plastik, 2023*
2. *invocation na babayin itim, 2023*
3. *gupit comme vivre, 2023*
4. *détecker ng kapwa, 2023*
5. *mabuting portée, 2023*
6. *pour réparer ang malaking bagay, 2023*



invocation na babayin itim, 2023



wall sculptures (untitled), 2023

*completed at Brucebo Fine Artist Residency,
Gotland, Sweden*



détecter ng kapwa, 2023



gupit comme vivre, 2023



mabuting portée, 2023

pour réparer ang malaking bagay, 2023





leaning sculpture (untitled), 2023

completed at Brucebo Fine Artist Residency, Gotland, Sweden



fantôme na plastik, 2023

ARCHIPELAGIC LIFEWORLDS:
ON KUH DEL ROSARIO'S
SUMMONING BLACK BEACH

BY DR. MARISSA LARGO

As one enters the gallery, they are met with a constellation of sculptures, the composition of which simultaneously appear to be contrived yet, naturally occurring. They are an odd alchemy of driftwood, recycled paper pulp, woven plastic packaging inspired by Philippine handicrafts, dried flowers and weeds, hemp fibres, milkweed, and some encrusted with salt or dried rice flour producing a crackle finish, seemingly weathered by the elements. These sculptures have a humility: made of familiar—yet defamiliarized—materials, they sit low to the ground, circling a large pool lined with black rubber which sits in the middle of the space. The pool is filled with salinated water, conjuring the ocean. Like volcanic islands, smaller sculptures are perched on the elevated topographies of the pool. The sculptures are both geologic features and diasporic bodies. In some of the pieces, the artist embedded seeds that have traversed oceans and lands to be there. Both organic and inorganic, the sculptures are charged with agency and full of life.

Each sculpture in Kuh Del Rosario's *Summoning Black Beach* is a complete universe onto their own. They are islands of possibility, in close proximity to each other, forming archipelagic lifeworlds, each island a proposition of how to live in connection with all matter. The various materials of each sculpture form an assemblage of relationality, each one an individual island in an archipelago of similar but different islands in a sea of shared experience. The artist taps into what political theorist Jane Bennett would call the "vitality" of materials.¹ Plastic refuse and natural elements speak with the artist and tell her how to be in this world. These sculptures suggest that there is another way to be with things—not to dominate, consume, and discard—but to be gently attuned to their truths and to co-exist alongside them.

Edouard Glissant suggests that the archipelago is an epistemological model that offers an aesthetic and ethical blueprint for relationality.² With over 7000 islands, the Philippines is a literal archipelago. Metaphorically, the archipelagic provides ways of considering various actants outside of national and colonial formations. Literary scholars Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens define the archipelagic as "a turn toward approaching islands, island-sea assemblages, and littoralformation that goes beyond colonialist tropes."³ Arising from her diasporic Filipino consciousness, Del Rosario transgresses borders and hierarchies of value to build distinct, yet interconnected, intersubjective moments in her material practice that serve as context for meaningful experience. Del Rosario's archipelagic lifeworlds are a collection of all the things that we need to bring together to holistically understand our material reality.

The work also asks how does one return to a place that no longer exists? While the artist immigrated to Canada as a child, sensorial memories of the Philippines stay with her and constitute a significant part of her aesthetic consciousness. Guided by her late father, Elmo, the artist recalls trips to a clandestine beach of volcanic minerals near her ancestral home of Batan. A long drive, hike through a mangrove forest, and through a clearing revealed the crystal-clear waters and the ebony shores of this magical beach. In her journeys back since her father's passing, Del Rosario has not been able to locate it again. Its magnetite-rich sands may have made it a target for oil and gas companies. In the age of ecological crisis and global capitalist extractivism, diasporic returns are especially vexed as the land, water, and life are irrevocably changed or destroyed. *Summoning Black Beach* proposes an alternative way to return and to reconnect with that which has been lost.

1 Bennett, Jane. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
2 Glissant, Édouard. 2010. *Poetics of Relation*. Translated by Betsy Wing. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
3 Roberts, Brian Russell, *Duke University Press*, 2017.





MATERIALS LIST

Accompanying my own stories are those of the materials I work with in the studio. Listed are actants that play a pivotal role in the exhibition, *Summoning Black Beach*.

aluminum (organic burn-out casting of seaweed)
avocado (peel and seed, dried and grated)
bamboo table (found and repurposed)
banana peel (dried, coted in resin)
bioplastic (experiments w/ gelatin, agar agar)
bronze (lost-wax casting & organic burn-out)
bunchstems (grape and tomatoes, dried)
cardboard (recycled and laminated w/ pvc glue mix)
carpet underlay (gifted)
ceramic (bisqued only)
charcoal (found, ground)
chicle (from Mexico supplier)
coffee (saved grounds)
computer toner
dried vegetable cuttings
dried sunflower stalks, roots and flowers
driftwood (scavenged)
dryer wool (felted)
drywall
eggshells (dried and ground)
glass (collected shards of tempered glass)
hair (collected from own head, felted and dyed)
red clay (dried and unfired)
computer toner (black powder)
concrete
foam (expanding)
iron oxide (natural red)
juniper branches (fallen and harvested from Gotland, Sweden)
limestone (ground into powder)
mapleleaf stems (dried)
marigold (powdered)
milkweed (seeds and floss)
red onion skins (dried in table salt)
resin (pine)
resin coating (synthetic)
resin (synthetic, dried into sheets and shattered)
rice flour
root (exhumed from dead bush, dried / carved / stained)
roses (buds dried from gifted bouquet)
rubber sheets (black waterproof lining)
palm leaves (dried)
paper (recycled and pulped)
plaster
plastic (reclaimed bottles)
plastic (recycled food packaging, twined and woven)
polycrylic
pvc glue
salt (table, pickling, road / borax)
sand (black sand from Santorini 2005, gifted)
sawdust (fir, walnut, purple heart)
scotch pine (bark collected in Gotland, Sweden)
silicone (caulking)
shirt (dad's button-down frayed back to fibres)
spices (chili / curry / indigo / turmeric)
styrofoam kernels
sunflower stalks (dried and painted)
trophy (bowling trophy thrifted)
twine (synthetic, frayed and unravelled)
ube (purple yam powder)
vegetable cuttings (dehydrated in salt
vitriol (powder / iron II sulfate)
wax (used in lost-wax casting)
wild flowers (harvested, dried from Gotland alvars)
wire mesh
wooden frame (birch and pine)

WITH GRATITUDE

Over the last three years while pursuing my MFA degree, I have occupied and benefitted from the bounty of the unceded Indigenous lands of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation. I hope to continue living in Tiohtià:ke/Montréal after the program, working to find ways to contribute meaningfully as an uninvited guest and artist.

Kelly Jazvac (Concordia thesis advisor) / maya rae oppenheimer, Cynthia Gerard-Renard, Mojeanne Behzadi (Concordia thesis defense committee) / The Peter N. Thomson Family Graduate Scholarship / Jean-Michel Quirion, Hubert Bolduc-Cloutier, Corine Lemieux, Laura Pritchard, Thomas Bouquin, Clark Board Members (Centre Clark) / Peter King (Atelier Clark) / Kyle Tryhorn, Myriam Simard-Parent, Émilie Allard, Gem Chang-Kue, Andrew Hoekstra (Sculpture & Ceramics Cohort 2023) / Pia Ingelse, Tom Sandström, Susanna Carlsten, Brucebo board, Aron Agelii, James Gardner, Carolina Benedicks Bruce and William Blair Bruce (Brucebo Fine Arts Summer Residency) Danielle Bessada, Maddie McNeely, Rebecca Ramsey, Cassie Paine, Joni Cheung, Mariane Stratis (Sculpture & Ceramics year 2022) / Anne-Sophie Vallée, Renée Forest, Jin Heewoong, Allison Higgins, Xavier Beldor, Nina Vroemen (Sculpture & Ceramics year 2024) / Cecilia McKinnon, Miri Chekhanovich, Muriel Ahmarani Jaouich, Diyar Mayil, Nico Williams, Alli Melanson, Laurel H. Rennie, Christy Kunitzky, Ioana Dragomir, Mel Arsenault, Gabor Bata, Selina Latour, Marcela Szwarc, Sonja Ratkay, Pascale Tétrault (Concordia extended community) / Tsēmā Igharas, Elizabeth Zvonar, Dr. Marissa Largo (Concordia entry application references) / Juan Ortiz-Apuy, Maureen Kennedy, Karin Zuppiger, Elizabeth Xu, Tom Simpkins, Kevin Andres-Teixeira, Marie-Pier Laverdière, Monique Deschamps, Mathew Karas, Cheryl Simon, Hannah Claus, Laurie

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Caroline Andrieux, Milly-Alexandra Dery, Kara Skylling, Frédéric Chabot, Walter Scott, Renée Condo, Ayam Yaldo, Maggy-Hamel Metsos, Rémi Belliveau, Shanie Tomassini, Michaëlle Sergile Darling Staff and technicians (Fonderie Darling and cohort, 2023-2026)

Daphne Odjig, Jessica Auer, Corri-Lynn Tetz, Véronique La Perrière M., Kyle Alden Martens, Elisabeth Belliveau, Laura Findlay, Sarah Pupo, Daniel Hutchinson (Brucebo Forest Pavillion - Between Juniper and Pines) / Laia K. Nalian, Matt Shane, Elizabeth Saint-Pierre Robert Dufour (Maison de la culture NDG-Monkland) / Canada Council for the Arts / Stéphanie Chabot (SKOL) / Marthe Carrier (B-312) / Karine Bouchard, Ariane Gélinas (Le Sabourd) / Nicole Burisch, selection committee (FOFA Gallery) /

Manel Benchabane, Ben Williamson, Nour Bishouty, Joyce Joumaa, Anahita Norouzi, La Société des archives affectives, Hajra Waheed, Leila Zelli, Alexis Bellavance (Stewart Hall - Entre les lignes / Writing Mountains) / Tania Theodorou, Hanna Mattes, Roberto Pérez Gayo (Dead Darlings) / Erica Mendritzki, Melanie Zurba, Natalie Goulet, Jennifer Gibson, Connie Chappel, Maureen Gruben, Jenine Marsh, Xiaojing Yan (C103 / Port Loggia Gallery - Worried Earth: Eco-Anxiety and Entangled Grief) / Nicolas Robert, Alex Bowron, Julie Tellier, Alison Postma, Maude Corriveau, Michael Thompson (Galerie Nicolas Robert - Formless) / Carrie Perreault, Todd Gronsdaahl (The Artist Cookbook Vol. 2 / Blackflash Magazine) / Tyra Maria Trono,

Bettina Pérez Martínez, Holly Chang, Laura Acosta, Santiago Tavera, Melissa Raymond, René Sandín, My-Van Dam, Par Nair, Santiago Tamayo Soler, Project Casa, (ART POP/POP MONTREAL - À distance-de soi / At a distancefrom within) / Marjolaine Bourdua, Antoine Beaudoin Gentes, Florence-Agathe Dubé-Moreau (LDT Fondation) / Dominique Fontaine, Yannick Renaud, Paul Litherland, Anna Jane McIntyre, Ayodele Mzilikazi, Émilie Régnier (Maison de la Culture Janine-Suto - Le présent, modes d'emploi) / Maude Johnson, Sylvette Babin, Alain Beauchesne (ESSE) / Joséphine Rivard, Ariel Rondeau, Étienne Rocheleau, Mélanie Racicot, Geneviève Barrette, Alignments, Julie Roch-Cuerrier, Ingrid Tremblay (EXPRESSION, Centre d'exposition - Vers des cycles mouvants / Towards moving cycles) / Maxime Prévost Durand (Le Courier) / Espace Art Actuel / Jeff Erbach, Manar Abo Touk, Julius Manapul, Karen Zalamea, Marigold Santos, Grace Lockheart, KoloWn, Zeus Bascon (Art Gallery of Grande Prairie - Tuloy, Tawid)

Norberto "Peewee" Roldan, Merv Espina, Mark Vincent Omega (VIVA EXCON 2018 - Bisan Tubig Di Magbalon / Don't Even Bring Water) / Colleen Suggang, Nancy de Mayo, Jindra Linda L. Demeterio, Abigail Salazar (Batan, Aklan, Philippines) Danielle Gotell, Elizabeth MacLean, Larissa Tiggler, Bradley Harms, Sara Reedman, Karilynn Ming Ho, Jonathan Igharas (Elmo's House Artist Gallery)

Justin Patterson, Justin Gradin, Jessica Yeandle-Hignell, Jeff Bosworth, Jonathan Syme, Breanna Fabbro, Jeff Stuckel, Eli Bornowski, Warren McLachlan, Aisha Davidson, Celia Hamilton, Ben Jacques, Nathan Jones, Patrick Cruz, Mike Bourcheid (Dynamo Arts Association) / Ryan Romero, Greame Berglund, Alex Quicho, Ahbyah Baker, Rob Turriff, Allison Mander-Wionzek, Vanessa Brown, Nelson Donais, Kitsum Cheng, Dule Mthombeni (Vancouver, BC)

Kelly Doolittle, Chantale Heron, Rachelle Chu, Vanessa MacTavish, Christina Ally, Jessica Ally, Jamie Eatmon, Marie Solakov, Shanaz Pasha, Ambrose Fan, Ginny Tran, Susan Menzes, Chris Cran, Richard de los Reyes (Calgary, AB)

Elmo F. Del Rosario, Gloria Angeles, Kenny Angeles, Winnie Angeles, Pia Angeles, Dolly Angeles, Emie Virtusio, Jen Shapiro, Bessie Sanchez, Nyah Angeles, Lola Turing, Lolo Enteng, Lola Tita, Lola Meneng, Lola Neneng, Lola Senyong, Purita Suggang Asahi, Babab, Bianca (Family)

The individuals, communities, institutions, funding bodies and places I've named are from a special period encompassing several years before the MFA program until this moment. Their support, influence and encouragement have gotten me to this point, where I am presenting my thesis show and accompanying text with confidence and assuredness. This is an accomplishment that I couldn't have imagined not that long ago.

I attempted to organize this list in a logic that relates to how I experience time and not with any type of hierarchy. Of course there is a great many more I am failing to include, which is only a reflection of my imperfect memory.