Melting Glaciers and Rising Seas: Indigenous Digital Art in the Arctic and Pacific Islands

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ABSTRACT

Melting Glaciers and Rising Seas: Indigenous Digital Art in the Arctic and Pacific Islands

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This thesis analyzes two works: *Rise: From One Island to Another* (2018), a video-poem by Marshallese artist Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Kalaaleq artist Aka Niviâna, and *Arkhticós Doloros* (2019), a poem and performance by Kalaaleq artist Jessie Kleemann. The 350.org production of *Rise: From One Island to Another* (*Rise*) demonstrates how climate change is affecting Indigenous communities in Kalaallit Nunaat ("Greenland") and Aelon Kein Ad ("Marshall Islands"), focusing on glacial melt and severity of floods due to rising sea levels. *Arkhticós Doloros* presents Kleemann's personal engagement with melting glaciers in Kalaallit Nunaat. These works are part of a growing movement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) artists who highlight how discourses around the anthropocene— the era in which human activity has significantly altered the environment and climate—do not fully account for the relationship between colonialism and climate change. Indigenous scholars, such as Kyle Whyte (Potawatomi) and Zoe Todd (Métis), argue for a decolonization of the anthropocene that is rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing about the land, waters, and relationships with human and non-human life. Aligned with these scholars, this thesis argues that *Rise* and *Arkhticós Doloros* call attention to the need for a decolonization of the anthropocene by advocating for Indigenous communities' knowledges and experiences. Drawing on Hupa/Yurok/Karuk scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy and Diné scholar Melanie K. Yazzie's notion of radical relationality—an Indigenous feminist framework that considers decolonization by establishing relationships with and through the waterways—this thesis considers Kalaallit and Marshallese artists' relationships with and through melting glaciers and rising seas.

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Introduction

When Marshallese poet and climate change activist Kathy Jetñil- Kijiner came face to face with the glaciers in Kalaallit Nunaat ("Greenland") whose melting waters will eventually submerge her homeland of Aelon Kein Ad ("Marshall Islands") under the seas, she noted her feelings of reverence saying, "It felt like I was meeting an elder" (*fig. 10*).[1] Jetñil- Kijiner's journey to Kalaallit Nunaat, to the home of Kalaaleq[2] Poet and climate change activist Aka Niviâna was part of the filming for the 350.org production of their video-poem, *Rise: From One Island to Another* (2018) (hereafter referred to respectively as 350 and *Rise*). In 2018, Niviâna and Jetñil- Kijiner wrote and starred in a video-poem about how climate change is affecting their communities as part of 350's prerogative to encourage decisive action against climate change globally. A year later, Kalaaleq artist Jessie Kleemann created a performance and wrote a corresponding poem of the same name, *Arkhticós Doloros* ("Arctic is Dreaming") (2019), where the artist expressed her deeply personal relationship with melting glaciers on a Kalaallit ice sheet. While some have written or considered *Rise*, *Arkhticós Doloros,* or the artists' previous work as part of climate change activism (hereafter referred to as climate action) within specific Indigenous communities, very little has been written about how the poets draw on oral histories from their respective Indigenous cultures to bring attention to the heightened effects of climate change on their communities. Taking cues from Indigenous scholars who write about decolonizing the anthropocene, particularly Kyle Powys Whyte (Potawatomi), Zoe Todd (Métis) and Kali Simmons (Oglala Lakota), this thesis considers Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner's video-poem and Kleemann's works as part of a growing movement of Black, Indigenous, and People of

[1] Jon Letman, "Indigenous poets read urgent climate message on a melting glacier," Grist, last modified November 1, 2018, https://grist.org/article/indigenous-poets-read-urgent-climate-message-on-a-melting-glacier/.
[2] Kalaaleq is the Kalaallisut term referring to an Inuk from Kalaallit Nunaat. Kalaallit is the plural of Kalaaleq.

Colour (BIPOC) artists and activists who point out that mainstream discourses around climate change do not fully account for the relationship between colonialism, climate change, and capitalism. Through their climate actions, BIPOC artists and activists resist and interrogate those discourses by showcasing the effects of climate change on their communities and homes. Drawing on Hupa/Yurok/Karuk scholar Cutcha Risling Baldy and Diné scholar Melanie Yazzie's notion of radical relationality, I argue that the poets call attention to the need for a decolonization of the anthropocene, examining both works from a conceptualization of water to build relationships with and through glaciers and seas. My methodology consists of a comparative analysis of two works, focusing on poetry particular to Indigenous women poets, and digital aesthetics and online platforms. First, I analyze Kleemann's relationality with water through melting glaciers, arguing that the artist asserts her relationship to ice sheets and her community by showcasing the anthropogenic ice melt in a performance and poem. Then, I examine how Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner construct a relationship with each other and the waterways, but through rising seas, creating a dialogue about climate change in their collaborative poem. Finally, I explore the importance of the digital space of *Rise* to demonstrate how the format of the video-poem amplifies the radical relationality between the poets.

Jessie Kleemann (b. 1959) is a Kalaaleq multimedia artist, known for her embodied performance and poetry that touches on Indigeneity in Kalaallit Nunaat, language, loss, and the relationship between past and present.[3] Asserting a move away from colonial ideas and imagery of Inuit, her work has often been compared to other famous Kalaallit artists, like Pia Arke, who have engaged with the land through their bodies. Danish scholar Kristen Thisted also highlights that Kleemann typically performs in silence and in a "sleepwalking or trance-like state" without

[3] Thisted, 267.

showing any emotions.[4] This is true for Kleemann's *Arkhticós Doloros*, a performance that took place in the ablation zone of the Greenland ice sheet, at an area known as Blue Lake, produced for a workshop called "At the Moraine: Envisioning the Concerns of Ice" that focused on the political ecology of ice (*fig. 4*). The organizers of the workshop considered her performance to be a "contribution to the cross-disciplinary dialogues about climate change in Greenland, and an embodied action that added a new framework by which that dialogue could take place."[5] A poem of the same name was published shortly after the performance and it, too, is reminiscent of Kleemann's unique use of various languages to interrogate and resist colonial forms of expression. In this thesis, I respect Kleemann's decision to keep some phrases and lines in Kalaallisut by not translating those lines to English,[6] honoring the disruptions to colonial languages that are evident in her practice.[7] Kleemann's work follows a movement of Inuit and Kalaallit artists who use performance to explore heightened climate and landscape changes in the Circumpolar North.[8] What makes Kleemann's work unique, though, is her bodily engagement with the melting glaciers and the way she uses her body to witness and feel the ice, while drawing on her own community's oral histories, knowledge, and experiences. In this thesis, I analyze Kleemann's performance and poem to demonstrate how Kleemann constructs her relationality with the waters in the form of ice and melting glaciers.

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[4] Thisted, 278, 287.
[5] Amanda Boetzkes, "'Arkhticós Doloros' by Jessie Kleemann," Vimeo, last modified 2019, https://vimeo.com/362802774.
[6] The original version of *Arkhticós Doloros* is in Danish with Kalaallisut lines dispersed throughout it. This thesis analyzes the English version, which Kleemann translated, but the Kalaallisut lines in the Danish version remain in the English version, too.
[7] It is worth mentioning that as someone who is not Kalaaleq, perhaps those specific lines in the poem are not really meant for me, or those parts are speaking directly to Inuit who understand kalaallisut.
[8] VK Preston, "Queer and Indigenous Art: Performing Ice Times in Climate Crisis," Theatre Journal 72, no. 2 (June 2020): 145, https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2020.0030.

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner (b. 1989) is a poet and climate activist from Aelon Kein Ad, who is known for both her poetry and environmental justice work that raises awareness about climate change-induced rising seas that threaten Pacifica communities' homes across the Pacific Islands. Aka Niviâna (b. 1998) is a writer and climate activist from Kalaallit Nunaat, who rose to prominence in the last several years for speaking about how climate change and colonialism has altered Kalaallit ways of living with the land. From these similar goals and work, Jetñil-Kijiner and Niviâna wrote a poem together, which they performed in a video that explores how climate change is affecting their respective communities. *Rise* was commissioned and published online by 350, who intended to use the video to raise awareness about climate change. McKibben, the founder of 350, was the instigator of the video-poem— he met Jetñil- Kijiner at a climate change conference in Paris and he initially wanted to frame her as sitting atop the glacier that would melt her homeland.[9] I argue that this framing would have depoliticized climate action in both countries and decontextualized both the communities and lives of the people on Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad. Of course, McKibben's goal ultimately became part of the video-poem, but this scene was disrupted when Jetñil- Kijiner asked to meet with an activist and poet from Kalaallit Nunaat. She met Niviâna, and they wrote the poem together that would draw on their own specific histories and communities in relation to each other. *Rise*, then, became a poem that the poets would not just recite as we watch the ocean, sand, ice, and snow move past our screen. It is written as if we are listening to the poets in dialogue about what it means to have their communities so intimately tied to the water, whether it be frozen or flowing. This thesis considers how the artists use performance art and poetry to establish a relationship with each

[9] "Making of Rise: Ethos", 350.org, last modified 2018, https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/#bts.

other through the waterways, in the form of rising seas, and discusses the importance of the digital space of the work to facilitate that relationship-building.

Poetry, Performance, and Digital Media

Ojibwe scholar and poet Molly McGlennan's analysis of Indigenous women's poetry and performance around the world considers the ways in which Indigenous women utilize poetry and performance to draw on their respective communities' ways of knowing and/or oral histories to confront an issue in their community. McGlennan states that "Native women's drive to retell stories, rewrite the past, and initiate healing through their own words stem from a history of being silenced."[10] One of the ways Indigenous women do this is by looking at "her own Indigenous knowledge" to consider their place and relationship to their communities.[11] Kalaaleq scholar and poet Karla Jessen Williamson echoes McGlennan's ideas, specifically arguing that Indigenous poetry contributes to decolonization because it arises directly from an Indigenous perspective or what Williamson calls "inner-soul— namely the spirit."[12] White-settler art historian Carla Taunton agrees that Indigenous women performance artists also engage in decolonization by using a bodily experiences and expressions to simultaneously draw on their oral histories, amplify Indigenous perspectives, and enact resistance to the settler state.[13]

Arguably, these embodied and personal expressions such as poetry and performance become even more important in discussions around climate change discourse and the

[10] Molly McGlennan, *Creative Alliances: The Transnational Design of Indigenous Women's Poetry* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 19.
[11] Ibid., 32.
[12] Karla J. Williamson, "Uumasuusivissuaq: Spirit and Indigenous Writing," In *Education* 20, no. 2 (2014): 136. https://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/168.
[13] Carla Taunton, "Indigenous Women's Performance Art in Canada," (PhD dissertation, Queen's University, 2011), 230.

anthropocene. Thisted asserts that because climate change has increased the focus on Circumpolar regions, Indigenous Peoples' livelihoods as well as how they identify with the environments have changed, too.[14] Queer white-settler historian VK Preston complements Thisted's ideas by identifying a "new wave of performance by Inuit artists and settler artistic collaborators" who focus on colonization and history, climate change, and sovereignty activism.[15] They specifically discuss how Inuit and settler artistic collaborators might challenge notions of time within responses to climate crises to reflect on "how such grapplings may be differently situated locally and globally and in different languages, practices, cultures, and ontologies' shapings of time."[16] Scholars researching poetry and performance in relation to climate change have presented similar arguments about the importance of Pacifica communities' perspectives on rising seas. German scholar Otto Heim notes that poetry and performance can disrupt the focus on sinking Pacific Islands that renders Indigenous peoples as victims or in need of saving.[17] In the same way, DeLoughrey emphasizes that poetry and literary forms allegorize the experiences of Pacifica communities to resist the emphasis on their cultures and homelands as vanishing by reasserting their agency, and perspectives.[18] Preston also highlights how Inuit artists "bring renewed attention to colonization and history, climate change, and sovereignty activism."[19] Thus, both performance and poetry can become part of climate action, where artists

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[14] Kirsten Thisted, "Blubber Poetics: Emotional Economies and Post-Postcolonial Identities in Contemporary Greenlandic Literature and Art," in *Sami Art and Aesthetics: Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Svein Aamold, Elin Haugdal, and Ulla Angkjær Jørgensen, (Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2017), 263
[15] VK Preston, "Performance, Climate, and Critical Art," *Theatre Journal* 72, no. 2 (June 2020): 7, https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2020.0028.
[16] Ibid., 12.
[17] Otto Heim, "How (not) to Globalize Oceania: Ecology and Politics in Contemporary Pacific Island Performance Arts," *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 41, no. 1 (November 2018): 131. https://doi.org/10.4000/ces.402.
[18] Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "Toward a Critical Ocean Studies for the Anthropocene," *English Language Notes* 57, no. 1 (April 2019): 5, https://doi.org/10.1215/00138282-7309655.
[19] Preston, 7.

communicate their own personal experiences with changing landscapes in order to incite action and imagine their climate futures.

Referring to Indigenous art histories in the Canadian, Circumpolar and Pacific regions, Igloliorte, Nagam, and Taunton point out in the introduction to their edited journal *Public 54 Indigenous Art: New Media and the Digital* that Indigenous artists are "leading the way" in digital and new media art.[20] In this journal, Métis/Syrian/German scholar Julie Nagam's article "Deciphering the Digital and Binary Codes of Sovereignty/Self-Determination and Recognition/Emancipation" explores how Indigenous artists use of digital/new media art as well as their own traditional practices resists ideas of Indigenous Peoples as part of a static past—directly interrogating and confronting colonial imagery. Nagam further argues that Indigenous artists' use of traditional practices like hide-work or carving with video, sound, and other digital/new media points to the fact that "[…] contemporary Indigenous artists are not […] stuck in the past."[21] Discussing digital and new media art in the Pacific, Hjorth et al. also point to the importance of these media to comment on and intervene in climate change narratives. They call this "screen ecologies" that "[…] stimulate particular types of social, material, and political critique and initiatives in relation to climate change, and to involve publics in the processes."[22] Taken together, Igloliorte et al.'s and Hjorth et al.'s articles that focus on digital and new media in similar regions demonstrate that digital spaces are unique sites for dealing with complex issues like climate change or colonialism.

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[20] Igloliorte, Taunton, Nagam, 13.
[21] Ibid., 79.
[22] Larissa Hjorth, Sarah Pink, Kristen Sharp, and Linda Williams, *Screen Ecologies: Art, Media, and the Environment in the Asia-Pacific Region,* (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 2016), 23.

It is equally crucial to note that digital spaces and the internet can facilitate connection-making and become a platform for advocacy and activism.[23] In "Arctic Cultural (Mis)representation: Advocacy, Activism and Artistic Cultural Expression Through Social Media," settler scholar Erin Yunes asserts that social media enables Inuit communities—who live in remote areas, sometimes with unstable telecommunication networks—to participate in decolonization specifically when they use online forums and social media to engage in conversations with each other. Furthermore, Yunes notes that Inuit use social media to express dissent, share their opinions or protest various issues, ensuring that their voices are heard on a public stage.[24] Though referring specifically to meme culture, British/Samoan scholar Lana Lopesi parallels Yunes' arguments by highlighting that internet and social media is a space for diasporic Pacific communities to connect and share ideas with each other. [25] Interestingly, Lopesi builds on Hau'ofa's ideas by suggesting that the ocean's free-flowing nature transcends false divides in the form of colonial borders or even language, linking people together around the world. As Lopesi explains, "[…] the false divides the colonial project leaves behind change the ways we understand ourselves, reinforcing colonial borders […]" and it results in "[…] only talking back to our imperial histories rather than talking to each other across empires […]"[26] For Lopesi, online spaces foster connections, relationships, and sharing of identities of local and global levels just like the water; they both refuse false divides that are set by colonial powers, like language barriers or political borders through land.[27] In accordance with Yunes's and Lopesi's ideas, the late Cree/Métis curator and artist Âhasiw Maskêgon-Iskwêw explains that

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[23] Erin Yunes, "Arctic Cultural (Mis)representation: Advocacy, Activism and Artistic Cultural Expression through social media," *Public* 54, no. 27 (2016): 97.
[24] Ibid., 99.
[25] Ibid., 30.
[26] Lana Lopesi, *False Divides*, (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Limited, 2018), 8.
[27] Ibid., 7.

artists who take advantage of the online format are engaging in a networked art practice. For Maskêgon-Iskwêw, networked art practices engage with social justice to consider global issues, like environmental degradation, especially when local issues are at stake.[28] They see the struggle for Indigenous artists to use the networks art practice to "[…] negotiate the survival of the animasphere, to teach it's values and reverse the international drive toward mass suicidal ecological destruction […]" — where the animasphere refers to traditional knowledge and relationships to non-human life.[29] Considering the many possibilities for connections with and through online spaces, I argue that the digital can foster decolonization and radical relationality by resisting colonial imagery, as well as having the potential to comment on climate change and connect communities via the democratization and accessibility of virtual spaces.

Melting Glaciers: The Context in the Arctic

Kirmaye et al. note that "non-northerners" have attempted to colonize Inuit by laying claim to "vast areas of Inuit homelands" over the past 150 years.[30] From 1972 to 1953, Kalaallit Nunaat resided under Danish rule, and then the country was incorporated into a Danish state within the Kingdom of Denmark from 1953 to 1979.[31] Thisted explains that this period of colonial rule has impacted how Inuit identify themselves because, for 200 years, the Danish government considered Inuit as primitive and established various systems of assimilation to

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[28] Âhasiw Maskêgon-Iskwêw, "Drumbeats to Drumbytes: Globalizing Networked Aboriginal Art," in Transference, Tradition, Technology: Native New Media Exploring Visual and Digital Culture, edited by Melanie A. Townsend, Dana Claxton, and Steven Loft, (Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery; Art Gallery of Hamilton; Indigenous Media Arts Group, 2005), 10, http://drumbytes.org/about/DrumbeatstoDrumbytes.pdf.
[29] Maskêgon-Iskwêw, 18.
[30] Laurence J. Kirmaye, Stéphane Dandeneau, Elizabeth Marshall, Morgan K. Phillips, and Karla J. Williamson, "Rethinking Resilience from Indigenous Perspectives," The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry 54, no. 2 (February 2011): 88. https://doi.org/10.1177/070674371105600203.
[31] Thisted, 268.

incorporate Inuit into Danish society.[32] Kalaaleq anthropologist Karla Jessen Williamson discusses her tense experience in the 1970s in Maniitsoq when she was under "tremendous pressure" to assimilate and become Danish while also holding onto her Kalaallit identity. She notes how the experience of assimilation continues to affect how Kalaallit view themselves in relation to Denmark today.[33] Thus, through processes of colonization, non-northerners introduced different social and structural organizations that fundamentally changed how Kalaallit identified themselves, as well as how they lived. However, the period during World War II (WWII) and the Cold War was marked by other tools of colonial powers— the presence of Western military forces, particularly of the United States, which took advantage of the geographic remoteness of Kalaallit Nunaat. As Whyte describes, colonialism is a form of domination where "one society seeks to exploit some set of benefits believed to be found in the territory of one or more other societies" through various means, including military invasion.[34] Therefore, Danish settler-colonial and colonial activity was further complicated by the presence of American and Danish militaries during WWII and the Cold War whose respective military operations forced Inuit to move, settle, and resettle in other parts of the country. Throughout WWII, the US established Kalaallit Nunaat as a strategic defense location specifically in response to Germany's occupation of Denmark.[35] Then, during the Cold War, Denmark allowed the US to establish the Thule Air Force Base to build, launch, and test nuclear missiles. As a result of this, many Inuit were forced to settle and resettle in other parts of the country. When the Thule Air Force Base's Project Ice

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[32] Ibid., 269.
[33] Williamson, 138.
[34] Kyle Whyte, "Indigenous Climate Change Studies: Indigenizing Futures, Decolonizing the Anthropocene," *English Language Notes* 55, no. 1-2 (2017): 154, https://doi.org/0.1215/00138282-55.1-2.153.
[35] Jaimey Hamilton Faris, "Sisters of Ocean and Ice: On the Hydro-feminism of Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna's Rise: From One Island to Another," *Shima* 14, no. 2 (July 10, 2019): 89. https://doi.org/10.214463/shima.13.2.08.

Worm was abandoned, equipment used to create and facilitate the production of nuclear power was buried under the ice.[36] Now that the ice is melting, toxic leaks are increasingly possible, potentially endangering Inuit and Arctic wildlife.[37] At the same time, the presence of the Thule Airforce base changed the land, which is now exacerbated by the current climate crisis. As white-settler scholar Jaimey Hamilton Faris highlights, the "[…] ontological structures of extractive and capitalist cultures have objectified landscapes […]" referring specifically to military operations.[38]

Though Kalaallit Nunaat now acts as completely independent and autonomous from Denmark, it is important to note that Inuit continue to deal with the aftermath of assimilation strategies, past military activity that threatened to change the vulnerable and sensitive landscape, as well as the long-lasting effects of colonial and military operations that have made the country financially insecure. Today, the country is still pursued by Western powers, particularly Canada and the US, this time for its oil and mineral reserves.[39] Indeed, the consequences of oil and gas mining at a time when the landscape is extremely sensitive to anymore extraction is a conversation that weighs heavily on Inuit politicians and climate activists, especially because oil and gas mining could potentially provide the financially unstable country with resources to support their communities.[40] As Niviâna explains, oil and gas extraction should not be seen as the exact same processes or entirely resulting from colonialism. Niviâna points out the multilayered difficulties around developing extractive industries and how it is rooted in the country's colonial history. This is all to say that discussions around glacial melt in Kalaallit Nunaat must

[36] Faris, 88.
[37] Ibid., 88.
[38] Ibid., 87.
[39] Ibid., 88.
[40] Ibid., 88.

acknowledge that Inuit deal with the consequences of how colonial powers have changed their landscape and how they relate to the land.

Polar bears and ice loss

As the largest island in the world and a country in the Arctic, Kalaallit Nunaat holds many of the world's ice sheets and glaciers. For over four decades, climatologists and other scientists have tracked and monitored ice and glacial melt, warning that this area of the world is extremely sensitive to the warming climate. Logically speaking, ice melt results in rising seas and loss of land masses, but what many might not realize is that glacial melt can result in an even warmer climate in Kalaallit Nunaat and the rest of the world. The dangers that arise from rapidly melting ice is why Inuk climate activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier states that climate and environmental changes in the Arctic act as a barometer and indicator for the kinds of climate disasters that might occur globally.[41] Similar to Watt-Cloutier, artists such as Icelandic-Danish multimedia artist Olafur Eliasson have recognized the importance of safeguarding the world's glaciers. Eliasson's installation *Ice Watch* (2018) at the Tate Modern in London, England rose to prominence for attempting to engage the broader public with ice loss in the Arctic. For the installation, Eliasson harvested approximately 30 blocks of ice from a fjord near Nuuk, Kalaallit Nunaat and placed them outside the Tate Modern and outside the well-known corporation Bloomberg's European headquarters.[42] The point of the work was, quite simply, to watch the ice melt, as Eliasson states:

> I hope the Ice Watch arouses feelings of proximity, presence, and relevance, of narratives that you can identify with and that make us all engage. We must recognize that together we have the power to take individual actions and to push for systemic change.[43]

[41] Watt- Cloutier, 205.
[42] Bloomberg's wealth and profit is known to be connected to many extractive industries.
[43] Olafur Eliasson, Ice Watch London, last modified December 2018, https://icewatchlondon.com/.

At the same time as climate change in the Circumpolar Arctic is imagined through ice loss, it is tied to the image of starving polar bears. Images of dying polar bears have been widely used by private companies and not-for-profit organizations alike to encourage decisive action against global warming. White-settler geographer Rachel Slocum has proven that polar bears are used to promote sustainable initiatives, particularly energy efficient ones.[44] Organizations like Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund often use these images of sad and helpless polar bears to draw "attention to the precariousness of their situation, thus heightening the viewers' sense of the animals' vulnerability to danger and threat".[45] Todd argues that heavy environmental advocacy on climate change in the Circumpolar Arctic through symbols of the polar bear has bound the Arctic and climate change as inextricably connected.[46] By extension, I argue that both ice loss, as demonstrated in Eliasson's work, and endangered polar bears become the sole symbols of climate disasters in the Arctic. This is not entirely problematic; as mentioned, the Arctic *is* particularly vulnerable to a warming climate, and Inuit see changes that indicate future climate disasters. The issue is that when they become what white anthropologist Elizabeth Reddy calls a "charismatic meta-category," "Indigenous peoples, their laws, and philosophies" are totally ignored.[47] In other words, when the image of the polar bear or extreme ice loss become the *only* symbols that the world associates with climate change, then the Inuit's everyday experiences with the melting ice and how it affects their homes and livelihoods is excluded from any discourse around the anthropocene. It neglects to see how the world is connected to the

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[44] Rachel Slocum, "Polar bears and energy-efficient lightbulbs: strategies to bring climate change home," *Environment and Planning D: Society and* Space 22, no. 3 (2004): 415, https://doi.org/10.1068/d378.
[45] Kate Manzo, "Beyond polar bears? Re-envisioning climate change," *Meteorological Applications* 17 (May 4, 2010): 198, https://doi.org/10.1002/met.193.
[46] Zoe Todd, "An Indigenous Feminist's Take on The Ontological Turn: 'Ontology' Is Just Another Word for Colonialism," *Journal of Historical Sociology 29*, no.1 (2016, March 1): 6, doi:10.1111/johs.12124
[47] Todd, 6.

Arctic, where climate and environmental changes result in disasters around the world as Watt-Cloutier insightfully argues. Thus, while well-intentioned, Eliasson and other scientists and artists contribute to the violent erasure of Inuit when they choose to focus solely on ice loss, melting glaciers, and the effects on Arctic wildlife, and forget to see the importance of the well-being of the Arctic for the rest of the world.

Rising Seas: The Context in the Pacific Region

As the glaciers melt in the Arctic, the seas and the oceans will inevitably rise, which has already been felt in the Pacific Islands. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has tracked that the ice loss in Kalaallit Nunaat averaged 400 billion tons per year as of 2018, which can result in sea level rise somewhere between 10-30 inches if the climate warms by 1.5ºC.[48] However, as white climate change expert Heather Lazarus points out, "Climate refugees and sinking islands have become popular tropes in climate disasters […] While highlighting the plights of Islanders, such metaphors do more harm by removing agency from these people."[49] What Lazarus hints at is that conversations about climate change-induced sea level rise cannot victimize Pacifica communities as in need-of-being-saved, but that climate change must be located as part of a history of colonial violence in the Pacific Islands.[50] It is well-known that climate change in the Pacific Islands is felt through rising seas, but the effects of nuclear testing and other extractive industries on changing landscapes and sinking areas of land is less known. For example, the island of Banaba was devastated by phosphate mining, which was harvested to

[48] "Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments," Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, last modified October 8, 2018, https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/.
[49] Heim, 294.
[50] Ibid., 131.

support agriculture in New Zealand and Australia, forcing residents to relocate to Fiji.[51] In Aelon Kein Ad, the US military conducted a series of atomic and hydrogen bomb tests from 1946 to 1958, and the US forced communities in Bikini and Eniwetok to relocate to support the testing and experiments. Oftentimes, the US military did not protect communities from the effects of radiation and "even used the event to gather data on the effects of radiation on human populations." [52] As sea levels rise, that old radioactive waste leaks into the water around Aelon Kein Ad, further endangering Marshallese to this day.

Ocean heritage in the "sea of islands"

Kanaka Maoli scholar Lisa Kahaleole Hall explains that knowledge about Pacifica communities is limited because they are typically grouped together into one category of the Asia Pacific.[53] Additionally, many Pacifica people are racialized and stereotyped as picturesque or primitive, exoticized and sexualized. The framing of Pacific Islands as isolated islands within vast oceans is also relevant to the violent colonial discourses that affect the world's false perceptions of Pacifica as financially poor communities living in remote islands. In response to this, many Pacifica scholars have evoked Fijian scholar Epeli Hau'ofa's renowned ideas around Pacifica relationships to water and the seas as a common Pacific heritage. In "Our Seas of Islands," Hau'ofa argues that while the Pacific Islands are typically regarded as poor and remote communities, the ways people have traversed across the oceans during pre-colonial and modern times resists this idea of isolation and poverty.[54] Historically, Pacifica communities travelled

[51] Heim, 132.
[52] Faris, 85.
[53] Hall, 23.
[54] Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Seas of Islands", in *We are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Manoa: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 31.

frequently across the oceans and seas, connecting, networking, and trading ideas and resources with one another—what Hau'ofa considers whole "universes."[55] With the advent of 19th century imperialism, Western colonial and imperial powers established boundaries and borders between oceans and islands.[56] Today, countries like the US still heavily militarize the oceans to sustain the global energy supply.[57] That being said, Hau'ofa argues that diasporic Pacifica communities and migrant workers make "non-sense of artificial boundaries"; thus, "there is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as 'islands in a far sea' and as 'a sea of islands'."[58] The latter situates the ocean as part of the islands' environment and community.

A Note on Climate Change on Islands

While Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad are located on opposite sides of the planet with strikingly different climates, they share some similar qualities. Both countries have vibrant Indigenous artistic practices that deal with colonial pasts in relation to the present, and both countries are islands: Kalaallit Nunaat is the largest island on Earth and Aelon Kein Ad is known as being one of the smaller islands that dot the Pacific Ocean. Even more, in recent years, both islands have begun to share in being more frequently discussed in the media as centres of climate change.[59] Undoubtedly, the Arctic region and Pacific Islands have been more severely affected by climate change than countries in the West, like Canada, USA, or parts of Europe. The Arctic is experiencing changes in landmass and climate due to rapidly melting glaciers, while the

[55] Hau'ofa, 31.
[56] Ibid., 34
[57] Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "Toward a Critical Ocean Studies for the Anthropocene," *English Language Notes* 57, no. 1 (April 2019): 23, https://doi.org/10.1215/00138282-7309655.
[58] Hau'ofa, "Our Seas of Islands," 31.
[59] Craig S. Perez, "Thinking (and feeling) with Anthropocene (Pacific) islands," Dialogues in Human Geography 11, no. 3 (2021): 3. https://doi.org/10.1177/20438206211017453.

Pacific Islands are seeing ever-more frequent flooding and other disasters due to the surrounding waters. These climate change disasters have disrupted and altered the lives of the communities on both Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad, and thus, there is a need for a discussion of the effects of climate change on the lives of those peoples. This is especially important because Indigenous peoples are already among the first to become climate refugees, a trend that will become more prominent in the next several decades.[60] That being said, the intense focus on those areas have reproduced colonial imagery and the idea of the Indigenous peoples as vanishing or in need-of-saving. As white-settler film scholar Elizabeth DeLoughrey argues, some documentaries or films about sea-level rise in the Pacific Islands result in "salvage environmentalism," meaning the belief that a culture or group of people needs 'saving' before they vanish as a result of environmental and climate change.[61] DeLoughrey derives salvage environmentalism from salvage anthropology, a colonial practice that strives to record a culture before it disappears. Salvage anthropology arose as a result of colonial and imperialist attempts at eradicating Indigenous peoples through genocide and/or assimilation into white settler-colonial society.[62] DeLoughrey draws on salvage anthropology to point out how ideas of salvaging or saving Indigenous peoples are rooted in colonial ideologies, warning against depictions of those communities as victims. Therefore, any discussion around climate and environmental issues on islands must consider and be sensitive to colonial ideologies. In other words, conversations around the effects of climate change on islands, must consider how the communities are being affected by changing landscapes, while also refusing to reproduce colonial ideologies like salvage paradigms that victimize Indigenous peoples.

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[60] Whyte, 157.
[61] Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene*, (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2019), 189.
[62] Samuel J. Redman, *Prophets, and Ghosts: The Story of Salvage Anthropology* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 2021), 10.

As a settler-scholar and woman of colour, I aim to actively reference the texts and work by Indigenous scholars, activists, and artists who highlight communities' struggles, knowledges, and resiliency, like Kyle Powys Whyte, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, and Craig Santos Perez. Whyte discusses how climate change is an intensification of colonialism and that "anthropogenic climate change makes Indigenous territories more accessible and Indigenous Peoples more vulnerable to harm."[63] Whyte's research has suggested that environmental planning must revolve around the existing work undertaken by Indigenous communities and their capacities to plan for their climate futures using their own knowledges. For example, he notes how Inupiat communities in the Arctic organize climate action through drumming ceremonies to reassert relationships with whales whose cycles have been disrupted by climate change.[64] In the Pacific Islands, Perez, an Indigenous scholar from CHamoru Guåhan ("Guam"), highlights that Indigenous communities are hyper-visible in discourses and media coverage of climate change, but it fails to recognize how the presence of corporations and other nations' military and organizations on the islands contributes to the anthropocene.[65] Perez also explains that the media fails to cover the communities' climate actions across the islands, such as the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement and the resistance of the construction of the telescope at Mauna Kea in Hawai'i.[66] Perez aptly points out the need for a more nuanced conversation around the presence of those organizations, the vulnerabilities of those communities, and the existing local climate actions. In Inuit Nunangaat, Watt-Cloutier has worked to showcase how climate changes have affected Inuit livelihoods as well as their ways of knowing about the changing environment. For example, during her position on the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Watt-Cloutier

[63] Whyte, 147.
[64] Ibid., 156.
[65] Perez, 3.
[66] Ibid., 4.

addressed that melting ice, thin ice, and melting permafrost has made it difficult for Inuit to hunt and provide for their families. In addition to sickly animals, thin ice makes it difficult to hunt safely, with an increasing number of hunters falling through cracks and drowning.[67] Thus, she outlines that the issue of climate change for Inuit is a "right to be cold" for cultural and social reasons, too. At the same time, Watt-Cloutier argues that changes in the Arctic act as a "barometer" for the world's climate change problems, such as rising seas and drought in other parts of the world.[68] Therefore, the right to be cold for Inuit is also symbolic of the entire world's "right to be protected from climate change."[69] Whyte's, Watt-Cloutier's, and Perez's respective articles clearly highlight that Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by climate change, but rather than victimize those groups, the scholars showcase the importance of their experiences, knowledges, and ideas in anthropocene discourse. My thesis draws from the work of all three scholars in order to argue for the refusal of the colonial portrayal of Indigenous Peoples and their homes as vanishing, while also carefully foregrounding their experiences and ways of knowing.

Decolonizing through Radical Relationality

Though *Rise* is a digital video-poem and *Arkhticós Doloros* is a performance and poem, all artists similarly draw on their own oral histories and languages to situate themselves within their communities and call attention to the need for a decolonization of discourses around the anthropocene. Scholars from disciplines in the social sciences, arts, and humanities including Kyle Powys Whyte (Potawatomi) and Zoe Todd (Métis) have argued that climate change and

[67] Watt-Cloutier, 188-189.
[68] Ibid., 205.
[69] Ibid., 231.

anthropocene discourses, whether in the media or in the sciences, have failed to acknowledge the effects of climate change on BIPOC. These discourses fail to understand that what might be called the anthropocene—the era in which human activity is drastically changing the Earth's climate and environment—is not exactly the result of *all* human activity, but rather, specific segments of it. For example, in *On the importance of a date, or, decolonizing the anthropocene* (2017), white-settler scholar Heather Davis and Métis anthropologist Zoe Todd argue that the beginning of the anthropocene should coincide with the beginning of colonialism, or 1610, directly critiquing the Working Group on the Anthropocene's proposal to the International Geological Congress (IGC) that the anthropocene should begin around 1964. Davis and Todd argue for 1610 as the beginning date of the anthropocene to attribute the consequences of colonialism to the current environmental crisis, to see environmental degradation as invested in a specific "…logic based on extraction and accumulation through dispossession…"[70] Environmental expert Kyle Powys Whyte further outlines that colonial invasions throughout history resulted in environmental changes through processes like terraforming for agriculture and deforestation, and these changes in the environment disrupted "Indigenous peoples' cultures, heath, economies, and political self-determination."[71] Thus, Whyte suggests a field of study called Indigenous climate change studies to decolonize the anthropocene by acknowledging that anthropogenic climate change is an intensification of colonialism that has already disrupted Indigenous ways of life, and that renewing traditional Indigenous knowledges can strengthen communities' own planning for future climate change.[72] Similarly, Oglala Lakota scholar Kali

[70] Heather Davis and Zoe Todd, "On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies 16*, no.4 (2017): 765 Retrieved from https://www.acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1539.
[71] Whyte, 154.
[72] Ibid., 153.

Simmons highlights that the anthropocene is a continuation of settler-colonialism, but different from Whyte, she more explicitly highlights the anthropocene as an era that insists on settler sovereignty and futurity, especially at the expense of Indigenous peoples. Whereas Whyte takes an Indigenous climate change studies approach, Simmons uses an Indigenous feminist critique of the anthropocene to see it as reinscribing the violent colonial erasure of Indigenous peoples from anthropocene discourse. Instead of focusing on a solely decolonial perspective, Simmons adopts an Indigenous feminist approach to refuse the erasure of Indigenous peoples, their struggles, and experiences in conversations around climate change.[73] Davis and Todd's, Whyte's, and Simmons' scholarship points out that responses and discourses around the anthropocene that do not fully account for colonial pasts and Indigenous futurities reinscribe the erasure of Indigenous Peoples. In other words, decolonizing the anthropocene requires engaging with and learning from Indigenous Peoples and their ways of knowing about the land, waters, and relationships with human and non-human life, and valuing Indigenous leadership in the climate struggle.

Baldy and Yazzie's notion of radical relationality is premised on an ontology of decolonization.[74] Their understanding of decolonization comes primarily from Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2012), wherein Smith frames decolonization as a struggle and process that moves away from colonialism. They also draw from Unangaxˆ scholar Eve Tuck and Asian-American scholar K. Wayne Yang's widely referenced journal article *Decolonization is not a metaphor* (2012), which

[73] Kali Simmons, "Reorientations; or An Indigenous Feminist Reflection on the Anthropocene," JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies 58, no. 2 (2019): 174. https://doi.org/10.1353/cj.2019.0012.
[74] Cutcha R. Baldy and Melanie K. Yazzie, "Introduction: Indigenous peoples and the politics of water," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 7, no. 1 (2018): 10. https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/issue/view/2004

outlines decolonization as repatriation of Indigenous land and life.[75] However, Tuck and Yang do not really expand on what 'repatriation of Indigenous land and life' looks like, other than to say that it means the actual return of land back to Indigenous peoples and upholding Indigenous sovereignty.[76] For Smith, decolonization does not *only* mean the repatriation of Indigenous land and life, but it involves—in no order— critically reflecting on oneself, alternative ways of thinking, moments when decolonial ideas are deployed, counter-hegemonic movements, and interrogating various structures.[77] Radical relationality encompasses these alternative ways of building relationships, counter-hegemonic tactics, and decolonial ideas.

In teasing out what radical relationality might mean or look like, the authors draw on ideas of decolonization, however the concept comes primarily from Indigenous feminisms. Baldy and Yazzie particularly derive this framework from Indigenous feminist scholars Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate scholar Kim TallBear and Tonawanda Seneca scholar Mishuana Goeman, whose Indigenous feminist frameworks consist of the "multiple strands of materiality, kinship, corporeality, affect, land/body connection, and multidimensional connectivity."[78] Put simply, radical relationality is a struggle for seeking inter-reflexivity and building relationships with one another, premised on *waterview*, not worldview.[79] From waterview, "we define […] our place in the world based on how the water views the world, or even how the water views us."[80] Baldy and Yazzie take inspiration from Bahrain activist Harsh Walia's idea of waterview as living well, which requires "interdependency and respect among all living things."[81] For the authors, the

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[75] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 1, no. 1 (2014): 10, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554.
[76] Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd edition, (New York: Zed Books LTD., 2012), 25-26.
[77] Ibid., 201.
[78] Badly and Yazzie, 2.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 3.

politics of water is part of the struggle for decolonization, and it upsets the scale of difference that settler-colonialism imposes on society.[82] In the vein of Goeman and Indigenous feminist praxis, *waterview* offers a scale based on connection, thinking about how humans, non-human life, the land, and water are related, even moving beyond human-land relationality.[83] When water is part of the decolonial ontology, it "[…] keeps ourselves open to the possibility of making new relatives […]" or kinships.[84] Indeed, as Baldy and Yazzie point out, one of these kin is the water itself.[85] As a non-Indigenous scholar and Punjabi woman, I would briefly like to make clear my own understanding and ongoing learning about the Indigenous practice and concept of kinship as making new and renewing relationships with relatives, human and non-human. In this thesis, my understanding comes primarily from Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen who discusses that kinship practices differ across Indigenous communities and knowledges, but kinships or the process of making kin can be generally understood as referring to relations with different parts of the world.[86] Later, I rely on Kuokkanen's explanations of kinship, as well as additional discussion of kinship practices from Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, to analyze how Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner see each other and water as kin.

Baldy and Yazzie derive radical relationality out of other kinds of struggles for decolonization and various Indigenous led social and political movements like #NoDAPL ("No Dakota Access Pipeline") that organized against the construction of the Dakota Pipeline, and Idle No More, an Indigenous-led movement that began in Canada. Briefly, I will discuss the "Water

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[82] Baldy and Yazzie, 8.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 11.
[85] Ibid., 3.
[86] Rauna Kuokkanen, "The Logic of the Gift – Reclaiming Indigenous Peoples' Philosophies," in *Re-Ethicizing the Mind? Cultural Revival in Contemporary Thought*, ed. T. B. Bornstein, 255. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2006. https://rauna.files.wordpress.com/2007/10/s21_sip_17_rauna-kuokkanen.pdf.

is Life" movement that became part of popular media discourse in 2012, but it is necessary to point out that the articulation of the relationship to water has been part of many Indigenous cultures for millennia.[87] During the on-going #NoDAPL movement, many activists and protectors rightfully spoke against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline and protected and defended the land and water where the pipeline was being built. The construction of the pipeline occurred at Standing Rock, and it ran through and under the main water source for many Indigenous groups in the area, particularly the Sioux and the Meskwaki tribes. As a result of the pipeline, the water was threatened with contamination and, thus, many Indigenous communities blocked the construction of the pipeline. From this emerged the notion of *Mní Wičóni*, the Lakota phrase for "water is life."[88] Many Indigenous water protectors and land defenders, like those at Standing Rock, foregrounded their existing relationships with and through water in the fight against climate change, as well as to secure clean drinking water for their nations and communities. Michif artist Christi Belcourt and Ojibwe artist Isaac Murdoch's *Water is Life* protest banners have been seen in many environmental justice actions across Canada (*fig. 11*). Anishinaabe-kwe teenager Autumn Peltier from Wikwemikong First Nation rose to prominence when she spoke in front of the United Nations (UN) in 2018, imploring the UN to act on the issue of inaccessibility to clean water while drawing on the importance of water in her own nation. Her powerful speech included anecdotes from her elders and oral histories, such as when she said, "I can't stress enough about what I've learnt from my elders about the water in our

[87] Melanie K. Yazzie, "Water is life, relationality, and tribal sovereignty: An interview with Melanie K. Yazzie," interview by Faith Kearns, The Confluence (October 4, 2017): https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=25499.
[88] Jennifer Weston, "Water is Life: The Rise of the Mní Wičóni Movement," *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, 2017, 12, https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/water-life-rise-mni-wiconi-movement.

ceremonies. Many people don't believe that water is alive or has a spirit. My people believe this to be true […] All the original water flows through us from the beginning and all around us."[89]

Arkhticós Doloros: "The Evil Dream"

Inuit artists have portrayed the changing climate, landscapes, and ice loss in their homes by drawing on their communities' ways of knowing and their experiences. Though sea ice is arguably unpredictable, Inuit have been able to rely on its seasonal freezing, but a warming climate has changed how and when the ice freezes, making it difficult for hunters to tell when the ice is safe to hunt on. In *sea ice is changing today* (2019), a work appearing in white scholar Kaitlyn Rathwell's article, "'She is Transforming:' Inuit Artworks a Cultural Response to Arctic Sea Ice and Climate Change" (2020), Inuk artist Elisapee Ishulutaq depicts one of the severe consequences of ice melting: people falling through the ice. Using bright colours, Ishulutaq shows someone who has fallen through the ice, while another individual runs to save them with a rope.[90] As sea ice melts, the chances of drowning in thawed freezing waters increases, making it difficult for some Inuit communities, like Ishulutaq's community in Panniqtuuq ("Pangnirtung") to continue safely hunting and living on the ice. In Inuit-led film company Isuma TV's documentary *Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change: Qapirangajuq* (2011), community members and elders living in different parts of Nunavut explain that the ice loss has affected community's abilities to engage in their traditional hunting practices. Joanasie Karpik from Panniqtuuq, Ishulutaq, Rita Nashook from Iqaluit, Jamesie Mike from Panniqtuuq, Inusiq Nashalik from

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[89] Autumn Peltier, "Autumn Peltier, 13-year-old water advocate, addresses the UN." talk presented at United Nations address, (March 22, 2018): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zg60sr38oic.
[90] Kaitlyn J. Rathwell, "'She is Transforming:' Inuit Artworks Reflect a Cultural Response to Arctic Sea Ice and Climate Change'" *Journal of the Arctic Institute of America* 73, no. 1 (2020): 73. https://doi.org/10.14430/arctic69945.

Panniqtuuq and others explain that their respective community's elders and ancestors have engaged in these traditional practices for centuries and have tracked and monitored the climate to hunt and live safely. Many community members note that they do indeed have knowledge about how the climate and land is changing and how the Arctic animals are being affected, but they are disregarded. For example, Nashook posits that:

> Qaullunat [Southerners] don't want to understand Inuit ways. They're ignorant about our culture, don't consider our opinion, and treat us like we know nothing. Inuit culture is oral, and we keep knowledge in our minds. Even without text, our culture is full of wisdom.[91]

Nashook explains that Inuit have knowledge about animals, too, including polar bears who are often labelled as endangered in the Arctic. For example, many of the individuals who share their knowledge in the documentary argue that polar bears should not necessarily be considered or labeled endangered due to climate change. They explain that polar bears thrive in warmer climates because warmer weather is conducive to easy hunting.[92] However, in recent years, Inuit have noticed polar bears behaving strangely, and some even enter their communities and homes looking for food.[93] Why does this happen? After observing polar bears over the years, community members conclude that marine biologists who come to the Arctic to observe wildlife may be affecting polar bears' aural faculties when the biologists travel to the Arctic on extremely loud helicopters. Now unable to rely on their sense of hearing to hunt, Inuit believe that the polar bears have begun to rely on olfaction to search for food and they enter Inuit homes when they smell food, sometimes attacking humans upon seeing them. This all points to the fact that Inuit have important knowledge and experiences with the land and animals, and they can offer a clearer outlook on how the Arctic is changing for both human and non-human life. Clearly, Inuit

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[91] *Qapirangajuq: Inuit Knowledge and Climate* directed by Zacharias Kunuk, and Ian Mauro, (Nunavut, Canada: Isuma TV, 2010.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

have and continue to make attempts to explain their knowledge, but scientists who track and monitor the changing landscapes, wildlife, and ice melt have neglected to consider Inuit's opinions, thereby reinforcing the violent colonial erasure of Inuit communities.[94] As I will demonstrate in the following section, Kleemann's *Arkhticós Doloros* resists this erasure because she adopts a personal approach and draws on her community's history and experiences to contribute to a discussion of climate change in another part of the Arctic, Kalaallit Nunaat.

In the performance, Kleemann begins by removing her jacket, boots, and socks, preparing herself to be with the blue-white landscape. Looking closely, the viewer can see a river slowly, gently flowing behind Kleemann as she spreads a black tarp with lightbulbs attached and a flexible, large plastic sheet upon the glacier (*fig. 1*). Though Kleemann shows very little emotion as she struggles to lay out the tarp and plastic against the harshly blowing winds, one still wonders about the pain she must feel as her bare feet walk on the cold ice (*fig. 2*). At one point, she holds the tarp above and behind her, attempting to cover herself with it while the wind pushes it off her body (*fig. 5*). Still holding the tarp, she walks across the ice sheet and tries to twist it all around her body. Looking even closer, one can see the ice sheet melting and oozing water beneath her feet. She continues walking, the lightbulbs peering in and out of view almost like dangling ornaments. At one point, she stops to warm her feet, only to eventually get up again, this time wrapping a long rope around her face, across her nose, eyes, and mouth (*fig. 6*). Barely able to see, she begins wrapping the black tarp around her, but allows the winds to move her and the tarp around the ice sheet. She wraps it completely around her body, sits on the ice, and feels the wind. Throughout the performance, she struggles to keep the tarp around her, but

[94] Of course, it is not the responsibility of Indigenous Peoples to share their ways of knowing and knowledge with settlers. Ideas that Indigenous knowledges can save the planet from climate change still forgets the communities who are involved in cultivating that knowledge, and it opens possibilities for knowledge extraction, thereby reproducing colonial extraction in epistemic forms.

also seems to be working with the wind, allowing it to guide her across the sheet and change her movements depending on how it blows (*fig. 7*). Then, with shoes on, she unwraps the rope and removes it from her body and uses her hands, forehead, and hair to feel the melting waters under her body. She wraps the tarp and rope into a ball, crouches on the icy ground, and begins crying (*fig. 8*). She slowly walks across the ice sheet and wraps the tarp in the plastic sheet with tears in her eyes, and holds it above her head, positioning herself in front of the lake.

While watching the performance, it might be easy to assume that Kleemann approaches the melting ice sheet from a place of grief and sadness. Though that may be true, white-settler art historian Charissa Von Harringa points out that performances like those of Kleemann's arise from an Indigenous ontology where self-identity is rooted in connections with the land, animals, and environments; therefore, the land becomes an "aesthetic object of contemplation embedded in identities and experiences."[95] In other words, Kleemann's performance with the land is not simply reducible to feelings of pain, loss, and grief, but a way for the artist to explore and negotiate a deeply personal connection to the ice in its frozen and melting forms. I argue that the bodily experience with the melting ice arises from her experience as a Kalaaleq and interrogations of climate change discourse that neglect Inuit experiences and ways of knowing. In an interview about the work, Kleemann states:

> Immediately I thought 'Oh, this is something that I know', [it] reminds me of my childhood when we used to go dogsledding with the neighborhood kids…. It took me back to something I know. I know it from memory but at some point, I knew how to walk and run down the cliffs or the rocks and just getting closer to the water. It was just pulling me somehow.[96]

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[95] Charissa V Harringa, "Movement and the Living Surface: Greenlandic Modernism, Pia Arke, and the Decolonial Legacy of Women Artists in Greenland," in *Modern Women Artists in the Nordic Countries, 1900–1960*, ed. Kerry Greaves (New York; London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2021), 58, 10.4324/9780367823672.
[96] Jessie Kleemann, interviewed by Amanda Boetzkes, *At the Moraine: Envisioning the Concerns of Ice,* 2019, https://vimeo.com/384288752.

Based on this personal experience of the land, it is difficult to think that the performance only arises from grief or mourning the ice. Her dream-like state suggests that she feels like she is dreaming, which could have negative or positive connotations.

Kleemann calls this performance, personal experience, and bodily engagement an intervention into scientific understandings and knowledge that do not come to truly know and feel the melting ice as she does in *Arkhticós Doloros*. As Kleemann mentions, she felt the urge to remove her socks and boots so she could be present, ground herself with her bare skin— to "[…] make herself really known to the place […] saying I'm here."[97] As much as Kleemann's performance comes from a personal engagement of meeting the ice to intervene on scientific knowledge, it comes with a profound understanding of what results in melting glaciers and changing Arctic landscapes, seen in her use of the black tarp, plastic, and rope. Kleemann mentions that she reuses old materials that are easy to travel with, but these materials symbolize various objects that are part of the anthropocene. The black colour of the nylon fabric tarp, a petroleum product, is meant to symbolize anything black, specifically, oil, exploration, mining, or pollution— all things that result in a warming climate and ice loss. The lightbulbs that hang from the tarp symbolize igniting new ideas or conversations around climate change, encouraging the broader public to act. On the other hand, the lightbulb symbolizes the bright ice sheet, light against dark, perhaps pointing to the necessity of glaciers and the cold for the well-being of the planet, including human and non-human life. The plastic sheet could indicate several ideas: flexibility and moldability within climate responses or even plastics pollution. Finally, Kleemann's explanation of the rope as a nod to the use of thread and threading in Inuit

[97] Kleemann, 2019.

shamanism or spiritual work is the most significant indicator of interventions into Western scientific perspectives of climate change:

> When we work with spirits or with a community gathering where we are talking with spirits or letting our own soul travel, then we have to keep our body tied to the place. It was very windy, so I put the rope around my forehead and my eyes. At some point, I think around my neck.[98]

Using materials and her body, Kleemann engages with the ice from her experience and Inuit ways of knowing to intervene in scientific knowledge, refusing any erasure of Inuit perspectives on climate change discourse. The poem that accompanies this performance contextualizes it, outlining how Kleemann views the Arctic as/within a dream. Kleemann discusses that her work does not just arise from grief or mourning, but how to deal with and approach ice loss. Thus, for Kleemann, the Arctic is a painful dream:

> "We are immersed in pain all the time, or we distract ourselves from the pain, but the pain is very essential, like the ice sheet for the whole planet."[99]

Multiple phrases in the poem associate melting glaciers and ice loss with pain and suffering. For example, Kleemann uses the word "oozing" to describe how the now-melted water feels beneath her feet as she walks across the sheet. "Oozing" typically refers to something unexpected or perhaps disgusting, something that is not necessarily welcome— apt for the melting glaciers that are changing the landmass and, ultimately, people's homes:

I walk on soft moss on top of water
it oozes up and down up and down it rests so quiet waiting
diving
rising
waiting for the first of cold nights in July

The words like "bleeds" and "aching" further reinforce the pain in the Arctic, which Kleemann then feels in her own body as she witnesses it in her performance. When Kleemann calls the

[98] Kleemann, 2019.
[99] Ibid.

experience an evil dream rather than a nightmare, it is clear that she is in a dream, experiencing the marvel and fascination with the bright icy landscape but it becomes evil when she realizes it's oozing an unexpected, unwelcome water that threatens the ice's existence. She personifies the glaciers and ice where she calls them "creatures of cold," urging and wishing them to freeze, which they eventually do, but through aches and pains:

as we sleep in the evil dream
unless we fight to wake us up

the snow

qanneq

whites out and make you blind
it bleeds and melts

until it freezes
to become the aching
of the creature of cold

The poem is an homage to the environment, acknowledging its need to freeze, desire for cold, and likely beauty in the ice that is threatened by a warming climate. In her urging for the ice to freeze and tears that mourn the ice loss, Kleemann not only understands her capacity to grieve with and for the glaciers, but she expresses her desire to heal the Arctic by acting to prevent a further warming climate and to see and feel the cold ice as beautiful and alive. My interpretation echoes Kalaaleq writer Emily Henderson's response to Kleemann's poem, too:

> Even to a reader that does not understand Kalaallisut, it is easy to read the verses at the pace one might breathe in the cold, salty air she so vividly invokes. You could almost walk with her as she takes you on a timeless journey through cold, moss, and seawater, shielding our eyes from snow-blindness as we listen in for the song of a whale far off in the distance.[100]

[100] Emily Henderson, "Arkhticós Doloros," *Nagvaqtavuut, What We Found: The INUA Audio Guide*, last modified 2021, https://www.wag.ca/inua-online#artwork-9004111222057584.

It is not a surprise that Kleemann's engagement with the ice is resonant of feelings that other Inuit in Kalaallit Nunaat might feel, too. As McGlennan states, Indigenous women's poetry helps them determine their relationship to their communities.[101] Kleemann uses Kalaallisut throughout the poem, which I argue is meant to speak directly to Inuit in Kalaallit Nunaat who know the experience of being on the icy landscapes. In this way, the use of Kalaallisut intervenes in colonial thinking, but also creates space for her own community's experience, which McGlennan might see as Kleemann looking back at her "[…] own original knowledge to progress as an individual, in conjunction with a community of peoples."[102] Thus, Kleemann's use of performance and poetry to showcase her relationship with the ice activated hers and her community's knowledge and experiences, thrusting them into climate change discourse, asserting the valuable contributions these communities make to decolonize the anthropocene.

As the glaciers melt, the seas will rise from Kalaallit Nunaat to Aelon Kein Ad

In *Arkhticós Doloros*, Kleemann uses poetry and performance to express her relationship to the water in the form of melting glaciers or, in other words, the ice that is part of her home and how her community lives on the land. Through her words, she expresses a personal engagement with the melting ice, but, of course, as the ice melts, it makes its way into the lakes, rivers, and oceans. In this section, I turn to the manifestation of these melting glaciers in the form of rising seas in *Rise: From One Island to Another*. Whereas Kleemann's work showcased her relationship with glacial melt, the following sections examine how Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner express their relationships with the water and each other.

[101] McGlennan, 9.
[102] Ibid., 32.

As mentioned previously, radical relationality is an ontology of decolonization premised on decolonizing by way of seeking relations to water, and kinships with human and non-human life through the waterways. Métis scholar Zoe Todd has also expanded on this idea of kinship through the waters in discussing humans' responsibilities to water from the Métis legal tradition, as well as her own kinship with fish, saying that she has "been bound to fish" and the fish have been her teachers.[103] Todd describes her relationship with fish to point out the reciprocal responsibilities that human beings have with the water and within landscapes that have "[…] been violated by settler-colonial economic and political exigencies."[104] This points to Todd's assertions throughout her research that humans are always embedded in watery worlds whether it be in coastal or island regions.[105] In *Rise,* Niviâna and Jetñil Kijiner literally emulate embeddedness in watery worlds as they are seen surrounded by ice and snow, on a boat in the ocean, sitting on a glacier, or submerged in water. Being-in-relation-to the water refuses the tendency to see the sea or oceans as separate from humans and the land, but Todd also implies that the water is a connective force that links communities to each other and to other waters, when she writes:

> Every place is tended to by waters that cycle through the Earth's hydrological systems and make their way back continuously to the ocean. And these watery arteries link us explicitly to the oceans that cover the majority of the globe.[106]

Todd's arguments echo Hau'ofa's and Lopesi's ideas about water-based relationships, further demonstrating the importance of these water ontologies for broader discourse around global solidarities and relationships. Important to mention is that Faris has written about *Rise* as

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[103] Zoe Todd, "Fish, Kin and Hope: Tending to Water Violations in amiskwaciwâskahikan and Treaty Six Territory," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry* 43 (2017): 105. https://doi.org/10.1086/692559.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

establishing solidarities from a "hydro-ontological feminist perspective." In Faris's text, she outlines that through the embodiment of the water that will destroy their homes, Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner cast each other as sisters of ocean and sand and ice and snow and establish a solidarity between each other. While I draw on Farris' text because she provides detailed histories about Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad, I offer an additional perspective of *Rise* that is based in Indigenous feminism and takes the ontological perspective of radical relationality that is rooted in decolonization. What is particularly interesting about Faris's analysis is the concept of embodying the water, which is different from the Indigenous feminist perspective of the politics of water, where Baldy and Yazzie assert that water is considered a relative and that many Indigenous communities consider water to have its own life or spirit. Even more, upon meeting the glaciers whose melting waters would inevitably submerge her home, Jetñil- Kijiner felt reverence instead of fear, saying "It felt like I was meeting an elder." Thus, my analysis of *Rise* considers water as relatives to Niviâna and Jetñil- Kijiner and as part of how they construct their radical relationality between one another. In the following sections, I explore how the artists also develop kinship through gift-giving, and by drawing on their local oral histories to develop global relations through their poem. Then, I explore how the digital space and video activates radical relationality.

Writing poetry for a radical relation

McGlennan highlights that many Indigenous women use poetry to establish a solidarity with each other and, by extension, I argue that Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner use poetry to establish a radical relationality between each other with and through the waters. Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner's poem shows how two Indigenous women use poetry to actively determine "[…] their

relationship to their nations and to Indigenous Peoples in unburdened ways."[107] In many ways, the poem demonstrates how the poets strive to build relationships with each other's communities through dialogue. Referencing El Navajo/Warm Springs/Wasco/Yakama poet Elizabeth Woody's poem *Translation of Blood Quantum,* McGlennan states that Indigenous identity is characterized by "a citizenship founded on Indigenous networks of affiliation and those communities' centralized relationships to the environment."[108] McGlennan suggests that, through poetry, these networks and relationships can be addressed and explored, and that Indigenous women's poetry relies on international exchanges of culture, knowledge, and connection to mobilize solidarity.[109] In the next sections, I explore how Niviâna's and Jetñil-Kijiner's poem, as well as the digital space, activate their relationality.

Kinship through stones and shells

At the outset of the video-poem, Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner greet each other bearing gifts from their homelands; Niviâna offers rocks from rocky and cold shores in Nuuk, and Jetñil-Kijiner gifts shells that cover the warm sand where the waters meet the shore at Bikini atoll and Runit Dome (*fig. 9*). What is significant here is two-fold. First, the poets offer objects from where waters meet the land—waters that ebb and flow away from the shore into rivers, lakes, streams, and seas all over the world only to return to lands once again (*fig. 18*). Second, Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner state that gift-giving is a practice that their ancestors also conducted when meeting new kin. Indeed, this practice of gift-giving that is common among many Indigenous communities globally makes clear their formation of a new kinship between each other. While

[107] McGlennan, 9.
[108] Ibid., 137.
[109] Ibid., 124.

Indigenous gifting practices differ from culture to culture, the main purpose of giving gifts is to "[…] acknowledge and renew a sense of kinship and coexistence with the world."[110] For example, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains that in Haudenosaunee cultures, gifting is part of diplomatic exchanges between nations and reinforcing and nurturing relationships.[111] Gifting also comes with certain responsibilities which manifest in different ways, such as a verbal Thanksgiving Address for Iroquois, or the potlatch ceremony for many Indigenous nations living on the Northwest Coast of Canada.[112] In Kuokkanen's arguments about the importance of gift-giving within Indigenous philosophies, she explains that gift-giving happens on a communal and individual basis, but it does not simply occur between people. Kuokkanen makes clear that the natural environment and the world is a "living entity that gifts and gives abundance to people if it is treated with respect and gratitude."[113]

In the context of gifting and kinship, I argue that Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner accept gifts from the waters surrounding their homelands (i.e., the rocks and shells from the shores), then share the gifts with each other to form a relationship that is based on protecting their homelands from climate change disasters. In this way, the poets accept gifts from each other, but then give back to the environment by promising to rise and take decisive action against climate change. This follows Kuokkanen's explanation that the main principle of gifting is to establish and sustain wellbeing for all; thus, Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner share gifts to secure the well-being of both poets' communities by establishing diplomacy between their communities through their activism and through the water.[114] It is important to remember that the gifts come from lands that

[110] Kuokkanen, 256.
[111] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 77, accessed April 21, 2021, ProQuest eBook Central.
[112] Kuokkanen, 248.
[113] Ibid., 258.
[114] Ibid., 260.

have been sites of nuclear testing by colonial powers, who have altered and destroyed the landscapes and waterways. These gifts the poets share come from lands where capitalism, colonialism, and settler-colonialism have attempted to extract resources out of the poets' homes. Simpson describes extraction as "taking something, whether it be a process, object, gift, or a person, out of the relationships that give it meaning, and placing it in a non-relational context for the purposes of accumulation."[115] It can be argued that by gifting objects from their homelands that are gifts from the water, Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner placed them back into a relational context for the purpose of acknowledging the water and each other as kin.

Establishing relationships through oral histories

During their writing process, the poets decided to use oral histories from their specific cultures to show the life or spirit within water and establish a bond between each other. Niviâna decided to write a Kalaallit story about Sassuma Arnaa, who Niviâna refers to as "mother of the sea." Karla Jessen Williamson explains one version of the story of Sassuma Arnaa: [116]

> Inuit believe strongly in the "lady down under" (Laugrand & Oosten, 2010). She was an ordinary Inuk girl who grew up and had an affair with a dog (Stuckenberger, 2007). Her father found out and in punishment banned her to an island. In her attempt to gain her father's forgiveness, she tried to cling to the railing of her father's boat as he was rowing away, only to have her fingers chopped off. While sinking slowly, her fingers became the whales, the walrus, the seals, the birds, the fish, and any other being that Inuit needed for their livelihood. She sank to the bottom of the sea and became the goddess of all living beings in the sea. She controls the animals and the sea birds, protecting them against human frailty and abuse. Among the Canadian Inuit, she is variously named Sedna, Nuliaajuk, and Takannaaluk. In Greenland she is known as Sassuma Arnaa—the Lady Down Under. She holds power so great that only the greatest, most sensitive, and courageous shaman can reach her when she gets angry.[117]

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[115] Simpson, 201-202.
[116] There are many versions of the oral histories of Sassuma Arnaa, or as Inuit in Inuit Nunangaat might call her Seda, Nuliajuk, or Takannaaluk. Williamson offers one version that reflects stories that are told in Kalaallit Nunaat, which is closest to Niviâna's community and history.
[117] Williamson, 140.

Williamson also notes that Inuit consider the sea to be sentient beings and when one is generous, "these sentient beings also become generous."[118] However, the story also demonstrates that, as much as Sassuma Arnaa is generous, she can also be angry. In her description about Sassuma Arnaa, Niviâna suggests that she is angry at humans for the lack of care and respect for the water, the animals, and the Earth when she recites the following lines in the poem: "When we disrespect them/ she gives us what we deserve, /a lesson in respect."[119] As Niviâna recites these lines, a loud whale calls out and the video shows violent thrashing waters hitting against a statue (*fig. 14*). Taking together the story of Sassuma Arnaa with Niviâna's lines, Niviâna suggests that by not actively protecting the water and the land, the relationship between the waters, Sassuma Arnaa, and humans becomes broken or disrupted. When Niviâna uses the personal pronoun of "us", she implicates the viewers and listeners to give rise to the impacts on her community and the importance of decisive action against environmental changes.

Jetñil- Kijiner settled on a Marshallese story that focuses on lessons about permanence through a narrative about two sisters who turned to stone, after trying to find a story about water in discussions with her elders. She decided to use this oral story, or what she calls a legend, to cast herself and Niviâna as sisters of ocean and sand and ice and snow.[120] Jetñil- Kijiner spoke with a writer of Marshallese legends, Heynes Jeik, who offered the legend of sisters in Ujae, which Jetñil- Kijiner summarizes in English:[121]

> The legend features sisters from Ujae who loved and respected each other very much. One day they decided to have a juggling competition around the entire island. They began their juggling competition – when the eldest reached a certain spot by the edge of the reef, she dropped the shells rock she was juggling, and she suddenly turned into stone. The younger

[118] Williamson, 141.
[119] "Rise: From One Island to Another," 350.org, last modified 2018, https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.
[120] Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, "The Process of the Poem," 350.org, 2018, https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/#bts
[121] Ibid.

> sister, who was following close behind, noticed this strangely shaped rock – when she came closer, she saw that it was her sister. In her grief, she decided to drop the rock she was juggling as well, choosing to turn to stone, so she could stay by her sister's side. The moral of the story is the love that connected the two sisters.[122]

Jetñil-Kijiner spoke with Jeik to understand the importance of stone, and they said "[…] stone is a part of our culture and everything becomes stone, it's something that never disappears."[123] From this, Jetñil- Kijiner drew out "a lesson in permanence" against what she sees as the destructive forces of climate change that put her home in a situation of precarity.[124] Aside from this, the idea of her and Niviâna as sisters and being-in-relation becomes solidified and permanent, a bond that will never go away. I argue that this serves as an acknowledgement of the incommensurability that comes with water from one's home rushing to overcome the other's and the complexity that lies with the destruction through water, whether it be melting or rising. Water, here, becomes the way through which Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner's bond becomes stone. The video shows women holding hands and young girls playing with each other, perhaps to suggest what these stone-permanent, watery bonds could look like (*fig. 16*; *fig. 17*). Most importantly, it seems to suggest that working together in solidarity, in sisterhood, will be part of the struggle towards decolonization, part of the struggle that is radical relationality. I outline this notion of sisterhood as only *one* possibility for radical relationality, knowing that the use of *sister* and the portrayal of women can neglect to consider how cisgender and straight women, as well as LGBTQ2S ("lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirit") are vulnerable to climate change

[122] Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, "The Process of the Poem."
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

in different, yet destructive ways.[125] This points to the fact that the popular discourse around climate change activism exists as part of heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism.

The digital space

While the kinship and relationality serve as the foundation of *Rise*, what makes the work truly unique is its digital format. I argue that the poem becomes activated through the digital space, precisely because the artists' use that space to both share their knowledge and experiences with one another and showcase their relationships to their communities and climate change. As previously mentioned, Indigenous artists who adopt digital or new media aesthetics in their work resist colonial imagery of their groups as being static, stuck-in-the-past, or primitive.[126] At the same time, Indigenous engagement with various media is not new, and reflects a history of artistic and aesthetic innovations.[127] Considering this, it is easy to see how the use of the digital can resist the idea that Niviâna's and Jetñil-Kijiner's communities, cultures, and histories are vanishing because of melting glaciers and rising seas.

Indeed, these climate and environmental changes do threaten the existence of their communities, as the poets describe the landscapes as "grieving" and "mourning," but they resist the idea that their communities will simply vanish by asserting their presence and that they will not simply leave if the environment destroys their homes.[128] By choosing to be permanent and rooting themselves to their homes "forever," they cast themselves and their communities into the

[125] Kirsten Vinyeta, Kyle Whyte, and Kathy Lynn. *Climate change through an intersectional lens: gendered vulnerability and resilience in indigenous communities in the United States*, (Pacific Northwest: United States Department of Agriculture, 2015), 3, https://www.fs.usda.gov/treesearch/pubs/49888.
[126] Nagam, 13.
[127] Ibid., 12.
[128] "Rise: From One Island to Another."

present and future.[129] Their words are amplified, though, by the accompanying images that indicate permanence and rootedness, particularly when Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner are laying on the ice and floating in the ocean (*fig. 12*; *fig. 13*). These moments suggest that they will not vanish, becoming parts of the past, but stay and engage in a kind of activism that envisions futures for themselves and their communities. Importantly, the poets understand that their futures are determined by the on-going effects of colonial actions from the past and present, evident when they explain how colonial powers attempted to demolish their communities and homes through extractive industries, but they resist any colonial attempts to render their communities insignificant or in-need-of-saving. This is specifically clear when the video shows members of the poets' homes staring actively at the screen, smiling, and sometimes laughing. These individuals are shown *in motion* with blinking eyes, changing facial expressions, and bodies in movement, rather than static models who form part of an image (*figs. 20-28*). The poets and their communities do not need to be rescued, and even though Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner realize the burden of living with tumultuously changing environments, they see establishing relationships with others around the world as making a difference to the future of their peoples. In other words, the video depicts the importance of that relationality and what it might look like, thereby intervening in anthropocene discourse. In this way, *Rise* also follows Hjorth et al.'s conceptualization of screen ecologies, where the screen works with the poet's radical relationality, exposing climate change as linked to colonialism.

Though the conversation around the digital form is important as it clearly activates radical relationality, it is worth mentioning how the digital space facilitates networking and sharing between the poets because, in the vein of Smith's arguments, networking is part of

[129] "Rise: From One Island to Another."

decolonizing, too. Even more, Maskêgon-Iskwêw discusses the importance of networked art practice for drawing on and sharing Indigenous knowledges, furthering Smith's arguments about networking as part of decolonizing. As discussed previously, the founder of 350.org, McKibben initially wanted Jetñil-Kijiner to write a poem on her own with a video depicting her sitting atop a glacier whose waters would eventually submerge her home. Jetñil-Kijiner resisted that portrayal by insisting on meeting Niviâna. As a result, Jetñil-Kijiner follows in Lopesi's arguments about using the internet and digital spaces to establish relationships with others across the world, where the poets work *with* the fact that the melting ice in one's home will result in sea inundation of the other. Rather than approach this incommensurable truth disparagingly or from a place of tragedy as McKibben initially imagined, Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner welcome each other. From their first lines, they greet each other by establishing themselves as "sister of ice and snow" and "sister of ocean and sand" (*fig. 19*).[130]

In tune with Lopesi's arguments, when Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner greet and welcome each other, they showcase the potential for communities to use the digital to work with each other and work through some of their own struggles, all the while foregrounding their strength and resilience. This video has been circulated on social media, specifically on YouTube and Tumblr, opening possibilities for the video to be heard, seen, appreciated, and challenged—further showcasing how the video-poem's digital format takes advantage of possible networks built online. It can be argued that the participatory format of the digital space is what allows for this radical relationality between Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner. What undergirds this statement is the belief that the internet and online spaces are accessible for everyone. However, due to issues of connectivity from unreliable telecommunications in the Circumpolar North, and expensive

[130] "Rise: From One Island to Another."

internet prices in the Pacific Islands, Indigenous peoples have had less opportunities to benefit from connectivity globally. As Yunes and Lopesi have pointed out, the ways in which Inuit and Pacifica use online spaces to connect, share, and create dialogues is what allows for relationship building, and self-determined content that reflects their communities. Thus, Maskêgon-Iskwêw might see *Rise* as Niviâna's and Jetñil-Kijiner's networked art practice, that takes advantage of the online format and possibilities for connections by thinking about a global issue of the climate crisis from how their local communities are being affected. From those melting glaciers to those rising seas, the poets give rise to their communities' experiences that are integral to dealing with the climate crisis. Thus, the digital format is integral to showcasing the poets' radical relationality and, by extension, the need for decolonizing the anthropocene.

Conclusion

> Discussing the creative process behind *Rise*, Niviâna states:
>
> > It was a lot of emotions, like seeing the ice melt firsthand was really overwhelming because I actually have an outlet, like a platform to share these things and show the world and not just talk about it.[131]

Niviâna's feelings around confronting the melting ice and then sharing this experience on a global stage shows the importance of creating self-determined content about personal experiences and knowledges about changing landscapes. Through *Rise*, Aka Niviâna and Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner use climate action to showcase how their communities are affected by climate change while balancing agency, resiliency, and their connections to the homes. They use a digital format and poetry to develop a relationship with and through the waterways while drawing on their respective cultural histories and community's knowledges. From their local contexts, they

[131] Aka Niviâna, "The Process of the Poem," 350.org, 2018, https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/#bts.

reach out globally through the waters to construct a radical relationality that considers the melting glaciers and rising seas as integral kin. Using poetry and performance, Jessie Kleemann implicates her body in the melting ice to make her relationship to the ice known to the audience and the ice itself. Processing grief as well as her desire to remain connected to the glacier despite its melting away, Kleemann draws on her community's knowledges, as well as her personal experiences with Kalaallit Nunaat's climate and landscape through poetry and performance. By comparing *Rise* and *Arkhticós Doloros*, I demonstrated how these artists establish a relationship to the waterways, as melting ice, or flowing water. Though Kleemann uses performance and poetry and Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner create a video-poem, they present uniquely situated works that refuse an erasure of their community's experiences through a waterview. As mentioned previously, adopting a waterview through radical relationality does not simply mean relating to the water—it necessitates a perspective of the world, human, and non-human life, *through* the water. Thus, the artists do not only think and relate to water—it shapes their understanding and relationships to each other's communities, themselves, and the water itself. In this way, water is part of the artists' climate actions and desire to incite change by focusing on "living well."

Though *Rise* and *Arkhticós Doloros* are inspiring works of climate action, their audiences might feel a sense of dread or doom from impending climate change disasters, particularly catastrophic flooding. Furthermore, while I have argued that both works intervene in colonial discourses that imagine Inuit and Pacifica communities as victims of climate change, lingering questions around how to support, work in solidarity with, or amplify the work of those communities might arise, especially when climate disasters on the homes of Indigenous peoples become more prevalent. Countries and organizations nationally have attempted to engage in conversations about how to best support these communities, but what is clear in these

conversations is that *Indigenous peoples are still being left out of the conversation*. When climate change activists and organizations from Western countries attempt to prevent Kalaallit Nunaat from developing their land for oil and gas, this might actually be a dangerous move that is insensitive to the country's colonial history and it might take away the community's autonomy from them—bordering on neo-colonial practices.[132] And when other wealthier countries or organizations suggest that the Marshallese should or should not invest in geo-engineering, and convince them to leave their lands to prepare to become climate refugees, this might remove their sense of agency and ignore their desire to be rooted to their homes in ways they see fit. The answer to the question of how to deal with climate change is certainly not an easy one, but as Faris highlights, both Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner "[…] emphasize relational conversation rather than position-taking."[133] Waterview suggests that this relational conversation can happen with and through the waters, and Baldy and Yazzie remind us that the water has always linked us, put us into a relationality whether we realize it or not. Niviâna, Jetñil-Kijiner, and Kleemann show that, from water, we can begin to unpack how to root our futures in the well-being of all.

[132] Markussen, 310.
[133] Faris, 88.

Illustrations

Figure 1. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros,* 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann performing on the icesheet from video (00:53) https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 2. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros,* 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann performing on the ice sheet from video (02:23): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 3. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros,* 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann touching her forehead to the ice from video (15:53): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

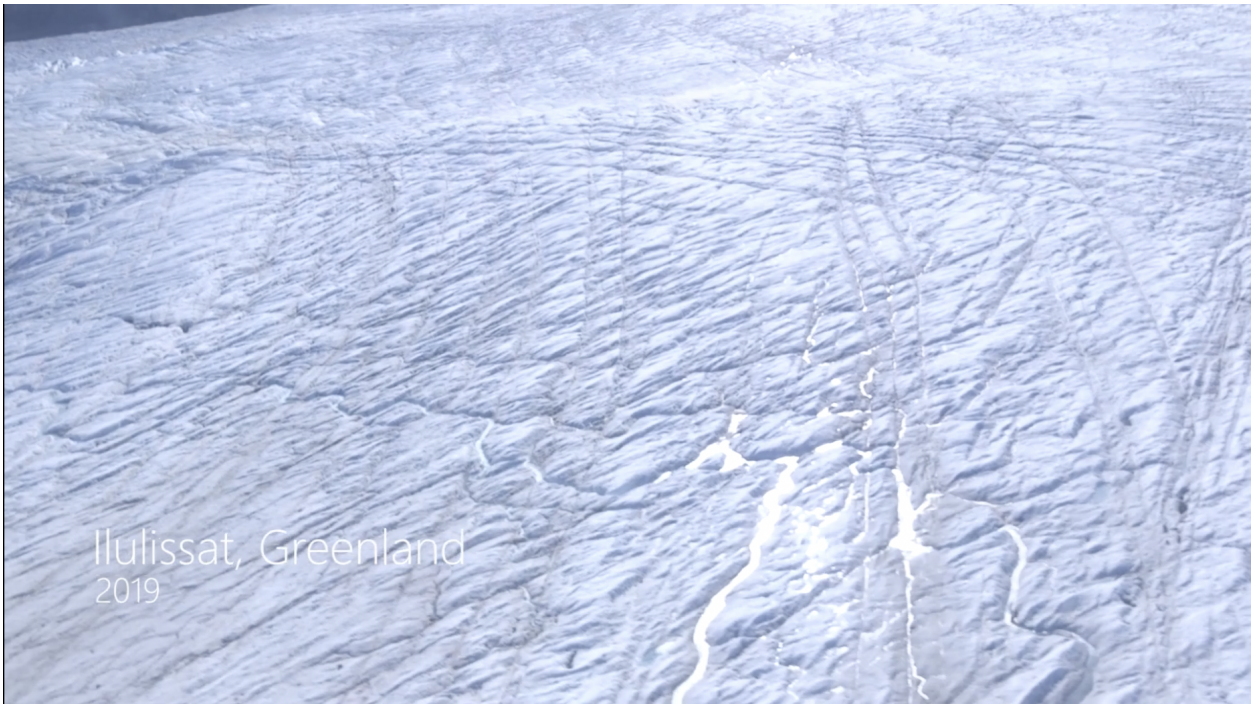

Figure 4. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros,* 2019, video of performance. Screenshot of ice sheet from video (00:05): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 5: Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros*, 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann holding black tarp above her head from video (03:58): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 6. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros,* 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann wrapping rope around her face from video (08:55): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 7. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros,* 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann performing with rope and tarp from video (09:51): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 8. Jessie Kleemann, *Arkhticós Doloros*, 2019, video of performance, screenshot of Kleemann crying from video (17:56): https://vimeo.com/362802774.

Figure 9. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of Niviâna and Jetñil-Kijiner from video (03:50): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/

Figure 10. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of Jetñil-Kijiner from video (03:04): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 11. Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch, *Water is Life*, protest banner, image courtesy of Onaman Collective: http://onamancollective.com/murdoch-belcourt-banner-downloads/.

Figure 12. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of Jetñil-Kijiner from video (05:13): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 13. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of Niviâna from video (05:10): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/

Figure 14. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of statue from video (01:39): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 15. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of whale from video (01:48): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/

Figure 16. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of people holding hands from video (05:18): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/

Figure 17. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshots of children holding hands from video (05:15): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 18. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of gifts from video (04:58): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/

Figure 19. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of poets from video (05:26): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 20. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individuals from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (04:45): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 21. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (03:39): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 22. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (02:21): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 23. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (04:55): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 24. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (03:57): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 25. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (02:08): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 26. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another*, 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (02:19): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 27. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another,* 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (02:41): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

Figure 28. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviâna, *Rise: From One Island to Another,* 2018, video-poem, screenshot of individual from Kalaallit Nunaat and Aelon Kein Ad from video (03:41): https://350.org/rise-from-one-island-to-another/.

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