

Ecology from Greek oikos 'house'

I have always been more comfortable around animals. As a kid I spent most my time outside, daydreaming, climbing trees, poking sticks into dead things, watching clouds form into unbelievable things. I feel more at ease, more at home, more myself in the unbuilt world. This relationship I've been fortunate to have with nature ebbs and flows through my life. There are times of extended separation followed by periods of reunion and renewal. Today my creative practice centers around ecology and the idea that everything is nature, the trees, the animals, the cars, the oil rigs, us...

I have an interdisciplinary practice founded in the sculptural. I often take on community oriented constructions projects to better understand how a community forms and functions. Architecture ties back to the Greek oikos, the root of the word Ecology, meaning house. Shelter. Home.

The study of ecology is one of relationships and that is what my work is about, our relationship with nature and each other. Through my sculpture, performance and video, I draw parallels between human and non-human ecosystems, seeking out where we align with and where we deviate from nature. In the gaps between our working with and against it, our feeling at home or out of place, there lie deeper truths that can lead us to our better nature and a more stable future. Because it's all nature. Understanding our place in it is the first step towards understanding ourselves.

In recent years my work has dematerialized into writing, video projection and performance. Whether my research results in a nomadic sculptural projection tent or a performative lecture with song, the work remains in the spacial, the sculptural, just now it travels more lightly, reflective of the shifting migration patterns of our global culture and community.

Currently I am developing and researching Migrations Songs, a collaborative project exploring the metaphysical aspects of migration, looking at human and nonhuman migration patterns on the micro and macro level. While immigration is in the news and on our minds I want to step back and take a different view on migration, away from the fear mongering, nationalism and political maneuvering. As with my last project I'm trying to draw parallels between non-human and human patterns and systems to see how we diverge and align.

The first phase of this project, which I am working on now, entails collecting migration stories and transforming these narratives into sonic works, songs or poems. It's sort of a collaboration within a collaboration where I invite poets, musicians and storytellers to share their migration story with another artist/culture maker who will then transform their partner's story into a "song." Then the roles can be reversed and the storyteller becomes the listener/creator. I am collecting these stories and songs to be used in what I am imagining to be an interactive installation about how and why we move around the world.

Phase two involves the construction of a series of nomadic projection tents as sculpture and screen to show videos relating to global migration patterns. This project is being supported by the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History.

-Sasha Petrenko, 2018