

Markus Baenziger / US

Barbara Ellmann / US

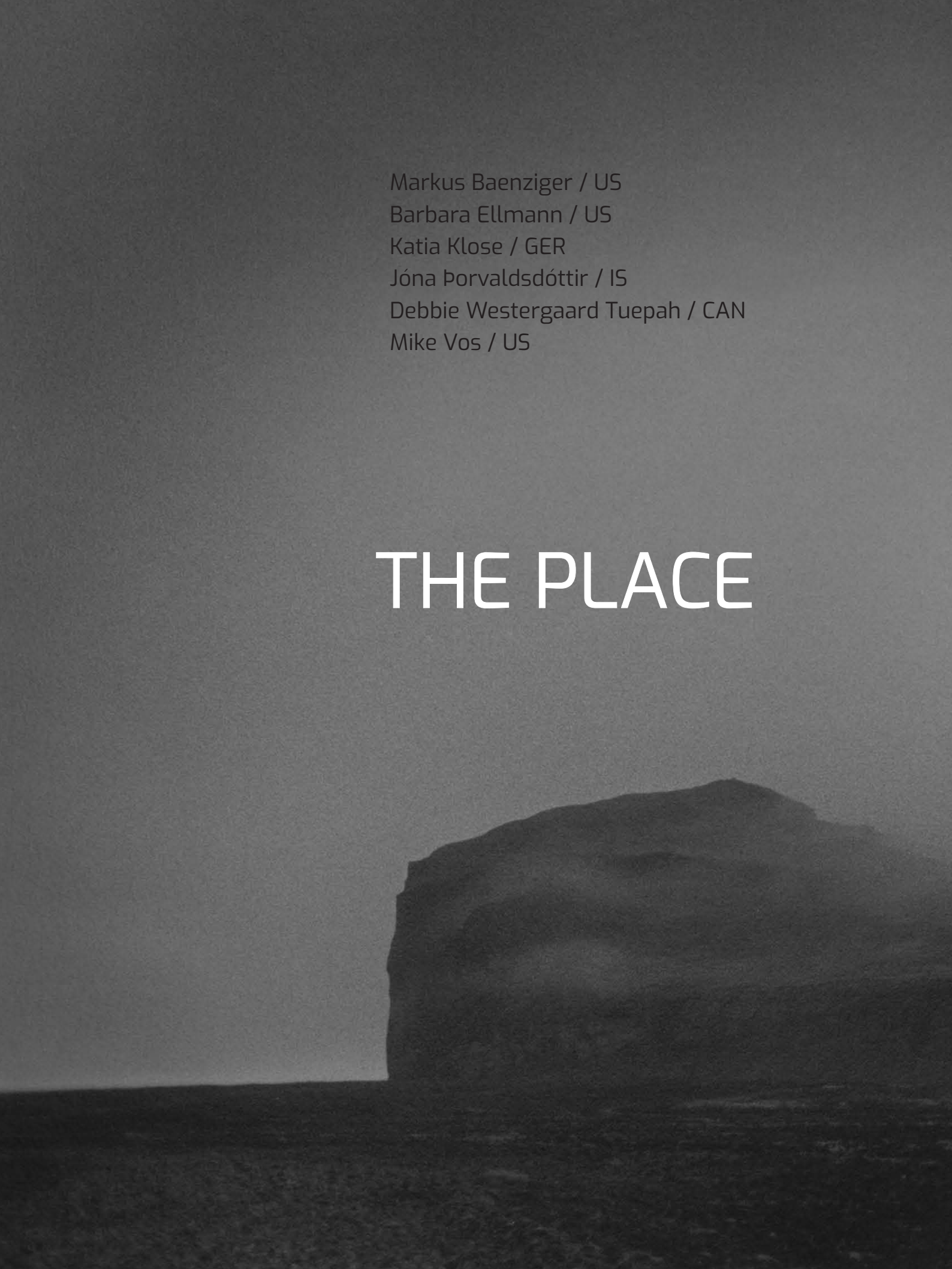
Katia Klose / GER

Jóna Þorvaldsdóttir / IS

Debbie Westergaard Tuepah / CAN

Mike Vos / US

# THE PLACE





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*Listasetrið að Bæ á Höfðaströnd (BAER ART CENTER) er staður þar sem listafólk hvaðan æva að úr heiminum kemur saman, staður þar sem þetta listafólk verður fyrir áhrifum stórbrotinnar náttúru, myndar sterk tengsl við umhverfið og þá einstaklinga sem það dvelur með. Bær er staður sem skilur eftir varanleg áhrif á þá sem þar dvelja, staður þar sem fjölbreytt listaverk mótask og verða til.*

BAER ART CENTER is a place where artists from around the world unite, a place where these artists are deeply influenced by the dramatic natural surroundings, bonding strongly with the environment and their fellow residents. BAER ART CENTER is a place that leaves a permanent impression on those who visit. It is a place where a broad spectrum of art is initiated and created.

Steinunn Jónsdóttir  
Framkvæmdastjóri  
Founder/director  
BAER ART CENTER



*"Big enough to get lost on: small enough to find yourself. That's how to use this island. I come here to place myself in the world. Iceland is a verb and its action is to center."* Roni Horn, Island Zombie, 2020

Why is it that people are drawn to Iceland? Is it the overwhelming, yet indescribable, beauty of the landscape? Is it the tantalizing sense of the unknown, that unseen expectation that is felt when you arrive in a new place or awaken each morning? Is it being captivated by that small, enchanted moment that occurs in the vastness of the landscape that cannot be explained? Or is it, simply, that there is no other place like this on Earth? Some will come only once to this island, a check on their bucket list, a kind of "been there, done that" badge of honor. They will visit many places and see incredible things and yet will leave never really understanding how incomplete their experience of Iceland is. For others, even those that have lived their whole lives in Iceland, they will be drawn to return again and again to the landscape, pulled back by some unseen energy and for reasons that may take years to understand. They will set off in search of the answers to questions they have yet to imagine. They will sense a spiritual force in the landscape, a kind of vibration to be found in the stillness of the place that will push them onward.

In June 2022, six artists, Markus Baenziger, Barbara Ellmann, Katia Klose, Mike Vos, Debbie Westergaard Tuepah, and Jóna Þorvaldsdóttir, arrived at the Baer Art Center in Hofsós, Iceland. They were three fine art photographers, two sculptors, and a painter, all with well-established and vibrant careers. Five of them had chosen to apply to this residency on the strong recommendation of others, artists and friends who had previously participated in the program, who had described their experiences as extraordinary and transformative. The sixth, a native of Iceland, had known this place before as participant and friend. When they arrived, each of them had plans and expectations about the work they would create, the questions they would ask, and the trajectory of their explorations. They had brought materials from their studios and conviction from past residencies. Each of them was confident in the need to explore their artistic practice through the lens of Iceland.

As the days passed and they became more and more immersed in the experiences of the residency (day trips, hikes, evening dinner conversations, long periods of studio time) and of the physical environment around them, their original plans and inquiries began to become insufficient or unsuccessful as means to pursuing their creative goals. However, something else began to happen for the six residents of Baer - time seemed to slow down, they turned inward to their thoughts while, simultaneously, looking more carefully at the spaces and everything around them, they sometimes sought counsel in each other, and they became more deliberate in their approach to working. The American artist Roni Horn described it this way, "it's action-packed up there, albeit very slow action, not obvious, not always easy to see — the weather, the birds, the ocean churn: an occasional seal napping on the shore." (Roni Horn, Island Zombie, 2020). Taken together, through these events the landscape began to reveal itself slowly and in small, personal ways to each of the artists. The sounds, colors, and textures found in its rugged terrain began to inhabit their work. The flotsam and jetsam collected on walks along the shoreline became reimaged in their creations. With each interaction, their efforts would move forward, a little clearer, a little purer, a little more centered to their practice. When they least expected it, the solutions for which they had been searching were revealed to them by the place itself.

When the residency ended and they returned home, the sense of a need to stay connected to each other was clear. Their time together had been charmed – open, respectful, motivating, genuine, harmonious, and filled with a generosity of spirit. A truly rarefied atmosphere. The collaboration among the group had moved and expanded in new directions. Creating an exhibition was the next logical step, yet no participants from Baer had ever undertaken this before, although that would not stop them. In the end, they chose the title for this exhibition, The Place, together. As a word with so many meanings, as action and concept, as verb and noun, The Place seemed to be perfect in describing their Baer experiences and their creative endeavors. It was from the very specific place, the vast Icelandic landscape around Baer, that they had drawn power, inspiration, and the insight to create amazing bodies of new work.

The exhibition also provides an opportunity to celebrate their relationships to each other, to the time they spent together, to the work they created during this time, and most importantly to Iceland, as a place – spiritual, physical, and creative. It acts as a marker in time to place an extraordinary experience, to share with others the inspiration that moved their work in new ways, to share their new bonds with each other, to share new insights into their work, and, ultimately, to share a statement about the natural environment and the precariousness of its future.

With this exhibition, these six artists now take their place in the long lineage of artists, both Icelandic and otherwise, who have looked to Iceland as a place for inspiration and who have found, not the answers that they sought, but more questions to be explored. Iceland, in all its tremendous grandeur has moved them closer to their artistic centers.

Jane K. Royal  
Freelance Museum Educator and Art Historian, New York City, New York

*„Nógu stór til að týnast á: nógu lítil til að þú getir fundið þig. Þannig á að nota þessa eyju. Ég kem hingað til að finna jarðtengingu. Ísland er orka sem umvefur þig og tengir þig jörðinni."* Roni Horn, Island Zombie, 2020

Hvað er það sem dregur fólk að Íslandi? Er það hin stórbrotna, ólýsanlega, fegurð landsins? Er það lokkandi tilfinning hins óþekkta, þessi eftirvænting sem fylgir nýjum áningarstað eða því þegar þú vaknar á nýjum degi? Er það að heillast af þessu litla, töfrandi augnabliki sem þú upplifir í víðáttu landsins? Eða er það einfaldlega vegna þess að eyjan er einstök, ólík öllu öðru á þessari jörðu? Sumir heimsækja eyjuna einungis einu sinni, til að geta sagst hafa komið og fá að launum „kom þangað, gerði það" - viðurkenningu. Þeir heimsækja marga staði og sjá ótrúlegustu hluti án þess þó að gera sér grein fyrir hversu yfirborðskennd upplifun þeirra af Íslandi er. Aðrir, jafnvel þeir sem alltaf hafa búið á Íslandi, laðast að náttúrunni sem seiðir þá til sín á einhvern dulrænan hátt og það getur tekið mörg ár að skilja ástæður þess. Þeir hefja leit að svörum við spurningum sem þeir þekkja ekki ennþá. Þeir skynja dulúð og kraft landsins, eins konar titring sem felst í kyrrð staðarins og knýr þá áfram.

Í júní 2022 dvöldu sex listamenn, Markus Baenziger, Barbara Ellmann, Katia Klose, Mike Vos, Debbie Westergaard Tuepah og Jóna Þorvaldsdóttir í Listasetrinu Bæ á Höfðaströnd. Þetta voru þrír listljósmyndarar, tveir skúlptúristar og einn listmálari, allt starfandi listamenn með rótgróinn starfsferil. Dvöl fimm þeirra var tilkomin vegna ábendinga annarra listamanna og vina sem höfðu dvalið í Bæ og lýstu upplifun af dvöl sinni sem umbreytikrafti í lífi sínu. Einn dvalargestanna sex, sem er Íslendingur, þekkti setrið sem þátttakandi og vinur. Við komuna höfðu allir í hópnum fyrirfram ákveðnar væntingar og plön um þá listsköpun sem unnið skyldi að. Listamennirnir komu með hræfni að heiman, ásamt hugmyndum byggðum á reynslu frá sambærilegri dvöl á öðrum stöðum. Allir gerðu þeir sér grein fyrir mikilvægi þess að iðka list sína á forsendum hins íslenska umhverfis.

Eftir því sem dagarnir liðu dróst hópurinn meira og meira inn í andrúmsloft listasetursins (með dagsferðum, gönguferðum, kvöld-verðarsamræðum og löngum vinnulotum í vinnustofum setursins) og áhrifum umhverfisins, og hin upprunalegu áform um list-sköpun urðu ófullnægjandi. Hins vegar fór eitthvað annað að gerast hjá íbúunum sex í Bæ - tíminn virtist hægja á sér, þeir fóru að stunda innhverfa íhugun, en fóru á sama tíma að veita nærumhverfinu meiri athygli, leituðu stundum ráða hvert hjá öðru og urðu markvissari í vinnubrögðum sínum. Bandaríska listakonan Roni Horn lýsti áhrifum Íslands á eftirfarandi máta: „það er svo margt að gerast þarna, en það er í hægum takti, ekki augljóst og lítið áberandi — veðrið, fuglarnir, öldurnar: einstaka selir sofandi á ströndinni." (Roni Horn, Island Zombie, 2020). Út frá þessari reynslu tók náttúran hægt og rólega að mótast í vitund listamannanna. Hljóðið, litirnir og blærinn í þessu harðgerða landslagi fóru að taka sér bólstað í sköpuninni. Litlu hlutirnir sem safnað var í gönguferðum á ströndinni fóru að koma fram í verkum þeirra. Áhrifin færðu þau nær markmiðum dvalarinnar, urðu aðeins skýrari, aðeins hreinni og aðeins tengdari sköpun þeirra. Þegar þess var síst von, uppfyllti staðurinn væntingarnar og svaraði spurningunum sem þau höfðu leitað svara við.

Þegar dvölinni lauk og heim var komið, kom fram skýr þörf hópsins til áframhaldandi samstarfs. Samverustundir þeirra voru einstakar - opinskáar, fullar virðingar, hvetjandi, ósviknar, samhljóma og fullar jákvæðni og hlýju. Algjörlega frábært andrúmsloft. Samstarf hópsins hafði öðlast nýjar víddir. Sjálfsagt framhald þessa var að undirbúa samsýningu, það höfðu engir hópar sem dvalið höfðu á Bæ gert áður, en það stoppaði þau ekki. Þau nefndu í sameiningu sýninguna „Staðurinn" eða „The Place" sem á ensku getur þýtt aðgerð eða verið hugtak, sögn og nafnorð, fullkomið fyrir upplifunina og sköpunina í Bæ. Það var frá þessum einstaka stað, hinu magnaða íslenska landslagi í kringum Bæ, sem þau fengu kraft, innblástur og innsæi til sköpunar frábærra nýrra listaverka.

Með sýningunni fagnar hópurinn einnig tengslum sín á milli, samverunni, listsköpuninni, en síðast en ekki síst Íslandi, sem andlegum, veraldlegum og skapandi stað. Sýningin tímasetur þessa einstöku upplifun og deilir innblæstrinum sem færði verkum þeirra nýjar víddir, tengingu þeirra sín á milli, nýrri sýn á verk þeirra og er jafnframt yfirlýsing listamannanna um náttúruna og ótrygga framtíð hennar.

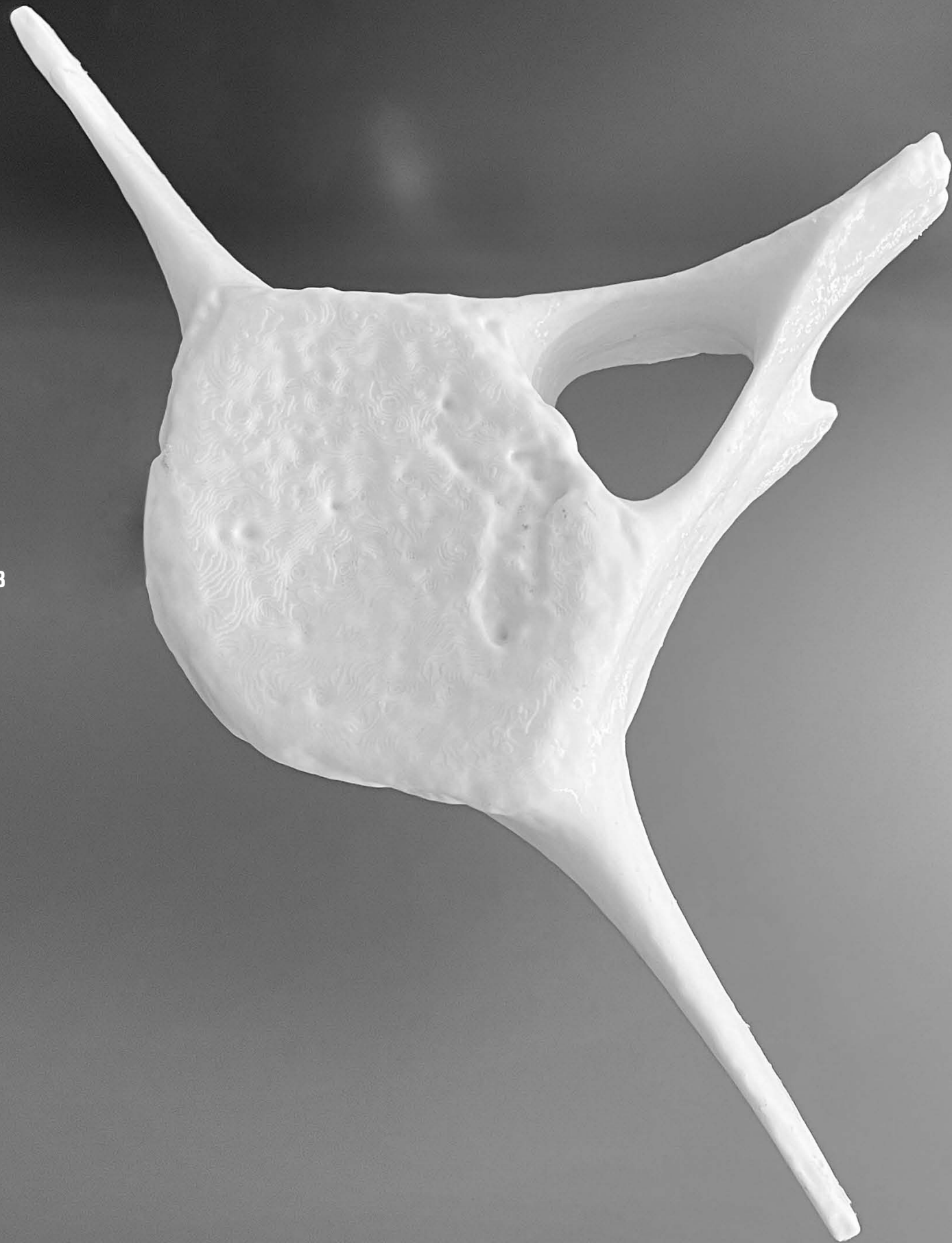
Með sýningunni skipa þessir sex listamenn sér sess í löngum röðum listamanna, bæði íslenskra og erlendra, sem leitað hafa til Íslands fyrir innblástur og hafa fundið, ekki svörin sem þeir leituðu að, heldur fleiri ósvaraðar spurningar. Ísland, í öllum sínum stór-fengleika, hefur styrkt þeirra listrænu jarðtengingu.

Jane K. Royal  
Sjálfstætt starfandi safnakennari og listfræðingur, New York borg, New York  
Translated by Fanney Kr. Hermannsdóttir

















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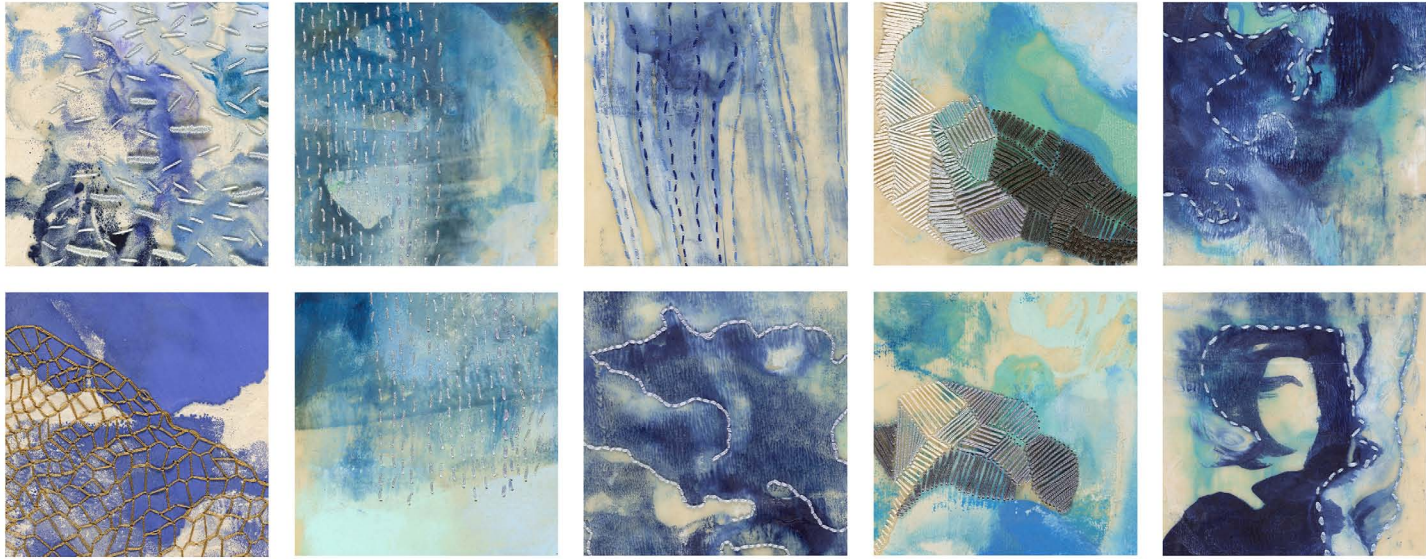


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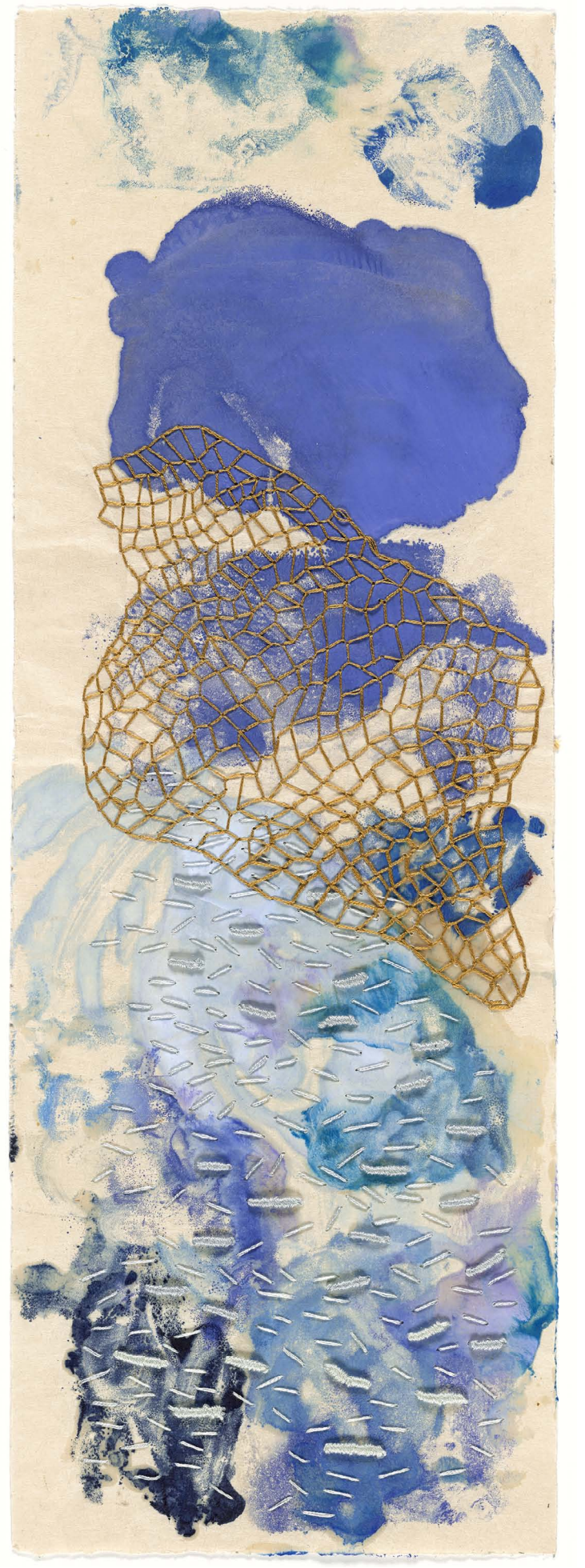


















**Markus Baenziger** is a Swiss born artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY. He has shown extensively in the U.S. as well as internationally. He is a recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship award, and his work was featured in solo exhibitions at the Edward Thorp Gallery, NYC; the List Gallery, Swarthmore College; the Cantor Fitzgerald Gallery, Haverford College; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, NYC, and numerous group exhibitions including the Rose Art Museum; the Walker Art Center; the Walton Arts Center; the Yale University Art Gallery, among others. His work has been widely reviewed, and can be found in the collection of the Walker Art Center, MN, and numerous private collections.

My first response to the stunning landscape surrounding Baer was to simply go on walks and take in the experience. Eventually I came across various small pieces of plastic, fragments of fishing nets, and other flotsam washed up at the shore. I started to collect them together with other materials from nature and created a series of small sculptures. They are inspired by the brightly colored rope that I found absorbed into the ground and entangled with the sea grass, or the small fragments of plastic tossed with the stone pebbles on the shore. I see these works as a reflection on the intersection of nature and the man-made world. They establish a dialogue between the beauty of our natural environment and our forceful positioning within nature, which is constantly absorbing the physical remnants of our presence.

**www.markusbaenziger.com**  
page **6** *Flotsam & Jetsam Series* No 4, 2022, 10 W x 19 H x 10 D cm Found objects, plaster, brass page **11** *Flotsam & Jetsam Series* No 2, 2022, 18 W x 22 H x 18 D cm Found objects, plaster page **21** *Flotsam & Jetsam Series* No 3, 2022, 25 W x 17 H x 6 D cm Found objects, plaster page **22** *Flotsam & Jetsam Series* No 1, 2023, 53 W x 15 H x 14.5 D cm, Found objects, brass

**Barbara Ellmann** lives in New York, where she works as an artist in painting, drawing, and mixed media. She's exhibited work for forty years at venues including the Katonah Museum of Art, the Parrish Art Museum, Montclair Art Museum, and the Haslla Art World Museum. She has been selected for residencies at Yaddo, the Hermitage Artist Retreat, Haslla Art World Museum, and Baer Art Center. She has also produced public works for the MTA; the City of Summit, NJ; and the Queens Public Library.

In Iceland, I experienced a place where nature takes center stage in a way that feels both ancient and alive. I found this most evident in the unstoppable motion of water throughout the landscape. On any given day, one can encounter fog or rain descending from the sky, steam or geysers rising from the earth, and rivers, waterfalls, and glaciers carving through the landscape.

I've recorded this experience through a series of sewn drawings on encaustic monoprints, which I've then scanned and blown up as single-edition large-scale prints. To make these works I encourage molten encaustic to run and mix on a heated palette, then lift the paint with a sheet of paper. The wax quickly cools, preserving the motion of the paint in striking ways. Drawing with thread adds definition to the spontaneous composition, and enlarging the works as digital prints heightens their visual impact. The result is a layered, shifting topography that gestures to water's constant movement and transformation.

**www.barbaraellmann.com**  
page **13** *ABOVE ALL*, 2023, Digital print on archival paper, 193.04 x 63.5 cm (226.06 x 161.29 cm with border) page **16** *DREAMS OF WATER COMING TRUE*, 2022, Ten digital prints on archival paper, 111.76 x 294.64 cm page **23** *ASD #68*, 2022, Encaustic monoprint on kitakata paper with embroidery thread, 50.8 x 17.78 cm

**Katia Klose**, born in East Berlin (Germany), lives in Leipzig as a photographer and picture editor. She studied graphic design at the Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee, photography at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig and picture editing at the Ostkreuzschule Berlin. Katia Klose's photographic work examines reality in all of its sensual and poetic qualities. Natural forms are reconfigured and re-examined when staged by the photographer as her subjects. Through documenting the environment in this way, her images reveal the hidden connections between human existence and nature.

The series *seaweed (the hide)* uses seaweed found on the black sand beach around Baer and arranges these specimens so they may seem unreal or surreal. Similarly, *The Play* which appears as a program for a fictional performance places her artist colleagues and others at Baer as curious and vivid protagonists.

**www.katiaklose.com**  
page **9, 18, 25** from the series *seaweed (the hide)* 2022, Inkjetprints on fine art Kozo natural japanese mulberry paper 75x110 cm page **24** from the series *The Play*, 2022, printed magazine

**Jóna Þorvaldsdóttir** is a fine art photographer based in Reykjavik who only works in analogue photography, especially in historic techniques in her darkroom. Jóna's work is strongly influenced by Icelandic folktales, where hidden creatures and beings lurk, eager to reveal themselves and stir our imagination. This fascination with the unseen, is beautifully reflected in her soft and dreamlike images. Her dedication to black and white analogue photography, allows her to create images that evoke a sense of timelessness and introspection.

Her images often transcend stark reality as she strives to present them from unique perspectives that challenge conventional norms. Employing traditional and alternative photographic processes such as palladium, bromoil and silver gelatin, require meticulous craftsmanship. The sacred space of her darkroom becomes integral to her creative journey, where she immerses herself in the transformation of film into tangible prints. It is within this realm that magic happens, where happy accidents and boundless imagination find their expression.

**www.jonaphotoart.is**  
**Cover and back cover** *Mist over Thordarhofti* (detail) two analogue silver gelatin photographs from 35mm negatives on Ilford/Hahnemühle MG fine art paper, each image size is 50x40cm mounted in a wooden frame with glass, size 65x55cm page **15** *Old and wise* analogue silver gelatin photograph from 35mm negative on Ilford/Hahnemühle MG fine art paper image size 40x50cm mounted in a wooden frame with glass, size 55x65cm page **20** *Another dimention* analogue platinum/palladium photograph from 8x10" negative, Bergeer Cot fine art paper. Total Image size is 28X35,5 cm, antique gold frame size 55x74cm

**Debbie Westergaard Tuepah** is a Canadian artist working in Surrey, BC. Notable exhibitions include Surrey Art Gallery, The Reach Gallery Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, and Bellevue Washington's Sculpture Biennial. She is the 2011 recipient of Emily Carr University of Art+Design Chancellor's Award and co-recipient of the 2019 Canadian Museum Association Award in Indigenous Contemporary Art Education.

Roaming Baer's powerful environment provided me space to consider place and collect detritus from ocean and land. Found plastics bore evidence of degradation into microplastics, which exist in water, sediments, air, rain, ice, and glaciers; and the bodies of humans and other creatures. When combined with the discovery of cetacean vertebrae and animal bones this relationship between plastics and life materialized in my work.

Scanned from a bone, a flow of 3D printed (compostable) bio-plastic cetacean vertebrae hover overhead. Resting below, table-like photographs of degraded plastics echo the aerial photographs of diminishing glaciers by famed Icelandic photographer Ragnar Axelsson. In poetic conclusion, three cetacean vertebrae balance precariously on found fishing buoys, and a sheep's pelvic bone gently envelops plastic detritus.

**www.debbietuepah.com**  
page **2, 12, 19** *Dissolution 1-3 | Skagafjörður*, inkjet prints, found objects, 64x36cm page **8** *Tender Rituals VI*, 2023, W 325 x H 15 x D 26cm, compostable bioplastic, fishing line page **14** *Tender Rituals IV*, 2022, W 23 x H 32 x D 76cm, Aluminum Buoys, cetacean vertebraee

**Mike Vos** is a photographer, visual artist and musician from Portland, OR. Vos' work is presented as an interconnected series of photographic projects that revolve around a central theme: wildlife's reclamation of the industrial landscape. Drawing inspiration from various literary movements and themes, Vos uses traditional and experimental 4x5 film techniques to craft complex visual narratives that advocate for the preservation of wild spaces. These photographic projects all exist within a shared universe; each focusing on different facets of an overarching story.

Traditional landscape photography lacks the ability to fully translate the complex emotions that come when viewing places firsthand that are ancient, beautiful, and strange. Much like variant adaptations of the same subject matter, Vos pushes the capabilities of analog photography to interpret landscapes into ethereal and otherworldly dreamscapes to capture the awe and wonder that exists in the natural world.

**www.deadcitiesphoto.com**  
page **7** *Jökulsárlón, Only a Memory*, 2022, 4x5 film, in-camera double exposure, 61cm x 76cm page **10** *Sprouting as if from Nowhere*, 2022, 4x5 film, in-camera double exposure, 61cm x 76cm page **17** *In the Valley of the Shark Fisher*, 2022, 4x5 film, in-camera double exposure, 61cm x 76cm

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