

ARTIST'S STATEMENT:

Continuum, Quilt, 2018

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Abstract

Artist's Statement for the cover art of IJPS volume 8, issue 1: Continuum, quilt

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The quilt pictured on the cover of this issue of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* is called Continuum. It was created in 2018. It is 16" x 17", and was created in response to *Turbulence*, a musical composition by Libby Meyer, as part of the Composers in the Wilderness program. The recurring, descending pattern of melody makes me think of water; it descends as rain, flows from hillsides and mountains, and gathers in streams. The melody dominates the other musical notes, so I chose to make the rivulets of water dark against a lighter background. Water rises and falls like musical notes on sheet music. The melody becomes discordant, evoking flowing water crashing up against obstacles. My water rivulets surge up and meet with printed areas of confused imagery. The water flows over and around the obstacles; it returns to relative calm, and the process repeats itself. The overlying quilting lines

emphasize this continuum. The abrupt ending is depicted by the dark rectangle in the right margin. The image and music are finite, but the cycle of water continues forever.



Continuum, 2018 (16" x 17")

Artist's Statement: Continuum

I make art quilts using my own fabrics which are produced with Procion MX dyes or fabric paints; I paint, silk-screen, deconstructed silk-screen, stencil, stamp, and hand paint my images on white cotton fabric.

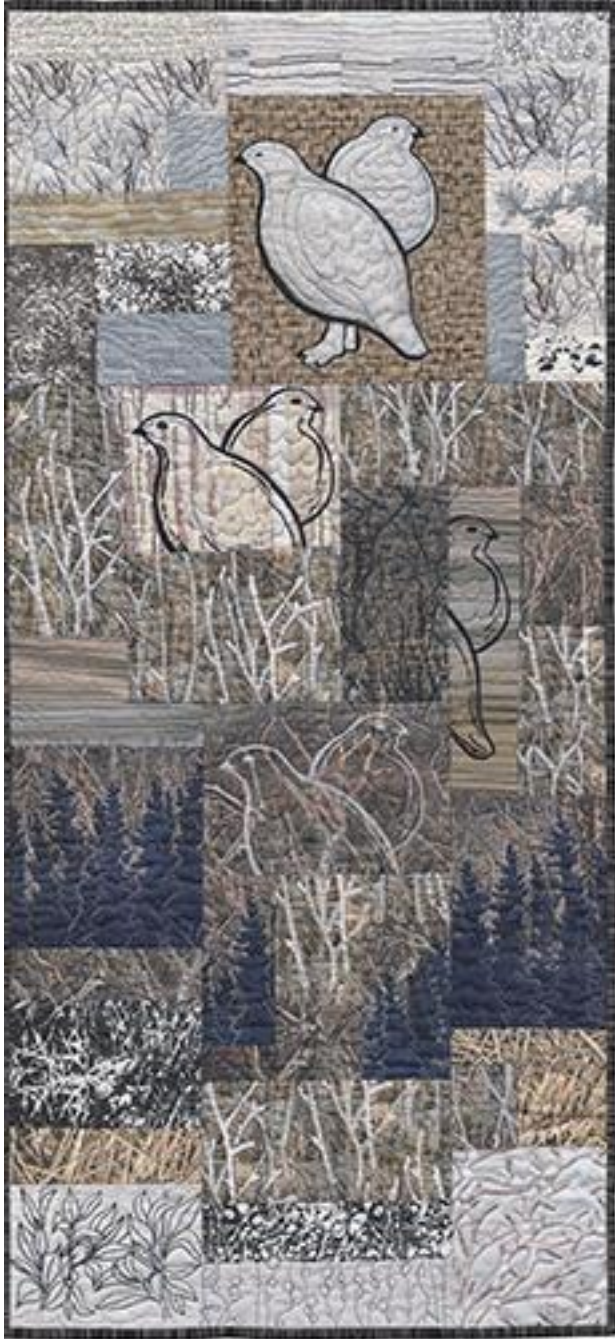
Collaboration has been pivotal in my work for over a decade. I was a participant of In the Time of Change: Envisioning the Future program in 2010 and have taken part in each new program they have presented. The variety of scientists we have worked with are indicated by the names of each program: The Art of Fire, 2012; Tropic Cascades, 2013; Microbial Worlds, 2017: and Boreal Forest Stories, 2022. This program offers opportunities for artists to work with scientists in selected fields for 1-2 years, then contribute work to an art exhibit at the end of the collaboration. The knowledge and deeper understanding of the natural world I have gained from working with these scientists has changed how I see the world, and how I describe it visually.



Spruce Smoke, 2012 (35" x 45.5")

This quilt depicts a flashback of burning spruce trees, inset into bare ground and dead trees smoldering after a fire. The intensity of the fire, and how deeply it burns into the organic layer, will affect how the area will revegetate. The seeds that are buried underground will be free to germinate. Some plants have roots that will re-grow new plants; spruce trees do not.

The In a Time of Change (ITOC) program (<https://itoc.alaska.edu>), founded in 2008 by the Bonanza Creek Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) program in Fairbanks, Alaska, facilitates and produces transdisciplinary events and exhibits focused on social-ecological themes, including climate change, wildfire, predator control, and the role of microbes in environmental health. ITOC recognizes that the arts, humanities, and sciences bring different yet synergistic perspectives and approaches to the natural world. Collaborations between the arts, humanities, and sciences can engage people at the intellectual, intuitive, and emotional levels, and can strengthen humans' understanding of and appreciation for the environments and ecosystems in which they live. At the global scale, increases in human population are driving climate change and resource depletion, resulting in acute local problems and issues at the social-ecological interface. Addressing the grand challenges of our time will require a synthesis of multiple perspectives, including the sciences, arts, and humanities. All of these disciplines share common aims of revealing, communicating, and responding to truths about the world. They also have the potential to engage the public more successfully than can traditional scientific communication methods. Synthesizing these diverse perspectives stands to yield much greater success in solving complex problems and promoting outreach and education than separate disciplines working in relative isolation.



Habitat Loss, Plumage Mismatch, 2019 (20.5" x 44")

Ptarmigan are adapted for survival by feathers changing color from brown in the summer to white in the winter, and back again. The length of daylight is the main determinant of this seasonal molt. As our climate changes, snow melts earlier each

year, leaving white ptarmigan visible in the midst of their browning world. As climate changes bringing warmer temperatures, vegetation is able to grow at increasingly higher elevation. Brushy undergrowth and spruce trees invade areas previously inhabited by ptarmigan.

Many of the fabrics in this piece are hand-dyed, silkscreened, and/or designed by me. I use drawings and textures, some photographic, which I manipulate in Photoshop, and have commercially printed. The white-tailed ptarmigan images in this piece have been silk-screened onto fabrics. Birds at the top of the piece are surrounded by typical vegetation and snow patterns found in their environment. Outlines toward the bottom represent ghost images of birds surrounded by vegetation species which now inhabit areas where they used to live.

I also participated in an unusual collaboration with members of Elements Artist Group in 2017. We responded to original music composed in Denali National Park by musicians who were participants of the Composers in the Wilderness Program. I have little background in music and found this to be both fascinating and initially terrifying. This challenge has given me insight into combining fabrics as well as a deeper appreciation for contemporary composing. You can find more information about these activities at <https://www.composinginthewilderness.com/elements> and https://events.mtu.edu/event/denali_music_inspired_by_wilderness

I am currently working on a series of 8-10 large quilts depicting climate change, using knowledge learned from my work with scientists. This body of work is made possible by an Individual Artist's grant from a Rasmuson Foundation Individual Artist's grant received in 2020. More information is at <http://www.reenancarow.com>



Selawik Sheefish, 2021 (56" x 65")

Selawik Sheefish describes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's ongoing scientific study of sheefish for 20+ years in the Selawik River in Alaska. My interest in and knowledge of this subject stems from reading research articles and having discussions with Ray Hander, who has been periodically studying Selawik River sheefish for 16 years. A huge permafrost thaw slump was created in 2004, from the thawing of a massive chunk of permafrost on the side of a hill slope bordering the Selawik River. It dumped huge amounts of silt into the river over several years, which created a delta at the base,

silted up the river for miles, and potentially affected all life in the river. My sheefish drawings were done referencing the underwater photographs, taken by Paul Vecsei.

The column of clear water on the right is the backdrop for healthy fish. The pair at the bottom are spawning, and the eggs nestle down in gravel at the bottom of the river to hatch. On the left, the column of water is filled with silt. The fish are depicted as ghost fish, representing the potentially adverse effect on them of silty water. Eggs which are laid in at the river bottom land on top of accumulated sediment and may not hatch as successfully as in gravel.

Ree Nancarrow grew up in Redfield, South Dakota, and graduated from the University of Minnesota with a B.S. in Education in 1963. She lived near Denali National Park, AK, for 50 years and currently lives in Fairbanks, AK. She was a Denali National Park Artist-in-Residence, has been accepted and won awards in many national shows, and has had ten solo shows. Major commissions include a panel quilt for the U.S. Army, Fort Wainwright Bassett Hospital, Fairbanks AK, and a four-panel quilt for Eielson Visitor's Center, Denali National Park, AK. She received an Interior Alaska Mayor's Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Arts in 2012. She was a Rasmuson Individual Artists Grant recipient in 2020.

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