



The Portland Art Museum Podcast - Episode 3

SPEAKERS

Grace Kook-Anderson, Annette Bellamy

G Grace Kook-Anderson 00:05

You're listening to the Portland Art Museum podcast. On the previous episode we heard from Ryan Pierce, a Portland artist featured in the map is not the territory about his art and life as an outdoors guy for artists. On this episode we're going to venture to halibut code Alaska and hear from a net Bellamy in the map is not the territory and that's peace. Moving Mountains draws you into the gallery. It's a massive sculpture that hangs from the ceiling. Her clay forms appear to be floating rocks making up the shape of the mountain and that's connection with the earth is strong, and it ties in directly with her work as a commercial Fisher woman, along with her husband, Marvin. A net decades long experience on the ocean also finds its way into her art maybe evident by her use of fish skin as a medium relevant links will be in this episode's description. And a full transcript is available at Portland Art Museum dot o RG slash podcast you will hear my voice from time to time but only when there was a shift in topics until then. This is a net Bellamy

A Annette Bellamy 01:26

My name is Annette Bellamy and I live in halibut Cove Alaska Island community across the bay from Homer when we're out of catch Mac Bay Well, I came to Alaska and 73 and I was going to University of Washington came up to work for a summer and loved Alaska's energy long winters. And I think I actually had it, I become an artist, I had the time to be creative, I started fishing right away. And so when you're fishing, it's very safe. All you have all the months of winter, so it'd be at least six, maybe even eight months off. So I had the time to be creative. And I think that's what a lot of people are missing, undisturbed and interrupted time. So that was and a lot of darkness. Lot of introspection. I think, operated better in a remote area versus an urban area. And it's become part of my life now. Very Yeah, it's very much a part of my life. I never never thought I would not live I mean, I didn't consider living in a really rural life or and raised in Seattle, although I tended to like being out of the city. I just happened upon fishing because I met Marvin he was a good fishermen, otherwise it wouldn't have continued and fishing I'll have to say a fish. This is my 45th season lot of yours that you can tell is

my hands you know my face the wind in my face, but some fishing experiences have been the most exciting experiences I've had in my life. Just it's been an opportunity to go to places that unless you had a boat you couldn't get there you probably wouldn't be there for weeks and weeks for runs that are like around Luca we'd be there may be over Solstice for two or three weeks on the outset auto coast halibut fishing in three B which is on the Alaska peninsula coast or south of Kodiak Island, which was a 30 hour run just totally wild country. Lots of natural rates, I mean lots of high density of stocks. halibut saw the peak of halibut in the 80s and 90s mid peaked in the 30s but it was unprecedented massive halibut and healthy salmon stocks mean it's just been been a pretty exciting lifestyle. I never wanted to fish in the winter I mean at least said I didn't want to fish in the winter. But with all the daylight the energy you get from Alaska you don't need as much sleep it's kind of amazing what you can do. Although I'm a strong believer in eight hours now like eight hours a night but fishing has been a big influence on me using your hands you have to know not you have to be fast everything and efficient cutting and dressing and bleeding and not missing a beat kind of when you're in repetitive you know work but you know really well and you can kind of opens your mind you can daydream about other things while you're doing it that's kind of nice thing at a cell phone signal it's wonderful and fishing I have to say is a lesson when you're certainly used to fish with the boat we have now that Kelsey was built in ADA and we finished the first probably maybe 15 years have done hundred miles offshore halibut fishing and it's yeah when you're out that far off shore it's it's actually better weather sometimes and middle of the Gulf than it is closer to shore but it was one storm that real you know I've when storm that came up with it wasn't forecasted that we had to just jog in the night I'll say the night we couldn't make any headway that finally after about four hours of jogging we could make just a little bit of headway maybe four knots and took us over 30 hours to get sure that was that I said you know what it's a small boat and a big ocean I think we'll just stay closer and before that we had a one incident that is certainly something I should touch upon because it was huge but I think fishermen it's something that people had lose a boat at sea we don't like to talk about but we had a boat go down and capsize and 84 rear goes 83 when two minutes ago it was down and it was after 48 hour halibut opening and there was you know you're going around the clock for 48 hours and I took the first we'll watch heading in heavy load on the boat and we are 60 miles offshore with the following see in April and we had a buddy boat that was maybe three miles off of us that we you know kept radio contact that Marvin and just come up to relieve me and he he said he didn't like the feel. He said get the crew up and I ran down to the enjoyment of the folks to get the crew up. And as I came up the boat was going over in the water coming in and the crew got off but it was just barely Marvin was trapped in the wheelhouse doing a May Day and he didn't come out until the boat was under and we had at the time there was no safety rags. But we had a hydrostatic release for a man life raft that popped up. Thank God we hadn't had time to get our survival suits. So as soon as Marvin came up, he started shouting orders and had us keep around this color that was floating in the life raft popped up. And the May Day they heard they kept the glasses on the binoculars honest and we are in the life raft. They helped us everybody helped each other get in, but we were picked up within probably half an hour hypothermic a little bit and we're on a boat that took took a long time to get in maybe about 12 hours. And it was a boat that didn't have any heat a nightmare. But that was a big loss. And I think there is a I think when we had the halibut Derby days, where these you know, hellacious catches in short amounts of times before we had regulations. A lot of boats went down lot of injuries. And it was that was hard. But the first thing we did is we had our first boat we fish together. We had that still. And we lost everything was under insured. Marvin, his brother medicine at the dock gave us \$4,000 no 6000, Marvin gave each of the crew members that thousand. And we had a 4000 to pay off bills. And then we got our old boat

and told the center out and we had this little catcher saying or Jitney. And we went to camera shack. And it's the only time one time deal that we happen to be there. When all these red salmon showed up. And the people the boats that Michelle or draft or inside the lagoon in the creek and I think it was the winds or something the fish blew out. So we are on our own and had all these fish that may cut. So we kind of made up for this huge loss. It was just unbelievable that we you know, it was lucky somebody just and I you know when people ask me how do you feel about going back out in a boat after a boat cap sizes. And I guess I never thought about it. Because I had trust in the boat. The real careful about me. We're always careful. Marvin has always been safety minded. But that was that was a big deal. So the longer I live, the more I feel pretty lucky that we've scraped through different things you know that was so fishing has been huge in life experiences. And we pulled people out of the water to a couple times. So that's pretty dramatic stuff. Then I come home to my studio and it's nothing's moving feels good. I've got the heat on. And I'm you know kind of feeding my creativity with everything that comes out of my head. So it's a for me, it's been a good mix. And I've got time I've got the time. That's the biggest deal. A lot of people don't have time to start taking a night class at the community college marker was taught it and he's still in Homer boat builder now. But I fell in love with making pots built my own had marker service. And Steve Thurman build a killer for me the next year. And I had a small studio in Homer next to a log cabin that we built. And I just loved it right here. everything I could about it. And and when you get into clay, maybe it's a balance between fishing on the water. But it's the earth. And it's the plasticity and the incredible range of things you can do with clay. It's you can't live I mean, 100 lifetimes wouldn't cover what you can do with clay and the long history there's something that's very I know, it just has a deep meaning for me in all the pots I have in the house that I use every day. That's the beginnings of my love of my entry into the art world was through functional pottery because you use the pots every day. And to me it's like having a conversation with a maker. I have all sorts of you know, pots from around the country, if not the world. And I'm starting to make sure I have some more of my own pots in the house. Because it's a conversation between the moment you made that and the end result. But but then from there, my first exhibit was drawings because I journalist my life my first started fishing I was struck by, you know, from a person that grew up in Seattle to living in Homer and fishing and living on a boat Marvin, I met six months after well, couple months after I got to Homer bought a boat together six months after we had met each other. He's finished his whole life, I knew nothing. And the two of us just the two of us fished of 34 foot, you know, classic wooden boat, it was beautiful lines of you know, classic wooden boat design fish that for 15 years. So people that know us to that Marvin must not have slept for three years because he had you know, I was in training so to say, but, you know, you'd have me run the boat you'd be setting halibut hooks, and it's kind of dangerous career does it start when you know nothing, but he's probably why I ended up fishing like why did why do i do our work, it's all connected. Everything I do in my life has been connected. But I continued fishing because I couldn't have found a better person, very capable person to fish with that loves what he's doing. And I mean, it was called home and you know, things are learning all the time. To me, it was really exciting, great adventure. And so I was the first few years of fishing I started journaling for a couple months, I couldn't write enough so I started drawing and the first exhibit I ever had was of drawings of my life in fishing. And I did that for probably do every day I was doing a drawing everyday kind of a self challenge. But I ended up having my first clay exhibit was pots and sculpture and drawings combined. And they've just kind of continued on is we pick up a thread through our life. And we continue on with that. And I just and nothing I do, as I say it has not everything's been kind of interconnected. I've gotten a lot of inspiration from my years of fishing. So that's combined with the creative work that I do when I'm not fishing so I

can't really separate the two even when my direct marketed the fish that we were for 12 years. I think we I direct market at some of our catch. And I direct marketed to potters across the country and the up to minimum 500 pound deliveries and they go to a major airport and pick it up and the potter is being Potter's would bring, you know, breakfast food and coffee and they'd have a happening at the airport where they split up their 50 pound boxes, you know, and I have thank you cards from people that I'm in their freezer with their with their berries and, and then I talked to, like Mary Behringer has editor studio. Potter would call me during Sam and asked me how the fishing is going. But she had this order going, I mean so this connection that would be kind of crazy. But it was just this wonderful connection. So community is important. Certainly it's a it's a lot of interdependence. Living on this island, a lot of interdependence, we have a boat that can go and many most, most anyone, whether we're here all through the winter, there's a sailboat twice a week, or there's a special concert in town, we'd have people ride with us and come back. And that's just one small example. But in fishing, it's interdependency because you have the VHF radio on 16, if you're in trouble, it's really competitive. But if you're in trouble, people are on 16 and drop everything and come because it's you know, on a life and death kind of basis there but and the pottery community actually wrote a article for studio Potter about this, I'm going to with fire tonight. And the killing is in Homer. I don't have a webcam here, but I'm invited to would firings and that's the collaboration. And it's a huge gift from the potter that has the killing because it's a huge investment. But the kilns built with their aesthetic on how they want to kill the fire and I'm kind of familiar with each Potter's work so I know what to expect in some ways you never do and when I go with this coming together of all the potters and we worked on our own isolated in our studios, usually. So when you have a weird firing, it's a wonderful gathering, like a tribal gathering, you know, it kind of gets down to that primitive level and you're firing because you're on a shift for six hours, four hours but you're keeping an eye on that fire every 10 minutes whatever you're keeping an eye on adding would she went through six chords or last firing and I think it's going to be a two to three day firing but that all the info so that's a collaboration, interdependency, but just the knowledge and the tradition of being a potter is passed on knowledge, all the books that are written during the craft revolution, so to say, I think in the 60s 70s the How to books that came out there is nothing that actually replaces the hands on knowledge and different killed designs and glazes and substitutions you can do and how different bodies fire I mean it just on and on. So there's there's an open exchange which is I think, in my experience having done was it pill check glass for residency at one point and I went to watershed for ceramic work residency the same year and I was at Santa Fe clay and just looking at and I did some iron pores that same year so all these different residents these different mediums but I have to say that the people that work in clay it's a different feel we all love to eat and cook because we're making things that hold food so you always have that kind of it's I know it's there's a field to the potter's I know you have to hosted many workshops here and the spin for Alaska studio potters and it's I've tried to have the outside come in inviting national or internationally known ceramic artist and every workshop has been this coming together. It's just been wonderful maybe up to 1520 people for four days and it's this great exchange so Lisa's that I'm going to the wood firing tonight she's come to every workshop we've ever had here. So everybody has a lot of shared history has a lot of heart. I had a lot of people that have mentored me and I think most notably when I first took that community college workshop class night class it was Mark service and then Steve Thurman built my first film for me was an updraft killin 12 cubic square feet and they sat there and watched me fire at the first time and gave you know took my hand helped me there and then when I moved to how the Coe we bought our place in hell but Cove in 1980 became available and we moved here and I first started making pots in a like a chicken behind the warehouse wasn't very big

and I had a discount and I Alex comes lived in halibut Cove and he had just moved he retired from University of Alaska I think he had actually created the ceramic program there and he was was at Tyler University from the GI Bill he went to the Tyler University was really Stoffel studio assistant. So Alex he was he was my my main mentor because I fired with him before I had my own kiln, built a discount. But the reduction kiln I fired with him for 10 years. And I'd make pots this fire them home down the ramp into the skiff, take them down the trail, follow up to Alex's and glaze at his place. And that I have never I've never really worked around a lot of people. I tend to work best on my own. But I never had a problem working in the studio with Alex. He was very thoughtful his years of teaching and his generosity and educating people. I think he kind of took me under his wing wanting me to learn every technique he'd learned through the years so in all different types of firing salt soda rack, who even a tile commission with on globes and low fire So Alex comes was a huge, a very dear friend and a huge influence. When I had my studio built. We enjoyed firing together so much. He gave me the ultimate compliment that he learned as much from me at one point that I learned from him. So it was just a wonderful exchange, you know, it's like being potters. And he did a lot of sculptural work. So I actually would lead on to doing sculpture will work to being around Alex and all the techniques of, you know, building doing sculptural work with clay. But then when I had my studio built, I would have Alex come down and put a cup of pots and my account and I kept doing the same thing because we love that exchange of you know, different pallets of glazes and, and also Diana Tillion. When I first had my first exhibit of my drawings, watercolors. I took them down to show Diana and she was she was very supportive. She wanted how the code to be a community of artists. And she encouraged and mentored quite a few artists and help but Cove. And because I didn't continue on painting as much she was always encouraging came to an opening I had in Seattle and brought friends. So always they're supportive. But the Alex was definitely the main mentor. Then, of course, all the potters that I've had is presenters for workshops I've correspond and keep up with them, I've been invited to fire with their wood kilns with them. And there's this wonderful ongoing sharing of knowledge. So I think I'm really wealthy person, the number of mentors I have the reset work that I've been creating has been little bit more abstract, I think, I think I internalized earlier and more specific life experiences. Now I'm getting no, I'm kind of broadening out my view and, and trying to be more universal, I suppose get to the essence of what I'm thinking. And I'm thinking everything's related, though, right? When you're, when you're fishing, you're doing all these multiples, multiples and multiples I love but there's patterns in nature that are all multiples, like there's not a single leaf the same on an oak tree. Isn't that amazing. So things like that interests me. And so everything I do, I try to do being unique with my hands. I'm not really into molds. Although it might not be a bad idea at some point. Because I can do all these multiples. But I like the idea that each thing is very different, similar but different. And this isn't like the piece that on exhibit moving mountains, but it's the market for moving mountains.

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Grace Kook-Anderson 22:03

Annette is gesturing to a small version of moving mountains. The large hanging sculpture I mentioned in this episode's introduction, it's a truly mesmerizing piece, you can find links in this episode's description that lead you to images of this piece. And there's a couple things that I love about hanging things. I love the movement, the kinetic aspect, and I love it when the big piece of moving mountains I've noticed at the opening

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Annette Bellamy 22:35

that people move around. And I like that they stop when they start seeing these things move just a little bit like I was walking on the boardwalk last week and get the mail, right. And the leaves are turning and they're falling. But there is this Golden LEAF hanging. And it was like in midair twirling and going in the little bit of when it was a spider web it was hanging from how cool is that those are the things I'm looking for. Kind of the invisible we can't see the layers of things and the patterns that we have, I think patterns or a sense of security. It's the cycles that go on. And so those are the things I'm interested in. And I love the movement of things that are well on the ocean. Everything's moving all the time. And everything's moving mountains are moving. That's what I was trying to get out. And people don't know. Yeah, mountains move. And we're seeing that more whether it's mining companies and moving them or, you know, changes in the earth, gradually moving them shifts. So that's I'm getting down to, I guess, bigger ideas that are more not bigger, more basic ideas, the underlying ideas that we live through kind of this the thoughts and following now so I'm I'm enjoying that and I don't know where it's taking me but that's the exciting part. So passed from 2013, I did floating in sinkers, both hanging pieces, I continue doing hanging things. So I've got more ideas, different materials to use.

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Grace Kook-Anderson 24:16

Floating and sinkers are not in this particular exhibition but not because they aren't incredible floating in the collection of the anchorage museum is another hanging piece in which small boats are suspended, using very fine fishing line. It's 14 feet long. And as a net describes the air movement in the gallery causes the boats to move. Like the oceans breath floating. his companion piece is sinkers. Now in a private collection. It's a 12 foot outline of a boat made of clay formations sinkers is about the things that anchor us and the things that way us the heavier line used to Hang the components of sinkers combined with the air movement. And the gallery gives the peace. A heaving motion.

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Annette Bellamy 25:07

Floating of boats and boats have boats are great metaphors for how we travel through life and time, especially in coastal communities. But boats are I tied made these little boats that were actually inspired from African shuttles in the tech still techniques. And then from there, black black would some sort that I love the form. And I just got this idea. And I think there were holes in them for the process of being being used as shuttle. And then there are these other forms that were used to spin fiber. And I just thought, wow, I'm going to hang these forms that were like kind of weights, I'm going to hang them all at the same level in the shape of a boat. And I hung them with heavier line that we use to hang gillnets because I want you to see that and they needed a heavier line. But that was a about sinkers was about the things that interest and about the things that keep us in the same place sometimes. And floating was just about kind of going through life, there's a sense of change in a sense of, we don't have control over life, when you're on the ocean, the weather comes up and you're in a storm, you're, you know that it's going to be passing through. But you have to endure that. And it's just the way it is, there's no place to go to get out of it when you're on a boat. And so that's a really good lesson I've learned from being emotional lot in weather. So floating had this, these boats hung in the middle at the center point. And there is a there was over 200, but I hung in three levels about that, you

know, two and a half inches apart in a wave pattern. And they had that kind of little bit of motion like that kind of bobbing in there, again, that everything's always changing and talks about time. I mean, I get go on and on about. I'm always complaining about time, because I don't have enough time and always complaining about that. But so time and and things changing and moving. Those are all part of the inspirations of things that I'm doing now. So their broader base subjects, inspirations that are really inspired from my lifestyle, living in hell. But Cove and fishing. So yeah, that's the main inspirations that I have.

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Grace Kook-Anderson 27:32

For this interview. We hired a videographer from Anchorage Mike county to meet with a net perhaps his own background and knowledge of commercial fishing inspired him to ask more questions about a network on the sea talking about an thats hanging work made Mike think about technology used during fishing to see objects that are under the boat. He wondered if he was correct in his interpretation that there may have been some inspiration.

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Annette Bellamy 28:02

That's a good interpretation. Because I do set the gear and you're halibut fishing, and we have a lot of electronics now that give you all different images of the bottom me now we're we're setting healthcare, there's, we have three screens, and one screen shows the ledges and you can just stay right on the ledge is before GPS, you just kind of be on the chart on the screen and kind of stay on a vague line. And so you kind of weave back and forth. But now you can just stay right on the edge at a certain part of the edge. So all that goes into course, it's in my mind, all that those experiences, the mountains on the bottom, and the mountains on top, it's all similar. And we're seeing more of it now with the electronics that we have. But this is really this is really kind of a I, I think my my, my reflections on this inspiration is that one of the first pieces I've really done of land, not really. But I did one hanging piece years ago I hang piece about falling leaves. That's you know, it's a corny idea. But I do love what looking at least fall It's beautiful. And it turned out to look more like seaweed in the ocean. And I kind of like that too. But this is a piece that is land base. But it could be but it's both because there's mountains underwater to in there now. But to look at the solid mountains on a on a skyline. They're pretty powerful. And they almost have a memory in the wilderness a lot looks like a living being to me, I was trying to get to the wanted people to get into a mountain to realize there's living minerals and qualities and water and million years, springs, etc. I mean, it has a lot of complexity. And this is simplifying that but it was a way of looking at the life of a mountain that actually moved and breathe a little bit. So but of course, everything I do is spin influenced probably more than I realized from the screens. The work that I'm doing now is much more I think, I think it could have meaning for a broader audience in in in that it speaks more universally to people. It's not a solo experience of somebody that commercial fishes you know, and in Alaska and lives on an island is I generalize my life more. It's more specific before a lot of the drawing the fishing like I'm still to this day. I like those drawings a lot. But it's some I've moved into more, I think more universal ideas. I think that there are broader topics that are rooted in my lifestyle, but there they are opened up more for people, I think that can connect to them in other ways. You know, I might be interesting to have people look at my older work my earlier work and see I mean, we all kind of do the same work in some ways, but I think I think I've evolved into maybe a little bit more, maybe a little bit less personal. Let's journal, you know, different ideas. We

bought halibut Cove we bought in 1980. This is the oldest house in the island from the herring days. But living in halibut Cove and fishing I cannot have to drive a car. I mean, I have a I have a card that Marvin that we got in 2007 has 30,000 miles on it. I don't drive a lot. I drive and we go out on a trip. But it's a different car. So anyway, on a daily basis. I love living on the island then we have to get in a car. I can be here for 710 days. Normally before I go to town more like usually a weekly township for food and different things. It could be two weeks but you know, don't want to go to town. But I love walking to the post office you run into different people you know, you know I love the quiet and I'm surrounded by piano doesn't get much more beautiful. It's living with the tides that the large times that we have the small tides so there's this rhythm you live right on a dock. So we can high tides different than low tide. And we're we have a bar that goes dry every tied so we're kind of at the quiet and because we're people can't cross the bar with boats at low tide. So I like that. But I like the I like the closeness to some sort of solitude and in a way from a business I guess because I it's restorative to me I think I can focus better in a creative way when I live in a place that's more quiet and so that this place is this place is given me a lot of inspiration Alaska period but this lifestyle and the island combined with the fishing has given me a lot of inspiration and ideas. The quiet when I first came to Alaska people still 73 had a hard time you know, hadn't been a state that many years people had hard time about Seattle in particular because a lot of the halibut schooners and the boats that would come to Alaska and go back to Seattle you know and always been the resource taking resources out of Alaska and Alaska kind of struggled but that's not quite about fit man it is about the economic impact so I've made we've made based are living on harvesting a resource that the coastal resource the fisheries and as the resources diminished in Washington, Oregon, the Dungeness the fleet moved up to Alaska. Now it's healthier but there's been I mean, the ocean is just seemed really big. But it's not that big fisherman needs to go to the halibut commission meetings to represent this area because we have such large title considerations and we got to know a lot of the fifth generation halibut fishermen that there's a lot of history of people that fish up and down the coast and it gets to be a small community people know each other by the name of their boat at so it's a strong ties on the coast and to have the opportunity to exhibit at the Portland Art Museum. As an Alaskan, it's huge. Because there's been a there's been a total lack of recognition of Alaskan artwork and the voice of Alaska. And it's huge, played a huge role with the Pacific Northwest. It's really part of the Pacific Northwest. But VCs in between kind of got long se that goes up. But there's a jag there's a little bit of a job that has been just BC, but there's been a disconnect. So maybe we don't want to be discovered. But I think it's good to share the it's a really vibrant lifestyle here. Lots of energy, lots of energy, with all the daylight in the summer, a lot of different energy with all the darkness in the winter. There's an intensity that you don't find another places hands on lifestyle, you can't get around that kind of have to know how to fix things. And it's empowering for individuals. I think, especially when you see the disasters that happen now, I think there's a resourcefulness that you gain from a lifestyle that moved up here, this little more rugged here alone, you're a little bit more separate. Most of us travel a lot. So we have, you know, we're not like we don't isolate ourselves generally, I think there's more of a hunger for knowledge and exposure just because of where we live. But yeah, there's a strong economic connection to the Pacific. I was invited by Fran read to go to a Fishkin to workshop and middle of July, and I thought, she's never going to sew Fishkin. I like clay You know, I'm handling fish. So I went to this and Fran was dying of lung cancer. And it was two months before she died. And we didn't know that timeframe. But I knew it was wasn't a lot of time, she invited 10 of us to come for a workshop to learn how to sew fish skin, so and sit in a band catch Mac Bay. So on the biggest opening of the year, Marvin and I tied the boat up, I went to this workshop with frozen GM, salmon, Chad, all the tools and, and she was there in a

wheelchair. And he has no hair from chemo and all that. But she glowed, she was passing on her knowledge. And that's something that was just, gosh, it's emotional. She was fabulous at that point in your life. And Audrey was the one person that kind of took the torch for her and carried on and actually presented to talk in Hawaii that she wasn't alive to present in October. But a year after we called ourselves, the skin sisters. It was just a two nights that we are there. I mean, we all made a basket. And this is like a traditional, you big basket that she wanted us to get the techniques with. And the stitching is kind of I mean, I finished this on a wheel watch going up the inlet, but she's what she taught us is how does how to process skin it clean. And I decided, you know, I'm probably never going to do anything with this right now. I'm surprised I still have it is the first thing that I made. You can see I wasn't real particular. It's how I work. There's a few holes here from skinning it holes here. And stitches are pretty wonky, but it was artificial see new she gave us the taxidermy outfit that she got all our suppliers, you know, and it's getting knife. She's Ulu and I just ended up in the using nice I'm used to on the boat that I like better anyway. And I just yeah, it was an interesting experience, just the energy being there and having her pass on or knowledge. So I was didn't foresee me using this technique very much. But we decided a year later to have an exhibit in memory of Fran and all that she taught us the skin sisters at Brunel street art gallery in Homer. So I thought, okay, whenever you are invited to do the part of an exhibit, I think you should do your best I thought Now am I going to do and we were actually took off with our old horse trailer, we are living in a nature conservancy preserve in southeastern Arizona meals to rant and I sewed I documented six months of eating our fish and every meal. I if I made salmon curry, I would cut the skin little cubes like the curry with and I'd so those little cubes together. That was the meal that I had 11 nine foot totems of all of our meals and it was called Home Economics. I like that anyway, I when I was doing that, I decided to kind of evolved as I started doing it. And once I started doing something I do get carried away by that kind of just big, so covered of 16 foot wall and it felt like the ocean moving. These totems had movement and and I realized that I can use Fishkin I'm using I've been handling Fishkin so for so many years, it tells a story when I really started using the fish skin and all the different species they all have different qualities. The thickness for the chum Sam into the king salmon to the silver and the soccer all different pink salmon or Pacific Cod, Cod. rockfish can we use all sorts of fish link card, so I tried to use every fish that we had bycatch and everything to tell the story. So it does, you know, it does tell them my story. And what I've into me there, I've done three major pieces in fish skin now. And they're all they're all in honor of, you know, homage to the resources that sustain us. And actually, I make a point that I cut a hole in the skin to carefully patch it because I'm putting it back together in a way, so that's kind of surprised I've been doing it and I'm still I'm saying this is the last fish center, skip Fishkin piece I'm going to do, but when people give me Fishkin, it's material so I clean it up, and I have a couple big jars of the nature of alcohol full of Fishkin. So if I ever do get an idea I have materials was one of these years, I'm going to quit fishing, And maybe I'll keep sewing. I don't know. Yeah.

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Grace Kook-Anderson 41:17

Annette's great care for her materials, consideration for the earth and bond with her community are clear. What's also important to note is a next level of respect for the indigenous values that's around the world around her and her awareness of the effects of colonization.

A

Annette Bellamy 41:36

Boy, the indigenous values in Alaska when I first I love the craftsmanship. I love the fence of using the natural materials. And I love the traditions of course, I'm not native, but I've, I'm inspired by a lot of the ways that of native traditions, I'm very, very careful not to appropriate because I respect those traditions as being not my own. respect them there and, but I I love Yeah, they have a wonderful essence. When I look at the objects that have been made, they just hit me in the gut. And that's what a good pot where it hits you in the gut. That's what it does for me, but sense of place and I did a hardest in the schools and good news Bay. And I really enjoyed that. Just getting to know the some of the people they're married, beaver made baskets, I got one of our little baskets with the seal intestine woven in Chad carpal tunnel from doing their baskets. And I met some of the elders that came for lunch at the school and being myself I shook their hand and shook up Miro and the kind of went like that and I go shoot that's like yes, raising your eyebrows. And anyway, there's different ways that that have waken woken me up ways of thinking and knowing. And I've done a lot of reading we are and I was we were visiting earlier I talked about and we're doing this work and some of her exhibits at the anchorage museum have been just fabulous. And I've always loved some of the first early pots made around the world, there is a sense of the human experience, whether it's from China, Africa, Latin America, whatever. They're all vessels, that as a human experience. So I kind of look for that. And and I love I love learning about the ways of the people that lived here, before it was colonized the way it was changed a lot, and they've had a lot of bad, right? Gosh, colonization is given them some illnesses, alcoholism, etc. But moving forward, there's a lot of inspiration right now, with the arts being done. So it's another interesting aspect

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Grace Kook-Anderson 44:14
of

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Annette Bellamy 44:15

how you how we all are influenced by indigenous cultures. I think when the when, when and Reardon did the exhibit of bringing the elders back to Berlin to look at the mass that you pick mass, their reaction was, well, thank goodness these were taken and stored and kept for us years later, because traditionally, they wouldn't have been saved. So there was kind of this, you know, I'm certain effects of colonization. But that was a moment that thanks to thanks to Ann Reardon, the anthropologists gathering the elders and taking them there, what an emotional event and then having the museum lend them back to it encouraged to have this fabulous exhibit with a full publication of the mass has actually I think, in inspired some of the dancers, groups that have really been recreated, etc. And then the Kodiak mass projects similar because that was in France. So I think there's so Fran rediscovering the techniques of Fishkin, sighing have to admire her, I mean, in a way I can have could have thought, Oh, she's using native techniques, indigenous techniques, that's not right, that's okay. She's using natural materials in her own way and reviving it techniques. And she's actually inspired Joel Isaac, who just graduated from Alfred getting a PhD now, and the designer language probably has think it has a different title for the language, I'm sorry, but he had a friend say, hey, you should check out Fran reads work pretty cool. So he did. And he gives workshops on fish skin. So now he was a chemistry major before and he's developed all his own ways of tanning. So I watched his demo in Washington, DC when we were all together and the decolonization exhibit that travel the DC he gave a demo at the Corcoran School of Art. And I went and watched him he says totally different knives in different ways.

And it shows you how many different ways there are using and dealing and handling the fish skin technique wise. So it's a wonderful exchange actually within the cultures that we have in Alaska. They shouldn't be buried and I think that's really healthy to to have shared with those of us that have meaning because we live here who love this lifestyle so in the country, I mean it definitely an influence

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Grace Kook-Anderson 46:45

In the last episode, Ryan peers describes how his art wants to pick did a changing world through the lens of science fiction, but later evolved into a premonition of our reality and that doesn't need to forecast the future. Her presence is drastically impacted by the changing climate, especially in her work out on the ocean.

A

Annette Bellamy 47:08

In the past, probably, oh, seven years, maybe, maybe longer. I've noticed everybody's noticed of decline in the more than seven years, I think a decline in the growth rate of halibut for their year class, they're quite a bit smaller, there's absence of herring. There's more difficult salmon runs three years ago, four years ago, we noticed the first runs in cooking that Gil netting were usually model, filament nets were legalized and we can usually fish the south end to Cook Inlet where it's clear water with those nets and usually be able to intercept fish as they're coming in. We have to call our openings a week, Mondays and Thursdays. So we'd be able to intercept in the middle of the inlet, you know, 30 miles, they don't know 20 miles offshore sometimes. And fish those middle rips and have good fishing before years ago, the fish we're not we're not getting any fish, maybe a little dab here. We work with a dozen 20 boats that we have private radios, and we because it's a big area Cook Inlet. So we call each other and kind of work an area of the cell fan and somebody to start getting good fish in their net. And we run to that spot and they've gone there is no schools that would like historically, you could get on a school and kind of fish it in a 12 hour period. But the tide but they were just coming up and going down is what we think are running deeper, because the water temperature on top was warmer. So that happened a couple years in a row past two years, it seemed like maybe a little more normal, but still still running deeper, I think or something. Because setting that sights on the beach, we're doing well. So there's changes like that. And then I was hearing reports from different fishermen because I think when I look at the salmon runs every summer, it's a drama to me because Alaska it's the heartbeat of this lifestyle, the salmon and it reflects the healthy habitat the ocean health a lot of the different impacts maybe a for maybe a two to six year run return five year return. Anyway, people reporting and Prince William Sound, for instance, they'd be hooking on a traditional traditional point that would be all pink Sam and they started getting mixed bag they start getting maybe some chums and reds more than they used to. So there's this and that was repeated in different areas it'd be a little different fish movement going on. And fish usually like the swallows come about may 7 tonight. And we always worry when they're little bit late this year. I think it was two years ago it was like the 11 to 12 somewhere in there. So later but I think there's been some there's been some unusual movement late runs historically late runs and just just different because after years of watching this you see that and so there's there's a lot of concerns worried about the salmon in particular worried about the halibut and catch him at bay has had right now a depletion of plankton because my neighbor k does plankton drags and she summertime is when you're gonna have the high plankton, she's had zero plankton right now. That's scary, we had the disappearance of starfish. So just on our title, living on the

coastline. And looking at the title changes, it's been concerning. So algae blooms, the muscle and oyster farms that are here, they had a tough time last year losing the muscles, I think, because of the warm water. And I like that they're here because our water quality indicator as well that the first things that would ever indicate any pollution and also just they signify changes. So there's been a lot of changes. And we just have to recognize those more, the halibut Commission had to change their whole model they were using for the sustainable fisheries, which is a little bit concerning because we are fishing on that model for many years. So now since maybe the past 10 years we've been going down and quota so we're down quite a bit quote and still going down it has kind of hasn't really stopped yet so changes it takes a long time to recover. If we're going down a difficult time I think the unknowns I think there's been a outcry in the country with modern I think with our contemporary way of living have a disconnect of community. I think that our community here on the island our community and catch Mac Bay and our community and Alaska is all very not a large population. We're very independent, interdependent and I think I've had had a lot of experiences of helping people supporting people and receiving and sometimes it's easier for me to be supportive and it's also been a learning experience to know that you can get help whenever you need it. It's there and it's quite wonderful lot of different situations that have come up one time we had to have a helicopter flying here for medical evacuate medical transfer and something happened to Marvin so I had everybody and how the cove show up was like shoot the helicopter flew him in a helicopter flies in lands and winter they know something's wrong and just everybody shows up whatever they can do take care of the horses when you're gone wasn't room for me in the helicopter so I'm Italian owns the mail boat so he got in the mail boat and he just said I'll take you to town he rammed through Christina enjoys this he ran through 17 inch ice you know the Harbor was blocked up he got to the fuel float another friend picked me up in the air I just made space for me there you know was full that they made space for me. So that's just one example. And then then ABS other people here and you just do it you do this people that have lived here our neighbor was on oxygen anyone to stay we all help them out had to check his oxygen, his blood and so those are kind of extreme but people get older and they can't lift things in your people come help. We have boat with hydraulics. We haul things at high tide for people may have a horse bars that people use to move building materials. And you notice there's an and spoken word about bartering here and currency is not really in dollar bills. But bartering it's worth way more than money because it's what you really need. I have a berry patch that you just like a commercial raspberry patch. And everybody's always welcome to pick but when they pick they feel compelled to give me something so to me maybe some more raspberry jam event or smoke fish that I kind of delight and exchanges like that and we've been gone for a bit and we come home it's not unusual than a neighbor comes by with a fresh piece of king salmon that they've just caught or whatever it's as much as we live on fish the fresh fish so there's another time you're gone we came home and there's all this welcoming cards in the front porch from people so it's it's kind of cool sometimes you wish that you had more Nike or anonymous do some time with your anonymous but that can be experienced for a week and a city or something then you come home and it's all good and sometimes on the island you have a cold the people on the island know you have a cold before you know it but it that it works out to be enriching in the art community. When way of giving back. It's been hosting the workshops here and I know trying to encourage people did you put anything in the biennial you know don't give up and also being really involved for seven and a half years when Canal Street Art Gallery now banal Street Art Center was created nonprofit which was hugely I mean, it's kind of the center here for the arts now and it's just continues on but that was really enriching and things like that are I'm still involved not on board or anything but very supportive. So in museums, those are things that I think are

really supportive in the arts but really trying to encourage other artists to and share I had a friend asked me when we were traveling their horses and camping around the lower 48 She said, I talked to on the phone she said, Boy, you must really miss working and I said what do you mean you're not working in the studio I said I'm working all the time. I'm working all the time. I mean, I don't just I'm not a production artist. But I think a lot and I take when I do a residency it kind of takes me a while to digest experiences and I do I do maybe I would say it takes me a while Yeah it does. And so I have ideas and experience is that I know I want to do and I just think about I'm thinking about them and I've tools these things I just had and I knew that they were special they were on the boat when we first bought the boat and 7374 so I kept them in the studio and probably in 2006 maybe I started a whole series of tool forums they see that's a number of years fight incubate ideas and I have piles of old steel and I have piles of line I have boxes in my storage of fish bones and fibers and horse hair and I don't know found objects on the beach so all sorts of cool things that could be incorporated but these tools these tools mean a lot to me because they look like they could be ancient and but I use them and not as efficient as the new ones that are you know fiberglass i think but every things more efficient now we use different line minute minute buying black line and all the different nuances of the line has given me from fishing insights into the nuances of fibers that I've used in in in mixed with clay forms so one thing I still want to do is something on not because when you learn a good not It can be as strong as a weld like if you lose an anchor you can lash with line and lash on if you don't have a shackle you can latch on with line a strong enough seizing that would hold an anchor I mean these things are like this before what do we do before we had shackles so there's all these things that I just get the light in that i've you know I really do will have maybe no maybe 1500 of these that all those multiples I mean you put the gear up you have all the hooks hanging on these rings we put it on this kind of this old Trojan horse kind of two wheeler and it's all them stacked out with about a an unknown 40 inch Gagnon and then we run a hose or to clean them before we cover it up with a tart anyway it looks like this wonderful waterfall going through all the hooks and everything I just builder inspirations haven't done anything with that I have tried doing things with water I've collected water so I'm thinking a lot about that to go a lot of ideas those are just kind of how I work I work slowly and I think of something and somehow I love the challenge of engineering an idea I really it's fun how do you do that how do you make the hooks to the hangers and make something look like it's hanging with invisible emit air I like things like that and I've had good good critique from people Chris Gustin saw the first tool farms I ever did, but I had the tools and clay and I actually had pins coming out of the clay that would be hangers, and Chris Gustin was a professor emeritus from Dartmouth, and he was a president, or here and saw these hanging at Brunel. And he asked means is, this is the thing about critique that we, I think we need to learn more about, it's about asking questions, he asked me, Why did you not just make a hanger that was separate, so that this object was the sculptural piece, it was a detail, it made a lot of sense to me. So so so I'm paying attention to the questions I hope to anyway that people have given me and I'm really open to that. I encourage people to give me input too often. I think we we tell people it's wonderful and we don't ask the questions. So I'm trying to ask questions to when I can. I really liked the title of the exhibit. The map is not the territory it questions Who made the map who says it's the territory it's it's like the first maps that friend is gave me let me a book about the history of the Pacific's and it was about before I think in the 1400s, when they didn't realize the North American continent existed, they thought you could just sail straight across, probably didn't ask the people who lived in Alaska at the time, you know, I didn't know. So it's like, who makes the maps and and they're usually for development maps, actually their source it was Explorer, exploration and trade routes, and resource transfer and trade, you know, trading routes. But I like it because we're at a point where we

need to design our own maps up and also I like the title because I was going across the bay Few days ago with this load of pots for the word firing. And I was kind of like, it was calm, but I think didn't want to some of the pieces are really big and heavy. And I did minimal minimal packing that's not being shipped per se. So anyway, I'm on a boat wake or a little bit of the Southwest swell came up, I kind of carve the So no, no pounding was That was my goal. And I was thinking on the way across how when you're on the water, there's not a straight line, there's no lines. And when you live in a developed urban setting, everything's on a grid or a pattern on cement, there's center lines, there's parking lanes, there is no there is you know, power lines it's a little different. So there's not straight lines not that you know, there's probably some people that go on the ocean and they go on a straight line but they beat themselves up doing it so I was thinking about that and I like that in reference to the map is not the territory because you you need to make your own route

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Grace Kook-Anderson 63:00

And you need to make your own maps and need to question the maps that are given that are publicised, I think the same philosopher was questioning the word is not the thing and the limits of understanding with the vocabulary in the language that we have is really limited. It's been passed on culturally in a certain way that influences how we express ourselves. And I've always wished I was bilingual to be able to think a different way but I'm stuck with what I have. So I'm trying to open up windows within that, you know, parameter. I think the arts do that beautifully. I really do It is very fitting that a net should mention the word is not the thing it's the title for the follow up to the map is not the territory that opens in in where the map is not the territory focuses on artists from the coastal Northwest. The word is not the thing will feature artists from the inner Northwest Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington. Being able to feature a network in the map is not the territory is an absolute thrill. It's not often that we get to work with artists from Alaska. But it is important to me that this particular part of our region is better represented.

A

Annette Bellamy 64:23

When I was invited to be a part of this exhibition at the Portland Art Museum. I was basically thrilled It was like a door opening because I have a group of artists that I've known have reached out to have opportunities to exhibit in the museums and the Pacific Northwest and they haven't been successful and we're actually got really some rich work being done and stories that are different stories. And so to have the opportunity to be one of the First Alaskans along with Irene to in this exhibit, it's huge. And I hope it keeps the door open. Because it's has a lot of there's a lot to share. And I suppose the map is not the territory is the perfect title for us to be the First Alaskans to be in this exhibit, too. So it means a lot. And I'm really enjoying the the dialogue has been great, because it's an exhibit that has a cohesion, there's a Google Doc kind of group that we were sharing readings inspire us, and we're getting to know each other's inspirations on some levels through this Exchange Online. And there's been the curator, Grace cook, Anderson has done several phone calls. It's not like you're invited, when you hear from her just before the exhibit or a contract and details of when to get the work. She's contacting you every few weeks. And there's a dialogue ongoing and outreach programs that perhaps might be involved that you have play in input where you want it to go. So it's wonderful. I mean, I think it's a new way to curate, I think it's a new way to create a stronger exhibition with more cohesion and more value. So I'm totally impressed with the Portland Art Museum people involved in their vision. So

this was super excited to be a part of this. Yeah, I hope that when people has as much energy that I have, I have a lot of energy and a lot of buzz kind of that. I hope that when people see my work, I hope it slows them down. Isn't that funny? I hope it slows them down. Because that's kind of what it does. For me, when I look at the work it's kind of little, it's a little bit of a meditation I hope that maybe isn't pause and I hope it I hope that they think about it maybe when they look at a mountain again, or another experience that catches that moment or maybe that's all I hope is that the catches a moment that they pause and it hits them I would say that hits them in the gut because that was cool i can do is comment for what a good part was, and but it hits them to the core. I hope it's like a good poem does or you know, kind of, I think there's a search for meaning in a way that on a deeper level that you can share with other people. And I don't want to control that. So I hope it reaches all different levels with all different types of viewers and the fish skin piece. I always am curious, when people see one of my fish skin pieces because they look at it it looks like a tapestry. Then they get back and it looks like a tapestry of kilter and they get closer and Aha. My goodness huh. Oh, and it's the surprise of that material that things that we take for granted and what you can do with it and has and has story layers, layers of stories to it. And the moving mountains they will not know this but moving mountains all the clay from that piece is my main mentor Alex comes had all the green clay that he had piles of. He had a young fellow in summer ball millet, all for him. He had 14 garbage cans that just before he died, he gave me as claim mixer, 14 garbage cans of clay. Whatever else I wanted from the studio but to use equipment wise but I hauled all that garbage cans of clay and each one's different. There's some have kind of a reddish iron body summer like a just a pinkish summer white and always a little bit of maybe he wasn't really sterile at all. And his studio porcelain mixed with stoneware here in there. So there be a little bits of maybe a low fire clay bits in there and so when I i recycled all each band I use separate patina has and I made all the rock farms from his clay. And sometimes if you look for it, you'll see a little like, looks like a glass bead, like a little little less bead, that's the four or cone you know, up to five clay that was mixed in there that didn't hold up melted down. And I love stuff like that the impurity the stories of how he worked. So these, this is all clay and all the different patina is except for the Black Rock, who is carbon trap reduction for that. But it's some kind of the story of a connection there of materials. It's been passed on and his hands are in it, my hands are in it now inspired. It's there forever. Now, it's not like iron where you can melt it down again. Once you fire clay, it's there forever, the shard or the form so that has an underlying meaning to me too. And in floating, there's one insert of an African wooden boat that I don't tell people about that night notice. But that psycho little a key of my inspiration and about crossing oceans in connection with other cultures that really inspired me. So I kind of wanted to give that notice. And in thinking I had one of the African farms and sinkers to which I kind of kind of delighted as a secret. I've got lots of stories and I can go on on something will trigger a memory and I can go on and on. Like when I do my taxes for one year. I do it when in January. It makes me go over the past year. And I go Wow, that's a lot a lot of things I forgot about that. So I live a pretty full life and a lot of variation and that stories are important. So I could sit here and keep telling stories for the rest of the day. I won't do that good sharing this much review.

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Grace Kook-Anderson 71:03

Thank you for listening to the Portland Art Museum podcast. On the next episode you'll hear the full interview of robbery. a sculptor and self described rubbernecker from Seattle Washington whose work can also be seen in the map is not the territory at Portland Art Museum through May 5, 2019. We

appreciate that you've chosen to listen to this podcast and encourage you the listener to get involved. If you have an idea for an episode of this podcast, visit Pam dot t o slash podcast idea and fill out the submission form. We would also appreciate it if you could take a moment to rate and review this episode. If you're using Apple podcasts or iTunes. I'd like to thank Annette Bellamy for this episode, and our producer John Richardson and most importantly, thank you for listening.