

Meditation Ocean



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Meditation Ocean: An Introduction

Jennifer Lange

Hope Ginsburg's decades-long art practice centers on collaboration and the pedagogical possibilities of artmaking. Conceived as an ongoing, interdisciplinary project, *Meditation Ocean* is envisioned as a platform for learning and social and environmental exchange.

As have many of her projects, *Meditation Ocean* began with curiosity and lines of inquiry: How does the presence of other species affect the experience of meditation? Can a meditation practice strengthen the resilience of our community and the environment? Is it possible that meditation, with its emphasis on interdependence, could offer tools to address the collective crises that result from a radically changing climate? What are the benefits of connecting a contemplative practice with environmental consciousness?

Meditation Ocean therefore advocates for a communal approach to the climate crisis, one grounded in the awareness that we—all forms of life on this planet—are interconnected.

The exhibition features *Meditation Ocean*'s premiere iteration, *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow* (2023), a six-channel video installation that brings the marine habitat of Florida's Biscayne National Park to Columbus, Ohio. The project began with a group of eight divers who took part in an underwater meditation retreat in fall 2020. Supported by a Wexner Center Artist Residency Award in Film/Video and by the institution's Film/Video Studio, the underwater meditation sessions were recorded and the footage used to create the installation.

Comprising six curved screens floating just above the gallery floor, the artwork invites viewers to participate in meditation with the divers and other living beings in the ocean. Within the organic, curvilinear arrangement of screens, the installation contrasts expansive views from the ocean floor with views that explore the exquisite details of the reef and its many occupants, including trumpet fish, angel fish, soft corals, and even an eel that ventures out to sway with the ocean's surge. The same rhythmic surges of ocean water move the bodies of the divers as they sit in meditation. Finding a meditative posture underwater is quite different than on land and so the divers sit, kneel, and even play with the buoyancy afforded by the ocean environment by using their breath to rise up off the ocean floor.

Ginsburg’s interests in meditation, scuba diving, and the climate crisis began with the multiyear project *Land Dive Team* (2014–20), which featured the artist and her collaborators meditating on land wearing full scuba gear as a way to focus attention on their bodies and breathing. Situated in sometimes surreal locations, ranging from the fast-rising tides of Canada’s Bay of Fundy to a desert in Marfa, Texas, the works in *Land Dive Team* consider our relationship to the environment and the health of our atmosphere.

Wanting a deeper understanding of meditation and its philosophical underpinnings, Ginsburg prepared for *Meditation Ocean* by studying and practicing Vipassana, or insight meditation, a form of meditation in the Theravada Buddhist tradition that involves observing your thoughts and sensations without judgement and focusing on the present moment. The Buddhist view of interdependence—the understanding that all life is connected and that nothing exists in isolation—can also be understood in ecological terms. Might the heightened awareness of kinship with all living beings stimulate a greater sense of empathy and an intensified sense of responsibility to care for and protect each other?

While the footage for *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow* was shot in Biscayne National Park, the installation was shaped during the artist’s residency at the Wexner Center’s Film/Video Studio. Ginsburg worked with Studio Editor Alexis McCrimmon over the course of a year to create an ocean environment in the galleries, aiming to share the divers’ experiences of meditating underwater and to invite participants to join in their meditation.

Emerging during the video editing process was something that McCrimmon and Director of Photography Matt Flowers called a “shimmer,” a transitional moment when the images dip briefly out of and back into focus. Used throughout the work, these shimmers create pauses that evoke the rhythm of breathing and offer a chance to reset our attention, both inward toward our own body and externally in relation to the ocean and the complex environmental, social, and political histories it holds. The ocean is a site for awe and wonderment, and it is also a site that may cause fear and anxiety. Its waters carry vast historical and present-day traumas including colonialism, enslavement, migration, and climate catastrophe. Engaging human well-being in the context of the ocean requires facing these issues. Further in this guide, writers Melody Jue and Anaïs Duplan point to some of these complex realities. In addition, a site statement, written by Ginsburg, mines some of the histories of the shooting location, Biscayne National Park, and of the surrounding land and waters.

Musician and composer Joshua Quarles produced a soundscape for *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow* that draws additional connections between human and nonhuman species. Alongside the ambient ocean sounds, which include the subtle crackles of the reef and bubbles and whooshes of the surging waters, Quarles wanted to bring the sound of humans into the space. To do this he recorded four vocalists singing, then processed and layered these notes into the artwork's score.

In addition to the installation's soundscape, ten guided meditations, available in audio and print form, were commissioned to accompany *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow*. Visitors can access these recordings in the gallery but are also encouraged to take them out into the world to develop their own practice of awareness and find points of connection to their local environment. Although *Meditation Ocean* is situated in a gallery environment, its ripple effects have the potential to be expansive and long lasting; the work inspires us to embrace and to share its ideas of interconnectedness in our own lives and communities.







Groundedness through Floating

Melody Jue

The spectacle of scuba diving often appears like a vision from space travel or science fiction: underwater cyborgs breathing in an environment where respiration is normally impossible. The diver wears an astronaut-like suit and brings their own source of oxygen, along with the necessary apparatuses of regulator, tank, fins, and mask. Because of the similarities between the extreme environments of oceans and outer space, NASA regularly trains astronauts at the Aquarius Reef Base, an underwater research station near Key Largo, Florida, where they experience an analogue of weightlessness in an environment where they cannot breathe—part of a cultural imaginary where astronauts and divers appear posthuman, alien, and otherworldly.

The Meditation Ocean Constellation imagines the ocean differently. Conceived and directed by Virginia-based artist Hope Ginsburg—and including artists, writers, educators, meditators, musicians, curators, divers, and scientists—the Meditation Ocean dive team engages a practice of mindfulness that requires them to attend to the ocean, their bodies, their breathing, and their interbeing while buoyed by a community of divers and underwater wildlife. They situate the ocean as a place where collective meditation may produce a sense of groundedness.

In the English language, there is a common way of invoking the ground as a metaphor for truth, evidence, rationality, and even morality. Consider sentences like, “She is a well-grounded individual,” or, “On what grounds do you believe that?” Such ways of speaking operate metaphorically, using the experience of having two feet firmly planted on earth to describe different kinds of certainty or personal character. In *Wild Blue Media: Thinking Through Seawater* (2020), I discuss how these figurations channel a terrestrial bias, a general tendency to draw on earth and air as normative elements.¹ This doesn’t mean one should stop using the word “ground,” but rather that one should consider how familiar environments provide a context for habits of thinking and speaking.

Meditation Ocean plays with groundedness through video recordings of divers who are literally floating, but figuratively grounded. If groundedness is an abstraction for feeling supported in material, emotional, and spiritual ways, then what we observe with the meditating divers is an instance of bringing a sense of support with you. Groundedness—as distinct from physical ground—is portable. You do not require physical ground to define where

you feel most supported, in touch with reality or even the truth (think of legal grounds). The feeling of being in touch with reality can exist regardless of gravitational conditions, without physical earth directly underneath. If what is reassuring about the ground is its constancy—always there to press against—there are other environments in which this is possible.

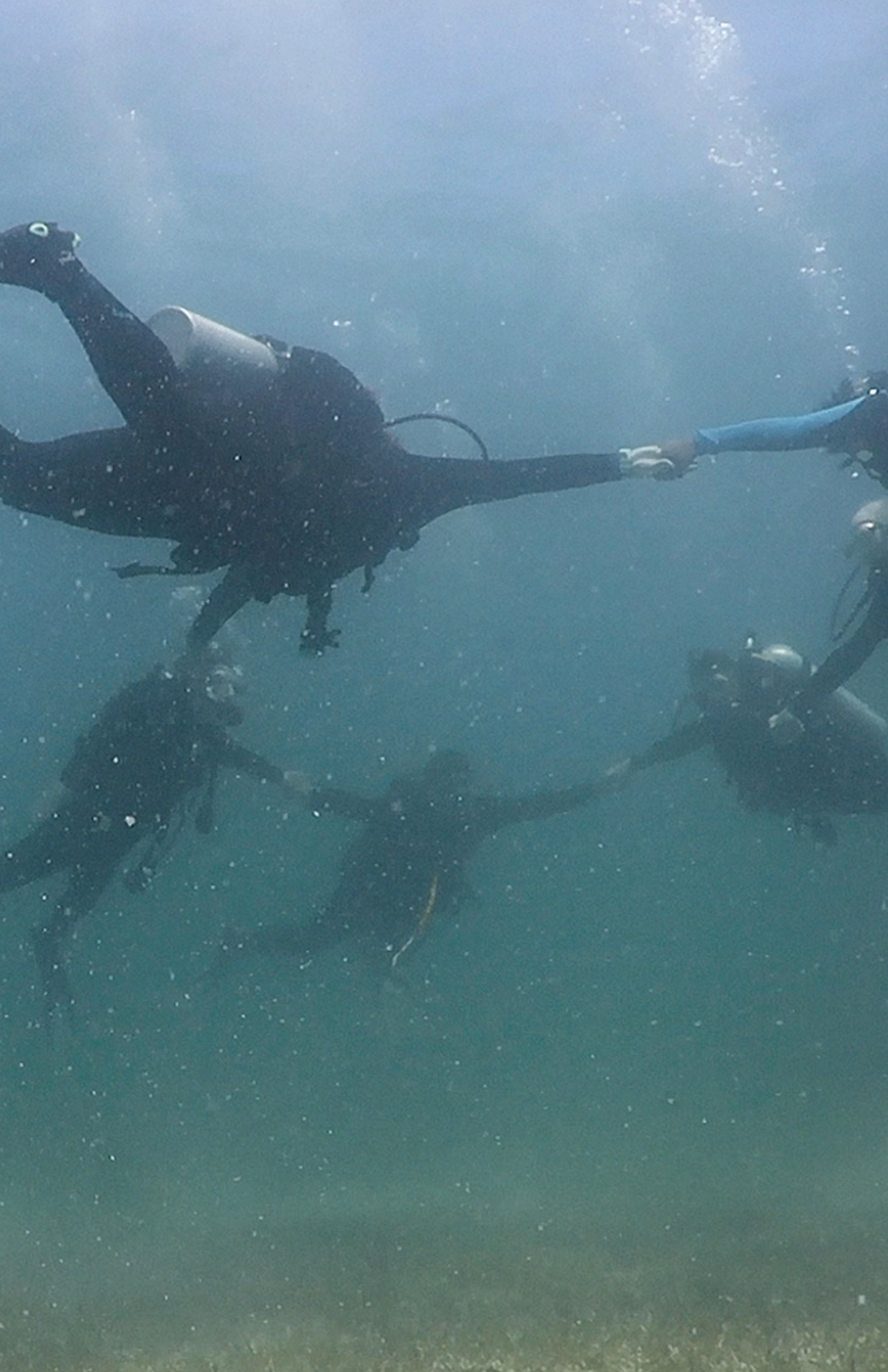
Filmed in Biscayne National Park in the Florida Keys, *M.O Turtlegrass Meadow*, the work at the heart of the *Meditation Ocean* exhibition at the Wexner Center, dramatizes the ocean as a space in which meditators might feel grounded—different from histories of characterizing the ocean as hostile, as in the literary naturalism of Stephen Crane’s 1897 story “The Open Boat,” or alien, as in films like *Europa Report* (2013). Anthropologist Stefan Helmreich has tracked the Western cultural tendency to portray the ocean as alien, found everywhere from the educational spaces of aquariums to the way that some scientists think that ocean microbes are good analogues for life in the extraterrestrial seas of Jupiter’s moon Europa.² By contrast, *Meditation Ocean*’s dive team appears at ease, unrushed in their descent to sit or kneel on the seafloor—yet also prepared for the endurance of being still.

As I watch the footage from *Meditation Ocean*, I am compelled by a strong mimetic impulse to slow down and breathe with the divers: inhaling when they inhale, exhaling when they release a breath. Perhaps you feel this too. *Meditation Ocean* gently invites the audience to synchronize their movements to the video’s diegetic sounds of the ocean: the staticky crackle of unseen shrimp, the gurgle of water, and the soft exhalations of the divers’ bubbles—an important signifier of human life underwater. In her description of *Meditation Ocean*, Ginsburg writes that the project “introduces a new milieu for multispecies mindfulness as a team of meditating scuba divers ‘breathes with’ the wildlife inhabiting each underwater site.”³

Breathing is a profound experience of touch. With each inhalation your insides stretch and contract, altering the internal and external shape of your body. One term for this sensation is interoception, or the awareness of feeling the inside of your body. Your air cavities are some of the most important gauges of safety when scuba diving, because if the air is not of equal pressure throughout your body, you can experience intense pain. This porosity makes the lungs a different kind of interface from, say, a computer screen; when breathing pressurized air, the lungs are a surface that leads to gas absorption by the full volume of the body.⁴

Yet the waters of Biscayne National Park are also home to the wreck of the slave ship *Guerrero*, among other sunken vessels—submerged nodes in the violent and traumatic history of the Middle Passage. Understanding the historicity of seawater requires a shift in perspective, where the





ground is not the only medium of history, layered and silted over centuries. When the Saint Lucian poet Derek Walcott writes that “the sea is History,” he alludes to the transatlantic slave trade, of drowned bodies and shipwrecks dispersed over time.⁵

For scholar Christina Sharpe, the ocean is haunted by the insistent presence of such violent histories. Sharpe defines oceanic *residence time* as “the amount of time it takes a substance to enter the ocean and then leave the ocean.”⁶ She uses this concept to imagine the continued presence of Africans lost in the transatlantic slave trade in the elements of seawater: “alive in hydrogen, in oxygen; in carbon, in phosphorous, and iron; in sodium and chlorine.”⁷ While meditation is not the same as residence time—meditation, after all, involves the intact, living body—meditation can be an occasion for historical memory. In the context of the Middle Passage, a feeling of historical groundedness might require unmooring groundedness from the literal ground. Instead, historical groundedness as inspired by Sharpe may involve a more fine-tuned hydrographic knowledge of shipwrecks, of currents, and of less disturbed waters. These are material, haunting histories that the dive team of Meditation Ocean is surrounded by as they breathe underwater, and as we breathe with them.

Yet the complex histories of the ocean and of Biscayne Bay also include hydrographies of fugitivity, marronage, and escape.⁸ Through examining ocean-current data near St. Croix, the archeologist Justin Dunnivant has traced an oceanic cartography of Black fugitivity, modeling how maroons used oceanic literacy to achieve freedom from slavery—often following currents to Puerto Rico.⁹ Dunnivant’s research offers a more nuanced understanding of ocean histories of resistance and defiant life that colonial narratives have repressed.

Dunnivant is a cofounder of the Society of Black Archaeologists and a member of Diving with a Purpose, an organization that focuses on oceanic histories of the African diaspora and submerged heritage preservation. Community is a kind of medium for the kind of work that Diving with a Purpose achieves. Safe diving always requires other divers: you do equipment prechecks with your “dive buddy,” keep together throughout a dive, and signal to each other if anything is wrong. For Diving with a Purpose, this supportiveness is a kind of buoyancy: a commitment to keeping each other safely afloat and to surfacing submerged histories.

Meditation Ocean centers an open-ended community (or constellation), gathered to watch a diverse group of divers: sometimes sitting back-to-back, sometimes drifting into view while holding hands in a circle. The dive team is, collectively, each other’s ground, each other’s tactile support.

Even if a diver's eyes were closed in meditation, they could hear other divers' presence through the reassuring sound of bubble exhalations. Some of the divers in *Meditation Ocean* sit in a lotus pose, rocked gently side to side by the surge of the water, or floating in the middle of the water column, as if flying. In these moments, it is impossible to forget that the divers are playing under new rules of gravity in the buoyant medium of the ocean. The floating divers redefine the feeling of groundedness, a feeling that can be achieved both in the supporting medium of seawater and in the supporting medium of community.

The video footage of *Meditation Ocean* includes connections with oceanic life forms through gesture. In particular, I am drawn to the pose where the divers are kneeling on the sand. Their torsos slowly drift forward and back, but they remain in place with the help of a few strategically placed weights and the anchors of their extended shins and fins. Ginsburg notes that divers enjoyed this position and could hold it indefinitely, whereas the lotus pose sometimes led to cramps or their limbs falling asleep. The upright posture seems to mimic the turtlegrass itself: vertical but anchored, a posture that I am tempted to name, as if it were a yoga pose, "turtlegrass asana." In another moment, I notice that the divers are not the only ones assuming a seagrass posture; a moray eel extends its body vertically in place, waving gently before eventually swimming away.

Ginsburg's earlier work also plays with similarities between stationary, meditating divers and swaying seaweeds. In her earlier project *Land Dive Team: Bay of Fundy* (2016), four divers sit cross-legged on shore as the incoming tide slowly rises. In one moment, the video focuses on seaweed attached to a rock as waves roll over it, and then cuts back to the divers, who are rooted in place and swayed by the waves. The divers are positioned as a kind of seaweed, anchored in place by the weight of their equipment, rocking back and forth with the waves.

Turtlegrass offers both the meditators and audience a particular experience of form. To invoke a concept from the anthropologist Natasha Myers, the kneeling divers who emulate the seagrass enact a kind of *metamorphism*. If anthropomorphism is the projection of humanlike qualities onto nonhuman entities, metamorphism is when the human body takes on the postures of nonhuman beings—in this case, "*vegetalizing* the sensorium."¹⁰ Vegetalizing the human sensorium as turtlegrass requires inhabiting the interface between seafloor and seawater, anchored to the sand while swayed by oceanic surges. What might the experience of this form evoke—a connection with ancestors, the nausea of being swayed by historical memory, or a particular sense of interspecies being?

As much as we observers may also want to sway vegetally, the milieu of experience matters—that is, whether one experiences turtlegrass asana underwater, or in the terrestrial space of the installation. We are not the floating divers, but we may imaginatively or metamorphically drift with them. Ultimately, this question of milieu-specificity is something that *Meditation Ocean* holds open through the juxtaposition of grounded viewers with the floating dive team. What kind of encounter is produced by being out of water while watching meditation happen underwater—while still, perhaps, feeling compelled to take a seat, observe, and contemplate? Across waters and screens, histories and multispecies relations, *Meditation Ocean* nevertheless invites us to breathe together, imagining ways of feeling groundedness through floating.

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1. Melody Jue, *Wild Blue Media: Thinking Through Seawater* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 11–13.
 2. Stefan Helmreich, *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009).
 3. Hope Ginsburg, “Meditation Ocean,” artist’s website, <https://www.hopeginsburg.com/bodies-of-work/meditation-ocean--2023-/m-o--turtlegrass-meadow--work-in-progress>. Accessed November 30, 2022.
 4. Melody Jue, “Interface/Breathing Underwater,” in *Wild Blue Media*.
 5. Derek Walcott, “The Sea Is History,” in *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977), 25–28.
 6. Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 41.
 7. Sharpe, 19.
 8. Marronage is the process of extricating oneself from enslavement and encompasses both short-term flight and the establishment of long-lasting, self-sustaining settlements. A maroon is a person who has extricated themselves in this way.
 9. Justin Dunnavant, “Have Confidence in the Sea: Maritime Maroons and Fugitive Geographies,” *Antipode* 53:3 (2021): 884–905.
 10. Natasha Myers, “Becoming Sensor in Sentient Worlds: A More-than-Natural History of a Black Oak Savannah,” in *Between Matter and Method: Encounters in Anthropology and Art*, ed. Gretchen Bakke and Marina Peterson (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2017), 76.

We Care About It (for Hope Ginsburg) Anaïs Duplan

I. The Sea Many Niggas Have Debated

Great mother life. The sea many niggas
have debated. I want that. When earth got my ocean, it was not
a surprise.

No one sees in absence of eyewitness accounts;

they are bound there. Be a certain amount of disagreement. I tell her,
Weapons face deep.

An ocean it must be.

A whole chapter

detail. Sorry founded on testimony.

Earth's most ancient rock, which was young when the earth was young.

Earth's materials form a rocky crust.

We arrived there by supposition.

II. Young Earth Must Have Been Like Darkness

Violent events connected with our planet's birth.
Occurred nearly two and a half billion years ago. May they.

Be found at any time.

Whirl gas intensely. Hot rush through. Black space universe, on a path,

at a speed controlled by immense force. Gradually,
a ball of flame. Gas cooled,
gas began, liquefy. Earth became a molten mass material,

This pattern persists.
Sphere of molten iron,

billion years ago
and beginning to beat.

Young earth must have been like
darkness, face-deep.

It was believed to. Be an event of greatest importance. Moon
next time, you and the beach there. Night.

III. Rough Face

Watch the moon's bright path.
Water water conscious. Moon-drawn tide.

Remember the moon
was born with a great tidal wave.

Remember
if the moon was formed with a sharp ocean basin.

Continental.
We know there were tides on the new earth, long before there was
an ocean in response to the pull. Sun molten, liquid hearth.
Whole surface rose in the tide and rolled.

Be only gradually diminished. Earthly shells are cooled,
congealed, hardened. Who believes?

Void. Darkness was upon its face deep.
Twice daily, tide was way larger

than the one before it.
Pacific decomposed basalt; the substance earth's middle layer.

We immediately wonder if the moon is away.
Thick, no rays of sunlight could penetrate

earth-heaven. Rough
Face deep. It will begin soon.

IV. There Are Little Induced Living Things

Never has there been such rain.
They poured in.

Become sea, primeval ocean. Grow in bulk and rain slowly.
Filled my basin. Must have been only faintly salty.

Be worn away
and carried to sea. Be an endless inexorable process.

Speed dissolving rock.
It seems probable. Damn. I want them to acquire

the ability to reproduce.
They devour a way of life.

Fall rain centuries.
Million years die.

Sea's edge.
Jellyfish swarms, drifting in the sea.

Worms evolved from starfish. Hard-shelled
creatures with many jointed legs.

Coastal rock by surf cast. Adrift all the time,
the continent has no life. There are little

induced living things. Come ashore.
Land must have been Black, hostile. Imagine

a whole continent naked.
It rocks with my roots. A silent land

except the sound of rain. Windswept.
No live thing moved over the surface.

My hard granite crust progressed through my deeper layers.
Unseen spirit.

V. My Particular Blood

Notice: steady gift, our breath, generally forgotten. Air creatures.
Be your nostril, circular within you. Glimpse air

only indirectly. Bends branches, birch trees.
We drink air, ceaselessly alchemize it within our flesh.

With every outbreath yet.
Manner of sea.

Produced the pour in through the door and eddy along.
Sun-infused air. Yet each of us engage it with our flesh.

You're pouring in through the door.
Or a field of wild lupine matter.

My particular blood, or all the time.
Wait, time. When niggas will heal, when our niggas heal.

VI. Water Sustains Our Bodies

Since your blood is different.
Birth. Be collective.

A transformation in land. More than a human field. Sensation
I am in everything, in grass-water.

Water's dead do not leave the sensuous world. Forsake it,
immaterial heaven. Even in the sea.

Even during the day, the sun is very bright.
All things my father remembered as a boy.

He had watched the blood, bile, and intracellular fluid.
A small ocean swallowed like a wild. Our gut. Our inside out.

Water, watery womb, water, watery world: we. Be
blood's water. My father remembered as a boy, he had watched

the blood-bile.
Made of mostly wet matter. Take transformation.

Exchange drinking,
peeing, sweating, sponging, weeping.

Flows flush. Water sustains our bodies;
water undoes ideal bodies. In which we pour ourselves.

VII. Human Wombstone

With Alexis Pauline Gumbs

Kissable blood.

Transfused to a stranger, a nurse-infant. They. Be likely

a sea, a cistern,
an underground reservoir.

We require other bodies, other water. Once
crucially the water. Watery gestationality.

Where human wombstone:
pond life, sea monkey, primordial

soup. Amphibious egg, moist soil.
They will relinquish my bodies.

Gift, theft, debt.
Out there. Our accepted cartographies,

space-time, species. Damn our bodies' water.
Be they necessarily dangerous. Be neither necessarily

benevolent. I must.
I beyond. We don't know. Be like

in hell. I don't want to deal with anyone.
"Remember all the thick impossible breaths."

VIII. I Feel Sick

Be because we.
Wound after vagina. The deepest area.

Ocean drill. Your name deserves safety.
You need food. Birds cawing

laughter, children's delight. I feel sick.
Come to the edge. Listen with all senses, blood.

I feel alive against my limit. Competitive,
powerlessness, wow. I want to wonder.

I want us to. I want us to
earn a place in the wild. Be a miraculous

world. I want to understand. I want us
humans too. I want that we human.



M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow Site Statement

Hope Ginsburg

M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow was filmed in October 2021 at Alina’s Reef in Biscayne National Park in the Florida Keys.¹ The coral reef and surrounding grassy area are approximately twenty feet deep in the Atlantic Ocean, east of Totten Key. The site is off the coast of Homestead, Florida, south of Miami.

We acknowledge that to be present in these coastal Florida waters is to be present with the historical and contemporary traumas of colonization, enslavement, and migration. We remember and honor those whose lives were harmed or claimed by these histories of white supremacy and human brutality. We also acknowledge the importance of telling the Florida Keys’ stories of self-liberation, refuge, and departure.

The Calusa tribe of southwest Florida and the Tequesta tribe of the southeast, descendants of Caribbean and Florida Taíno peoples, lived and thrived in the early sixteenth century during the arrival of the first Spanish settler-colonizers crossing the Atlantic to Florida. We honor the people of the Calusa, Tequesta, and Matecumbe tribes residing on the islands of the Florida Keys during the onset of colonial occupation. We name the fact that due to violent displacement, disease, and the depletion of resources, by the mid-eighteenth century, only a few Indigenous families remained on the islands, forced to move between them for sustenance.

An awareness practice in Biscayne National Park is an exchange with the very waters in which the Spanish ship *Guerrero* sank in 1827. The *Guerrero* was one of many ships still sailing after the ban on the transatlantic slave trade. When the *Guerrero* entered combat with the British antislavery patrol ship *Nimble*, there were 561 enslaved Africans on board. Forty-one of them drowned in that tragedy. The Atlantic seabed is both a memorial and a place of mourning for those lives and for the millions of enslaved Africans who died in the Middle Passage. Diving with a Purpose, the organization that is searching for the final resting place of the *Guerrero*, works internationally to preserve and conserve submerged heritage, with a focus on the African diaspora. We thank them for being part of the production of this project and honor the work they do and the histories they are uncovering.

The Florida Keys remained relatively undeveloped by settlers until the 1890s, which made them a site of refuge and departure. In the pre–Civil War era, when US patrol boats seized slave trade ships in the Keys, the city

of Key West provided a haven. Those escaping enslavement farther north in Florida and the southern states during the Civil War sought refuge in Union-controlled Key West. Self-liberated Africans and Black Seminoles who arrived on Key Biscayne from the southernmost tip of Florida's peninsula, making their way to Cape Florida, were able to negotiate passage to the Bahamas, making the Keys a point of escape to the Bahamas and other sites of maroon community in the Caribbean.

The Biscayne National Monument was created in 1968, officially becoming Biscayne National Park in 1980. When landowners in the Keys municipality Islandia proposed an industrial seaport with an oil refinery, there was protest. Two brothers, King Arthur Lafayette Jones and Sir Lancelot Garfield Jones, who were the second-largest landowners on Islandia, refused to sell, leading to the establishment of the monument. Their father, Israel Lafayette Jones, a Black agriculturalist from Raleigh, North Carolina, grew the family's real estate holdings by building the largest key lime enterprise in the state. Jones made his way to the Keys in the early 1890s to homestead, shielded to some extent from the violence, racism, and economic struggle of life on the mainland. Though we recognize that the creation of the National Park System is contested due to its displacement of Indigenous people and rural people relying on the land for subsistence, Biscayne National Park owes its founding to the Jones family and resistance to industrial development.

Biscayne National Park is 95% water and is home to the northern part of the third-largest coral reef system in the world. Yet less than 10% of the reef is covered in living coral due to impacts like heat stress and bleaching events, disease, acidification, overfishing, and coastal development. Many coral species face a high risk of extinction. Along with environmental devastation, the climate crisis is wreaking economic havoc. Coral reefs provide tourism, sites for fishery areas, over 70,000 jobs, and hundreds of billions of dollars annually for Florida. We acknowledge that these economic impacts are unevenly distributed, having the greatest impact on communities of color and poor and working-class people. Issues of environmental justice are as bound up with the ocean as they are with the land.² Globally, these ocean justice issues include ecosystem loss, sea-level rise, pollution, storms intensified by climate change, and human rights abuses.

Florida's coastal waters, bays, and coral reef tracts are fed by the Everglades watershed, a "river of grass" originating near Orlando and flowing south. Since the nineteenth century, more than half of the original Everglades have been destroyed by settler development, industry, draining, and reengineering

for agricultural interests. Agricultural runoff in the freshwater Everglades causes harmful algal blooms and sea grass die-offs when it empties into Florida’s surrounding salt waters. We recognize the Council of the Original Miccosukee Simanolee Nation Aboriginal Peoples, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the work they are doing to restore and protect the Everglades. We name the resistance of the Love the Everglades Movement and Defend the Sacred movement and the clean water activism of many, including leaders Betty Osceola and Reverend Houston Cypress of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida.

At the time of this writing, there is a steep rise in asylum seekers from Cuba and Haiti crossing the Florida Straits to the Florida Keys and Miami. Brought on by a longstanding US trade embargo and the coronavirus pandemic, Cuba’s economic crisis has led to food scarcity, blackouts, and political persecution. This wave of Cuban migration is the largest in over fifty years. Current protests in Haiti against outside intervention are aimed at addressing political turmoil, escalating gang violence, displacement, and economic crisis. These conditions are driving migration at levels not seen in almost two decades. We name the connection of this unrest to US foreign policy, as well as the failure of immigration policy to adequately address the situation within the US. We acknowledge the catastrophe of these migration and humanitarian crises and their presence on Florida’s shores and in its surrounding waters.

Finally, this site statement is an evolving document, reflecting learning, changing social and environmental conditions, and new knowledge. Thank you for reflecting on these acknowledgments. Further exchange is invited.

Hope Ginsburg
Artist/Director
Meditation Ocean Constellation
January 2023

1. The *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow* video shoot went through a National Environmental Policy Act review in conversation with the Environmental Protection Specialist and Supervisory Wildlife Biologist at Biscayne National Park, resulting in a special use permit for the four-day duration of our work.
2. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, “What I Know About the Ocean: We Need Ocean Justice,” *Sierra*, December 12, 2020, <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/future-oceans-environmental-justice-climate-change>. Visit meditationocean.com for a complete list of references.





Constellation and Sustainability: New Ways of Working

Jennifer Lange

Conceived and directed by Hope Ginsburg, this project was realized by an expansive ecosystem of artists, curators, writers, musicians, meditators, divers, and scientists. Aiming to register this collaborative form of art- and exhibition-making, Ginsburg names them collectively as the project's creator, using the rubric of the Meditation Ocean Constellation.

The same ideas of interdependence also prompted new ways of working at the Wexner Center. To realize this exhibition and its accompanying public and educational programs, the Department of Film/Video collaborated with our colleagues in the Departments of Exhibitions, Art & Resilience, and Learning & Public Practice, as well as with students, faculty, and staff at The Ohio State University.

Another component of the exhibition is a Climate Impact Report. Working with Artists Commit, an artist-led collective based in New York that works for climate action in the art world, we are tracking the materials and resources that have gone into realizing this exhibition. These include the electricity that powers the installation's six projectors and the paper and ink used to print the gallery guide in your hands now. That report will be available on our website during the run of the exhibition, and at www.artistscommit.com/reports.

We hope that this focus on sustainable and collaborative exhibition-making will serve as a model for future projects.

Acknowledgments

Meditation Ocean would not be possible without the collaboration of many talented, creative, and generous individuals who comprise the Meditation Ocean Constellation. Together, we make an ecology of artists, educators, meditation practitioners, writers, divers, curators, musicians, and scientists whose time, enthusiasm, and expertise gave this project form and life. In this guide, you'll find a comprehensive list of constellation members and their specific roles, a testament to the fact that art- and exhibition-making requires the labor of many. Special thanks go to Matt Flowers, Alexis McCrimmon, and Joshua Quarles, the core production team of *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow*, who captured the ocean on camera, reconstructed its environment in postproduction, and created an original soundscape with care, precision, and a deep belief in the many possibilities of this work. The underwater production was overseen by Dive Safety Officer Jim McNeal, who understood our vision and helped to safely manifest it.

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Hope Ginsburg & Jennifer Lange

Meditation Ocean Constellation: Meditation Ocean

Organized by the Wexner Center for the Arts and curated by Film/Video Studio
Curator Jennifer Lange.

Meditation Ocean Constellation

Hope Ginsburg Artist/Director	Mary Boltz Dive Guide	Melody Jue Writer
Jennifer Lange Curator/Producer	Oscar Fleites Boat Captain	Anais Duplan Writer
Matt Flowers Director of Photography	Chelsea McLaughlin Boat First Mate	Matthew Barger Vocalist
Alexis McCrimmon Editor and Colorist	Lily Cox-Richard and Michael Jevon Demps Library of Radical Returns, Meditation Script Writers	Olivia Carlton Vocalist
Joshua Quarles Composer and Sound Recordist	Nicolás Dumit Estévez Raful Espejo Ovalles The Interior Beauty Salon, Meditation Script Writer	Lauren Maho Vocalist
Jim McNeal Dive Safety Officer	Forest–Body–Chair and Mildred’s Lane Session Fellows: Gina Siepel, Session Coleader; Julia O. Bianco; Joe Lerro; Rachel Schmoker; Ainsley Steeves; Samiha Tasnim; Ruby Waldo; and Lotte Kliros Walworth Meditation Script Writers	Jesse Roberts Vocalist
Dionne Custer Edwards Director of Learning & Public Practice	Brad Fox Meditation Script Writer	Julia Harth Learning Guide Researcher
Emily Haidet Manager of Community, Public, and Academic Programs	Rachel Hilton Yoga Scope, Meditation Script Writer	Amanda Tobin Ripley Learning Guide Researcher
Sarah Robison Manager of Teaching, Learning, and Interpretive Practices	GM Keaton Meditation Script Writer	Kendall Markley Graphic Designer
Tracie McCambridge Director of Art & Resilience	Tifani Kendrick Meditation Script Writer	Nisiqi Graphic Designer
Stephen Jones Exhibition Design Engineer	Monique McCrystal and Deja Redman Replenish, Meditation Script Writers	Marcy Paredes Graphic Designer
David Dickas Exhibition Designer	Fiona Middleton Meditation Script Writer	Nia Snelling Art & Resilience Student Leader
Sarah Howard Dive Team Captain	Sara Smith Meditation Script Writer	Sophia Buskirk Art & Resilience Student Leader
Bob Ballard Dive Team	Naoco Wowsugi Meditation Script Writer	Deidre Hoguet Designtex, Materials Designer
Steve Peloquin Dive Team		Jerry Marshall Upholsterer
Rachel Stewart Diving with a Purpose, Dive Team		
Riane Tyler Diving with a Purpose, Dive Team, Meditation Script Writer		

Images

Covers, pages 4–6, 9 (bottom), 10, 22

Meditation Ocean Constellation, *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow*, 2023 (still). Six-channel video installation with sound, 67 mins. looped. Images courtesy of Hope Ginsburg.
pages 9 (top), 26–27

Meditation Ocean Constellation: Meditation Ocean, installation views at the Wexner Center for the Arts. Photo: Stephen Takacs.

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Open the camera app on your phone and take a picture of the QR code below to visit the exhibition event page on wexarts.org, where you'll find additional content including interviews and a multimedia learning guide.



Support

SUPPORT FOR *M.O. TURTLEGRASS MEADOW*

The following individuals and organizations supported Hope Ginsburg and the Meditation Ocean Constellation in the development of *M.O. Turtlegrass Meadow*.

Wexner Center for the Arts Film/Video Studio Program and Artist Residency Award in Film/Video

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Anaïs Duplan

Sat, Mar 18 and 25

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Chapters Five and Six:

Cadine Navarro

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and Alexis McCrimmon
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AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Breathe

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