

RYDELL

RYDELL VISUAL ARTS FELLOWS • 2016-2017 • CROCETTI • LUSZTIG • HARRISONS

Kathleen CROCETTI

Irene LUSZTIG

Helen and Newton
HARRISON

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Visual Arts Fellows 2016-2017

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In Memory of Roy and Frances Rydell



How do you want to be remembered?

It's been 10 years since we launched the Rydell Visual Arts Fund and its fellowship program for individual artists. What began with about \$2 million from the estate of Roy and Frances Rydell has grown far beyond what we had anticipated.

To date, we have awarded more than \$1 million; this includes 22 fellowships and nearly \$770,000 in grants to arts organizations. As a demonstration of the power of good investments the permanently endowed fund has grown to more than \$2.4 million today.

We celebrated this hallmark by bringing together a large percentage of the Rydell Fellows and others involved in the visual arts in our county. The idea was to spend time reflecting on the award and to talk about how the local arts environment has changed.

One thing made clear to us was that local artists want the fellowship program to continue. We heard stories from the fellows how the awards gave them time and money to travel, build a new studio, create new works and build recognition.

Roy and Frances Rydell, 1985

There was deep appreciation for the size of the fellowship awards and for the fact that they are merit based and have no strings attached. The size of the awards was seen as important recognition of the need for artists to earn a livelihood from their art. This is what we hoped would happen and what we want to keep doing.

Our direction from the Rydell estate was intentionally open ended. I know Roy and Frances would insist on taking a fresh look every so often at the process and the product of their generosity and estate planning.

The Rydells put their trust in your community foundation. I think we've lived up to that challenge. Could *you* be the next generous donor like the Rydells? It takes more than good thoughts and appreciated assets. It takes good, thoughtful planning. The Community Foundation can help, but it starts with you. Just as it did with Roy and Frances.

Lance Linares

Chief Executive Officer,
Community Foundation
Santa Cruz County



Rydell Fellows 2016 / 2017


Encountering Art Perspective

In remembering our experience as jurors for these Rydell Fellowships, I have thought about the two people who originally made these fellowships possible and how their bequest has been actuated. Looking at these fellowships from the perspective of a juror, who has been a working artist (photographer) and founder/administrator of an international arts organization, I want to say a few words about the fellowships themselves.

These fellowships represent the best kind of support that creative people can receive. They are selective but inclusive. They define their purpose in a broad and open way. Film, sculpture, performance, painting, printmaking, ceramics, glass, textiles, mixed media, photography and video are all included in an expansive concept of visual expression. The awards are generous in spirit and in actuality. They look at the quality and substance of an artist's work, but make no demand for new artworks or special projects. They honor what the artist has done.

In selecting the 2016–2017 fellowships, we studied and looked at the works of sixty-one artists. The three jurors brought a range of expertise with different kinds of art forms and professional environments. They came from different parts of the country and different places: a multidisciplinary university art center in Ohio; a large-scale corporate art space in New York, and an artist-run international festival in Texas. Individually and collectively, we brought concerns with the formalist elements that go into the making of an artwork, the craft of the art, as well as the content and intentions of the work—what issues they speak to—what strategies they use. Although we approached the selection process from very different standpoints, all of us paid attention to how the artist and his/her artwork connect to a larger world or community of people. All these concerns are manifest in the artworks of the four artists selected for this year's fellowships.

These artists work in very diverse media that reflect the remarkable possibilities that



newly developed materials, techniques and technologies make available to us today. These tools enable contemporary artists to more easily combine disparate disciplines in their creative work—science and art, historical documents and modern social issues, participatory education and urban development. The integration of craft and formalist aesthetics with subject matter that addresses what is happening to human society and the earth today characterizes all these artists’ work.

Helen and Newton Harrison have mapped much of the world in their multi-dimensional art installations about the health of the planet and global warming. Their work melds an unusual range of visual communication and text-based information. Graphic diagrams, numbers, photographs and words are overlaid on and within large-scale maps of continents, specific geographic regions and coastlines to create a space of flowing information about the movement of people, the circuitous motion of water, the currents of heat across the land, and the ecology

of biodiversity. Their art installations combine the latest big data analytics from digital technologies with visual depictions of geography whose roots lie in Renaissance cartography from western Europe. Going beyond the normal parameters of art making, they have worked as scientists and diplomats to take their work to many global audiences and effectuate real change.

Kathleen Crocetti’s work is very much based in her own community, and her art deals with issues that are both global and local. Her work is tactile, often designed for the outdoors and for visual surprise. Using glass, clay, fabric, steel, wood, paper and resins, she constructs color sculptures that speak to subjects such as community building, the development of cities, and conflicts in Iraq and Gaza. Her art is frequently interactive and participatory. In her way-finding mosaic reliefs along bridges and stairways in Santa Cruz, CA, she has invited middle school students to work with her to complete the mosaics; in a public gathering place of artificial trees and curving foot paths,

she invites participation from the surrounding community. Her artworks are signposts asking for a participatory awareness of our urban environment.

Irene Lusztig’s films have a conscious intellectualism that evokes the haunting quality of lost memories. Her work brings back the ideas and values of times we thought we had “overcome”—ways of thinking that western society has left behind. But in her contextualization, they turn out to be one of the primal forces that have shaped modern thinking and the way we behave in some of the most personal moments of our lives. With a meticulous and lengthy immersion in historical archives and feminist historiography, Lusztig takes old documents and films about motherhood to show us the evolution of societal thinking about the behavior of women, our attitudes about birth, parenting, children and family.

As with all good art, you are always learning. As jurors we do the same. The fellowships give us the opportunity to look at many forms of creative

work, to think individually and collectively about new ideas, and then learn from each other as well as the art itself.

Wendy Watriss

Co-founder and Senior Curator
FotoFest International

Kathleen Crocetti

Magic Woman

Kathleen Crocetti is an artist—but cannot be described in that one word. She is an activist, relationship builder, project manager, mentor, true friend and a bringer of light, love, hope, and community.

I moved to Santa Cruz eight years ago, and I heard Kathleen's name time and time again. But I hadn't met her until the Gail Rich Awards in January of 2010. She was an awardee, and in her acceptance speech she spoke about "F.O.K.," or "Friends of Kathleen." People who had participated in one of her many community-built public art projects, classes, or programs. She asked all "F.O.K." to stand, and several hundred cheering people got to their feet.



I wondered about this magic woman, who inspired so many. And I conspired to find out.

A couple of years later, the California Arts Council launched a new program that provided large grants for creative place-making projects. By that time, I'd seen Kathleen in action and knew I wanted to work with her. I brought her and community leaders together from many sectors: public safety, environment, watershed stewardship, and arts. An hour later, the Ebb & Flow River Arts Project was born.

The Ebb & Flow River Arts Project is a movement that celebrates and enlivens the San Lorenzo River, its adjacent Santa Cruz Riverwalk, and the Tannery Arts Center. It marked the first large-scale collaboration between Arts Council Santa Cruz County and multiple other sectors, aimed at making a lasting, positive contribution to our county. One element of Ebb & Flow was the creation of a new public art piece at the Tannery. Kathleen led this project, and I saw her magic when we sat down to plan how it would unfold.

She envisioned a year-long process to create

a river-themed sculpture that would be meaningful for Tannery residents, and also welcome people from around the world. She talked me through her timeline: community visioning meetings where people wrote, drew, and talked about their hopes for the Tannery and river; working with a 2D artist to create a visual representation of those hopes; and then months of community builds to lay all of the tile for a large-scale installation. She then described the creative process, including words that to this layperson sounded both fundamental and intriguing: tesserae, thinset, grout, double indirect, sealer. It was one of the most educational and inspiring conversations of my life.

Intertwined with the creative process was her community process. Her community meetings were welcoming, fun, and inclusive. "First I need to find out how a community identifies itself, and then how they use and envision the use of their shared public space," she said. "The meetings I hold are the beginnings of creative community building as folks sometimes meet

their neighbors for the very first time, and are encouraged to think and dream big together. These community meetings are just the start of a long journey we take together. The journey fosters both relationships and creativity, which is why I do what I do."

Then she got to work. It turned out that she isn't just a brilliant thinker and community builder. She's a highly adept project manager. She organized and smoothly led months of community builds, involving people of all ages and abilities. She patiently taught my then-two-year-old how to safely pound large tile squares into right-sized mosaic pieces; she guided teenagers and octogenarians alike in how to lay the pieces. She navigated challenging personalities and numerous project hurdles, pivoting, being firm, and laughing and shaking her head as needed.

And then—the artwork itself. Breathtakingly beautiful, telling a hundred stories, involving the hands of hundreds of people.

Kathleen has repeated this process dozens of times over the years, bringing thousands of

"F.O.K." together, building relationships across the county, celebrating our many cultures, and creating stunning works of art.

When Kathleen was in graduate school, she was "taking a beating" in a grueling critique by one of her teachers. The professor asked, "What is your medium, anyway?" Kathleen, distraught and speechless, couldn't answer. But a visiting professor answered for her. "Her medium is hope."

Kathleen does work in hope—and in empowerment and love. She helps communities claim their public spaces and build relationships while they are at it. I'm lucky to now firmly belong to the "F.O.K.," which has helped me feel like I truly belong in Santa Cruz County. Thank you, Kathleen, for the gifts you share with our community, and for creating spaces that make so many of us feel like we are finally home.

Michelle Williams

Executive Director

Arts Council Santa Cruz County



Ebb & Flow

Consists of a new patio with two mosaic covered picnic tables, three potted trees with fused glass medallions and a mosaic river leading to the head of the river walk trail. Images were designed by Anna Oneglia with input from the community on their identity and river images. Kathleen Crocetti was a co-designer, the project lead and fabricator on this project. Tile mosaic, cement tables, cement patio, stainless steel trees, fused glass medallions framed in recycled farm parts. 700 square feet of mosaics, 33 medallions, trees are 17' tall, river is 160' long.

Supported by Arts Council Santa Cruz County
Photo above: Crystal Birns

*Ebb & Flow, Tannery Arts Center,
Santa Cruz, CA, 2015*

Cement, mosaic, stainless steel,
fused glass
17' x 30' x 163'





We're All Downstream, Tannery Arts Center, Santa Cruz, CA, 2017

Steel, cement, paint, mosaics, digital printing, aluminum, cast plastic, ceramic (multi-media)
15' x 16' x 60

Supported by Arts Council Santa Cruz County

Photo above: Crystal Birns

What is it like under the waters of the San Lorenzo? We invite you to come contemplate the life of the River from a fish eye view. Imagine yourself sitting on a mosaic covered cement fish egg in one of three circles of fish eggs. Around you are clumps of reed-like plants. On the wall is a lively, colorful mural of huge salmon and other smaller fish. Above you are bright blue strips of metal, the ripples of blue water running from the hills towards the river. Floating downstream on the water canopy above

you are large aluminum photo-engraved panels of artwork... it looks like some artists dropped their portfolios! You see a musical score, a poem about water bugs, drawings of the river bank, paintings of water birds and fish, leaves and trees, and sunsets! Up at the water line parked against the painted bank of the river is the long lost red canoe. Contributing artists: Maha, Elijah Pfotenhauer, Geoffrey Nelson, and others.



*Barson Street Stairs,
Santa Cruz, CA, 2014*
Mosaics
15' x 16' x 60'

A community initiated beautification project supported by City of Santa Cruz Neighborhood Grant Program. Design contest held, 260+ entries. Design by Sandra Tulaczyk, a high school student in the neighborhood. Kathleen Crocetti lead artist, fabricated and installed with assistance from the community.



Fish Food: Macroinvertebrates of the San Lorenzo River, San Lorenzo River Park, Santa Cruz, CA, 2017
Mosaics
22" x 120'

80 mosaics created by individual Mission Hill Middle School students incorporated into one long image of grass and sky. Installed on San Lorenzo River levee wall with community assistance. Kathleen Crocetti lead artist and facilitator.

Supported by City of Santa Cruz Arts Commission



Mission State Historic Park Stairs, Mission Street, Santa Cruz, CA, 2016

Mosaics
18' x 80'

Community initiated beautification project. Design contest held, 150+ entries. Design by Katherine Tkoch and Flora Chatwin both high school students in the neighborhood. Kathleen Crocetti Lead Artist, fabricated and installed with assistance from the community.

Supported by Friends of Santa Cruz County Parks and City of Santa Cruz Arts Commission
Photo: Dan Coyro

Diversity, Unity, & Equity
from the Luminous Color Show, January 2014
Cardboard, resin, fabric, pastels, encaustics and neon
8' x 36" x 18"





***Laurel Street Bridge,**
Santa Cruz, CA, 2011–2014*
Mosaics

Dimensions, approximately 30" x 20"
Water St., Soquel Ave. and Laurel St.

One of three bridges, completed
by middle school students over a
three-year period. Each bridge has
a different theme.

*Supported by City of Santa Cruz
Arts Commission*

***Soquel Avenue Bridge,**
Santa Cruz, CA, 2011–2014*
Mosaics

Students created mosaics representing the agricultural products
of Santa Cruz County for the Soquel Avenue Bridge.

Supported by City of Santa Cruz Arts Commission





Pi Mural, Mission Hill Middle School, Santa Cruz, CA, 2009

Mosaics
6.5' x 14'

Each student at Mission Hill Middle School created a digit of Pi in glass mosaic. The tiles were attached to the wall in the order of Pi. A contest was held for the grout design. The winning design was by seventh grader, Graham Galloway. Students assisted in the grouting process.

Supported by Santa Cruz City School District



We Are Mavericks, Mission Hill Middle School, Santa Cruz, CA, 2008

Mosaics
80' x 7'

Publicly made tiles from First Night Santa Cruz and Mission Hill Middle School students.

Supported by Santa Cruz City School District

*Artists need to create on the same scale that
society has the capacity to destroy.*
—Lauren Bon, 2005

Helen and Newton Harrison

Tipping the Scales: The Harrisons and the Force Majeure

Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison (The Harrisons, Harrison Studio) have become legends in their own time. They are well-known pioneers of ecological art and environmental art. Ecological art or eco-art as it is often called, is a distinctive area of contemporary art practice, a sub-category of environmental art that focuses on the biological interdependencies in ecosystems. In order to understand ecosystems, to work with them as an artistic medium, and to create successful ecological and environmental interventions, the Harrisons have had to master environmental science. They also have had to conduct a great deal of their own original research at the intersections of art and science, generating outcomes that contribute to both fields.



In this respect, they are not only pioneers of ecological art but they also have played leading roles in defining art as an authentic research field and in establishing the emerging interdisciplinary field of art-science. To further their research, in 2013 the Harrisons, together with their son Joshua Harrison, founded the Center for the Study of the Force Majeure at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The term, “force majeure” is typically used in legal contracts to limit liability for damages caused by circumstances beyond human control: earthquakes, floods, lightning, and so on. The Harrisons conceive of the force majeure as the environmental damages caused by humans that have set in motion the pending catastrophe of climate change. The Center strives to create on the same scale that society has the capacity to destroy.

The Harrison’s first eco-art project, *Making Earth* (begun 1970) was, according to the artists, a “metaphor for the idea of regenerating the earth worldwide.” *Making Earth* demanded that the Harrisons research soil, its constituent elements,

and the biological processes that generate and regenerate it in order to create it themselves. As artist Elizabeth Stephens has written, “they systematically learned how to... grow things literally from the ground up.” In this sense, *Making Earth*, like much of the Harrison’s work, operates not only metaphorically but concretely: in addition to referencing earth symbolically it created actual earth—the thing in itself. They have referred to this work as “eco-political,” for it responded to the worldwide endangerment of topsoil, which has become a “disastrous environmental problem throughout the world,” far worse than when they began working with soil as a medium nearly half a century ago.

The scale of the *Making Earth* project ranges from *Making Earth Again* (1990), a signed edition of 6 5/8" x 1 3/8" glass test-tubes filled with earth and sealed with cork, to *Working with a Spoils Pile* (1978–80, ongoing), a twenty-one acre reclamation of a debris-filled spoils pile at the Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park in western New York. In the latter work, collaborators (park

services, municipalities, local power companies, and apple orchards, along with community groups like the boy scouts) contributed some 3000 truckloads of earth and organic debris. In what the Harrisons refer to as a “performance,” earth-moving machinery spread and intermixed those donations with native seeds, transforming the surface into a “viable meadow with trees, berry patches and vines interspersed.” Part of the project’s success lay in its economic efficiency: it cost the collaborators less to haul their waste to the Artpark spoils pile than to the more distant dump, plus they were offered a tax deduction for their contributions. This pragmatism and ability to work at diverse scales characterizes the Harrison’s work, which offers economically viable solutions to “wicked problems,” problems that are difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, contradictory, and changing requirements that are often difficult to recognize. Scale, for the Harrisons, was not a formal matter or an expression of bravado but was determined by the nature of a particular problem, which necessitated

a response on a certain scale. Of *Making Earth*, the Harrison Studio more recently asked, “‘Would it be enough, if all the topsoil was regenerated worldwide?’ Clearly it wouldn’t be enough. Regenerating topsoil might simply be an invitation for further exploitation.”

Indeed, that invitation led to more recent, ambitious, and ongoing projects such as *Sage Hen: A Proving Ground*, *Peninsula Europe*, *Tibet Is the High Ground*, and *Saving the West*, which operate at the scale of regions, continents, or watersheds that exceed geo-political boundaries and impact the lives of literally billions of humans and countless other species. For the Harrisons, their ultimate “boss” is not the organization or governing body that commissions their work, it is the environment, the life web. In *The Web of Life*, physicist Fritjof Capra claims that the shift from linear thinking to systems thinking that began in the mid-20th century, is generating an awareness of the world as an integrated whole, rather than as a collection of parts. This holistic perspective has important implications for ecology and ethics.

“Deep ecological awareness recognizes the fundamental interdependence of all phenomena and the fact that, as individuals and societies, we are all embedded in (and ultimately dependent on) the cyclical processes of nature.” The life web operates locally and globally. There are local life webs, like the meadow at ArtPark that the Harrisons brought to life from a toxic spoils pile. There is the global life web, spanning the Earth. And there are life webs at all scales in between.

Atmospheric scientist James Lovelock proposed the “Gaia Hypothesis,” that the Earth itself is a large organism comprised of billions of other organisms that are all interconnected in ways that collectively affect the state of the whole, or Gaia. Although Lovelock’s metaphor has been contested, many scientists accept the idea of the Earth as “one continuous enormous ecosystem composed of many component ecosystems.” In the mid-1990s, when the extent of climate change was less apparent than it is today, evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis wrote, “Gaia is a tough bitch—a system that has worked for over three

billion years without people. This planet’s surface and its atmosphere and environment will continue to evolve long after people and prejudice are gone.”

The Harrisons recognize that on the deep time scale of evolution, humans are a relatively recent phenomenon and that our species’ reign on Earth inevitably has an expiration date, just like all other species that have come and gone before us. What is different about humans is that, for the last two hundred years, we have been contributing to our own demise—and to the demise of many other species—on a scale that is unprecedented in the fossil record and in a time-frame that is accelerating. The Harrisons accept, albeit with great dismay, that billions of people and millions of species may die as a result of global climate change precipitated by anthropogenic (human) influences.

Driven by an ethical commitment to the life web, the Harrison’s ask a vital question: At what scale of the global ecosystem must we intervene in order to act most effectively, given best estimates

of change over time? In other words, what can we do now in order to mitigate the loss of life and biodiversity that will result from the force majeure—to the catastrophic human impact on Earth. The Harrisons believe that “unless artists, scientists, industry and government create working environmental projects together... habitable environments that can sustain future generations of life may not exist.” Fortunately, the subtitle of their monumental 2016 book suggests, “after 45 years, counterforce is on the Horizon.” That counterforce is the Harrison Studio and the Center for the Study of the Force Majeure.

Dr. Edward Shanken

Associate Professor, Arts Division
UC Santa Cruz



Brine Shrimp: Notations of the Ecosystems of the Western Saltworks, 1971

Photo: The Harrison Studio



Brine Shrimp: Notations of the Ecosystems of the Western Saltworks, 1971
 Photo: Musée des Abattoirs toulouse



Watering earth



Shoveling and shoveling



Hoeing earth

Feeling and crumbling

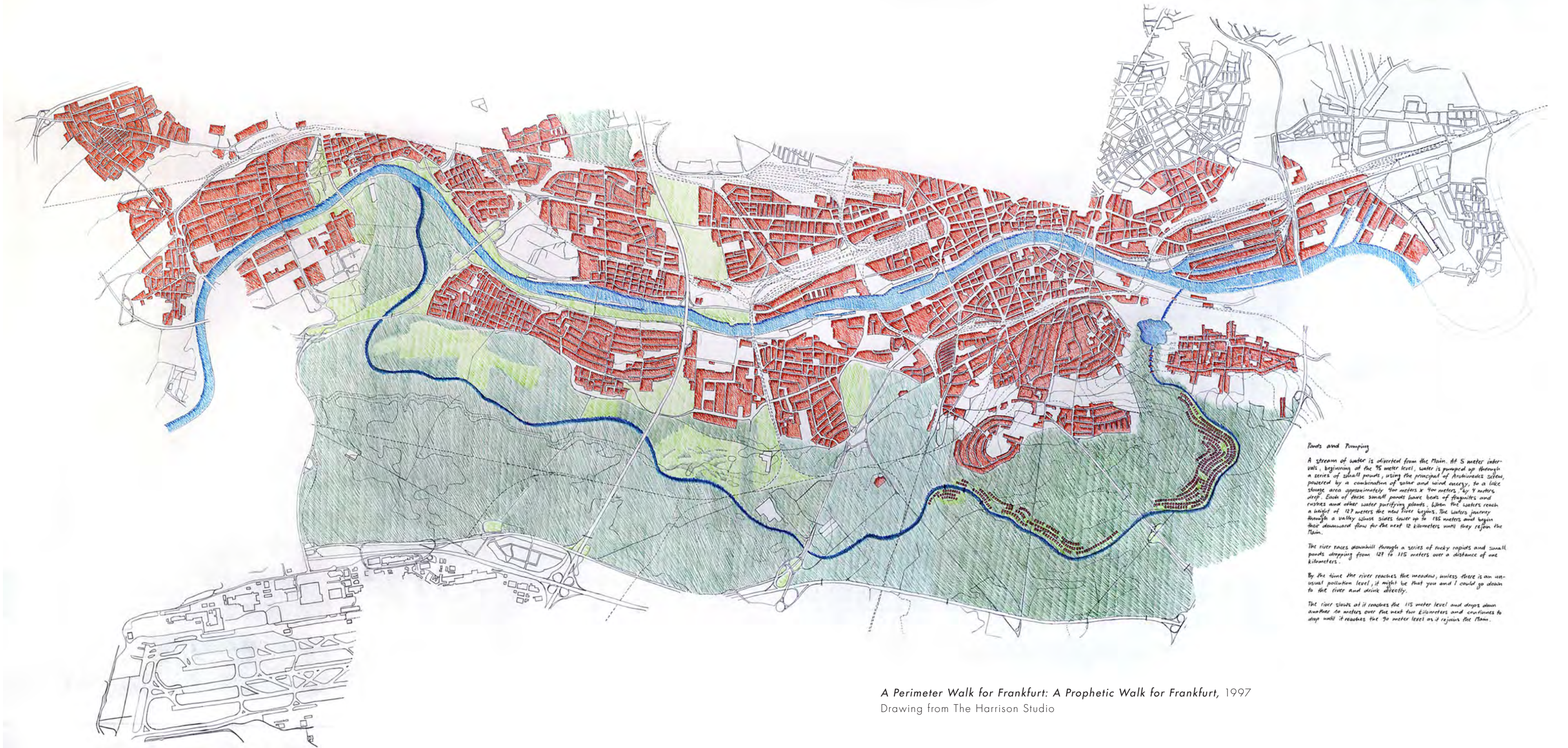


Turning earth

Smelling and tasting



Making Earth in Pepper Canyon, 1970
 Photo: Lennart Bourin



Ponds and Pumping

A stream of water is diverted from the Main. At 5 meter intervals, beginning at the 75 meter level, water is pumped up through a series of small ponds, using the principle of Archimedes' screw, powered by a combination of solar and wind energy, to a lake storage area approximately 400 meters x 400 meters, 4 meters deep. Each of these small ponds have beds of fragmites and rushes and other water purifying plants. When the waters reach a height of 127 meters the new river begins. The waters journey through a valley whose sides tower up to 135 meters and begin their downward flow for the next 12 kilometers until they rejoin the Main.

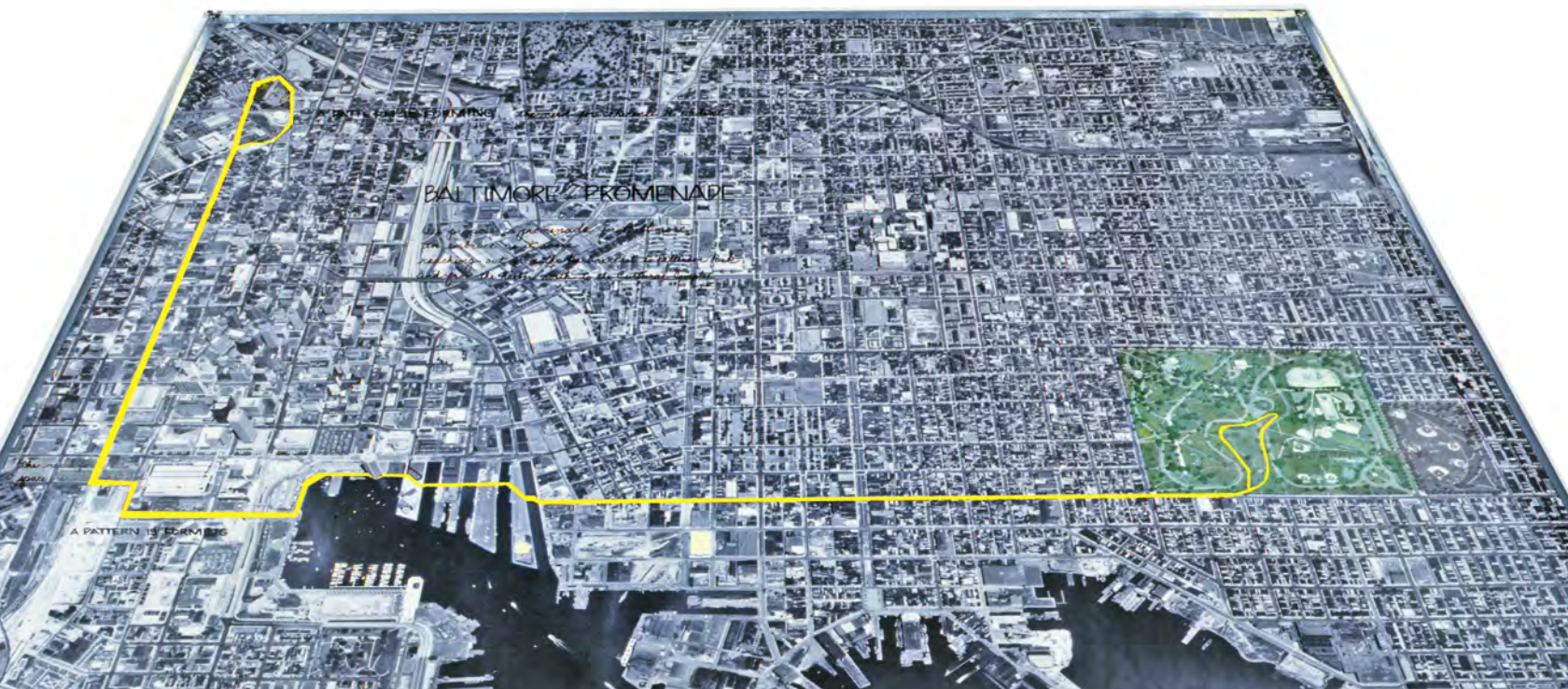
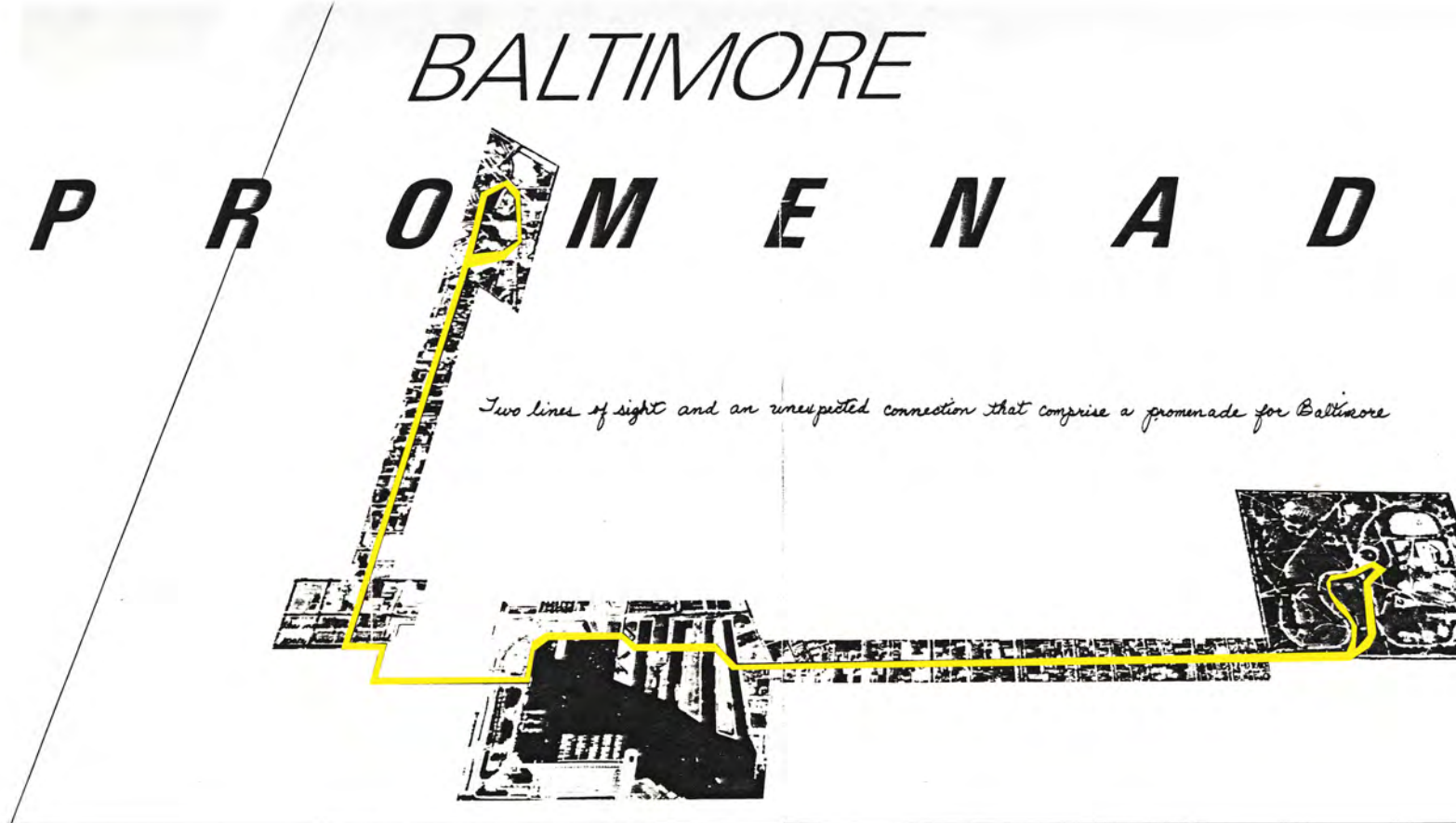
The river races downhill through a series of rocky rapids and small ponds dropping from 127 to 115 meters over a distance of one kilometer.

By the time the river reaches the meadow, unless there is an unusual pollution level, it might be that you and I could go down to the river and drink directly.

The river slows as it reaches the 115 meter level and drops down another 10 meters over the next two kilometers and continues to drop until it reaches the 90 meter level as it rejoins the Main.

A Perimeter Walk for Frankfurt: A Prophetic Walk for Frankfurt, 1997

Drawing from The Harrison Studio



Baltimore Promenade, 1997

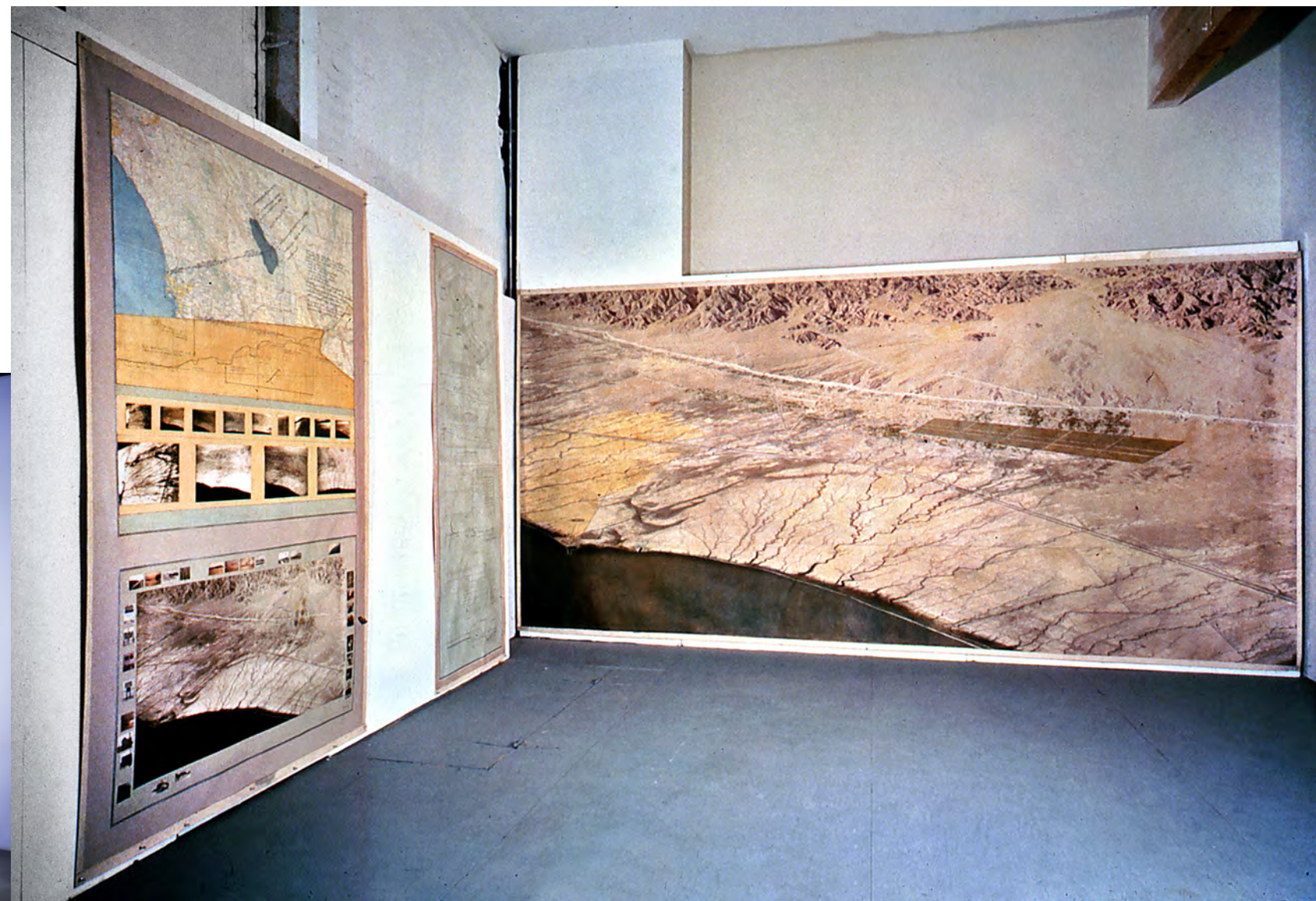
Left: Two Lines of Sight and an Unexpected Connection that Comprise a Promenade for Baltimore

Above: Installation view

Photo: Aerial Photography commissioned by The Harrison Studio



4th Lagoon Cycle Installation, 1974
Photo: The Harrison Studio



7th Lagoon Cycle Installation, 1979-1981
Photo: The Harrison Studio



Above:
7th Lagoon Cycle Installation, 1974
 Photo: The Harrison Studio

Opposite:
Green Heart Vision Installation, 1994–ongoing
 Photo: Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der
 Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, Germany





Green Heart Vision Installation, 1994–ongoing

Photo: Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, Germany



Endangered Meadows of Europe, 1975–1977

Photo: Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, Germany

She asked me what I was going to be when I grew up and I said, the President. She thought that was a riot.

Irene Lusztig

Near Ms. In the first interview in *Yours in Sisterhood*, filmed in 2016, a thirteen-year-old in Quincy, Massachusetts, reads a letter written by a thirteen-year-old from her town in 1973, to Ms. magazine. In it, the writer describes a bus journey in which she talked to the elderly woman sitting next to her, who can't believe the future that this young woman imagines for herself. After all, it had only been a year since Ms. put out its first full issue, featuring the headline WONDER WOMAN FOR PRESIDENT, and since Shirley Chisholm—the first African American congresswoman—had announced her candidacy for the President of the United States. She didn't succeed, but when Irene Lusztig started shooting



Yours in Sisterhood in 2015, it looked like Hillary Rodham Clinton might. The young reader of the letter says:

“Now there’s a woman President. Well, there’s a woman President running, and I think she has a chance.”

What a near Ms., from the perspective of 2017, as Lusztig is completing the film begun in a moment of hope, researching the archive of unpublished letters held at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, at Radcliffe College. The film bridges the moments of expectation and—with a reading by a woman in an interracial relationship in North Carolina, who tries to contain her emotions while describing a KKK parade that followed the 2016 election—devastation.

The opening interview is poignant as well as bitterly ironic, because its multiple lines of possibility are familiar from another kind of 1970s American feminism: its rich legacy of science fiction. What thus emerges from the film is feminism’s commitment—to paraphrase Emily

Dickinson—to “dwell[ing] in possibility.” A near Ms. gets close, asks us to be open.

It’s particularly poignant to be finishing this essay so soon after the death of Sheila Michaels, the campaigner who popularized the honorific “Ms.” In 1969, she gave an interview to WBAI Radio, 99.5FM, in New York that caught the ear of Gloria Steinem, searching for a name for her proposed magazine. *Yours in Sisterhood* restores to the letters that which the word Ms. offers: a feminist address, a way of being heard.

Particularly for voices that remain marginalized: a young African American woman who says “I want to be behind the camera, I want to be in the writers’ rooms;” an ASL speaker who animates a letter from an “angry but loving lesbian” feeling unrepresented by Ms; and a Lakota elder who links colonial-era violence to that faced by the water protectors at Standing Rock.

In the gallery, *Yours in Sisterhood* will play on a loop, its form emphasizing this sense of repetitions—not only in the recurrent issues, but also in reappearing bodies. Claudia Stallman,

reading her own coming-out letter to Ms., says “I like that the letter is in my own handwriting. I sat down at my desk—I can see where.”

The word Ms. is also a work of science fiction in itself: a new word recognizing a new state of being. One letter-writer asks the magazine to support the gender-neutral pronoun they have coined: ahon (a, her/she, him, one). The contemporary reader in Emporia, Kansas—who uses female pronouns but finds that others may not use them for her—looks back to this letter from 1975 and comments, “It’s almost eerie.”

“A new word,” she concludes, “why not? If we can invent bae, why not ahon?” *Yours in Sisterhood* delves into the archive and renews the word, bringing neglected letters into the circulation they sought, and changing their unpublished pasts into public futures where their voices are heard. It uses the letter as a form of time travel, and even teleportation.

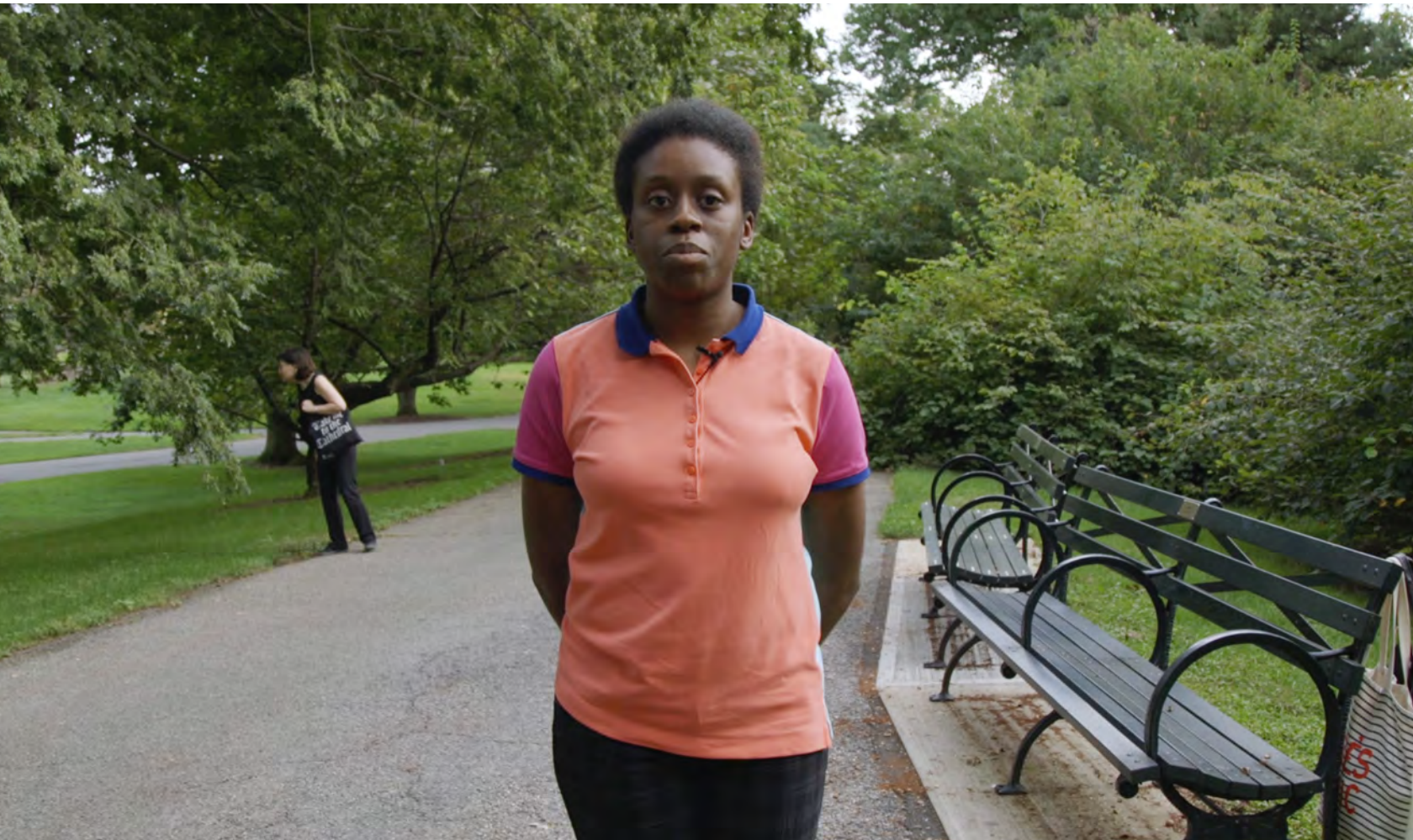
This is science fiction of the highest order: moving non-linearly through time and space, beaming us from past to future and back again,

transforming bodies into other bodies through quantum connections. A film that could have been a valuable but static time capsule becomes instead a spaceship searching for its own lost futures, to activate them: in the bodies of us, its viewers, whom it also calls (knowing that some of us might prefer ahon, or they, or he; or be pleased with the recognition), to whom it also gives the responsibility of being or becoming, Sister.

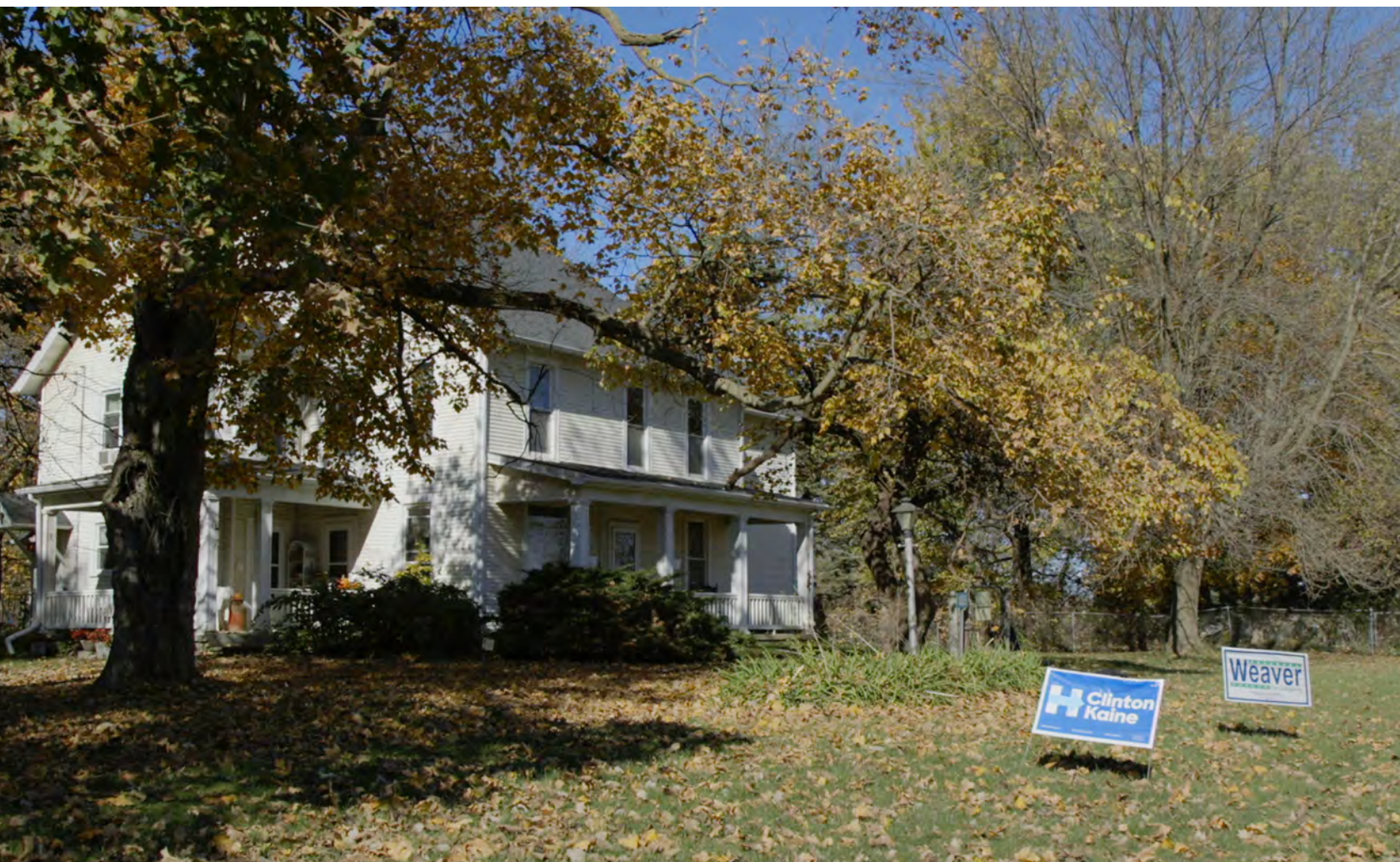
Sophie Mayer

Author of *Political Animals*:

The New Feminist Cinema



Pages 46–55, all images from:
Irene Lusztig, Yours in Sisterhood, 2017
 Frames from single channel HD video loop









Rydell 2016 – 2017 Visual Arts Fellows

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