
TEEMING WITH LIFE

In summer 2020, the international, transdisciplinary collaborative Ensayos (which translates as “inquiries,” “essays,” or “rehearsals” in English), conducted a digital artist residency at the New Museum. To share their research on the ecopolitics of archipelagos, Ensayos produced **Hydrofeminist METitations**, a podcast blending journalism, fiction, and guided somatic exercises recorded where their collaborations have taken place: Norway, Australia, and the Americas. To learn more about Ensayos’ practice, you can watch and listen to work produced for their residency [here](#).

This activity focuses on **Hydrofeminist METitation II: Norway** (42 minutes). You can listen to the podcast in parts, or in full. The Norway episode explores humans’ and animals’ relationships with each other and with bodies of water through five Acts.

This lesson invites you to explore wildlife in and around a local waterway as you consider climate change and interdependent relationships in ecosystems.

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

- **interdependent:** mutually relying on and supporting each other
- **ecosystem:** a community of living organisms (plants, human and non-human animals) and their physical environment
- **graywater:** relatively clean waste water from home appliances (kitchens, baths, sinks, washing machines)
- **hydrofeminism:** a term coined by gender studies scholar Astrida Neimanis to bring together feminist, queer, and ecological sensibilities. Neimanis believes that ecofeminism begins with the realization that we are mostly made of water, and refuses a separation between nature and culture, and between the environment “out there” and the human “in here.”



START WITH ART: ENSAYOS

As you listen to the **Hydrofeminist METitations: Norway** podcast, we invite you to think about these questions as you listen to each act:

Act 1 (0:00-10:15) focuses on glaciers and climate change in the Svalbard Islands, an archipelago midway between Norway and the North Pole governed by Norway since the 1920s.

- What types of sounds do you hear, human and non-human? Do they give you a sense of place? Do they remind you of sounds you have heard before and where? How do they make you feel?
- How do the artists and researchers in Act 1 describe the glacial landscape of Svalbard?
- Connecting the photograph above to Act 1, would you anticipate finding living creatures within the ice? How might the life forms in ice be different from those in the moving body of water?

In Act 2 (10:36-20:00), artist Randi NygMrd explores a poetic law in the Norwegian Marine Resources Act stating that “**wild living marine resources belong to society as a whole.**”

- Randi Nygard shares sounds of animals that are part of the region that she lives in, gulls, cod fish, and orca whales and asks what is “wild living?” What do you think lives in the wild? Are humans part of the wild? Who do you think is responsible for caring for the wild?

In Act 3 (20:00-30:00), artists Sÿssa Jÿrgensen and Geir Tore Holm explore the wildlife in and around Holsbekken Creek near their farm, ÿvre Ringstad. Graywater from their property feeds the creek.

- How do the artists in Act 3 describe the color of the water in Holsbekken

Creek?

- What types of wildlife do the artists notice in and around the creek?
- Do the artists notice signs of pollution?
- What senses do the artists engage to observe and seek out the living creatures in and around the creek, and the state of health of the creek?
- Mr. Creek makes a phone call about his tests. Do you think water is like a person who needs check-ups and healthcare? How does the health of the water **interdependent** with other living things?

Act 4 (30:00-36:50) shares the experience of an 11-day boat journey above the Arctic Circle.

- What sounds did you hear and how did they make you feel? Did you imagine you were on a boat journey?

Act 5 (36:50-41:00) is a song in the imagined voice of farmed sea salmon.

- Do you ever imagine stories for animals? Do you think animals in your neighborhood have a story to sing and tell, and what would it be?
- What can we learn from imagining stories in the point of view of animals, or a creek as in act 3?

How can we use our senses to study a body of water or rain water while considering climate change, and changes in the local **ecosystem**?

In the Artist's Words:

"...The color of the water, it has a special tint. It's like a little bit milky, and maybe a hint of sepia and it's only partly clear. Here it is clear because it's falling a little bit but then in that pond over there it is more sepia colored..."

–Ensayos: Hydrofeminist METitations: Norway, Act 3

LOOK AROUND

- What were some of your interactions with water today? Where is water in your home and where do you think it comes from?
- Do you live near a body of water, like a pond, river, lake, ocean, or stream?
- If you don't live near a body of water, do you notice large puddles or collections of water after rain? Do you think you might notice the "wild living" of an ecosystem in and around a water fountain?
- Choose one of the places you see water outside that you can comfortably observe for the following activity

In the Artist's Words:

"... Looking around, the vegetation here is quite dense and it makes up homes for birds and insects and there are small animals of course in the water and the bigger animals around and just here on the big trunk that is on the creek side it has marks from the beaver teeth and also the smell...is strong and we can see the white flowers as small stars towards the lush green vegetation..."

MAKE ART

Let's study a body of water (even a puddle or bucket of rainwater) and document the wildlife, evidence of pollution, and ecosystem changes we observe through drawings, photographs, sound, or video recordings.

Materials

- Pens, markers, pencils or other drawing media
- Paper or a sketchbook
- A smart phone or device for recording sound and video
- An adult or older sibling to accompany you on visits to the water

Making

1. Observe the place you have chosen from near and far perspectives and notice animals and plants you see in and around the water. Capture these through photographs, video, sound and/or drawings.
2. Do you notice signs of pollution? Do you notice unusual smells? Use drawing, video, photographs, or a recording of your voice to document these.
3. What sounds do you hear around water? Do these sounds come from things that might affect, or are affected by the water?
4. What color is the water? How would you describe the surface?
5. Try visiting the body of water multiple times in one week or over a period of several weeks. Record changes you see in different weather, light, and seasons.

REFLECTION

- Did you notice new animals, insects or plants you hadn't seen before?
- Did you become more attuned to pollution or trash, in and near the water?
- How would you write a song from the point of view of an animal, or plant species you found near, or in the water? Or, how would you create a song or series of movements about pollution and the impacts of climate change on wildlife and the **ecosystems** in and near the water? What stories do the water and wildlife have to tell us?

Did someone forward this email to you? If you would like to receive these art activities directly, sign up [here](#).



NEW
235 BOWERY
NEW YORK NY
10002 USA
MUSEUM

IMAGES:

Søssa Jørgensen, *Wild Living Marine Resources Belong to Society as a Whole*. Performance presented as part of Ensayos #4, Kurant, Tromsø, 2016. Photo: Christy Gast. [Alt text: A performer wearing a wetsuit floats in a fjord surrounded by mountains]

Our mailing address is:

New Museum
235 Bowery
New York, NY 10002

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>
[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
New Museum 6 235 Bowery 6 New York, NY 10002 6 USA