

SF WEEKLY

Off Shore: S.F. Waterways and Bays as Artistic Medium

by Laura Jay Cramer

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Courtesy A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting and Southern Exposure

Potrero-based art gallery Southern Exposure has big plans for summer.

The gallery has put together Off Shore, a series of events that celebrate the waterways and bay specific to San Francisco. Did you know that there are hidden creeks that pass through the City for miles, or that Bayview boasts a boat club over 65 years old? And do you remember Mission Creek, the houseboat community tucked behind the ballpark? Southern Exposure brings together artists Paul Cesewski, Constance Hockaday, Marie Lorenz, Chris Sollars, and A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting, who use these locations to explore their relationships to the water of San Francisco and show how it can be used as an artistic medium.

The Off Shore Opening Reception features pieces from Amy Balkin's A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting. Balkin, along with her co-registrar Cassie Thornton, have created an archive of everyday objects from various locations affected by the changing climate.

"[It's] a growing collection of items contributed by people living in places around that world that are, or may, disappear owing to the combined physical, political, and economic impacts of climate change, including glacial melting, sea level rise, coastal erosion, and desertification," explains Balkin. "The collected contributions from these places form an archive of the future anterior -- or 'what will have been.'"

The items that make up the collection are common -- there are train tickets, an empty tuna fish can, a VHS tape -- they create an accurate portrayal of what life looks like in regions that may become obsolete.

Amy Balkin and Cassie Thornton are taking contributions from residents to add to A People's Archive of Sinking and Melting at the Opening Reception on May 28.



Courtesy Marie Lorenz and Southern Exposure

"We ask anyone living in the San Francisco Bay Delta watershed and across California who lives in a place that is threatened to disappear because of climate change to please contribute," says Balkin. These pieces will join the collection, which currently includes items from over 15 countries, including Australia, Nepal, Panama, Senegal, and the US.

Southern Exposure presents Off Shore at 7 p.m. on May 28 and it continues through July 3 at various locations. Exhibitions, lectures, and walks are scheduled through July:

- June 1 - Islais Creek Walk by Chris Sollars
 - June 13 - The Voyage of the Hurllothrumbo by Paul Cesewski
 - June 15 - All These Darlings and Now Us by Constance Hockaday
 - June 19 - 21 - All These Darlings and Now Us by Constance Hockaday
 - June 21 - Mission Creek Walk by Chris Sollars
 - June 26 - All These Darlings and Now Us Lecture by Constance Hockaday
 - June 28 - Yosemite Creek Walk by Chris Sollars
- Tickets are free, but some events require you to pre-register; more info at soex.org.