

DARLA BJORK



“Wax Flow” by Darla Bjork, wax and water, 2018

“Wax Flow created for [Pages from the Frozen Sea](#), co-curated by Eva Mantell & Sarah Stengle, Minneapolis, MN.

A book must be the ax for the frozen sea within us.

—Franz Kafka

Instruction:

MAKE A PAGE OUT OF ICE: Use a block of ice, any size, any shape (one you have found or created, outdoors or in your freezer) and shape it as a space for expression. Freeze art, poetry, sculpture, drawing, messages, seeds, natural materials and more within/around/on/under it. Note how and for how long the ice stays frozen, how it contains as well as melts and changes and how its message transforms as warmth unlocks it.

<https://www.facebook.com/pagesfromthefrozensea/>

FROM THE CO-CURATORS

Ice is only a temporary condition. Our planet's frozen wonders are cracking, splitting and falling into the sea. It's called calving and for a moment it feels like it might be a process of addition, as more and more chunks of glaciers are set free. But it is only subtraction and then more subtraction as the ice at the poles slips away from us. Feeling frozen and yet tearful is the new contradiction.

Art shifts, transforms, finds its way through blockages and dislocations through space and time. Art has a particular talent for freezing, unfreezing, pausing, stopping, rewinding or fast-forwarding time.

Marcel Duchamp's cracked Large Glass reads like a piece of ice that traps a drawing in space and time. A photograph is a pause, one way to suspend time and see David Hammons selling snowballs on the sidewalk in Cooper Square, New York City. Or a way to stop and see what Andy Goldsworthy built out of icicles, temporarily, in Cumbria England.

Art wants to let us experience what most of us haven't experienced. Envision Olafur Eliasson's huge pieces of a glacier taking their time as they shrink, run off and evaporate in the Place du Pantheon, Paris. Or think of Yoko Ono's instructions, which can be carried out at any time in multiple ways. "Use things until they melt," she writes.

Kafka writes about the frozen sea within us. What was there before it froze? What gets revealed now? —Eva Mantell

Ice reminds me of suspended expression. Things I want to say but repress or projects that I am too busy to realize can rattle around in my mind and lead to frustration or anger. Being in my studio helps me balance out my emotions. What I have found talking to non-artists is that art-making can sometimes have an opposite un-balancing effect because of self-consciousness or performance anxiety. Anxiety can cause us to freeze inside, or to feel numb.

But anyone can experiment with freezing an object or text in ice. Often the visual transformation is amazing. I encourage you to participate in this project whether you feel that you have talent or not. Making an ice page is a very direct process. If your page or photograph doesn't turn out, you can make another one. Let the pages melt; this transient quality is part of this project's concept.

I can't wait to see what happens with this idea in other people's hands. — Sarah Stengle