

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Christine Marie

At the end of her life, the mother of the modern environmental movement, Rachel Carson wrote *The Sense of Wonder*, a manual for embracing the natural world. Carson asks, what if all children had a connection with nature? Might they grow up to create a world in harmony with it? Today, the natural world is in peril. A beloved setting like a creek or a tree may disappear by next season. The current state of the climate crisis has led us to witness—and for many, to directly experience—these losses caused by extreme weather conditions.

For this live, multimedia, multi-channel performance installation, *The Sense of Wonder: Buffalo, NY*, I will recontextualize the beauty of the local natural world within a silo using analog equipment connected to a dimmer system: overhead projections of photographs, hand-painted looping filmstrips on reel-to-reel projectors, and giant shadows from cutouts of shapes with performers and plants, each cast from hand-made halogen lights.

These images will be projected directly onto an inner wall and surrounding surfaces of the silo. At intervals throughout the performance, mounted LEDs and digital projectors will overpower the analog images with high-lumen, pixilated videos. These will first represent extreme weather patterns—digital snow, yellow haze, smoke, etc. —until each becomes brighter, ending in a flash of blinding light. During the “digital meltdowns,” the team will prepare for the next phase of building a local natural setting before it deteriorates again.

Four, 20/5 analog-to-digital minute sections will repeat throughout an evening-long experience, followed by an open exploration for audience members to visually remix and play in the analog environment. The sonic experience is yet to be determined, though a four-song cycle is being developed by composer Hil Jaegar. Outside the silo, a live feed will be mixed and projected.

I’ve studied and assisted traditional Indonesian *wayang kulit* shadow theater performances for over a decade. Inspired by *wayang*, I provide a similar function of seeing the shadows from one side of the projection surface and on the other side the creation of the images. This function also embodies the Balinese word *niskala*, which defines a praxis involving the unseen forces, evoking the liminal state between the intangible and tangible worlds.

This art experience aims to be a community ritual honoring the liminality, fragility, and power of the local habitat. The silo represents the eroding effects of modernism, embodying modernism’s effect upon the natural world.

I acknowledge that, while I am a Western New York native, I have much to learn of the history that the silo’s contain. I embrace this knowledge and am excited to invite new directions into this proposed work.

The Sense of Wonder: Buffalo, NY, is an opportunity to create a replicable model for additional community art memorializations of local natural settings and landscapes of personally sacred spaces. Toward that end, it will create opportunities for connecting with wisdom keepers, and inviting citizen stories/photographs, then weaving the information into a large-scale art experience.

SKILLSHARE: Christine Marie

Given the modern climate crisis and ongoing extreme weather patterns, we must acknowledge that our beloved natural spaces are impermanent. Artist Christine Marie creates sensory narratives that examine the role of the feminine in maintaining the integrity, beauty, and preservation of the natural world. Her work is analog and light-based.

For this workshop, participants are asked to consider where their favorite local outdoor place is and why it is personally meaningful. Examples include; beneath a tree in a park, the view of the sky from a window, or within a garden. Where is a place you feel calm? Please photograph the place with your digital camera or smartphone and bring it to the workshop. We'll print the photos onto a transparency to use in building a large-scale, collective memorial. We'll use collage strategies to repurpose and re-conceptualize these visual fragments to explore collective memory and the liminality of our precious habitat during climate crisis.

Each participant will have an overhead projector, colored gels, objects, text, etc., for creating a projected environment. Marie will share methods for enlivening the environments with moving shadows of objects, cutouts, and bodies. Collectively, we'll create an immersive world within the gallery where we listen to each other, interweaving personal expression while supporting one another in creatively reflecting upon our intrinsic, existential condition.

Two Hours:

5: Welcome participants. SW staff prints transparencies during introduction.

10: Introduction to CM prior works, *The Sense of Wonder* project, and Rachel Carson's legacy.

15: Exercise: Seeing Shadows, an opening movement exercise. We'll layer color, textures, and text and begin creating with the available art materials (not the nature photos).

30: Individual art-making with participants' photos and provided materials. CM circulates and provides support.

45: Viewing of each other's work. Artists share a meaningful moment at their installation.

15: Reflections