**Call for Artists, Writers, and Humanists – All Disciplines and Media**

**for interdisciplinary environmental science workshops, exhibit, and book focused on the boreal forest**

***In a Time of Change: Boreal Forest Stories***

**Program Director: Exhibit Curators:**

Mary Beth Leigh Margo Klass

University of Alaska Fairbanks Ree Nancarrow

[mbleigh@alaska.edu](mailto:mbleigh@alaska.edu) Susan Campbell

Application deadline: Sept. 15, 2020 (11:59 pm)

Apply by emailing completed form and required attachments to:

inatimeofchange@gmail.com

Group activities (approx. once per month): November, 2020 - May, 2022

Gallery exhibit: May, 2022, Bear Gallery

**Overview**

The Alaska-based arts-humanities-science consortium In a Time of Change (ITOC) is seeking applicants from all disciplines within the arts and humanities for a series of collaborative workshops culminating in a group exhibit and book entitled ***In a Time of Change: Boreal Forest Stories.*** The transdisciplinary exhibit will to be presented in the **Bear Gallery in May, 2022** and willfeature **multiple competitively selected artists, and humanists working in a variety of media**, following regular interactions with scientists, to produce original works that **communicate narratives rooted in the boreal forest**, including its ecology, its inhabitants, and their interactions.

The project will be directed by UAF faculty member Mary Beth Leigh in collaboration with the UAF-based Bonanza Creek Long Term Ecological Research Program with funding from the National Science Foundation. Margo Klass, Ree Nancarrow, and Susan Campbell, will serve as the curatorial team coordinating the installation of the multimedia exhibit in collaboration with the participants.

In order to foster substantive collaboration across the arts, humanities, and ecological sciences, selected participants will meet regularly, approximately once per month for one year, to engage in a series of **interactive experiences** meant to foster in-depth exchange of knowledge, ideas, paradigms, and perspectives on the boreal forest and humans’ relationships to it. Opportunities will include workshops on boreal forest ecology, storytelling, writing, art practices, and other topics to be determined based on group interests and experience, as well as field trips to Bonanza Creek Long-Term Ecological Research station near Fairbanks. Activities will be held remotely initially (e.g. via zoom or other media) and may transition to in-person meetings or field trips if/when they can be accomplished safely during COVID. Through these experiences, participants will gain new knowledge of the boreal forest ecosystem and develop skills in **communicating through narrative/storytelling, defined broadly to be applied to multiple visual art media as well as writing, music, dance, and other creative disciplines.**

**The project will culminate in original works to be developed by participants working individually or in teams to be presented to the public in the May, 2022, exhibit at the Bear Gallery in Fairbanks.** All participants will be expected to contribute work in some form to the exhibit, whether it be visual art, written works, links to media presented online, live performance, or other products. We also may produce complementary live events that will enhance public engagement in this project, such as storytelling, literary readings, performing arts events, activities at public events/festivals, or other activities to be determined by the interests of the participants. Live performances may take the form of standalone events or components of existing live performance series by other local organizations.

**Goals, approach, and theme**

***The Boreal Forest Stories* exhibit and book** seek to engage and educate the public on our local ecosystem, awakening a renewed sense of wonder and connectedness to the environment and raising awareness of the changes it is undergoing, by integrating accurate elements of ecological science into original works developed by established and up-and-coming local and regional artists and humanists. **Our commitment to interdisciplinary process** seeks to foster personal creative growth in the participants and to nurture interactions that can help build interdisciplinary communities better equipped to address major social-ecological challenges in the future.

Through **workshops, field trips, and collaborative activities**, participants will learn the fundamentals of **boreal forest ecology** and of **storytelling and narrative structure**, while considering how to incorporate these paradigms into their own work and across the arts, humanities, and sciences. Then, participants will apply **narrative/storytelling approaches** to **develop original works, either individually or collaboratively, focused on the boreal forest ecosystem, its inhabitants, and their interactions** to be presented at the multimedia exhibit, in the companion book, and potentially other venues.

**What is the boreal forest?**

**The boreal forest** is the largest intact forest and wetland ecosystem on Earth. It occupies much of Alaska and other Northern regions of North America, Europe, and Russia, and is home to diverse wildlife and culturally rich human populations who interact with each other and the environment in many ways.

**What is ITOC and its mission?**

Founded in 2008 by the UAF-based Bonanza Creek Long-Term Ecological Research program together with Fairbanks artists, writers, and citizens, ITOC recognizes that the arts, humanities, and sciences bring different yet synergistic perspectives and approaches to the natural world. Collaborations between the arts, humanities and sciences can engage people at the intellectual, intuitive and emotional levels, and can strengthen humans’ understanding of and appreciation for the environments and ecosystems in which they live. At the global scale, increasing human population is driving climate change and resource depletion, resulting in acute local problems and issues at the social-ecological interface. Addressing the grand challenges of our time will require a synthesis of multiple perspectives, including the sciences, arts, and humanities. All of these disciplines share common aims of revealing, communicating and responding to truths about the world. They also have the potential to engage the public more successfully than can traditional scientific communication methods. Synthesizing these diverse perspectives stands to yield much greater success in solving complex problems and promoting outreach and education than separate disciplines working in relative isolation.

Every few years, ITOC recruits new participants and undertakes a new thematic project. Learn more at the websites of our most recent projects. Note that these are primarily visual arts projects with smaller literary components, while the new Boreal Forest Stories project aims to have greater disciplinary breadth. You can review artwork and background at itoc.alaska.edu (under menu item: Past Projects). Examples of recent projects are below:

* + ***Microbial Worlds*. 2014-present. Visual art exhibit and literary readings on the role of microbes in environmental and human health.**
  + ***Trophic Cascades*. 2013-2015. Visual arts exhibit and literary readings promoting public understanding of predator-prey-ecosystem interactions in Alaska.**
  + ***The Art of Fire*. 2011-2012. Visual arts exhibit designed to foster public understanding of fire science and fire management in the Alaskan boreal forest.**

**Program Activities**

Selected participants will meet regularly (via distance or in person), approximately once per month, to engage in a series of **interactive experiences** meant to foster exchange of knowledge, ideas and perspectives on the boreal forest and humans’ relationships to it. Opportunities will include the following:

* Workshops on storytelling, narrative structure, and strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration across the arts, humanities, and sciences, and other topics TBD
* Field trips to Bonanza Creek LTER near Fairbanks, a long-term research site, to experience and learn more about boreal forest ecology (if/when group travel can be conducted safely during COVID)
* Meetings to discuss and exchange ideas. These may take the form of seminars, roundtable discussions, lab and artist studio visits, film screenings, and other events to be determined by the group. Participants may be asked to help lead an activity at one or more gatherings.
* In addition to organized events, participants are encouraged to seek additional interaction with other participants or collaborators as they develop projects.

Activities will be offered at no cost to participants, but each must provide their own transportation to/from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and other venues in the Fairbanks area when needed. Participating artists, humanists, and scientists are highly encouraged and expected to attend as many events as possible.

Participants selected will be awarded an **honorarium of $200 per individual, team, or organization.**

Participants will be expected to **develop projects either as an individual or collaboratively with others in the group** using various forms of **narrative**, defined broadly across all media and disciplines, that are based on themes related to the boreal forest and **explore new ways of expressing, representing and exploring not only through the tools of their disciplines but also those of others in the group**. ITOC is committed to ensuring creative freedom for all participants to explore topics within the theme as they choose. ITOC's aims are to catalyze thought and creativity; connect scientific concepts with human ideas, actions, and emotions; and foster new social-ecological dialogue.

The project will culminate in an **integrated gallery exhibit and book**, featuring products of works by individuals and/or collaborative teams of participants. These may include traditional visual art forms and written manuscripts as well as documents of performing arts (e.g., video, photography, audio recordings of music or readings, etc.), data visualizations, or other forms of creative and scientific expression. This exhibit will be premiered at the **Fairbanks Arts Association’s Bear Gallery in May, 2022.** Additional exhibit venues will be identified for a possible exhibit tour to other cities and in Alaska and across the U.S. Detailed guidelines will be supplied to participants for submissions to the exhibit at a later date.

**Additional live events** may be produced, based on the creative visions developed by the participants over the course of the project. These events could include performances or readings in the gallery, theaters, performing arts centers and other venues, including nontraditional locations such as public fairs and festivals. Performance pieces may also be presented within existing performance series hosted by other organizations. Online and other events are also encouraged.

**Who Can Apply?**

Applications are being accepted from people working in **ALL DISCIPLINES AND MEDIA within the arts and humanities. Applicants should either be residents of Alaska or be a member of an Alaska-based collaborative team application.** Additional details regarding eligibility are listed below. The review panel will select participants based on their application materials.

* Applicants must be residents of Alaska and 18 years of age or older or be a member of an Alaska-based collaborative team application. Collaborative teams of artists may apply as long as at least one member is an Alaska resident.
* Leaders of larger groups are also welcome, e.g. artistic directors of performing groups. Space is limited in in-person workshops so participation in some cases may be limited to the group lead.
* Applicants should be able to attend monthly events via zoom or in-person in the Fairbanks area (COVID-permitting) from November 2020 through May 2022. We understand that some events may be missed for unforeseen circumstances, but participation in the majority of gatherings is expected.
* **PARTICIPANTS FROM** **ALL DISCIPLINES AND MEDIA** and of diverse ages, career stages, cultures, and backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ+ participants are encouraged to apply. Participants being sought include, but not limited to:
  + Visual artists (photography, painting, textile art, ceramics, traditional arts, digital and other media)
  + Writers (poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, journalism, mixed-genre, etc.)
  + Storytellers
  + Musicians/composers
  + Dancers/choreographers and ensembles
  + Playwrights/theatre ensembles
  + New Media artists (web designers, social networking artists, app developers etc.)
  + Video/film documentarians, including those interested in documenting the project (field workshops and creative processes of participating artists, scientists, etc.)
  + Educators working at all levels
  + Journalists
  + Philosophers
  + Historians
  + Other disciplines – if unsure, feel free to contact us.

**Important dates:**

**2020**

June, 2020 Call for proposals released

July 31, 2020, 1 pm Zoom info session on the program and application procedures (register [HERE](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsmVetSUMBZRDw0zAlX8mFxlTrl2RVER4VPAXIAtMOCkk_tA/viewform?usp=sf_link) by COB July 30 and a zoom link will

be sent). A recording of the session will be made available afterward for those unable to attend.

Sept 15, 2020 Deadline for application submission

October, 2020 Applicants will be notified of panel decision

2 weeks later Signed commitment letters due from participants.

**Nov 2020 – April 2022** Group meetings and activities will be held approximately monthly with days/times determined based on participant availability to the greatest extent possible.

**January 14, 2022** Final artwork and artist statements due for gallery exhibit. Professional photographs will be arranged for development of the printed book.

**May 7, 2022** Exhibit opens at the Bear Gallery in Fairbanks

All artists will be invited for a public presentation and panel discussion during the May exhibit. Other events, such as readings, performances, educational activities, etc. will be scheduled by participants along with organizers.

**Want to learn more?**

You’re invited to a zoom information session at 1 pm on July 23, 2020 on the program and application procedures. A recording of the session will be made available afterward for those unable to attend. We will present examples of past projects, review the application procedures, and answer questions. Register [HERE](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsmVetSUMBZRDw0zAlX8mFxlTrl2RVER4VPAXIAtMOCkk_tA/viewform?usp=sf_link)  by COB July 22 and a zoom link will be emailed to you.

For more information, contact Mary Beth Leigh at [mbleigh@alaska.edu](mailto:mbleigh@alaska.edu).

**How do I apply?**

Applications are being accepted by email only (no hard copies). Complete the [application form](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LdVOOu8nltuwfg8zvSDFfhB1hmhMwr289SoXCBuyLoI/edit?usp=sharing) using a word processing program and then email it to inatimeofchange@gmail.com as an attachment. To submit samples of works (e.g. visual art, writings, etc.), attach them to the same email following the instructions in the application form.

Email your application to inatimeofchange@gmail.com

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