

# Blue SELKIE



**APRIL 2020**  
**SITKA, ALASKA**



**ANTICIPATION SKY:**  
*Journal Entry*

I can't concentrate. I can't read, sleep, sit still, think straight. I'm sitting on a plane flying me to the Arctic Circle. I can feel the cold, sharper than I'm used to, leaning back on me as I lean against the window. The sky is a striated dome of blue. Darker Robin's egg, shifting down to a translucent turquoise strip curving slightly to bound a thin wisp of white clouds. Beneath the gentle bands of turquoise, almost a caress and trace of the curvature of the globe, a mountain range of cloud spreads as far as I can see. Punctuated in places by rivers of dark clear sky below, glimpses of the Arctic Ocean, I expect. It's a very pastel scene on the cloud-range. White to grey to blue to hints of a dusty pink. The tallest tufts of the Cloud Mountains making themselves known by the brightness of their white, a privilege of being the closest to the sun.

I don't know what I should be writing about, what thoughts I should try to steer my excited mind towards. This must be how I felt as a child on Christmas Eve. I am at a loss with how to contain my excitement. I am going somewhere so far, so cold. So other, so vulnerable. I know I am not alone and I am no trailblazer, but for me, this is charting the unknown.

Most of my art making seems to come from dual impulses of desiring discovery and understanding. The impulse to create and then the chasing of the creation in an attempt to understand what it means. I'm really thinking about that now. With this new project. Not currently titled. These houses that don't protect, that need the wearer just as much as we need the shelter. The permeability, the openness of these new sculptures. I haven't been able to find the deepest meaning of them yet. I brush against it with my mind and see the edges of the idea and my heart swells and retreats from the emotion of it. Just like when I let myself really see a landscape, the vast sculpted rocky curves and edges of our world, the embrace between land and sea. The

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big-ness, the long-ness of it. Not to be too grandiose, but part of this feeling is in these pieces for me. I think I'm a bit scared to put words to it, so I work towards understanding by circling round it, closer and closer each time, eventually landing in the part that scares me. The unknown of it all. It seems so appropriate, so timely, that I bring with me a work I'm still seeking to know to a place so completely foreign to me. I hope this can force understanding, both of the place and the piece.

Like I said, there are things I understand. The original impulse, at least formally, was to figure out a way to make a soft, centrally supported, house frame. Something that can be attached to a sailboat. From there came the discovery of the Vestment angles, the use of gold, embellishment, and symbolism, to claim and assert significance. The simple house form to elevate the day to day and the fragile. Then came the person-sized houses. The collective autonomy of the group. The knowing of one's form in a different way through the wearing of the structure. The line between a shrouded private moment and a very open/visible experience. The element of a processional. What does it mean to take an ancient tradition and use it for my own intentions? What are the edges now? What boundaries are we circling? Where are the bridges between public and private?

The line between cloud and sky has suddenly become much starker. The cloudy mountain range has morphed into a thick sea. The sky has chosen a more consistent shade of blue. Just briefly, anyways, as if to say, stop wondering. Be clear. Just do. Just be with the work. Just follow it. Just as I won't know what this time in Svalbard will truly be like until I've experienced it, I cannot expect to fully understand a work until it is finished.

But then, I look up again and the edges have softened



once more. Leaving space for wonder(ing).

And then, a hint of knowing. Mountains, real mountains, peeking between the clouds and sky. I see you. I am so excited to see more.