Solstice, June 21, 2022

Dear Friends,

Solstice Greetings from New Mexico where new rains will hopefully quell the fires that have been raging, without too many flood scenarios! Fires began early this Spring with heavy winds and high temps mirroring the blistering hot conditions and sand storms that have returned to Iraq, where I visited in March. Thankfully it is cooling here, at least for the next few weeks.

The last four months have been exceedingly busy, so I wanted to give you an update on my travels and recent exhibitions and apologize to friends for being so out of touch.

FOLLOW-UP NEWS on my San Francisco and MOMA NY exhibitions and trip to Iraq:

Here are pictures of the installation from Brian Gross Fine Art in San Francisco of my *Boat Is A Circle* work and of me with my work on display at MOMA.

It was wonderful to celebrate the presence of Women Photographers at MOMA with old and new photographer sisters like Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie (Navajo from Sacramento) and Cara Romero (Chemehuevi from Santa Fe). It was also wonderful to whoop it up with Australian Tracey Moffatt, and New Yorkers Laurie Novak and Susan Meiselas to name a few. Most incredible were Helen Kornblum, whose collection was being exhibited, now part of MOMA, and Roxanna

Marcoci the brilliant curator of the **Ourselves: Photographs by Women Artists, from the collection of Helen Kornblum.** I stayed in NYC with my long-time collaborater Ellen Zweig and our work together was recognized in the MOMA show with our ***Critical Mass*** catalogue on display.

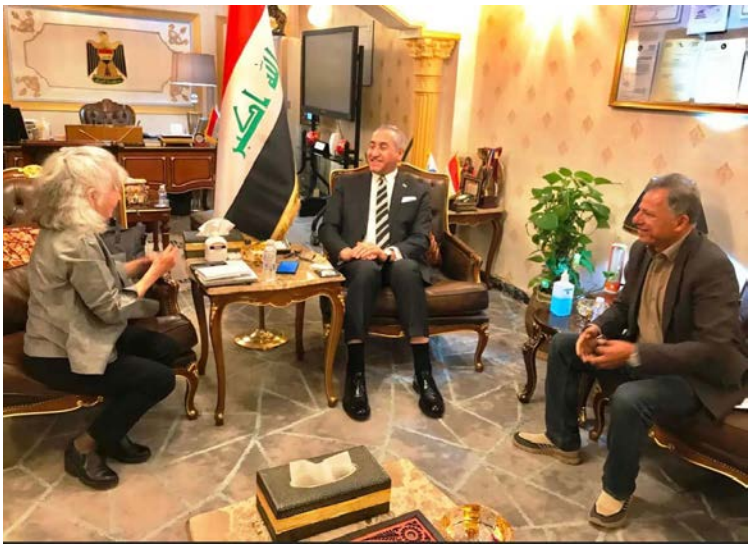
IRAQ

In between these two exhibitions, I returned to the Marshes in S. Iraq to work on our Wastewater Garden Project-*Eden in Iraq*. I was able to see our new site for the first time-here with site drawings overlaid. You can see the dark sewage in the water.

My Nature Iraq colleague Jassim Al Asadi and I took our guest journalist, Alan Weisman (**The World Without Us** book, among other powerful stories), to spend the night on a floating island with a Marsh Arab family in a reed mudheif.

We also took Alan to the ancient cities of Ur and Uruk and then to Babylon on our way to Baghdad. There we visited with the Iraq Minister of the Environment, Jasim al Falahi, to confirm the Ministry's crucial support of the project as our National umbrella. Finally and most importantly, I started to work with Nawar Ihsan. She is an artist, designer, and conservator at the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. We are beginning to design ceramic relief tiles for the garden, based on Mesopotamian cylinder seal imagery. She and her brilliant son Taha al Taee have joined the Eden in Iraq team and have become good friends and collaborators. So my visit with them was a wonderful finale to the trip because I'm back at last to the artistic details of the garden.

Above: Contemporary reed dwelling, similar to those pictured on this cylinder seal clay printout from 3000 BC Uruk



Minister Al Falahi

Nawar Ihsan

NEW NEWS: In Zoom conversations with Jassim at Nature Iraq, we now have a verbal commitment from the Ministry of Water Resources to start the first stage of the Eden in Iraq Wastewater Garden, with the ground-breaking early August. Our impact sponsor Blue Tech Research has contributed funds to finance fuel and travel!!!

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Last week, I returned from Vancover where *Eden in Iraq* team partner and Biospherian Dr. Mark Nelson, documentary filmmaker Ben Shedd and I attended the Blue Tech Research Group's Global Water Forum with 200 innovative clean water technology Specialists. The title and focus of the conference was ***Radical Collaboration for Regeneration***.

In advance of the proceedings, we BlueTech Forum attendees were given the opportunity to join "in planting and launching a floating ecosystem at Vancouver's iconic Trout Lake as a collaborative regenerative experience, echoing the need for strong partnerships to solve the water challenges facing the planet. This new floating ecosystem showcases the social and environmental benefits of aquatic restoration.

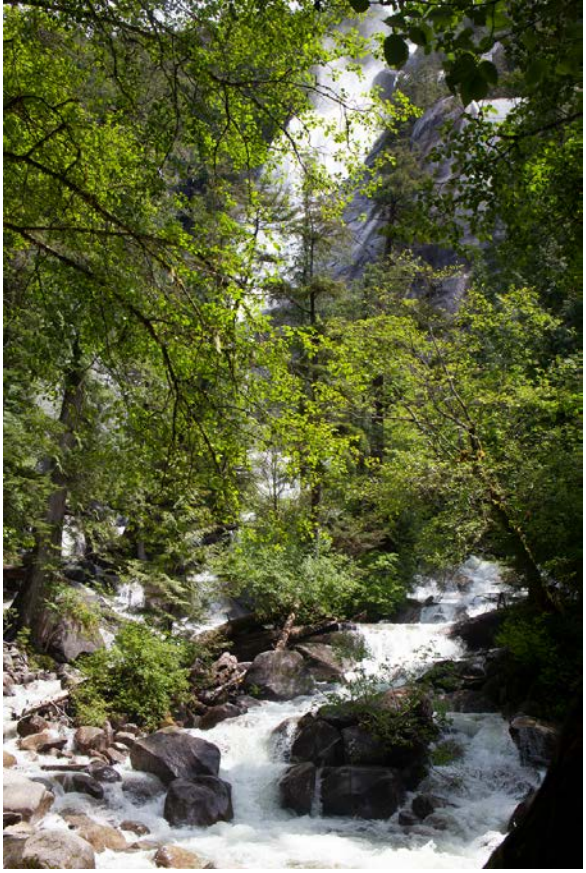
The mini ecosystem will grow in harmony with the local environment, supporting animals, including fish, birds, amphibians, insects and microbiology. It leaves a legacy for BlueTech Research in the city from which this flagship water technology event has taken place."

Mark gave one of the inspirational Keynote addresses at the Forum, along with environmentalist Paul Hawken (**Regeneration and Project Drawdown)** and National Geographic Explorer in Residence/anthropologist Wade Davis. Also presenting thought-provoking keynotes were environmental journalist Erica Gies whose new book **Water Always Wins** will help to change the field, urban strategist Sarah Ichioka discussing possibilisum from her book **Flourish: Design Paradigms for Our Planetary Emergency**, and Dr. Adriana Marais, founder of Proudly Human, about preparing for Off-World travel and conditions by exploring some of the most difficult places on Earth-which may become the norm.

At the Forum, Ben Shedd, Drew Fitzgerald, co-founder of 501CTHREE.org, and I facilated a round table discussion for the entire group on Art and Media solutions to visualizing water issues. We all 3 are artists who work with scientists seeking ways to more broadly to tell stories about our planet.

Ben will help to facilitate BlueTech's next documentary, a sequel to their Netflix film ***Brave Blue World***, in which *Eden in Iraq* will be included. One of our purposes in being at the BlueTech Forum was to meet potential supporters from Water and Engineering Firms as well as investors. We met some terrific individuals who are deeply supportive to getting funding in place for us soon!! We are deeply grateful to Blue Tech Founder and CEO Paul O'Callaghan and Lead Sustainability Researcher Aoife Kelleher for their vision and support!

Ben and I stayed in Vancouver a few extra days visiting with old friends and professors Hugh Gusterson and Allison MacFarlane and their daughter Sasha who have relocated to the University of British Columbia. We visited the great Museum of Anthropology at UBC as well as old growth forests, mountain waterfalls and saw orca whales by boat in the Vancouver Sound. The Pacific Northwest Native traditions are so prescient for today



So, all of these events have left me more positive than ever that regeneration is possible for our flayling planet, including marshes, water bodies, our bodies-hearts-minds, women and even artists.

Have a beautiful summer.