

Allison's Almanac

Part One: Lexicon

Allison's Almanac will be a short booklet that accompanies the thesis exhibition

I. *Germunits* / Iconography / Main Pictorial Symbols

- **Egg Case (of skates and oviparous sharks)**
 - Mother Goddess, Mother Earth, motherhood, fertility, birth, life/death cycles, oceans, more-than-human, embryonic, latent, shorelines, intertidal zones, alien(object), idol, relic.
 - After the small shark or skate hatches the egg cases wash ashore and dry out alongside the kelp and seaweed. Beach combing kids call them Mermaid's Purses. Sometimes Allison calls them Egg Sacks. The scientific name is Chondrichthyes.
- **Seed Pods (most prominently milkweed)**
 - Egg Case Of The Prairie, germination, spreading seed, earth, growth, overgrowth, interconnectedness of species/plants/insects/animals/fungi, prairie biome
- **Squiggle**
 - The Squiggle Stage, outburst of intense feeling, panic attack, disruption, Madness, freedom, Sam.
 - Scribbles are the go-to drawing technique of young children and the developmentally disabled, a phenomenon I had often observed. Viktor Lowenfeld suggests there are six stages of artistic development that children go through, the first of which he calls the Scribble Stages. This “motor activity utilizing large muscles with movement from shoulder” is characteristic of two to three-year-olds, before one attempts to represent any sort of figure.¹ In a Jungian sense the scribble is an archetype, it is the innate drawing motion we are born with.
- **Picket Fence (+fences in general, even those in papermaking or on the table-saw)**
 - Borders, boundaries, isolation, home, suburbia, gilded cage, familiar, facade, fitting in, keeping out, back yard, personal space, privacy, the personal is political
 - Different fences associated with their typical localities. Varies somewhat from person to person
- **Paper Chain Festoon (+other festoons and bunting)**
 - Making Special,² make-believe, play, pretend, artistic/therapeutic playspace,³ celebrated, sacred, [Octopus Egg Festoons](#). Allison often combines/offsets her festooning with themes of abjection and proliferation but that is not necessarily inherent to them.
 - Also fabric flag bunting, zip-tie chains,
- **Notebook Paper (+binders, spiral notebooks, folders, and the like)**
 - School, homework, academic pressures, academic pleasures, conventions, systems, borders, margins, academia, elementary school, office supply collecting/coveting.
- **Rainbow Pencil**
 - Childhood, nostalgia, prism refracting light. Often paired with Scribble.
- **Other important pictorial symbols:**
 - Grid
 - Mud
 - Oval Portal
 - Candle burning at both ends (double-ended candle)
 - Washtub

II. Themes / Theory / Concepts / Concerns

- Post-Structuralism
- Linguistics

¹ Viktor Lowenfeld *Creative and Mental Growth* (1987)

² Ellen Dissanayake, “Chapter 4 ‘Making Special’: Towards a Behavior of Art.” *What Is Art For?* (2015)

³ Johnson, D.R. “On the therapeutic action of the creative arts therapies: The psychodynamic model” *The Arts in Psychotherapy* (1998)

- Water (from the symbolic to the biology to the thing itself and farther)
- Posthumanism
- Vital Materialism⁴
- Discard Studies
- Psych.
- Disability
- Anthropologic
- Abjection⁵
- Agential Realism, Diffraction⁶
- Ecosystems
- The Unconscious
- Madness
- Nostalgia
- Childhood
- Latency
- Human Caused Climate Disaster
- Sanctity and Mythology/Mythos
- Material Culture
- Narrative
- Archaeology/archaeological
- Motherhood and Matriarchy
- Tentacular connections⁷
- New Materialism
- Feminist Queer Theory⁸
- Ontology
- Ecology⁹
- Freud and Jung
- Play+Art+Ritual, Making Special¹⁰
- Art Therapy¹¹
- Borders/Boundaries/In-Betweens
- The Therapeutic Playspace¹²
- Vernacular
- Nonverbal Communications
- Flattening (false) Hierarchies
- Discursion and Discursiveness
- “Waste” “Excess”
- Closed System/Open System/‘Balanced’ System
- Cycles of birth-life-death-decay-regenerate-transform
- Ritual

⁴Jane Bennett *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2009)

⁵Julia Kristeva *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980)

⁶Karen Barad *Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter* (2003)

⁷Donna Haraway *Staying with the Trouble, Making Kin in the Cthulucene* (2016)

⁸Jack Halberstam *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011)

⁹Robin Wall Kimmerer *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (2015)

¹⁰Ellen Dissanayake “Chapter 4 ‘Making Special’: Towards a Behavior of Art.” *What Is Art For?* (2015)

¹¹Edith Kramer *Art as Therapy with Children* (2nd ed 1993)

¹²Johnson, D.R. “On the therapeutic action of the creative arts therapies: The psychodynamic model” *The Arts in Psychotherapy* (1998)

- Collective Unconscious
- Archetypes, Archetypal
- The Uncanny
- Self-Fulfilling/Self Determined/Self Sabotage/Self Feeding

III. Illustrations of.../ Examples of.../ Mobilized Themes

- Orcas
- Shipwreck
- Asylum
- Coral
- Chalkboard
- Tidepool
- Bog
- Votive Objects
- Fractals
- Octopuses
- Prairie
- AAC devices (Augmentative and Alternative Communication)
- 'Bottle Tree' (from intersection of Mulholland and Coldwater Canon)
- Vessels
- The Dust Bowl
- Entropy
- Institutions
- Tension and Simultaneity
- Proliferation/Overgrowth
- Germination
- Diptychs and Triptychs
- American Witch-Hazel Tree (*Hamamelis Virginiana*, yellow blooms in late fall)
- Bindings/Bondage/Restraints etc.

IV. Artistic Devices / Modalities / Media

- Material
- Color
- Written Language
- Dissonance
- Auxiliary Content (such as this Almanac)
- Format and Arrangement
- Tactility
- Found Objects
- Mimesis
- Audio/Video

V. Artists, Writers, Scholars

- *Forthcoming*