

body~sea: a corporeal narratology of tide borne bone by Aarti Pillai reconceptualises conventional perceptions of the human body through an exploration of oceanic aesthetics. This body of work delves into the profound relationship between the human form and the diverse creature-beings inhabiting the depths of the sea. *body~sea* reimagines the notion of "personhood" as a "creaturehood", emphasising the interdependence of all living entities within the natural world. *body~sea* challenges anthropocentric views and presents a compelling case for environmental justice. Pillai's nimble play integrates bone as a symbol of the human body within the radical abundance of the ebbs and flows of the ocean.

In the realm of *body~sea*, the boundaries between the human form and the ocean are blurred in a bid to consider the tethered connections between the human form and oceanic elements such as coral, shell and sea glass. *body~sea* seeks to deconstruct anthropocentric views as an invitation to viewers to consider creaturehood in the tapestry of the natural world. *body~sea* illuminates the humanistic internal rhythm that resonates with the cycles and patterns of the natural world, eroding the boundaries between the body and the sea.

Bone, shell, and coral, all share common chemical components with the collagen of extramuscular matrix from marine invertebrates being utilised as a proteinaceous substitute in certain medical applications. The body is often a convergence of sociological discourse which separates humanity from the rest of the natural world. The melding of bone into shell, soothing the seams between coral and flesh challenges dominant anthropocentric perspectives by presenting a deconstructed body that re-evaluate the hierarchical relationship often imposed between humans and nature.

The sociology of the body is situated in and engaged with nature, the sea, the waves, ancestral stories of migration, and the abundance of water. *body~sea* presents a 'creaturehood' subject to novel, complex, and contradictory opportunities for freedom, escape, surveillance, and monitoring. The body presented in *body~sea* is released from all forms of bodily weaponisation: perception, expectation, gender, ancestry through abstraction. *body~sea* dissects the temporal and spatial organisation of human bodily experience into one of creature-ness to present a reality where personhood is viewed as a reciprocal kinship with the natural world as opposed to an exploitative stewardship. In doing so, *body~sea* is a testament to Pillai's dedication to environmental justice and serves as a poignant reminder of the imperative to restore planetary health.

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"Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel that the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond."

~ Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*

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body~sea

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towards the evening, amidst the lengthening of shadows;
feel yourself awash in gifts;
glass who was once sand upon the beach, washed back and forth
bathed in foam and soft song of wind;
creature of sun, moon, wind, sea;
the moon lulls the bated breaths of your ocean as her ribs rise and crash with the tides;
her aching hips bud bouquets of coral to safeguard their power ~

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~fin~