



## KAREN HOLMBERG

FRI 3:35PM, OCT 8 2021

Hello Dr Holmberg!

Hi! I'm just getting back to my office from oyster monitoring with students. Can we postpone by ten min so I can get settled?

Was that for the NYC coastlines project?

Yes! We monitor oysters for the Hudson River Park River Project.

I'm proud that my students collected the final data of the season!

So what does the oyster data tell us?

They show that the Hudson is cleaner than for many decades. And they are helping that process as filter feeders.

This week the project caught a Silver Perch. They haven't seen those since 2003.

So when did art take on a bigger role in your work along with archaeology and volcanoes?

I'm not really sure, it wasn't a planned thing.

When I started my PhD at Columbia, I found the PhD process soul crushing.

And what was most frustrating was my brain began to calcify in the way it processed things, squeezing out the experimental and phenomenological.

I reached out to an artist who works with volcanic processes, Ilana Halperin, after coming across her website. She commissioned me to write a piece for her about how I think about volcanoes.

**She told me to write on the way I really feel about [volcanoes] and that I'm not allowed to write in 'academia.'**

She introduced me to Allan McCollum. Allan said that I needed to talk to his friend Keith Edmier, who pioneered a method to cast lava (basalt). Keith and I have gone on to have an ongoing tangle of collaborations. We think well together.

What's your collaboration like with Keith? How do you two find a project or question?

Generally I give thoughts and ideas and let him 'in' my research brain. He is able to translate my thoughts tangibly into something in ways I cannot do. He's remarkably talented and skilled.

We always seem to come to something new at the end of a project that could have never happened if we worked on our own and that could not have been predetermined.

That's what I believe design is, which is a way to translate information into a visual language

I think you are right

Btw, per visualization: the exhibition, BarabásiLab. Hidden Patterns, at ZKM right now is mind blowing.

Last question, if you can go (or return) to any two places in the world with a camera as advanced as u need it, where would you go and why?

I would go back to Matera in Italy, a place I've been to several times already and find stunning. You have 300,000 years of continuous human occupation there in the caves.

And I would go back to Antarctica

I went there to run the Antarctica Marathon. It goes between five research stations on the Peninsula and up a glacier twice.

I couldn't believe how wrong my preconceptions were. I assumed that being so far from civilization would mean it would be silent.

It's a very loud place, especially the ice. It tinkles like wind chimes as brash ice, rapsorts like a gun when it calves, and creaks and moans. I wish I had a camera with super good audio capture capability when I was there.

Wow, that all sounds unbelievable. Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to seeing the art at the WettLab and Virtual Volcano Observatory.