

Artist Statement

Saving Grace: Photographs of the Seven Sisters of the Pleiades

With the impending doom of the Plasticene, not one surface of either land or sea is free from the plastic debris that permeates our planet. Within the aqueous ecologies, it is a slow drowning death beneath the surface of a soiled sea. Its imprisoned residents, strangled by polyethylene artifacts, persistent in a constant struggle to survive. Some succumb to their pliant shackles while others, oblivious of the tiny shiny micro plastics, ingest them only to unwittingly pass them on at humanity's dinner table.

Climate change is a now reality. We are caught in a perilous maelstrom for which our children will pay the price of this inconvenient truth. Many have ignored the inevitable; some have taken action and a few have turned to higher powers with prayer. Calling out into heaven's void for help.

The Sisters of the Pleiades, celestial women exiled by Zeus to a star cluster over 400 light years away, heard the plea. Risking discovery, they secretly returned to earth to save their beloved ocean. Camouflaged beneath the Gyre of Garbage in the Pacific Ocean, hidden from surface dwellers by the floating plastics, keeping to themselves, they stealthily set about to upend the damage done by man-made pollutants.

The proof of the seven sisters daring return is unveiled in this series of never before seen photographs, and through illusionary truth, one discovers the power of women to change the world. A visual call to activism - our mission - our saving grace - our earth.

Illusion, myth, fantasy and transference through these figures echoes an invitation to dive beneath the surface of these images. This corporeality of these constructed heroines bestows a visual sensuousness of being in the water. An experience, perchance a visceral feeling as well, of the floating substances of plastic pollution in our oceans.

Within the story-telling narrative, structured scientific data of ocean pollution creates the call to action. Stories embody and empower, and through the creation myth of the seven sisters, humanity might come to believe themselves capable of ending this environmental catastrophe.

This series' plausibility is rendered sublimely through my pursuit of ecofeminist activism, and the photographic medium of manipulation brings a surreal awareness to this impending peril. My hope is others may embrace my passion for saving grace - the earth - and take action to rescue the future for our children.

Suda House, Photographer

Myths of the Seven Sisters of the Pleiades



Taygete was pursued by Zeus and unwilling to yield to him, she sought the help of Artemis, the goddess of animals, who disguised Taygete as a red deer in hopes of eluding Zeus. He eventually caught her, and she soon delivered a son, Lacedaemon, the king of Sparta. Upon her returning to her normal form, Taygete gave Artemis the Cerynitian hind with golden antlers.



Alcyone is the second born sister of the Pleiades and her name means “strong helper.” She was seduced by Poseidon, the brother of the supreme god Zeus. Poseidon was the ruling god of all waters and the sea. Myth has it that during the Halcyon days - when the world was filled with joy, prosperity and tranquility, Alcyone watched over the Mediterranean Sea, making it calm and safe for sailors.



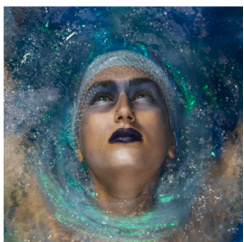
Maia is the eldest and most beautiful of the Pleiades’ sister. Her name means ‘nurturing mother’ and often her name is associated with the month of May and her star in the heavens shines the brightest. She was seduced by Zeus and gave birth to Hermes, the messenger to the gods. Hermes moved freely between the worlds of mortals and the divine, aided by his winged sandals, and was the guide of the dead, presenting them to Hades, the god of the underworld and brother to Zeus.



Celaeno was described as the dark one. Her star shines less brightly than the others, supposedly because she was once struck by lightning. In several myths, Celaeno marries the Olympian god Poseidon and has sons, Lycus, Eurypylus, Triton and Nycteus. Some myths also suggest she was the mother of Deucalion, whom she had with Prometheus.



Electra is known as the third brightest star, had two sons, Dardanus and Iasion by Zeus. Dardanus, founded the kingdom, and the dynasty of Dardania including the city of Troy. As she viewed the destruction of her son’s beloved Troy from the heavens, she covered her eyes and turned away, grief stricken by this destruction she left her sisters altogether and become a “long haired star” or “comet in the sky.”



Merope is said to have suffered endless shame because unlike her sisters, she is the only Pleiades to marry a mortal, Sisyphus, and all of her children were human beings. Some accounts claim Sisyphus was a criminal, refusing to honor the gods and he sought personal wealth and glory. His punishment was to roll a heavy stone up a hill to the edge heaven, only for it to always roll back down. There is an ironic similarity, here to Merope’s father, Atlas, who kept the weight of the world on his shoulders.



Asterope is the name for “starry face” but is often interchanged with the name, Sterope, which means a “flash of lightning.” She is traditionally portrayed as one of the weaker sisters, perhaps because her star shines less brightly than her sisters. Ares, the god of courage and war, took Asterope as his consort and she bore him a son, Oinomaos, the barbaric founding King of Pisa.