

Hope Ginsburg

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The belief that awe and curiosity inspired by nature motivate action on its behalf is fundamental to my work. Integrating video, performance, and social engagement, my practice is transdisciplinary and project-based. Drawing inspiration from the interconnectedness of ecological systems, I foreground collaboration and participation.

I arrived in the desert with the ocean on my mind. Specifically, an underwater habitat that allows human “aquanauts” to survive for days at a time on the seabed. The video that needed editing, *M.O. Aquarius Reef Base*, is the newest artwork in an ongoing, collaborative project called *Meditation Ocean*, which is part underwater meditation retreat, part video installation, and part platform for environmental programming. It was quickly obvious that the Great Basin would command full attention.



Meditation Ocean Constellation, *M.O. Aquarius Reef Base*,
Still from two-channel video with ambient scores and nine audio interviews, 2025.



For the first week, my partner and *Meditation Ocean* collaborator Joshua Quarles was with me, and diligently started a two-channel audio composition for the “Aquarius” video. He set up sound equipment in the studio and a binaural mic in the sage, while I unpacked the tripod, borrowed camera body, and lenses that I’d brought for an alternate, more site-responsive plan. Then, on our second full day, wham! Wildfire. We spotted smoke rising over the range to the southeast and instantly realized we’d need to evacuate. Thus began a set of correspondences with distant but ever-present neighbors—Phil and Ros Behenna, Lupe and Tony Cox, and the even farther-afeld Stefan Hagen—from New York City, vigilantly monitoring reports. When the winds carried the flames in the opposite direction, we returned to the refuge of the house, thrilled to be back, grateful for the continued support of a new community.

Week two was solitary. I felt awe; aware of every thought that moved across my mind, fragrances shifting in the rain, dusk beetles, and a bit like I’d landed on the moon. I was also gripped by documenting the pink perimeter line ringing the distant burn area. Parallels between Aquarius Reef Base, engineered for human survival in an extreme environment, and the retreat’s equally intentional design emerged. With my remaining time, I filmed all the ways the house serves as a habitat, making the experience of this “sagebrush ocean” possible. As I write, we’re wrapping up *M.O. Aquarius Reef Base* for exhibition next month, and the Montello footage is burning a hole in my pocket.