

## Heather Green | *Tide Cycle: An Act Against Erasure*

*La Cholla, a headland near Puerto Peñasco, Mexico, has one of the largest tides in North America, spanning over 26 vertical feet during spring and neap tides. The semi-diurnal rhythm of the tide completely empties the bay and exposes the thriving diversity of life in the rocky reef and tidal flats, then hours later erases any trace of the organic texture, replacing it with a vast expanse of blue.*

*The tide's game of revealing and concealing influences how we interact with the landscape at any given moment and can be seen as a metaphor for our own cycles of contemplation. The recurring phenomenon of shallows and depths mirror our own awareness—what lies beyond our visible terrain, whether it be other species, natural phenomenon or our cultural past, goes in and out of focus as it presents itself to us or slips from view.*

*Like the tide, much of the natural and cultural history of La Cholla lies nascent—the artifacts and written history of the indigenous people who visited La Cholla, a plethora of biodiversity within five distinguishable habitats, and the published research that has been conducted in the natural sciences are either obscured by the subtle textures of the physical surroundings or safeguarded in distant university libraries. The chapters of La Cholla's history are liminal; they exist in a scattering of publications or cast as fossils in the local bedrock.*

The nine paintings in this installation of a red chair being taken by the tide— each with a rusted shelf underneath with a pile of weathered linotype slugs— are a metaphor for the problems with development and over-fishing in La Cholla. The chairs allude to the fable of the British King Cnut, so besotted with his own power that he boasted he could control the tides. To demonstrate this, he ordered his throne to be placed on the shore at low tide where it was consequently overwhelmed by the incoming water. Though a story over a thousand years old, its point is apt: one cannot control the natural cycles of the world, nor demand that they bend to one's will.

The cast linotype slugs have a long list of the common and scientific names of species that are threatened by our reckless demands from the headland. The metal alloy of the linotype castings is the same as fishing sinkers and bullets— a material used to reference the danger to biodiversity by technology. The pile appears as sunken detritus, and the floating red chair contrasts this as a brightly colored buoy floating out of control. These linotype slugs were printed to create the take away cards on the pedestal that invite the audience to visit a website about La Cholla and learn more about the virtual museum called La Cholla Museum of Natural and Cultural History, a project in the making that seeks to illuminate the hidden facts and history of this irreplaceable ecosystem.

The two mutoscopes depict the Cholla tide going in and out from dawn to dusk. Each photograph was taken at three-minute intervals for about twelve hours. One sequence focuses on the reef, and the other looks out at the bay. The skeletal steel structures bear a resemblance to coastal beacons, museum cases, the inner workings of clocks, and devices from the 20th century tourist industry along boardwalks and amusement parks. This reference to early technology evokes the industrial age, when we began to harness natural resources on a grand scale to improve the quality of life, forgetting that part of that quality was simply the presence of the wild expanse of the other, and the time necessary to appreciate it.

The mutoscopes speed up the process of the tide so we can see it more evidently, as a phenomenon that sets La Cholla apart from other places. They offer us a technique to control the speed of the tide by how fast we crank the handle and at the same time provide us with an apparatus for delighting in the incredible breadth of the tide's wake.