

Project Title: *Nuna Works Alaska*

Lead Artists: Deanne Morizono, Jack Bennett, Micheal Neece

Country: United States

Medium: Earth, wood, plant fibers

Nuna is a word for "land" in several Native American languages. This project is about our human relationship to the land, earth, water and all of nature. It is about being conscious of the natural world and its beings in all our human actions and choices. It is about being good stewards of the earth for generations to come.

We came to Alaska to explore, learn and live. We found vast spaces of pristine beauty. Moose and eagles are often the closest neighbors. Skies are a theater of constant color, chaos and calm. Changes of weather and seasons are felt with all the senses.

The first humans here lived freely and in harmony with the land, water and wildlife. They understood their duty as stewards of the land. They lived with humility and respect for the interdependence of all life forms and systems.

The Nuna Works project was inspired and informed by the lessons learned from the enduring legacy of these first peoples. We wanted to build a structure that would reflect the values of sustainability; to honor the land, to use less, waste less, leave a smaller footprint, and create a beautiful space in harmony with the earth. Our plan was to use the earth itself to form the walls like many traditional homes in the rural villages made of sod. We also plan to use plant fibers and local clay for walls and floors. We will harness wind and solar energy to power the home and a water catchment system to collect rain and snow.

We started in Spring and hoped to have a completed structure before Winter. Building the earth walls took much time and labor. Rain and wind were frequent visitors insisting that we stop and wait. We learned to be patient. Moose wandered carefully by the building site, eagles circled overhead. We learned to be quiet. The earth had a mind of its own, changing and shifting to ancestral rhythms. We learned to honor its wisdom. Nature had different plans for us and we had to listen.

The walls are sitting quietly under their snow covered winter hat. The Spring thaw will guide us to the next steps. We are learning to work in harmony with Nature, honoring her wisdom.

We would like to give gratitude and acknowledgment to the special people and pets who worked with us through all the challenges and surprises: Bridget, Marcie, Preston, Wes the Mess, Hunter, Tyler, Craig, Parker and Twilight.



