

## Liberty Blake

The Great Salt Lake is the largest saltwater lake in the Western hemisphere. A railroad causeway divides the Northern and Southern arms of the lake, causing the Northern portion to develop a higher salinity—around 26-30%—in contrast to the Southern arm, which averages between 12-15%. In the late summer and fall the water in the Northern section can become a glorious pink, due to both the algae, *Dunaliella Salina* and microorganisms called halophiles which are known as extremophiles as they are able to live in extreme conditions. Two of the pieces in this year's show are inspired by this phenomenon.

We are incredibly fortunate to live near to this natural wonder—the eight largest terminal lake in the world—and it is our responsibility to fight to protect the habitats that make up our environment, not only for the flora and fauna but for our own survival as a species. To think we are somehow immune from the possibility of extinction seems like an astonishing arrogance. Every year we see the devastation caused by global warming and yet policies to slow or reverse these effects are not prioritized by our governments.

As an artist I regularly oscillate between believing I can make a difference by making environmentally focused art and feeling it is futile. But in my darker moments I remind myself that action is essential, in any way we can, we should take action every day to protect our planet.

