



Concrete Turned to Sand

A film by Ryan Ermacora & Jessica Johnson

(2025, 35mm, 1.37, 5.1 Sound, 75 min, Canada)

“The lights were out, there, and it was illuminated only by starlight. The air was quite cold. A night-blooming flower from some unimaginable world had opened among the dark leaves, and was sending out its perfume with patient, unavailing sweetness to attract some unimaginable moth trillions of miles away, in a garden on a world circling another star. The sunlights differ, but there is only one darkness.”

- Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

synopsis

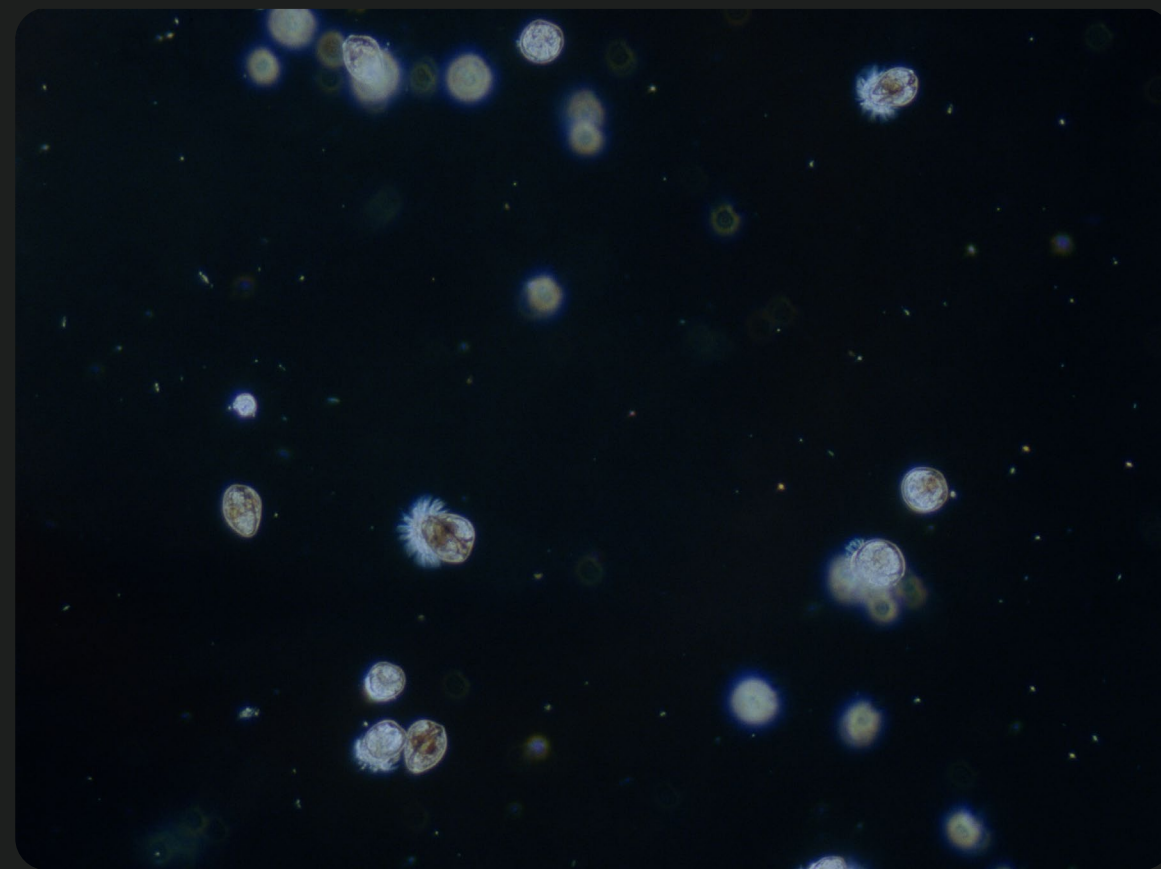
Following a collective of oyster farmers on Cortes Island, British Columbia, *Concrete Turned to Sand* traces the changing intertidal zone as it endures the effects of ocean warming and acidification. Temporal, geographic and ecological scales of perception flow between each other, as the film reveals the transforming landscape and the intertwined livelihoods within it.

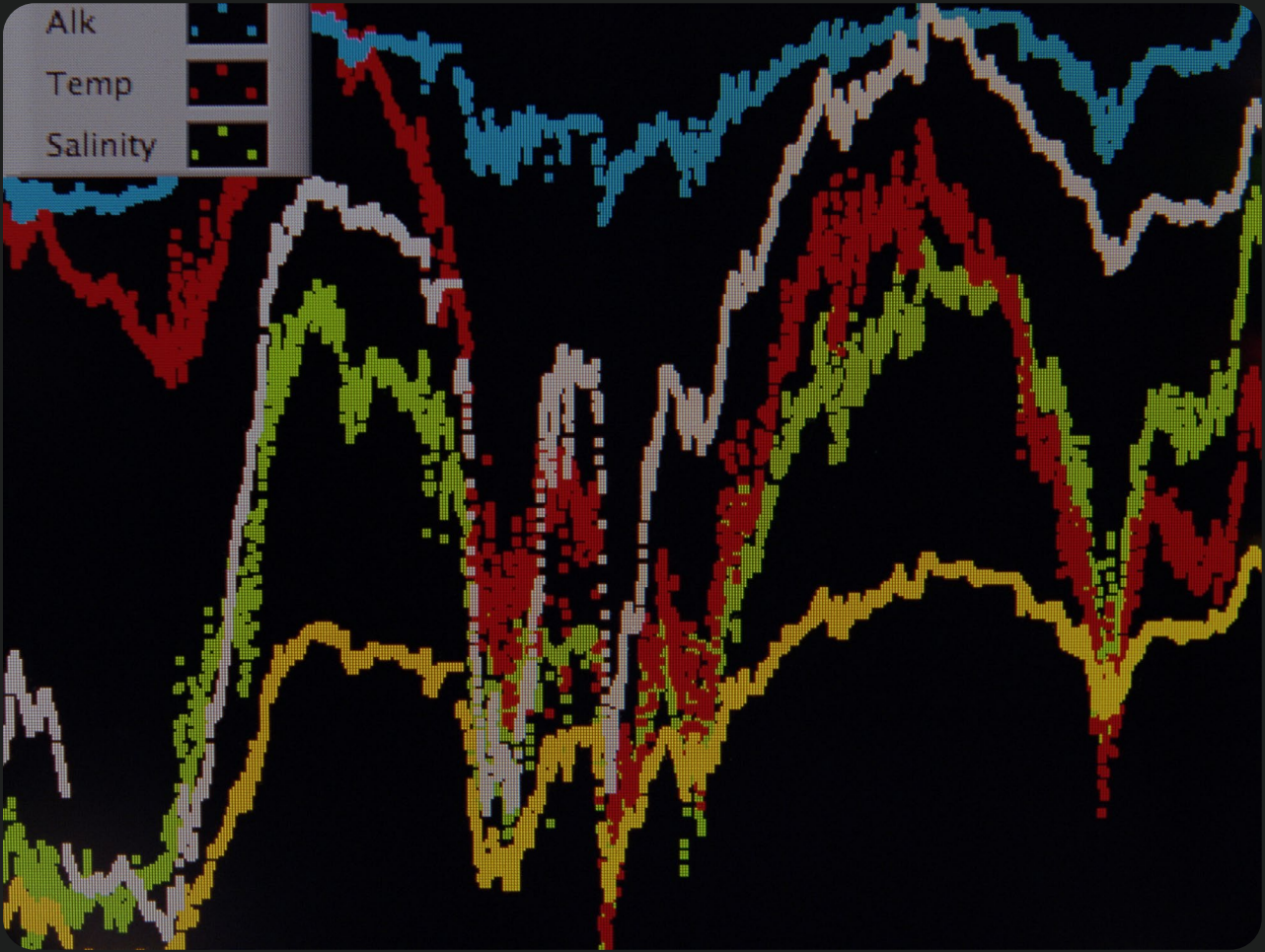


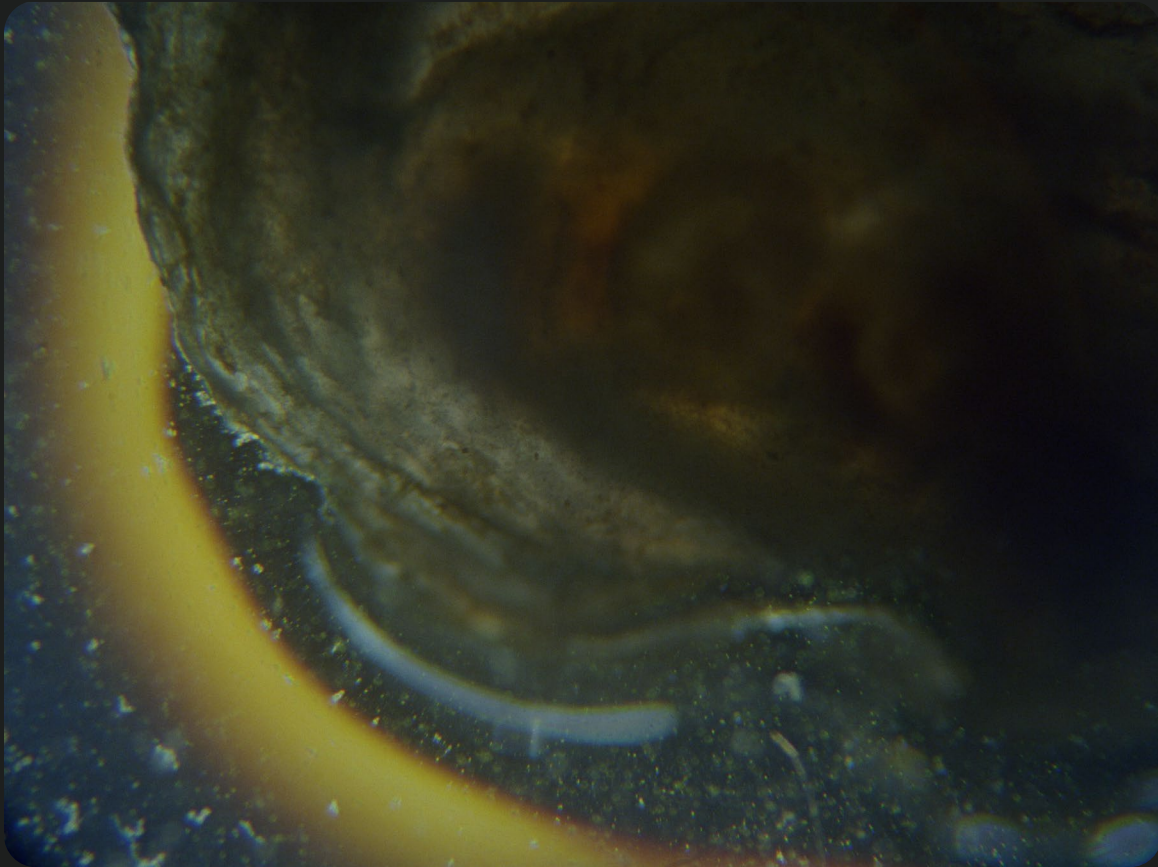
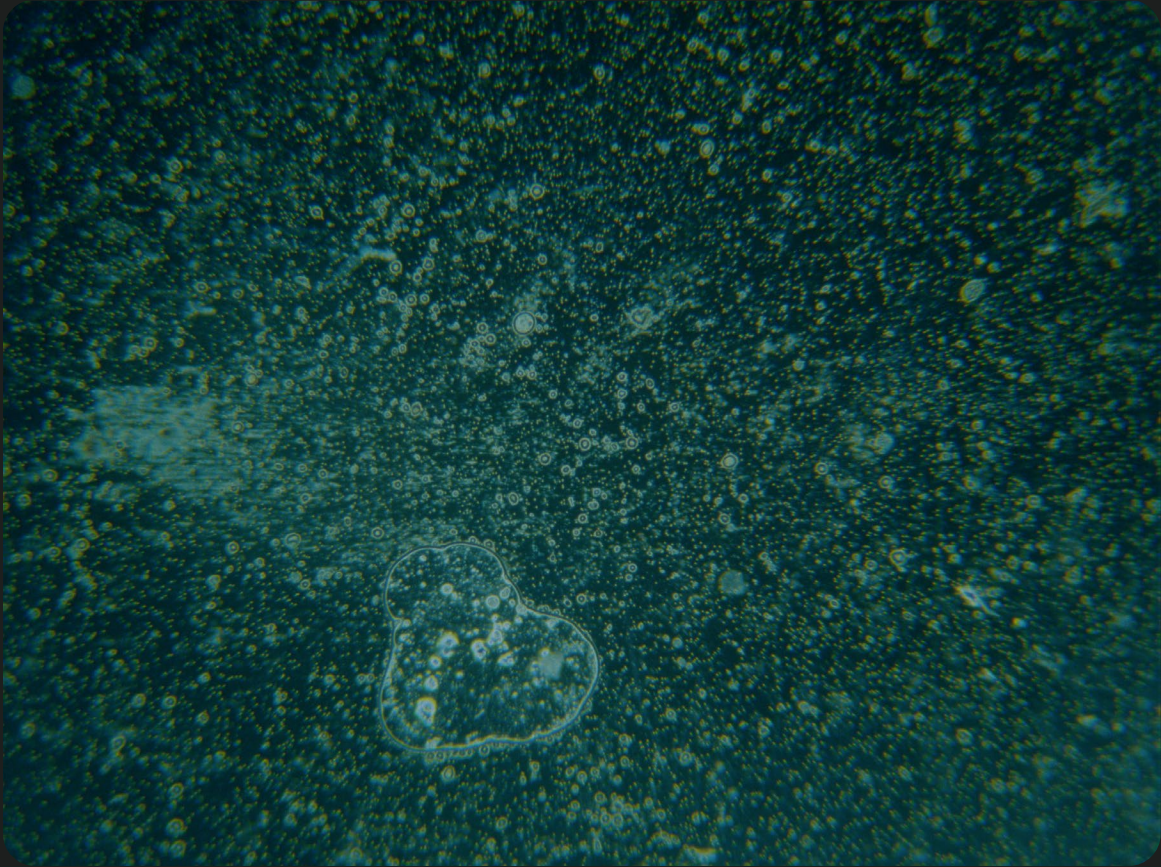


directors' statement

Concrete Turned to Sand confronts the need to reconceptualize our embeddedness in ecological systems and the representation of this reality. Utilizing a process-based approach, this film is motivated by a documentary instinct in conjunction with a structural approach to filmmaking. Throughout our artistic practice, we have made films that focus on environmental resilience in the face of degradation in contested and protected landscapes. Our films have focused on investigations of labour in relation to landscape, confronting and studying subjects such as resource extraction, company towns, industrial waste and invisible labour in the agrifood sector. The participants in our films are often people who work and live on the periphery of political and economic forces which inevitably affect their lives and the ecosystems they depend on and work within. In 2021, we were drawn to a small group of oyster farmers who collectively own Bee Islets, a cooperative of oyster rafts on Cortes Island, Canada. Through an extensive research process with the oyster farmers, we developed a filmmaking method that reveals their experiences, along with the unique pace of this work, carried out in tandem with the patterns of tides and sunlight on the island. Concurrently, we worked with ocean scientists to provide insight into ocean acidification and its impact on shellfish, while offering perspectives on the geological timescale of our ecological circumstances, stepping back to consider climate through the earth's past. This project explores methods of representing climate change by experimenting with optical and auditory techniques that play with the distancing between the viewer and the ecological subject of the film. *Concrete Turned to Sand* creates an encounter between the beauty and strangeness of our world, engaging us to think beyond our atomization, and towards broader ecological understanding and context.









Ryan Ermacora
director/producer

Ryan Ermacora is an award-winning filmmaker based on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations. Formally, his work is defined by a structural approach to filmmaking, engaging with the optics of cinema while illustrating the experience of labour in dialogue with landscape. His work has screened at festivals and cinemas including Cinéma du réel, The Walker Art Center, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Open City Documentary Festival, DOXA, and VIFF.

Website: ryanermacora.com



Jessica Johnson
director/producer

Jessica Johnson is an award-winning experimental filmmaker based on the unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations. She has made a number of short experimental films with a focus on narrative embedded within the landscape. These works often explore representation of space and time in the natural landscape with an attempt to subvert audience expectation. Her films have played at Canadian festivals such as VIFF, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Images, WNDX, and internationally, in cities such as Edinburgh, London, and Paris.

Website: jessicajohnson.ca