

# WATER AS METHOD

19-20 JUNE

THE GLASGOW  
SCHOOL OF ART

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HUMANITIES  
Sgoil Ceumrachaidh na h-Alba airson  
Ealain agus Daonnachdan

SPACE, PLACE & THE HYDROLOGICAL GAZE IN MOVING IMAGES

## ABOUT

### ***Water as Method: Space, Place & the Hydrological Gaze in Moving Images***

is a two-day symposium (19–20 June, 2025) exploring the poetics and politics of water in contemporary artist moving image (AMI) practices and methods. The symposium reflects on innovative approaches in film and moving image practice that respond to the intersecting planetary crises of climate catastrophe and geopolitical conflict—through the lens of water.

This event is curated and organised by Kelly Rappleye (AHRC-SGSAH PhD, Glasgow School of Art, Art Curator 16Collective) as part of doctoral research, and hosted by the GSA's School of Fine Art research. The programme is organised in collaboration with FieldARTS research programme (hosted by the Infrastructure Humanities Group, University of Glasgow), and generously funded by SGSAH Engagement Funding. The symposium invites contributions from artists, filmmakers, researchers, curators and creative practitioners. We welcome participants from across disciplines, including but not limited to visual arts, film studies, cultural geography, urban studies, art history, fine art, memory studies, and environmental humanities, to join us in Glasgow to share watery poetics and approaches in moving image practice.

## **Research Context**

Bringing together artists and scholars working with hydrocritical practices in the moving image, this symposium extends ongoing research into how ‘hydropoetics’ (Ryan, 2021) offers new methodological and epistemological frameworks for researching place. The presence of water in both urban landscapes and film operates as a material and poetic carrier of memory and history, capable of holding multiple and overlapping narratives and subjectivities. Urban waterways, river basins, coastal zones, port areas, and hydrological infrastructures reveal situated material, historical, cultural, and political conditions of the urban, demanding new creative and critical strategies of situated fieldwork.

Emerging dialogues in arts and humanities research—foregrounding ‘geologic’ (Litvintseva, 2022), ‘topological’ (Mansfield, 2016; Costantin, 2021), ‘infrastructural’ (Davies, 2024), ‘tidalectic’ (Brathwaite, 1994; DeLoughrey, 2020; Hessler, 2020), and ‘oceanic’ (Syperek & Wade, 2020) approaches—have increasingly shaped contemporary artistic practices. These practices often draw on postcolonial philosophy, decolonial feminist imaginaries, and ecocritical, hydrofeminist methods emerging from the blue humanities (Hofmeyr & Lavery, 2022). This is reflected in a burgeoning field of AMI that deploys hydropoetics to interrogate urban coastlines, canals, and riverways.

Such works frequently engage the archive to narrate submerged maritime histories of migration, extraction, and diaspora—revealing speculative watery archives and unseen infrastructures of climate colonialism embedded in urban waterscapes. Water in urban environments produces spatial and temporal states of permeability, spectrality, stagnation, and decay, enabling reflections on the presence of multiple pasts and layered histories. Moving image representations of watery poetics in urban landscapes often enact forms of multidirectional memory (Rothberg, 2009) and transnational place-memory, illuminating how traumatic legacies of colonialism, conflict, and displacement continue to structure the present.

Considering water as an affective infrastructure (Bosworth, 2023) in moving image practice opens further questions around how hydropoetics represent, mediate, or narrativise affective relationships to water infrastructures—and how these shape processes of remembrance, memorialisation, and place-memory (Knox, 2017; Bosworth, 2023). As a method, hydropoetics may also disrupt the visual regimes and epistemologies of colonial modernity, subverting the logics of legibility and photographic representation that structure dominant Western traditions of history-telling (Quijano, 2000; Wynter, 2003; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2014).

# **ABSTRACTS**

## **Keynote: Dr. Laleh Khalili**

### *The Corporeal Life of Seafarers & Mediterranean Entanglements*

By Dr. Laleh Khalili

In this keynote, **Dr. Laleh Khalili** draws on her time aboard commercial vessels in the Mediterranean to reflect on the lived entanglements between seafarers, refugees, and the infrastructures that connect them. Through conversations with crew members about piracy, migration, and maritime labour, she explores how solidarities and divisions are forged across oceanic spaces shaped by extractive economies, surveillance, and the geopolitics of border enforcement. Bringing together ethnographic insight and political analysis, Khalili traces the complex relations between mobility, capital, and violence at sea.

### **Biography**

**Laleh Khalili** teaches at the University of Exeter. Her books include *Sinews of War and Trade* (Verso, 2020), *Corporeal Life of Seafaring* (Mack Books, 2024), *Extractive Capitalism* (Profile Books, 2025), and *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (2007). An Iranian American, she received a BS in chemical engineering from the University of Texas and a PhD in political science from Columbia University. She was previously a Professor of Middle Eastern Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London and a Professor of International Politics at Queen Mary University, London. An internationally-renowned expert on the oil industry, global trade and geopolitics in the Gulf region, Professor Khalili has worked as a consultant and an engineer and has written widely on globalization, capital and neocolonialism. She has written for the Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Chicago Tribune, Financial Times and Agence France-Presse and contributes regularly to London Review of Books.

## Panels: Day One

### Panel 1: Liquid Landscapes of Memory & Spectral Landscapes in Film

*Disappearing Rivers and Rivers of Disappearance in Chilean Experimental Activist Film*  
By Struan Gray

#### **Abstract**

It can be challenging to think of rivers as sites of memory. They are metaphors for oblivion, they bear material away, they swell and abate in permanent impermanence. And yet, the inexorability of rivers also makes them markers of continuity, particularly in urban landscapes that are subject to continual development. They evoke pasts that precede the built environment and signify crimes that leave no trace. During times of authoritarian violence, rivers are often sites of necropolitical violence, flowing water being used as a tool of forced disappearance. Water carries bodies from the scene of the crime, while leaving evidence of the crime partially visible, liable to reappear. This paper analyses two experimental activist films in which the Mapocho river in Chile is depicted as haunted, or haunting in its absence, focusing on the potential of flowing water to bear witness to different forms of state, structural and ecological violence. First, I consider the short film *No +* (CADA 1983), which documents a protest against the Pinochet dictatorship that took place on the banks of the Mapocho in Santiago. Next, I turn to *Quipu Mapocho*, by Cecilia Vicuña, which foregrounds the river's slow ecological death by pollution, climate change and canalisation, while also drawing attention to indigenous presences that precede and exceed colonisation. Drawing on theories of spectral materiality and temporality, I am interested in the imaginative potential of rivers bring different temporalities of loss and injustice into view. I argue that both films depict loss not as a moment in time, but as an enduring and unfurling event that is made sensible by the inexorable flow of water, or anticipation of its curtailment.

#### **Biography**

**Struan Gray** is a senior lecturer in the School of Film and Television at Falmouth University, teaching on the Film BA and the Film and Television MA. His research explores histories and practices of activist and experimental filmmaking in Latin America, and the Global South more broadly, engaging with theories of spectrality, cultural memory and cinematic cartography. He employs an interdisciplinary



approach, drawing on theories and methods in film studies, cultural geography, oral history, and critical theory.

*Water and Memory: Nonhuman memory-work in Martha Atienza's "our islands 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E"*

By Ian Harvey Claros

**Summary**

Set in Bantayan Island in southern Philippines, Martha Atienza's film *our islands* 11°16'58.4"N 123°45'07.0"E features a subaquatic fisher folk's Ati-atihan procession. This seemingly religious procession doubles as a protest memory-work because its participants held placards referring to extra-judicial killings and climate emergency. The underwater parade was possible through compressor diving where people breathe through plastic tubes as they walk in the sea bed. The scenes are strikingly reminiscent of a preceding Filipino film in the 90s, Marilou Diaz-Abaya's *Muro-Ami* (1999) where actors also deployed the same risky technique of diving. The visibility of tubes and its bubbles, the imaginative range of costumes, the political references of placards, and the buoyant bodies of diver-performers harmoniously dramatize an ecological crisis and urgency which is unique to cinema. This paper, therefore, engages with the film's ecocritical and performative potential by situating water, not only as a trope, motif, or an imagery, but as an actor whose agency shapes the movement and diegesis of the film.

**Abstract**

In particular, this current reading looks into how water, with all its elemental physicality and presence, facilitates a collaborative memory-work between human and nonhuman agencies. On balance, the tropical archipelago, where Atienza's film is situated, is almost always antithetical to remembrance as its frequent storms and shifting tectonic plates make no room for permanent markers and records. However, by positing water as a filmic actor, the anthropocentric constructs of memory are reworked and decolonized to chart new sensorial circuits and sources that make remembrance possible. At any rate, while the image of a submerged procession summons an apocalyptic future made increasingly imminent with the global rise of water levels, it alternatively unfolds a memory borne out of, rather than besieged by, an archipelago that intimates perdurance and survival in this age of climate crisis.

**Biography**

**Ian Harvey Claros** teaches Philippine literature, rhetoric, and ecocriticism at the Ateneo de Manila University. He finished his AB/BSE Literature at the Philippine Normal University, and MA in Literary and Cultural Studies in Ateneo. Currently, he is a member of Young Critics Circle- Film Desk, a Philippine-based interdisciplinary critics group. He also led an Arete Sandbox Residency group that commemorates the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Typhoon Haiyan through grassroots and multi-sectoral podcast conversations in the Eastern Visayas. His research work deals with vernacular and ecocritical interventions in memory and trauma studies. He recently published in *Forum for Modern Language Studies* (Oxford University Press), *eTropic: electronic journal of studies in the Tropics*, and *Kritika Kultura*.

*Groundlessness: The Sea and the Archive in John Akomfrah's Vertigo Sea (2015)*

By Spencer Hurley

### Summary

'Groundlessness: The Sea and the Archive in John Akomfrah's *Vertigo Sea* (2015)' is an essay about the memories and history occurring in aquatic, rather than landed, spaces. *Vertigo Sea* is a three-screen immersive film installation by British-Ghanaian filmmaker, John Akomfrah, where he investigates the sea as a reliquary of memory. The film depicts human relationships with water and its ecosystems through migration, the Transatlantic slave trade, and whaling, among other examples. Art historian Marcus Rediker in an essay called 'Hydrarchy and Terracentrism' explains that landed histories are often perceived as more 'real' than aquatic memories. This essay investigates how non-terracentric histories can be deployed to create more inclusive archives. The question that drives this essay is what happens to history and the archive when it enters a state of groundlessness? Whose histories are better represented by the sea and its fluid nature?

### Abstract

This essay investigates the archive (specifically some of the first photographs of enslaved individuals in the form of the Zealy daguerreotypes included in *Vertigo Sea*) and its history as part of the imperial project. 'Groundlessness' begins by an investigation of the history of human extraction through the Anthropocene. It situates geological extraction in conversation with exploitation of human beings through chattel slavery à la Kathryn Yussof's theorisations in *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. From there, 'Groundlessness' deploys Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* and his essay "Where every breeze speaks of courage and liberty": Offshore Humanism and Marine Xenology, or, Racism and the Problem of Critique at Sea Level' to question how history changes when set at sea. This essay proposes that history and the archive when positioned in conversation with the sea allows for a more fluid and nonlinear approach to history allowing one to circumvent colonial systems embedded in linear historicisation.

'Groundlessness' addresses how temporal systems inherent to imperialism are rooted in the photographic medium through the scholarly writings of Ariella Aïsha Azoulay (*Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*). It then likens this to geological stratification and the law of superposition. The law of superposition states that in the study of stratigraphy or the strata of the earth, the layers on top of undisturbed sedimentary rock formations are younger than what is below. This essay uses interpretations from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's essay '10,000 BC: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)' to understand how water departs from the linear stratification of land. Through these scholarly perspectives, this essay proposes the sea as a space for decolonial history because of its material properties (fluidity). The sea becomes a 'groundless' space free from 'logical,' landed systems that can better address forgotten memories and narratives in the archive and afford revision.

### Biography

**Spencer Hurley** is a writer and art historian from the United States. She has studied art history at New

York University and has a history of art MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, England. At the Courtauld, Spencer studied under art historian and curator Dorothy Price and focused on modern art after critical race theory. Her practice is particularly concerned with decolonial and aquatic art histories at the intersection of the ecological and the cultural.

*It Is Time to Say to the Water, 'Disobey'*

By M. Ty

**Summary**

This presentation devotes itself to the waters of Palestine and the reservoirs of collective memory that they hold. My talk reflects on the decisive role that water plays in settler-colonial logics that have legitimated the establishment of the Zionist state. Taking inspiration from the artist Jumana Emil Abboud, who set out to search for bodies of water in Palestine that have been said to have disappeared or dried out by the occupation, I consider what it would mean to follow her in adopting “water divination” as an alternative to cartography. Reframing her practice of searching for water as an archival practice, the presentation closes with a screening of a short video that collects—from peripheries and blurred out corners of the cinematic archive—scenes that offer a glimpse of Palestinian waters. The film proceeds from the Jordan river to the sea.

**Abstract**

Perhaps water is a mouth that runs toward unwritten histories. This possibility comes closer to the senses in the work of Jumana Emil Abboud, an artist whose practice is grounded in Palestinian landscapes—and the refusal to cede them to their brutal equation with narratives of damage that colonial occupation programmatically inflicts. For some time, Abboud has attended thoughtfully to the waterscapes surrounding Galilee and Jerusalem—reanimating the folktales that they harbor, bringing them into the color of a fresh image, and taking the time to search for what has been said to have disappeared irrevocably. Keeping company with Abboud’s art, this talk reflects on what water can hold and how the connection to its reservoirs of memory might be sustained—in defiance of state violence and settler agribusiness, which together sever Palestinians from the life-giving waterways with which their ancestral knowledge is interspersed.

I attend to the way ecological sensitivity and counter-colonial remembrance course together in Abboud’s art; and how she practices literacy in invisibility, all while refreshing the sense—without which history devolves into propaganda—that the erasure of evidence does not mean that nothing is there. This presentation closes with a screening of a short video that takes up Abboud’s invitation to partake in water divination as an anticolonial practice—and asks how that might be taken up as an archival method: that is, sifting through images of rubble and loss to try to catch a glimpse of water—even if only in a well that is seconds from being filled with concrete. My short film is the result of trawling the archive of moving images for the most incidental cameos of Palestinian water—in the corners and cutaways and peripheries given to blur, sometimes, zooming away from the principle action in a propaganda film to bring forward the spring or sip that usually thrums in the optical unconscious; or lifting a few seconds

of vanished bodies of water into a new timeline, and, when necessary, reversing their demolition. As a sort of moving-image poem, the video features scenes that proceed from the river to the sea.

### **Biography**

**M. Ty** is an ember of a diaspora. They are an Assistant Professor of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

## **Panel 2: Hydrocritical Geographies & Infrastructures**

*Panel Convened & Chaired by Struan Gray*

*The Doggerland Energy Complex-North Sea tidalectics and offshore wind energy development in submerged Doggerland*

By Arie Frosh & Ed Compson

### **Summary**

*The Doggerland Energy Complex* (2025) is a film that looks at the meeting between offshore wind energy and Doggerland, the submerged landscape that used to connect the UK to mainland Europe. The film frames this meeting through a nonlinear poetics of the North Sea, where archaeological exploration and speculative energy futures occur simultaneously.

The film includes footage from the North Sea seabed taken during an expedition by the Submerged Landscape Research Centre from the University of Bradford in summer 2024. A voiceover reads entries from a sonar scan of the seabed commissioned by a wind energy company, looking at potential archaeological sites around the turbine bases. Other footage includes site visits with palaeoarchaeologists researching Doggerland; Scroby Sands Offshore Wind Farm; the North Sea filmed from on board the *Excelsior* sailing vessel; Siemens Gamesa blade factory in Hull, and the Norfolk Broads. Commissioned as part of the East Gallery Fellowship, Norwich University of the Arts.

### **Abstract**

*The Doggerland Energy Complex* reflects on the complex relationship between geological and archaeological research and the energy industry. It positions the expanded site of the North Sea as a discursive one, informed by a looping, cyclical time: a nonlinear poetics of the sea.

The film emerges from a year of research at Norwich University of the Arts into the meeting of contemporary offshore wind turbines with the geological history of Doggerland. During this period, our research practice was constructed through outward exercises of site visits, interviews with palaeoarchaeologists and marine geophysicists, with wind energy technicians and engineers, through collective workshops, and a focused exploration of sourced material. The notion of tidalectics informed our understanding of the North Sea space across long durations, particularly through the equating of territorialising the ocean with territorialising time. Our use of moving image was central throughout the fellowship, and followed this tidalectical framing —while dispersed films throughout our exhibition in East Gallery, Norwich, continually looped and circulated, *The Doggerland Energy Complex* folds



together research into 20,000-30,000 year old Doggerland earth extracted from the North Sea seabed with embodied, place-based recording of contemporary wind farm development and function.

Doggerland is the name given to the land that used to connect the UK to mainland Europe. Fully submerged around 8,000 years ago, Doggerland was a place of human inhabitation and settlement. It is an area now understood through proxies: through seabed scanning and filming, sediment sampling, the finding or trawling of artefact. The last twenty years have seen huge expansion of offshore wind farms in the North Sea. The growth of offshore wind energy production has involved a sizing up of turbines themselves, whose bases fixed within the seabed are literally embedded in the same Doggerland earth. The submersion of Doggerland is a story of a changing climate, one that resonates with the contemporary context of anthropocentric actions leading to the rise of sea levels and coastal erosion.

Initially through 3D seismic data from oil and gas that gave the first detailed indication of the seabed, much of the information on the North Sea seabed is provided through the acquisition of data in order to site wind turbines. Massive swathes of data arrive from scans taken for undersea cable routes that transfer energy from offshore wind sites in the middle of the North Sea to the shore. A contemporary understanding of Doggerland is a land that comes back into being through data; a site that gets revealed through a renewable energy infrastructure that is one part of the effort to limit the loss of land to the sea. As historian of the ocean Helen M. Rozwadowski writes, "our knowledge of the ocean is so dependent on technology and knowledge systems that these can be understood as, to some extent, constituting the ocean."

Conversely, the building of energy infrastructure limits access to further research, and puts a time pressure on an understanding of the North Sea's archaeological history. Playing the data-led, but still somewhat speculative research on Doggerland against the scaling up of offshore wind farms and planned energy islands, the North Sea becomes a site for speculation in many directions.

### **Biography**

**Arieh Frosh and Ed Compson** are independent artists who work collaboratively on socially engaged, technologically-driven projects. Since 2020, their ongoing series of artworks, workshops, and research experiments have involved technologies that might only become visual through translation, from seabed scanning, to electromagnetic listening, to recording wind speed. They do this to engage with a world that operates — and is made operational — through non-visual means, with visual and material effects. This approach, combined with a critical employment of fiction and an experimental use of tools, allows for a questioning of how machine and ecological thinking operate, interpellate us, and affect imagination.

From December 2023 until June 2025, they were East Gallery Fellows at Norwich University of the Arts, where their research considered how the meeting of contemporary offshore wind turbines with the geological history of Doggerland could be a tool to creatively explore the historical, cultural, and political narratives surrounding wind energy and oceanic thinking.

*Veins of Saltwater: Archipelagic Resistance in the Gulf Spectral resistance in Iran's wetlands*  
By Shahriar Khonsari

## Summary

The video essay is about the hydrological collapse of the Lake Urmia in Iran as they are the scenes of submerged memory and spectral resistance. By using found footage, archival fragments, and the submerged filming techniques, the author of the video essay considers water as an archive that is not only wounded but also a fugitive witness to histories of extraction, displacement, and environmental degradation. The essay embarks on a hydropoetic journey to bring forward the overlooked connections between colonial infrastructure, transboundary water conflict, and the politics of ecological mourning in Iran's borderlands. The paper endorses a hydrofeminist interpretation of Iran's waterways as affective infrastructures, mediating the interlocked legacies of war, empire, and ecological grief. By utilizing hydricritical and decolonial frames, the video work disrupts the prevailing visual regimes and contemplates over the opacity, erasure, and resistance entangled in these aquatic zones.

## Abstract

The issue at hand involves the disappearing wetlands of Iran which are depicted as the most important site for exploration of hydropoetics and hydrocolonial memory in an artist's moving image practice. These wetland areas have long been the main target of such activities as mineral extraction, that was undrinkable due to salinization, and political carelessness. These are sites that at least visually look more like an environmental crisis, but they are also cultural labs. *Veins of Saltwater* is a cinematography project in which I record the submerged life of a region through image editing, narration at least with a poetic tone, trying to make the extinct waters think it can be hosts to the memories. Lake Urmia was the largest saltwater lake in the Middle East when it was still in good condition. Nowadays, it is a dry place with salt stretches and only the darker part is left with the desolated piers. The primary catalyst for the fall of Urmia's ecosystem was the development of the 20th century which brought about wide-scale modernization, changed agricultural policies, and constructed infrastructure in the name of the national idea of progress.

We talk about water in terms of poetic media; in these reverse morphed drowned landscapes, however, the waters are not only likely to be the cataclysmic place but also they are place/space holders for the volumes of submerged stories of colonial toxins, forced migrations, and hydroterritorial violence.

The video essay makes use of postcolonial theory, hydrofeminism, and a Middle Eastern environmental humanities, that connect water with a variety of emotions like sorrow, protest, and memory. The whole concept of wet media and shifting ontologies of the spiritual domain has been a major influence on my work; I have the idea that the dominant mode of documentary which is clear and controlled. Here, I prefer ambiguity, distortion, and invisible but still present existence as ways to question the paradigms of knowledge, sight, and truth. A piece of history having to do with the event of the river being flooded followed by a period of drought, is talked of together with narrated eyewitness accounts and the words of a poem, making the reader think of the event as blocked and unblocked memories.

By presenting water as not only a witness, but also as a method, *Veins of Saltwater* can be seen as a reflection, via Iranian moving image practices, on the ways that climate colonialism and hydropolitical trauma can be newly recognized. In the text, the artist goes beyond the framework of the decolonization of environmental aesthetics to visual vocabularies.

## Biography

**Shahriar Khonsari** is an academic and professional in the fields of photography, art, and communication for development. He holds multiple Master degrees, including: M.A. in Photography from the University of Art, Tehran, M.A. in Artistic Research from the University of Art, Tehran, and M.A.

in Communication for Development from Malmo University, Sweden. His academic pursuits reflect a deep commitment to using visual media as a tool for social change.

His conference presentations span globally, from Helsinki to Paris, addressing topics in media. His study is also about working with other researchers in order to get the effects of the media representation of minorities. He has been a Research Assistant to Dr. Agnes Devictor at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, focusing on the visual documentation of conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war and the Syrian civil war. His influence is aimed to increasing media literacy, and discovering connections between communication, and societal impact.

*Flume Study 4: Aesthetics of Turbulent Waves*  
By Avi Varma

**Summary**

*Flume Studies* is an ongoing series of artistic-theoretical studies investigating the imposition of colonial time space through the technology of the canal. *Flume Study 4* proposes a lecture-performance of approximately 10-15 minutes in the form of a live essay-film. The performance is composed of fragments from the archive of early cinematic motion-studies of waves. While the measurement of waves with cameras was used by colonial, civil engineers in south Asia to create an “onto-epistemological context” conducive to domination, *Flume Study 4* distorts this projective vision through: 1) an autocritique of the hydro logical gaze of colonial engineering, 2) a micro-history of irregular waves and flume channels in the political films of Harun Farocki, and 3) a “potential history” of an early cinematic practice of wave motion-studies that *might* compose a new aesthetic constellation from technical images of water and anti-colonial ways of looking.

**Abstract**

*Flume Studies* is an ongoing series of artistic-theoretical studies investigating the imposition of colonial time space through the technology of the canal. *Flume Study 4* proposes a lecture-performance of approximately 10-15 minutes in the form of a live essay-film. The performance is composed of fragments from the archive of early cinematic motion-studies of waves. While the measurement of waves with cameras was used by colonial, civil engineers in south Asia to create an “onto-epistemological context”<sup>1</sup> conducive to domination, *Flume Study 4* offers to intervene in this context by looking elsewhere from within this hydrological gaze in order to see what Eduoard Glis sant calls an “aesthetics of turbulence,”<sup>2</sup> where irregular waves offer an ecological image-thought of mutiny.

As a project, *Flume Studies* emerged from many years of engagement with the Kisan Andolan, Farmers’ Movement, and affiliated organisations in Punjab, Northwest India.<sup>3</sup> At a continental scale, the Punjab canal system transformed space by internally displacing people in order to grow wheat for European markets through perennial canals that erased whole seasonal water bodies from the earth.<sup>4</sup> At a micro-political scale, this colonisation of seasonality was perpetuated through the technology of the flume-channel. Flumes are aspects of the canal system that siphon off excess waters seen as turbulent. I argue that this attempt to assert domination over flood-rhythms by means of canals is mirrored in attempts to control social revolution within Punjab from the colonial era to the present. I read this contradiction within the wave itself by bringing together archival images of flumes situated across an aesthetic-political divide. These extend from the early cinematic motion-studies of

waves by eugenicist geographer Vaughan Cornish that sought to measure and predict the laws of wave-forms to the images of turbulent waves in flume-tanks that serve as an unfettering of the gaze in Harun Farocki's essay-film *Images of the World and Inscriptions of War*.

In this way, *Flume Study 4* offers to the *Water as Method* symposium a departure from early cinema in the form of an essay that shifts "from an original plan" in order to "take a different path instead,"<sup>5</sup> like the irregular waves of a river bound within a flume. It enacts this shift by means of: 1) an autocritique of the hydrological gaze of colonial engineering, 2) a micro-history of irregular waves and flume channels in the political films of Harun Farocki, and 3) a "potential history"<sup>6</sup> of an early cinematic practice of wave motion-studies that *might* compose a new aesthetic constellation from technical images of water and anti-colonial ways of looking.

1 Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race*, Borderlines 27 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007): 15.

2 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, Nachdr. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009):155.

3 Avi Varma. "Subsistence, Surplus and the Everyday." Ric cardo Badano, Tomas Percival, and Susan Schuppli, eds., *Border Environments: CRA #1* (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2023).

4 Rohan D'Souza, "Water in British India: The Making of a 'Colonial Hydrology,'" History Compass 4, no. 4 (2006): 621–28; Imran Ali, *The Punjab Under Imperialism, 1885-1947* (Princeton Legacy Library): 923 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014); Walter Rodney, *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881-1905*, Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture (Baltimore, Md: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).

5 Harun Farocki, *HaFl 013 – Harun Farocki: On the History of Labor* (Berlin: Harun Farocki Institut & Motto Books, 2020): 31.

6 Ariella Aisha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (S.I.: Verso, 2019).

## Biography

**Avi Varma** is an artist-researcher and doctoral candidate at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London. His work takes as its departure point the nexus of ecology, epistemic violence, anti-colonial struggle. He led Research Studio 5 "5, 0, 1000 rivers" in the Environmental Architecture programme at the Royal College of Art.

## Panels: Day 2

### **\*A. Aqueous Archives: Vessels, Migrations, & Imaginaries**

*\*Parallel Panels: Practice-led Presentations, Water Methods in AMI*

*Vessels of Passage: Remembering the Derry Boat and Irish Migration*  
By Rachael Ryder

### **Abstract**

This presentation forms part of an ongoing PhD research project exploring the intertwined histories of Ireland and Scotland, particularly Ireland's emigration to Scotland, focusing on the vessels that facilitated these movements across water. Central to this research is the Derry boat, a key passageway between Ireland and Scotland throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, which carried generations of Irish emigrants, many fleeing poverty, seeking work, or building new lives across the sea. The passenger and livestock steamer that travelled between Derry and Glasgow was often called 'The Derry Boat' by



people in Donegal, while in Derry itself it was known as 'The Scotch Boat'. A regular, timetabled service ran between Derry and Glasgow for 137 years, from 1829 until the autumn of 1966, and it played a significant role in the maritime history of the city.

In this presentation, I will reflect on the symbolic and material presence of the ship itself, positioning it as a vessel not only of bodies but of memory, loss, and transition. Drawing on archival sources, oral histories, and moving image material, the presentation considers how the Derry boat can be read as an archival and emotional space, both a site of departure and arrival, absence and presence, within the realm of migration narratives.

As part of this presentation, attendees will be invited to engage with a participatory element: a pre-made paper pop-up boat handout. Participants will be asked to contribute short texts, memories, or reflections inspired by the themes of migration, water, and passage, which will be written onto the surface of the paper boat, transforming it into a collective vessel of thought and shared experience.

### **Biography**

**Rachael Kelly Ryder** is an artist, curator and researcher from Dublin. She is an SGSAH-funded practice-based researcher at the Glasgow School of Art and the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive. Her research centres on networked cultures, Irish diaspora, oral histories and socio-economic conditions on communities, explored through experimental documentary, participatory activities and lens-based media interventions.

Her moving image and installation work has been screened at Market Gallery (2023), CCA Glasgow (2023) and Transmission Gallery (2024).

She has a BFA from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin (2016) and an MLitt in Curatorial Practice from the Glasgow School of Art and the University of Glasgow (2021).

### *Conjuring the Oceans: World-building ancestral cultural ecosystems & marine imaginariums* By Christina Peake

### **Summary**

Digital and material creative interventions braid themselves into overarching decolonial ecologies, forming tidal flows between collections, moulding 'tidalectic', epistemic kinships and 'alter/native' (Braithwaite, 1994) historiography, grounded within Caribbean marine geographies, multispecies entanglements and potentially as Hartman (2008) suggests 'act of reparation'. At the heart of the ecosystem/s are deep ancestral, ethical, and sacred articulations and practices rooted within Caribbean cosmologies.

The conjuring these worlds, informed by living cultural communities, entities, and knowledge systems (in collections, communities and/or the natural world), are essential to radical and just transformations critical to our futures.'

### **Abstract**

'Christina was Artist-In-Residence for the Transforming Collections project in partnership with UAL

Decolonising Arts Institute, Creative Computing Institute and the TATE with national partners such as World Museum (Liverpool), and the Wellcome Collection in researching their collections relating to Caribbean Indigenous and African descendent and multispecies ecological cultures. Informed by marine conservation and cosmologies, was to view national collections as cultural ecosystems, in conjunction with ML applications to evaluate what can be classified as a healthy and/or degraded ecosystem, essentially the creation of a 'Cultural Ecosystem Health Framework' (CEHF). Addressing colonial histories that have embedded structural barriers such as race, gender and ecology are central research questions to the project. By connecting cultural ecosystems across collections/archives, there is potential to not only identify stories that have been marginalised, minoritized or erased, collectively illustrating overarching stories but also highlight the potential to engage in restorative and regenerative practices through speculative acts of marine imaginaries, critical fabulation and creative intervention.

These acts are a praxis of world building and imagining, interrogating the colonial and environmental 'double fracture' (Ferdinand, 2022), narratives of futurity and articulations of systems change. Wynter (1997), speaks of the need to imagine beyond human, 'transculture' and how transformation begins in dismantling and rebirth/(re)indigenisation of the cosmologies and cosmogonies that structure our worlds. In this context, digital and material creative interventions braid themselves into overarching decolonial ecologies, forming tidal flows between collections and learning from the CEHF, moulding a 'tidalectic' epistemic kinships and 'alter/native' (Braithwaite, 1994) historiography, grounded within Caribbean marine geographies, multispecies entanglements and potentially as Hartman (2008) suggests 'an act of reparation'. At the heart of the ecosystem/s are deep ancestral, ethical, and sacred articulations and practices rooted within Caribbean cosmologies.

### Biography

**Christina Peake** is a Bajan British transdisciplinary artist, AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Researcher with the University of Westminster and The National Archives, whose PhD research focuses on how archival research and eco-social art via decolonial and liberatory practices can inform regenerative practices in the Caribbean marine environment. Christina was Artist in Residence for the 'Transforming Collections (TaNC)' project led by UAL Decolonising Arts Institute partnered with UAL creative Computing Institute and close partnership with TATE, (Jan 2024 to Dec2024). Christina is currently working with the Horniman Museum on a permanent display for the 'Natural History' gallery exploring Caribbean perspectives and relationships with the sea.'

### *Six Knots*

By Ali Vanderkruyk

### Summary

To reduce ambient noise when approaching a whale, a vessel should not exceed the speed of six knots. A long-standing symbol of the distance between human and animal and the mystery of the natural world, the whale is a site of human obsession. A loose adaptation of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, "Six Knots" follows specialists in cetacean death and conservation on the west coast of Canada. The film tracks the grey space between language, sound and image, and the repetitious loop of Western settlement and science.

In the almost total absence of images of living whales, "Six Knots" focuses on the relationship to their capture: how they are caught in both fishing nets and the meshes of science imagery, as direct prey

or collateral victims of an extractive relationship to the human. The film's six chapters depict colonial encroachments on the life of cetaceans, but also question documentary film's exploitation of its subjects. The film celebrates distance through a complex and precise form and an open, fragmented structure to disentangle and liberate the gaze from predatory ambitions.

### **Abstract**

"Six Knots" critiques the *necropolitical* (Mbembe) logic embedded in maritime and conservation industries and offers a postcolonial philosophy within experimental techniques in the moving documentary image. Engaging with a form of participatory filmmaking with littoral laborers and Coast Salish peoples, it disrupts visual regimes at the heart of colonial modernity. The film illustrates a hydrocritical connection between damage towards more-than-human life underwater and the colonization of Turtle Island. The imagery of white settlers performing scientific investigation, and later, training sessions for predominantly Indigenous communities to respond when a cetacean is in danger, represent dominant Western traditions of history-telling. The surface of the film is about whale death, but legible just below is the colonial process of subverting indigenous knowledge, a knowledge where human-marine relations is not occupied with offering data for technological extraction, but considering our relationship with marine life as affective and relational.

The film aims to challenge the typical borders of the filmic or *operational* image (Farocki): expressing data and functional, mechanical and scientific imagery through artistic means to elicit an embodied, turbid experience for the viewer. As an essay film, it distorts fact-based representational modes and presents sound and image with contemplative and expressive registers. By editing archival imagery of whaling practices in the early 20th century between images with comparable gestures of a present day porpoise necropsy, and ending the film with a conversation between the filmmaker and an ethnomusicologist with expertise and lived experience in Indigenous Sound Studies (Robinson, *Hungry Listening*), a dissonance is created between visual and aural epistemologies to suggest that the human relationship to the earth, and documentary, is not one of dominance but fragility. Following Donna Haraway's notion that "only partial perspectives promise objective vision", it was fundamental that the contexts of production and the filmmaker's positionality were constantly interrogated and reinterrogated—how to decenter the human self while centering responsibility to the subjects that are engaged with.

"Six Knots" is a film that experiments with dismantling objectivity and challenging colonial sensorial orders that privilege sight at the peak of sensory hierarchies. The only true, legible portrait of a live whale is illustrated through sound, and one of the film's central images, the circle, portrays the both limited capacity of the human to inhabit the more-than-human gaze, and the shape of the spyglass as a direct representation of hydrocolonial infrastructure. Building frameworks for intimate, haptic, and multi-sensory engagement with the environment is especially urgent in a moment where the climate conditions to support human and more-than-human life are rapidly deteriorating. By reframing historical precedents where "nature" is idealized or treated as neutral, the filmmaker seeks to foster a dialogue between historical visual modalities and speculative futures, in the interest of decolonizing filmmaking.

### **Biography**

**Ali Vanderkruyk** is an experimental filmmaker and researcher based between Vancouver and Los

Angeles. Their work engages with shifting notions of the self and “other” in documentary ethics in relation to ecology, gender dynamics, carceral spaces, and the body. Their approach is research-as-process, where the interrogation of archives and working-through methods of visualization are embedded in the poetics of the moving image. Current subjects address the dilemmas of representing the “more-than-human” (a term that proposes reparative attention across species), and understandings of human ecological damage by challenging received histories behind scientific images and their presentation as “neutral” or “apolitical”. They have been featured in Filmmaker Magazine as one of the 25 New Faces of Independent Film (2024), screened at festivals including Montreal International Documentary Festival (RIDM), Cinéma du Réel, and DOXA. They currently teach Film and Video at California Institute of the Arts.

## **B. Fluid Subjectivities & Watery Bodies**

### *Fluid Borders*

By Emily Beaney

#### **Summary**

This screening and discussion will explore how hydrofeminist approaches to collaborative moving image practice can facilitate collective care and challenge gender-based health inequalities in Western Medicine. Tending to borders between bodies as leaky, this practice-based research brings into being flows of affect moving between hospital and home in the UK. The use of analogue film will be discussed here as an approach to filmmaking that can embody and affect experiences of illness and care in Western Medicine, but also as a process that can negate care of the environment.

#### **Abstract**

Leaks and flows pass between and circulate around us. Leakiness moves and connects us in illness through the practices of care that sustain us. In the 16mm film *‘Practices of Care’*, flows of affect within hydrological infrastructures of care in Western Medicine are addressed. A hydrofeminist approach to filmmaking sees collaborative approaches co-constructing knowledge of care within an assemblage of exchanges between hospital and home. Collaborations with a woman living with chronic illness, her clinician and her husband, reveal hydrological approaches to treatment of illness. This multi-channel film embraces the audio-visual language of water to mediate flows of affect between practices of medical care, self-care and familial care. It reveals contained and un-contained bodies and practices leaking and absorbing, flowing and overflowing into, from, and in-between self and other, institution and home. Here, practices of care co-exist, challenge and sustain.

The bathroom, hospital and home sequester and see. The hydro here becomes a lens through which we can come to know where the imbalances lie. Hydrofeminism sees alterity and plurality leak between our porous borders, enabling other bodies, other ways of being and doing, otherness, to flow through us



and our practices. Hydrofeminist moving image practice brings into being bodies that are unbounded, uncontained, undetermined and therefore unhindered by forces of oppression. Our watery networks are thereby expanded as new flows meet and seep between, through and beyond collaborators, institutions and audiences, creating opportunity for radical and emancipatory forms of representation, creative practice and collective care.

Forces of medicalisation, silencing and stigma in care can threaten the bodies, practices and narratives we bring into being. In film, singularity is often a point of erasure as nuance and complexity is lost, oppressed by the norm. In attending to the fluidity and viscosity of our relations, we may come to address subtleties and imbalances. Recognising where liminal forms of embodiment lie between divergent practices and experiences, particularities in experience, perspective and practice, can meet, leak and flow, collectively shifting and shaping one another.

Unbounded by conventions of filmic form, experimental and collaborative approaches to moving image can hold both synthesis and dissonance as similarity and difference come together and diverge. What is shared between us as creative collaborators generates an embodied form of representation, a filmic body that can be screened and shared, often revealing experiences that are hidden in Western Medical epistemologies of the seen and heard. Materially embodied and mediated in moving image practice, uncertainty, intervention, play and rupture render familiar audio-visual formats unstable and new narratives emerge. Here, audio-visual experiments offer alteration and altercation of perspective.

Analogue practice holds a diverse array of contributions through the physicality and tactility of its body. Embodiments slip, slide, push against, rush through one another, there is loss, pain, absence and presence, flowing between interior and exterior bodies. Fluidity and viscosity inform the filmic body. In *Practices of Care*, black and white analogue film is informed by leaky practices of care in the hospital, the bathroom and the home. The analogue medium follows rhythms of care, embodying knowledge and experience. However, this care ends as we reach the end of our reel. Analogue film is deviant, it hides and reveals its experiences. It leaks in and out and it affects the world around it. Care is negated in the consideration of the world around it. The act of processing and revealing the hidden, is itself hidden, and its damages to the environment silenced in its rendering of lived experiences.

To explore these complexities, we follow the leaks. Here streams of knowledge can begin to flow where silos of silence and gaps in understanding once stood. These streams shimmer with potential.

### **Biography**

**Emily Beaney** is an artist and AHRC PhD researcher working with moving image. Her creative practice and research centre upon embodied difference and collective care, utilising experimental and collaborative approaches to filmmaking to bring into being the unseen and unheard. These works have been screened and exhibited in creative, academic and community contexts across the UK and internationally. Exhibitions have included work shown at the Southbank Centre, Talbot Rice Gallery and Alchemy Film and Arts. Project partners and supporting organisations have included British Council, Creative Scotland, Unlimited, Wellcome Collection and Glasgow Women's Library. In 2021 Emily received the Guthrie Award for outstanding work adjudged by the Royal Scottish Academy.

*90 Miles*  
By Rosa Prosser

**Summary**

*90 MILES* is a short experimental film mapping the River Eden in miles and MIDI sounds. Images are taken from an armchair voyage down the River Eden – by “armchair voyage”, this is very much a journey through the online (and removed) archive of historical and contemporary maps. Contrasting the static and the distant, the soundtrack is composed from a swim by the artist – audio from the swim converted to MIDI then transformed into Logic SoCal drums. These sounds prompt the question of where archives are necessarily stored – for there is another archive of the river, stored (reverberating) in the body.

**Abstract**

*90 MILES* takes as its departure point a tension of distance and an abstraction of intimacies. There are five security grade CCTV “rivercams” that line the banks of the River Eden. These cameras watch its waters, taking one image every five seconds, saving one image every hour. Their purpose is to monitor water levels, both for fishing and flooding, but the amassed database is also used to train AI *how to see water*.

When researching the River Eden – a river that runs 10 minutes’ walk from my house; a river that I have grown up swimming in – my methodology swung between repeated swims responding to the touch of the river (GoPros attached to my body in an effort to translate these movements into audio/visual forms of knowing), to pouring over archives of frozen images, as I returned to my now base in London.

I was confronted by the question of *how we understand/know place*, and *how images fix/freeze certain ways of knowing and relating*. The abstraction of the river into certain images (maps, CCTV) reinforced “modern” understandings of water (Linton, 2010) allowing for extraction/separation to take place. From my sensory swims, I felt that this leaky, diffuse, turbid, ever-changing river could not be contained in a single image, and in making a film I struggled with the question of “representation”.

In bridging the distance between abstraction and intimacy, I return to Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker’s concept of *weathering* (Neimanis & Walker, 2014), bringing the river back to my body. In *90 MILES*, this is achieved through sounds that echo a swim, a reminder of reverberations of sensations and experiences, held beyond the confinements of language. These work to produce affective atmospheres for the audience, working *against* the abstract images of the river we see.

The CCTV “rivercams” claim to offer a “window” to “reality”, however, as countless poets, scholars, thinkers and dreamers throughout history have observed – *it is never the same river twice*. *90 MILES* seeks the transformation of direct experience, caught up in the moving image, into something playful and anew.

Research questions to ground the work –

*How does “the river” challenge dominant images of “modern” hegemonic representation through multiplex notions of what it is, and can be?*

*Through moving image and a sensory ecological ethnography approach, how can new imaginaries of water challenge its “modern” representations?*

### **Biography**

**Rosa Prosser** is an artist filmmaker from Cumbria, northern England. Her creative and research practice explores the entanglements of place, history, ecology, and people through an “elemental” lens (mostly the wind!). She graduated from the University of Cambridge in 2022 with a BA in the History and Philosophy of Science, going on to undertake an MFA in Creative Documentary by Practice within University College London (UCL) Public Anthropology Department. Her films have been shown internationally, including the Beijing International Short Film Festival, Jakarta International Documentary Experimental Film Festival, Ciné Liminal (formerly EthnoKino Seasons), and the Athens Digital Arts Festival. In August 2025, she is starting a PhD in Film and Visual Studies at Harvard University.

*Alienation, Community, and the Undulatory Subject: Looking Out to Sea in Thomas Frick’s Escape to the Mountains (1983)*

By Matthew Parry

### **Abstract**

Thomas Frick made his experimental film *Der Ausflug ins Gebirge (Escape to the Mountains)* in and around the East German coastal city of Greifswald during the Autumn of 1983. It stands as one of numerous films produced by the so-called *Greifswald Circle*, an organically self-organising collective of avant-garde artists who, like similar pockets of independent filmmakers active throughout East Germany, refused to work within the state-socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR)’s centralised film production studio. Instead, Frick’s film belongs to an illicit avant-garde movement within East Germany which produced and circulated formally and thematically experimental works within a semi-illegal artistic “underground” operative within the GDR towards the end of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, using equipment such as Super 8 cameras largely imported from the Soviet Union to do so. Frick’s eleven-minute film consists of a loose adaptation of a short story by Franz Kafka of the same name originally published in 1912, in which a nameless narrator takes a trip to the mountains in order to escape from his everyday life (which is plagued with social alienation and isolation) and find a sense of community. The largest change which Frick makes to Kafka’s original text is to change his protagonist’s final destination from the mountains to the Baltic Sea. This paper examines this choice, questioning how the space of the Baltic coast and the forms of thalassic gazing which result are marshalled by Frick as a motif to reckon with states of social and political alienation as it appeared in the context of East German socialism. Ultimately, the paper addresses how Frick’s film utilises the unique undulatory rhythmicity of his cinematic ocean to posit an iterative mode of individual subjectivity, able to assuage experiences of alienation pertaining both to the specific historical contexts of state-socialist East Germany and beyond.

### **Biography**

**Matt Parry** is a second-year PhD Candidate at the University of Cambridge’s centre for Film and Screen, secondarily affiliated with the University’s Department of German. His doctoral project analyses experimental cinematic practice in late socialist East Germany through a kinetic lens, questioning how an intermedial aesthetics of cinematic movement intersects with various political discourses of motion

throughout the GDR's final decade. Matt is recipient of the Judy and Nigel Weiss Studentship in the Arts and Humanities at Robinson College (co-funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council), and is a member of the Open-Oxford-Cambridge Doctoral Training Partnership.

### **C. Reading (for) Water: Hydropolitical Imaginaries**

*Curating Currents: Circular Exhibitions (2023)*

By Bengü Gun

#### **Summary**

How can we tell stories of slow violence and the politics of water through an exhibition? This question shaped the fourth edition of Circular Exhibitions in 2023, which I curated in my hometown of Mersin, a coastal city in southern Türkiye where water is both vital to daily life and increasingly under threat. Grounded in personal connection and ecological urgency, the exhibition addressed the cumulative and often invisible harms caused by water infrastructures, pollution, and extractive development. Over three days, the programme brought together moving image works, installations, performances, and public talks to explore water as both subject and curatorial method. Drawing on Rob Nixon's theory of slow violence, the exhibition invited artists to respond to water's political, poetic, and affective dimensions. This presentation reflects on the curatorial strategies underpinning the project, with a focus on video works by Halil Altındere, Volkan Aslan, and Sibel Horada, which approached water as a site of memory, rupture, and ecological resistance.

#### **Abstract**

This presentation will be about the curatorial methodology behind *Yavaş Şiddet: Suyun Görünmez Etkisi* (Slow Violence: The Invisible Impact of Water), the fourth edition of Circular Exhibitions (2023), an annual environmental art programme situated in a coastal city. Taking water as its focus, the exhibition aimed to make the diffuse and accumulative impacts of environmental degradation visible, particularly within contexts shaped by local policies, nuclear infrastructure, and coastal urbanisation. The project invited artists to observe and reflect on the environmental concerns in this coastal town.

Working across disciplines including moving image, installation, and performance, the exhibition featured eighteen artists whose practices engage with ecological grief, watery memory, and spatial injustice. This proposal focuses on three key contributors: Halil Altındere, Volkan Aslan, and Sibel Horada, whose works offered critical and lyrical responses to water's material and symbolic weight. Altındere's *Siren* (2016, 8'54") constructs a militarised Mediterranean through the figure of a wounded mermaid, suspended in liminal waters and embodying myth, displacement, and surveillance.

Aslan's *Home Sweet Home* (commissioned by the 15th Istanbul Biennial, 2017, 6'50") offers a cinematic meditation on drift and dislocation, tracing the fragile architecture of home across the Bosphorus. Sibel Horada's video *Migration Wave* (2019-2021, 3'52") reflects on the ecological rescue



effort of yellow corals to a different island due to aggressive construction, as a metaphor for fragility and displacement. Set in a region where biodiversity is threatened by microplastics, pollution, and impacts of a new nuclear power plant, through immersive capacities of moving image, the exhibition created a platform to talk about these slowly emerging issues publicly. The session will begin with the curatorial video essay shared with the artists for the exhibition, including excerpts from the featured works, and conclude with reflections on the political relevance of water as a curatorial method.

### **Biography**

**Bengü Gün** is a Manchester-based curator and consultant in the arts and heritage sector. She is the Co-Founder of Mixer (İstanbul), an innovative art platform dedicated to supporting emerging artists, and former Director of Gate 27 (İstanbul), an international artist residency fostering interdisciplinary exchange. Gün has provided strategic consultancy for creative industry projects in the UK, USA, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. She is currently the Chief Operating Officer at esea contemporary (Manchester), UK's only non-profit organisation specialising in presenting and platforming artists and art practices that are informed by East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) heritages. Alongside her institutional role, she continues her independent curatorial practice. Her curatorial projects include Chrysalis of Rebirth (London, 2025), commissioned by Carpel Atelier, Circular IV (Mersin, 2023), Atonal 9 Solo (İstanbul, 2019), and Sounds Like Home (San Francisco, 2019), which she co-curated with Duygu Gün.

### *Modern Water: ecocritical analysis of the modern gaze in 'Water, Water Everywhere' (1967)*

By Harriet Crisp

### **Summary**

This paper argues that foregrounding an aesthetic encounter with archive educational films offers a means to resist the films' Anthropocenic framing of water as a resource. The paper focuses on *Water, Water Everywhere* (1967), a documentary film exploring water supply in Scotland and global water scarcity. Sponsored by a government-funded committee established to promote Scotland and produced and circulated with the instrumental purpose of educating viewers and celebrating the country's abundance of water, the film is an example of 'useful cinema' (Acland and Wasson, 2011). Drawing on descriptive, auto-ethnographic fieldnotes, the paper reflects on the experience of viewing this film on the bank of the River Forth and the embodied and relational outlook on water that was elicited. This practice of archival appropriation and site-specific film exhibition emerges as an ecocritical strategy to resist the films' 'usefulness', countering 'modern water' (Linton, 2010) and initiating a poetic mode of attention to water (Ryan, 2021).

### **Abstract**

This paper considers the Anthropocenic framing of water as a resource, and the conjuring of a hydro-imaginary of industrial modernity, present in Scottish archive educational films. It proposes an ecocritical practice of archival appropriation and site-specific film exhibition as a resistant mode of engagement.

Over the past century or so, a shift has occurred in the perception and management of water to 'modern water', wherein water is abstracted and considered apart from its social and ecological relations (Linton,

2010). As explored in ecocinema studies and scholarship on 'useful cinema', films act as part of the structures of power, economic activity, and environmental relations within which they are produced (Rust, Monani and Cubitt, 2023; Acland and Wasson, 2011). Film has been used as a tool to demonstrate and legitimise ways of relating to water and the natural environment more broadly (Hediger, Hoof, and Zimmermann, 2024).

The paper focuses on *Water, Water Everywhere* (1967), a documentary film exploring water supply in Scotland and global water scarcity. Sponsored by a government-funded committee established to promote Scotland, and produced and circulated with the instrumental purpose of educating viewers and celebrating the country's abundance of water, the film is an example of 'useful cinema' (Acland and Wasson, 2011). Through discussion of this context and textual analysis of the film's form and content, the paper explores how the film frames water as a resource and constructs a hydro-imaginary of industrial modernity.

Practices of archival appropriation, such as those of found footage filmmakers, generate new meanings through the reuse of archive 'useful cinema' in new works (Baron, 2014). Site-specific film exhibition produces new ways of experiencing films and environments through the screening of particular films at particular sites (Harris, 2017; Vélez-Serna, 2020). These two currents of practice and scholarship inspired a viewing of *Water, Water Everywhere* on the bank of the River Forth. Drawing on descriptive, auto-ethnographic fieldnotes, the paper reflects on the embodied and relational outlook on water that was elicited by the interrelations of body, film, and site in this experience.

Through its evocation of new ways of attending to water and engaging with the film, this practice of archival appropriation and site-specific film exhibition emerges as an ecocritical strategy to resist the films' 'usefulness', countering 'modern water' (Linton, 2010) and initiating a poetic mode of attention to water (Ryan, 2021). This strategy is positioned as an innovative form of hydropoetics (Ryan, 2021), which my doctoral research will explore with communities in the Forth Water Basin.

### Biography

**Harriet Crisp** is a PhD researcher at the University of Stirling. She is broadly interested in how people experience places, both real and imagined, through sound and moving image. Harriet has specific interests in place-based and participatory arts and heritage practices, archival appropriation, and phenomenological, elemental, and ecocritical approaches to film studies. Her doctoral research investigates human and non-human experience of water in the Forth Water Basin through archive film analysis, collaborative soundscape production, and site-specific audiovisual events. Her PhD is linked with FORTH2O, a UKRI-funded Local Policy Innovation Partnership project. Harriet has presented work at a number of exhibitions, screenings, and conferences, programmed arts events at The Cube Microplex, Bristol, and published in *Film Matters* and *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. She holds an MA in Contemporary Art and Archaeology from the University of the Highlands and Islands and a BA in Film and Television from the University of Bristol.

*My Wits or Salts* episodic exploration of wastewater examining privatisation, sanitation, and the politics of waste in the UK

By Bryony Gillard

### Summary

*My Wits or Salts* is an episodic moving image work that explores wastewater as an active site of engagement (Todd, 2014). The project reflects on the traces of lives, processes of extraction, illnesses, pharmaceuticals, hormones and industrial processes present in Wastewater. Each chapter investigates interconnected aspects of wastewater, moving fluidly between registers of sound and image: from fictional narratives and plumbers' footage of sewers, to philosophical reflections, choreographed gestures in sanitation spaces, interviews with climate scientists, and seductively composed images of polluted rivers. Departing from a framework informed by crip theory, the project examines the porous entanglements between waste, body, and environment. Rather than treating wastewater as a problem to be fixed or hidden, *My Wits or Salts* asks how we might relate to it differently—as something intimate, relational, and politically charged.

### **Abstract**

The contemporary moment is underpinned by a global water crisis—and by extension—a wastewater<sup>2</sup> crisis. In the U.K., raw sewage discharges in our waterways are at an unprecedented high, wastewater systems are insufficiently designed to process pharmaceuticals, and demand for water is predicted to exceed supply by 2034. Internationally, 90% of climate disasters are water related, rainwater across the planet contains unsafe levels of 'forever chemicals' and 1.69 billion people live without access to adequate sanitation.

In the face of systemic and widespread problems relating to wastewater, I am exploring wastewater through creative practice-as-research, in order to question and disrupt categories and hierarchies of power and control. Using artists' moving image<sup>2</sup> as my key method, I am activating theories around wastewater, rendering wastewater visible and productive.

Can an aesthetics of waste make visible the systems that process wastewater and the multifarious matter that flows through them? How might we cultivate more "attentive relations"<sup>3</sup> between ourselves and the bodies of water that circulate through us. I will invoke wastewater's materiality, aesthetics and metaphoric symbolism; creating opportunities for social reflection on wastewater and its connection to power, climate and capitalism. To borrow from historian Gabrielle Hecht, "you can't write about waste and not write about power".<sup>4</sup>

My research is informed by Mary Douglas's<sup>5</sup> work on dirt alongside decolonial critiques<sup>6</sup> and genealogies of feminist thinking including post structural feminism<sup>7</sup> and posthuman feminist phenomenology<sup>8</sup>. Synthesised, these theoretical perspectives provide critical vocabularies on waste that attend to social construction and the making and re-making of Matter.

### **Biography**

**Bryony Gillard** (she/her) is an artist, curator and educator and a PhD Candidate at University of Plymouth (School Art, Design & Architecture). Situated between writing, workshops, performance, moving image and exhibition making, her practice reflects on events, states of being, materials and

organisms that refuse or resist normative capitalist structures and temporalities. Forthcoming projects and recent projects include a new commission with Focal Point Gallery, Southend a solo exhibition at Jerwood Arts (London, 2021), a commission with the University of Bristol (2022) and a performance for Playbill (Amsterdam, 2023). Her work has been commissioned and presented on a variety of national and international platforms including ESTUARY (Kent), Holden Gallery (Manchester), Cinema Maison at BB15 (Linz), Ocean Archive Programme at TBA21 Academy (Venice), Tate St.Ives Cornwall, Arnolfini (Bristol), The Royal Albert Memorial Museum (Exeter), FLATLAND Projects (Hastings) and Turf Projects (Croydon).

*CACHE*  
By Xiyao Chen

**Summary**

*CACHE* is an inquiry into ecological traces, forgotten stories and neglected history based in estuary ecosystems, in the latent and indeterminate zone where fresh water meets salty water at the mouth of a river. The project seeks to question the socio- ecological dimensions of ‘cache’, delving into the estuary repository of these hidden layers to make invisible and retrieve their ecological meanings. Through the lens of psychogeography and queer ecology, the moving images work traces the layers of geological sediments of time, raising questions around entropy, liminality and indeterminacy, to reflect on our shifting more-than-human relations in this entanglement of extraction.

**Abstract**

The word ‘cache’, originally meaning hidden storage - a collection of items of the same type stored in a hidden or inaccessible place, could be interpreted in ecological terms as hidden, invisible natural resources or waste (e.g. fossil fuels or landfill sites); or in computational terms as an auxiliary memory from which high-speed retrieval is possible. In relation to the topics of liquid landscapes, contested memories, and hydrocritical approaches in moving image, the project attempts to reconcile these meanings of cache by mediating through a psychogeographical visual reading of cache both on a personal level and on an ecological level. Tracing ‘slow violence’ (Nixon, 2011), ‘a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales’. *CACHE* delves into imperial toxicities, seepage, sediment and toxic debris, drawing from the (hi)stories of the shapeshifting ecology of the human activities and swamps of the natural environments along the Thames Estuary, intertwining ecological waste, geopolitical history, and diasporic identities.

At the mouth of River Thames joining the sea where water is neither fresh nor salty, the 257-hectares manmade isle Two Tree Island in Essex bears witness of a whirlwind series of geopolitical events over the past three hundred years – initially reclaimed from the sea in the 18th century when a seawall was built, it has evolved from constructed farmlands, to heavy industrial production and landfill sites, to now the rebranded nature reserve. Challenging the out of sight, out of mind habitual system of waste management, and rethinking ‘rooting’ as a process of ‘transitioning’, the film explores how unseen residual stories from the actual metabolism of history be rewritten, reused and switched.



## Biography

**Xiyao Chen** is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher and educator based in London. They often work against the grain, and against disciplines, across the expanded field of anthropology, queer ecology, moving images and sonic installations. They are currently nurturing an embodied practice that values care over extraction, challenging eco- social injustices by focusing on more-than-human interspecies kinship and the affective turn in ecology.

They have participated in the Working with Waste moving image research group in collaboration with Max Planck Institute, Berlin and have been working on land-based projects with the Inland Collective in Spain and beyond, as part of the Lumbung network in Documenta Fifteen. Their works and performances have been shown at Macau International Art Biennale, Bie Biennale in Sweden, the Old Waiting Room in Peckham London, SODAS2123 in Vilnius, Narva Art Residency, Nida Art Colony, Matadero Madrid, Zaratan Arte Contemporânea in Lisbon and PB27 Gallery in Porto among others. In parallel with their practice, they are a lecturer focused on eco- social justice at the University of the Arts London and Royal College of Art in London.

## FieldARTS Study Sessions

### *Dual-Use: Logistics, Reversals, & Infrastructural Aesthetics on the Clyde River Corridor* By Fred Carter

#### Abstract

This talk reflects two years of research, fieldwork, and labour organising along the Clyde as a site of military-industrial accumulation, uneven redevelopment, and continuing struggles over the lines of supply that link manufacturing in Glasgow to colonial and imperialist violence overseas in Yemen and Palestine. Against the representational impasses of dual-use technologies that recede into an “infrastructural milieu” or the maritime supply chains that maintain a militarized “field of influence” (Belanger & Arroyo), the work follows a series of forays into this riverine field and sketches a mode of research militancy oriented toward the critical analysis and eventual abolition of “infrastructures of empire” (Aouragh & Chakravartty; Cowen).

#### Biography

**Fred Carter** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Glasgow and founder/director of FieldARTS, a residency programme for infrastructural fieldwork, currently hosted by the University of Glasgow’s Infrastructure Humanities Group. He was recently a Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich. His current monograph, *Poetry & Energy After 1973*, explores petrocapiatim, exhaustion, and poetic refusal. His research and practice traverse ecological poetics, energy humanities, and experimental field methodologies. His chapbook *Outages* is published with Veer2. FieldARTS is a research residency programme exploring fieldwork and practice-based methods for studying environmental, hydrological, and infrastructural sites. At present, the residency is hosted by the Infrastructure Humanities Group.

### *Fascism & the Deep: The Submerged Image* By Ifor Duncan & Sonia Levy

#### Abstract

The arts and humanities have recently turned to submerged spaces and practices of submersion as fertile sites for counter-politics and alternative histories. While submergence can interrogate and destabilize dominant narratives, we argue that it can also—if unexamined—reinforce them. In this talk, we turn to Leni Riefenstahl's 2002 work, *Impressions of the Deep*, to explore how image-making practices intersect with colonial and extractive politics. By examining her work, we highlight the ethical and political consequences of image-making and call attention to the kinds of worlds these practices produce—intentionally or through negligence.

## Biographies

**Sonia Levy** is a Berber-Polish artist filmmaker whose interdisciplinary, site-responsive practice explores the entanglements of Western extractivism and hydrosocial transformation. Her work has been shown at Tate Modern, ICA London, Arnolfini, Ocean Space, ZKM Karlsruhe, BALTIC, and internationally across museums, art centres, and research forums. She was the 2023–24 European Marine Board artist-in-residence for the UN Ocean Decade and the 2022 S+T+ARTS4Water resident with TBA21–Academy in Venice. Her writing has appeared in MIT Press, Thames & Hudson, Antennae Journal, and Parallax. Levy has presented research at Harvard GSD, NYU Gallatin, UC Santa Cruz, and Goldsmiths, where she is also an external member of the Centre for Critical Global Change. She lectures at the RCA School of Architecture, co-convenes the collective [howlikeareef.net](http://howlikeareef.net), and serves on the Steering Committee for the UN Ocean Decade's 'Connecting People and the Ocean.' She is currently a guest researcher at NICHE, Ca' Foscari University.

**Ifor Duncan** is Postdoctoral Researcher on the EcoViolence ERC project at Utrecht University. His interdisciplinary research and art-practice focuses on political violence in the contexts of devastated river systems and dispossessed communities. He approaches the weaponisation of rivers as borders, mega-dams, and as the mediums and dynamic archives of genocide through cultural memory and an audio-visual practice that involves submerged methods. Ifor has a PhD from the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, where he was also Lecturer, and has been Postdoctoral Fellow in Environmental Humanities at NICHE, Ca' Foscari, University of Venice.