

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

Call for Submissions:

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 AMI that respond to the intersecting planetary crises of climate catastrophe and geopolitical conflict—through the lens of water.

Hosted by the Glasgow School of Art's School of Fine Art in collaboration with FieldARTS, the research programme of the Infrastructure Humanities Group (University of Glasgow), the symposium invites contributions from artists, academics, early-career and postgraduate researchers, and creative practitioners. We welcome participants to join us in Glasgow to share watery poetics and approaches within moving image practice.

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).

Submissions

We invite proposals for a wide range of contributions including traditional academic papers, pre-constituted roundtables, and practice-led formats such as video essays, films, or moving image works.

Organisers:

Kelly Rappleye (School of Fine Art, Glasgow School of Art); FieldARTS research residency, Infrastructure Humanities Group (University of Glasgow); Struan Gray (Falmouth University)

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Liquid landscapes in film: spectrality, contested memory, and urban trauma
- Hydrocritical approaches in moving image: reading for water, dockside reading, hydrocolonial infrastructures, spatial politics
- Watery film techniques: 'turbid media', submerged filmmaking, wet ontologies
- Weathering and affective atmospheres of place: damp, steam, cloud, ripple, mist, flood, rain, humidity, fog
- Watery networks of care: transnational hydrofeminism, political activism, diasporic care
- Hydro-imaginaries of place: rivers, canals, waterways, hydrocommons, hydrocitizenship
- Decolonial approaches in AML: submerged perspectives and place-based activism
- Imperial toxicities: colonial seepage, sediment, toxic debris, poisoned ecologies
- Hydrological infrastructures in film: dams, ports, estuaries, tidal zones, weirs, lagoons

Presentation Formats:

- Individual papers (15 minutes)
- Pre-constituted roundtables (30 minutes, 3–5 participants)
- Video essays / moving image works (Up to 10 minutes screening, excerpted if longer, followed by 10 minutes of commentary/discussion by the creator)

Submission Guidelines:

Please send your proposal to: waterasmethod@gmail.com

Deadline: Monday, 12 May 2025, 5pm BST

Your submission should include:

1. **Title and format** of your contribution
2. **Summary** (150 words)
3. **Abstract** (300–500 words) outlining the focus and relevance of your submission
4. **Short biography** (150 words)
5. **Any relevant links or images** (e.g. film/ video submissions)