

# water~ways symposium



30 June 2021  
2.00pm~5.30pm

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**PLYMOUTH**  
School of Art, Design and  
Architecture

water~ways

2.00~2.05 ~ Welcome by Mary Pearson

2.05~2.35 ~ chaired by Rachael Allain  
Professor Tania Kovats ~ Waterworks

2.40~3.20 ~ chaired by Sian Gouldstone  
Gail Flockhart ~ *Watermarks: Rethinking Inscription in the Temporal  
Ebb and Flow*  
Laurie Reynolds ~ *Constructing an Unsubstantial Territory*  
Linda Ward ~ *river, sea, ocean, mum and me*

3.25~3.55 ~ chaired by Laurie Reynolds  
Dr. Onya McCausland ~  
From Mine Water to Landscape Painting: 51°43 33.56 N 3°07 58.63 W

*15 minute break*

4.10~4.50 ~ chaired by Linda Ward  
Rachael Allain ~ *The Highest Tide of the Year*  
Kate Paxman ~ *Sirens: Crossing Thresholds of Multi-Entity Ethics*  
Mary Pearson ~ *Beach Walk*

4.55~5.15 ~ chaired by Dr. Carole Baker  
Dr. Mandy Bloomfield ~  
*Waves are unfolding sentences: the poetry of Craig Santos Perez*

5.15 ~ Symposium Closing with Dr. Kayla Parker & Mary Pearson

Film Still: © Rachael Allain 2021  
Exhibition: [www.artsteps.com/view/60a66904821f40dd0db8bad7](http://www.artsteps.com/view/60a66904821f40dd0db8bad7)  
Twitter: #WaterWays2021

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**Professor Tania Kovats**  
*Waterworks*

**Biography**

Kovats' is an artist whose work explores how culture negotiates how we connect to the natural world. Her practice embraces sculpture, drawing and writing, often working in the public realm. Recently this has focused on the element of water as the connective element in the landscape. Kovats explores the psychological and poetic, as well as activating water to provide a route to explore critical environmental and socio-political questions.

Kovats is an advocate for drawing as a specific and unique discipline and form of expression with its own discrete discourse that renders thought visible and external. She celebrates the democratic nature of drawing, its unique horizontal quality that describes a link through the thoughts and visualisations of scientists, engineers, sculptors, designers, performers, children, architects, surgeons – the list is endless. Kovats celebrates how drawing belongs to everyone and is an infinite and varied means of communication that continues to be expanded and enriched by practitioners. This philosophy has informed Kovats' drawing publications, 'Drawing Water: drawing as a mechanism of exploration' her second publication on drawing with writing on a collection of drawings all thematically linked by the sea.

Some of Kovats' work includes 'Rivers' at Jupiter Artland, 'Oceans', her 2014 solo show at the Fruitmarket Gallery Edinburgh, and 'Well' a public drinking water fountain. Kovats has recently been appointed Professor of Drawing and Making at DJCAD, University of Dundee.

[instagram.com/kovats66](https://www.instagram.com/kovats66)



*Dirty Water*  
Portrait of Tania Kovats  
Image Credit: © Thierry Bal

**Gail Flockhart**

***Watermarks: Rethinking Inscription in the Temporal Ebb and Flow***

In the liminal and temporal thresholds encountered through the absence, presence and movement of water, traces can be found in various forms or re-presentations. Using ‘watermarks’ as a powerful metaphor for re-thinking the affective inscriptions of trauma and post-traumatic memory, I consider the way bodies become inscribed by actions, events or lived-experiences, often leaving a trace.

Integral to my practice-research, I develop a ‘diffractive’ methodology for re-appraising personal narratives and painful memories, forging new pathways for re-thinking inscription. Inspired by artists such as Jo Spence and Rosy Martin, my work delves into an archive of damp-damaged family photographs, engaging with ‘watermarks’ as a fluid form of inscription. Informed by Posthuman and New Materialist concepts that acknowledge **we humans are de-centred**, intra-acting entangled socio-material assemblages, I envisage myself as part of a dynamic flow of vibrant materials and forces, always reconstituting. So that, as Karen Barad (2007) notes in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; “... even the smallest cuts matter”. Considering material diffractively to incubate ideas that intersect or resonate with each other, my approach is attuned to issues around traumatic experience, which are often complex, multi-layered and difficult to articulate verbally. I strive to find a visual language that articulates the way trauma and post-traumatic memory manifest, to unearth the diffractive lines of embodied thought discerned in the traces or ‘cuts’ inscribed by water.

**Biography**

Gail Flockhart is an independent artist, curator and doctoral researcher who creates film and photographic works that explore ways in which trauma and memory affect ontologies of the self. Her moving image installation, ‘Self Annihilation’, was exhibited in the Anglia Ruskin Gallery as part of Cambridge School of Art’s PhD conference. Her accompanying critical essay is included in the peer-reviewed publication, *Theorem* 2019 (2020).



Fluid Surfaces, 2021  
Digital HD film stills from Water-marks  
© Gail Flockhart

[gail.flockhart@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:gail.flockhart@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Laurie Reynolds**  
*Constructing an Unsubstantial Territory*

Inspired by Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, *Unsubstantial Territory* seeks to address the struggle and experiences of code-switching within the LGBTQIA+ community. How we have to constantly adjust how we are presented, learning the language of cultural compatibility, constructed by heteronormativity through the practice of code switching. *Unsubstantial Territory* is constructed with interviews from members of the LGBTQIA+ community, photography using water from the English Channel, combined into a zine for *The Box*, Plymouth.

This presentation explores the personal experience of myself, a non-binary queer person, that led to this project and deconstructs through a personal narrative each photographic still from the project through; my experiences growing up gendered male, being queer, **learns** of my privilege, using comedy as a defense mechanism and too many Star Wars references.

The zine can be accessed from *The Box* website; <https://www.the-boxplymouth.com/past-projects/lgbt-commissions/my-story-laurie-reynolds>

**Biography**

Laurie Reynolds is an artist and researcher undertaking their PhD at University of Plymouth, working with camera and landscape with a focus on the process of collaboration with the materials that comprise the landscape.

Their work explores indeterminacy and what it means to collaborate/ create with it through practice-led process work, the expanded field of photography, and an engagement with landscape. Photography is used as the artists entry point for exploration, however with the intervention of the landscape throughout various stages of the photographic process to create collaborative pieces of work that compose and build that allow land to create its own mark on the images.



**Linda Ward**  
*river, sea, ocean, mum and me*

A presentation by artist film-maker Linda Ward drawing from her recent film work. Ward is a lecturer in filmmaking and a doctoral researcher at Plymouth University. Her films explore matters of memory, the maternal and a sacred feminine.

Ward has worked with a number of personal experiences where water played an important part. Beginning with a 'moment of being' in water when the tour boat she was on with her late mother was caught in a storm, and passengers had to jump into the sea and swim for safety. This is bound up in her memories and the relationship between the archetypal mother Mary figure (as Stella Maris) and her relationship to the ocean. Her practice-led research has concerned and been made in proximity to the sea and rivers. Ward is interested in the visual, the visible and the invisible elemental force of water as she connects it with memories of her mother. Moving image work, insight and knowledge have come from engaging with water. As Roberts and Phillips (2018) state, 'Water is essential to all life as we know it. As such, it seems a good place to start with an attempt to think about porosity of human experience.'

Roberts, L. & Phillips, K. 2018. *Water, Creativity and Meaning: Multidisciplinary understandings of human-water relationships*. Taylor & Francis.

**Biography**

Using artist film to explore matters of memory, the maternal and a sacred feminine, Linda Ward is a lecturer in filmmaking and a doctoral researcher at Plymouth University. Her award-winning film poems have been exhibited at film festivals around the world including the London Short Film Festival and the Barcelona Film and Video Festival. Over 20 years of experience as a professional broadcaster, working as a presenter, producer and director on a broad range of news, documentary and factual programming for ITV and BBC television and radio.

[www.lindaward.org](http://www.lindaward.org)



***Sea Hydrangea***

Time  
insinuates  
fading  
between oceans  
the stem quenches blue  
lime peppered  
a possibility  
of a sea incarnadine.

Linda Ward

Still images from *Sea Hydrangea* (2021)

Dir: Linda Ward

© Linda Ward



*Six Bells Red*  
Sxbls/bnt no.000  
1 Lt tin of wall emulsion paint made  
from mine water waste ochre.  
Edition 100  
2020  
Photo Credit: © Arved Colvin-Smith

## **Dr. Onya McCausland**

### ***From Mine Water to Landscape Painting: 51°43 33.56 N 3°07 58.63 W***

This talk will focus on the recent development of a new paint made from recycling polluted waste residues forming as water passes through abandoned mines.

It considers the social, economic and ecological imprint carried by mine water of the past human extractive practices occurring in a particular place in the world at a particular time in history.

The work considers ownership, land access and value systems in the context of developing a sustainable future. Six Bells, a small examining village in the Valleys of south Wales will be the focus for the talk.

### **Biography**

Dr. Onya McCausland is an artist and senior research fellow at the Slade School of Fine Art. Her work examines and develops relationships between painting and contemporary landscape. Works are shown internationally and include recent showings at Helsinki Contemporary, Finland; Newlyn Gallery, Cornwall 2019; Flat Time House, Peckham London 2019. Forthcoming shows include Room 2 Karsten Schubert, London and Norrtälje Museum, Sweden.

**Rachael Allain**  
***The Highest Tide of the Year***

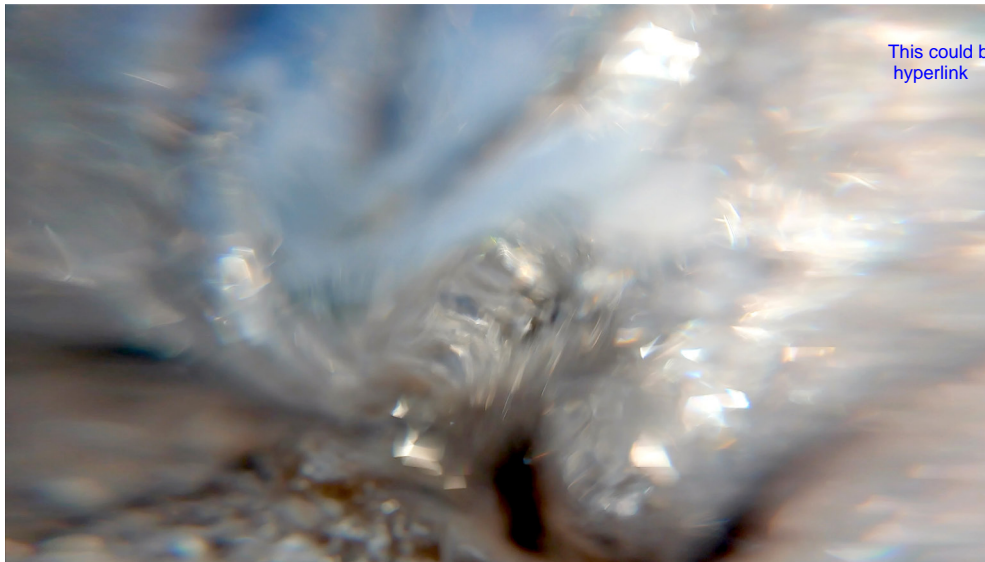
A film made during the equinoctial tide on 30th March 2021 from 8-15am, marking the event by swimming into the highest tide of the year. Encountering severance, threshold and return, the three phases of liminality, during the highest tide of the year. The film was made and recorded on the morning tide, ~~it was~~ then edited and shared in a wider arena during the High Water <https://art-earth.org.uk/high-water/> Event, that ran for the duration of a full tide (approx.12 hours), across different time zones ~~and space~~, screened online a few hours later.

High Water: Respond/Record/Reflect, is a site responsive film made during the highest equinoctial tide of the year 30-03-21 at 8-15 am UK time, edited and screened for High Water online event, an International gathering of artists/writers/mudlarkers and thalassophiles.

**Biography**

Rachael is a multidisciplinary artist, researcher and educator based in the South West, UK. Working with moving image, photographic processes, optical devices, light, projection, sound, text, water and scientific data. Her work is made in response to the experience of natural phenomena, the horizon and watery places.

www.rachaelallain.com  
rachael.allain@plymouth.ac.uk  
twitter.com/Rachlouall  
instagram.com/rachlouall/



This could be an embedded  
hyperlink





*Sirens* 2021, Kate Paxman  
Digital animation film still (work in progress)  
© Kate Paxman

**Kate Paxman**

### ***Sirens*: Crossing Thresholds of Multi-Entity Ethics**

*Sirens* is the name of an artwork and outcome from my body of research, and is an account of swimming into sea caves with a group of artists, academics, and researchers. Here, in the porous and unfixed boundaries of the shore area, climate breakdown and ecological entanglements can be read in the action of the waves and the rapid changes to the land's edges. My work with the data gathered from these field trips reflects my interest in making visible cultural and geological time scales as ways of understanding the inhospitable future that awaits. Entering the watery realms, we attempt "to think in much larger temporalities...more inclusive models of imagination that simultaneously pay attention to very tiny and very large non-local entities" (Biemann, 2014). Such attentiveness and concern offer starting points for a curiosity that leads us to noticing the worlds around us, and our caring obligations for all our human and nonhuman relations.

#### **Biography**

Kate is an artist, educator and practice-led PhD researcher with the School of Art, Design and Architecture at Plymouth University. Kate's research is focused on sea caves in the Torbay Marine Conservation Zone where she pays close attention to geologies and entities and different time scales and how they can help us reframe our present ecological crisis.

[www.katepaxman.com](http://www.katepaxman.com)  
[kate.paxman@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:kate.paxman@plymouth.ac.uk)

**Mary Pearson**  
***Beach Walk***

World Oceans Day [Oceans?](#)

Air Temperature: 16°C

Sea Temperature: 13.6°C

This paper is a reflection of a walk on Ness Beach on World Oceans Day, on 8th June 2021.

The sea has always held a fascination for writers and artists with the rhythms of the waves, the distant horizon and the bracing clean air. It provides a place for reflection and renewal. Exploring the beach gives the opportunity to rediscover a place that from childhood has given untold pleasure. Reflecting upon the collection of pebbles, there is the opportunity to rediscover a passion from childhood which continues to this day.

By weaving art history with personal experiences and memories I will allow the opportunity to consider the phenomenological aspects of the coast.

As Lucy Larcom wrote, 'A drop of water, if it could write out its own history, would explain the universe to us.'

**Biography**

Mary is a **practice led** PhD researcher at the University of Plymouth. Her research focuses on the interconnections between borders, lines, space and memory. By using photography and autobiographical writings she links the past to the present to form lines of possibilities in thinking and the formation of new knowing about herself and the world around her.

[www.mary-pearson.com](http://www.mary-pearson.com)

[mary.pearson@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:mary.pearson@plymouth.ac.uk)





**Dr. Mandy Bloomfield**

***Waves are unfolding sentences: the poetry of Craig Santos Perez***

This paper discusses recent work by poet Craig Santos Perez, an indigenous Chamorro writer from Guam. I'll explore how this poetry draws on Chamorro imaginaries of the sea to suggest forms of multispecies collectivity, even as it registers the damage and violence of the American Capitalist-Military presence in Guam and Hawaii.

**Biography**

Mandy Bloomfield is Associate Professor in Modern and Contemporary Literature at the University of Plymouth, and Programme Leader for the MA Environmental Humanities. Her current research explores how modern and contemporary poetry engages the dilemmas of our present moment of ecological emergency, and she has published several articles related to this interest. She is working on a monograph related to poetry and cultural imaginaries of the sea, provisionally entitled *An Oceanic Poetics for the Anthropocene*.

### **Sian Gouldstone**

Sian Gouldstone is a photography lecturer, artist and PhD researcher. Her research explores manifestations of whiteness in suburban Melbourne, in the context of British migrations to Australia. Particularly, Sian is interested in the affective encounter and the ways in which whiteness can materialise. She focuses on methods of decolonisation and unlearning in the production of work.

[www.siangouldstone.co.uk](http://www.siangouldstone.co.uk)

### **Dr. Carole Baker**

Carole is an academic, writer and photographer who has taught in UK Further and Higher Education since 1991. Since achieving her doctorate in 2000, her research has centred around the non-human in art, particularly in relation to power, alterity and marginalisation. In addition to contemporary visual art practice, this transdisciplinary focus encompasses posthumanism, new materialism, animal studies and critical plant studies. Carole's iterative process of research, art-making and writing combines theoretical and practical experimentations with real-world activism, employing experimental research methodologies to produce diverse works across multiple contexts. Her work has been shown in Japan, US, Cyprus, Malta and UK.

### **Dr. Kayla Parker**

Kayla Parker is an artist film-maker whose research interests centre around subjectivity and place, embodiment and technological mediation, from feminist perspectives, with an interest in the interface between still and moving image, and new materialism. The recipient of many awards, her films are shown internationally in public, gallery and online spaces. Her publications include chapters and essays on film-making; she gained her PhD in 2015 for a thesis examining gender and women's creative practice in direct animation.

[www.kaylaparker.co.uk](http://www.kaylaparker.co.uk)

[kayla.parker@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:kayla.parker@plymouth.ac.uk)

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our symposium,  
especially those working behind the scenes at Plymouth University.

**Online Exhibition Curated by:**

Sian Gouldstone  
Laurie Reynolds

**Organised by:**

Mary Pearson

**With:**

Dr. Carole Baker  
Dr. Kayla Parker  
Rachael Allain  
Sian Gouldstone  
Kate Paxman  
Laurie Reynolds  
Linda Ward

**Booklet designed by:**

Mary Pearson



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