

Tilly Craig
Phoebe McBride
Molly Erin McCarthy
Rhys Morgan
Carly Sellar
Abby Beatrice Quick

Curated by:
Rachel Grant

Paradigms

An exhibition of contemporary art
from Aberdeen and Plymouth

Curatorial Text

In July 2021, the British Art Show 9 [BAS9] arrived in Aberdeen. The biggest touring exhibition of contemporary art in the UK, its arrival to Aberdeen Art Gallery was framed as a significant moment for the city and its creative and cultural sector. To celebrate this moment, provide connectivity and promote dialogue between two of the four host cities, Aberdeen and Plymouth, Look Again, a creative unit based at Gray's School of Art, facilitated an opportunity for a 'curatorial exchange' programme, supported with funding from Creative Scotland. The result of which is this exhibition and programme of events.

A significant moment certainly — but significant for whom? Under what terms? And, crucially, for how long? Aberdeen's BAS9 will have no lasting significance whatsoever unless the arts and cultural ecology make it so. The show's visit to Plymouth in 2022 will be its second: in 2011, the city was host to the British Art Show 7. Then, the exhibition was housed in multiple sites across the city of various scales and structures. The effect on Plymouth's arts ecology is often cited and can be clearly traced through the emergence of initiatives such as KARST. Founded in 2012 by artists inspired by BAS7, KARST emerged as an artist-led space with ambitions to produce and show the best international contemporary art. In less than a decade they've grown to become a gallery with a reputation for being challenging, edgy and dynamic with an outward looking programme. This is only one example of infrastructure in Plymouth that has since developed to support the production and dissemination of contemporary art, contributing to an artist-led ecology and includes a host of social enterprise models.

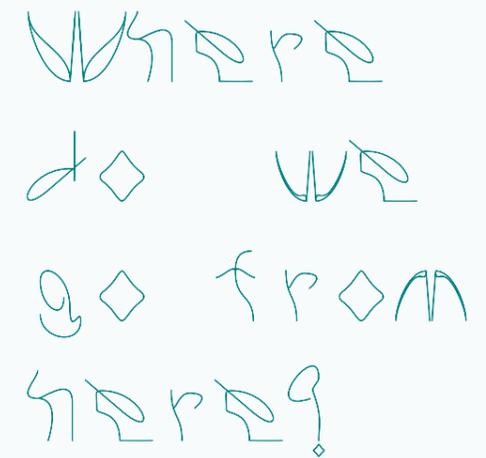
Gazing towards other cities as a model for the art ecology of Aberdeen is not always useful and a repetitive tendency. There are already marked differences between presentations of the British Art Show between these two places in the iterations that have already happened. Aberdeen's presentation is centralised to one building; perhaps a reflection of the lack of appropriate spaces to exhibit this scale of exhibition. Beyond BAS9 as a particular exhibition, Plymouth's art community can make use of the city's post-industrial spaces, whereas in Aberdeen's still industrial landscape, despite the most recent bust in oil prices and attempts at re branding the city as an 'Energy city', the oil industry remains centralised in the political economy. Since the 1980's shift away from welfare models of arts funding, compelled by austerity economics and diminishing public and private funds, demands that artists and cultural workers do *more*, be *more* adaptive, *more* sustainable: how they are able to do so varies as widely as the material circumstances in each city.

A survey in 2016 from Scotland's national funding body Creative Scotland, aimed at understanding diversity in the sector, highlighted geography as one of the most significant barriers for career progression and cited a high concentration

of practitioners based in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The friction created by the push and pull of cultural centres and peripheries is not new, however within the survey itself the number of respondents based in Aberdeen was a tiny 1%¹ which compared to other local authority areas such as Dundee at 3% and Highland at 4% carries concerns. Whilst the survey does not provide a census of the sector it provided an important snapshot of the working conditions and views of those who work in the arts. A browse through the award listings for Creative Scotland between March 2019 - 2021 makes for grim reading from an Aberdeen city perspective. Discounting the recent flurry in requests for hardship funds, and focusing on funding for individuals rather than organisations, the highest number of awards given to those based in Aberdeen per month was one and the average equates to zero. If successful financial awards from Creative Scotland are between one and zero, furthermore if the basic representation of cultural work in the city is as low as 1% what kind of comparisons between geographies are actually useful in this context?

Locally a growing emphasis from policy makers on culture for tourism, cultural imports led by the private sector and a buoyant market for various forms of Etsy markets in disused retail spaces can make thinking about opportunities for development in contemporary arts and social arts practices challenging. The power of private finance attached to the force of public planning, high cost and short term, culture not as needs and values but as strategies for expanding the city's economic profile are all very comfortable tools for thinking with art given Aberdeen's oil-y development. Cities formed through dominant economies often affect communities beyond money and profit because they attach to a wider social and political matrix. Fossil fuels make identities² and they can foreclose futures. Certainly, this is not the first articulation of similar tools or patterns used in the ecology of art and oil. Questions, criticisms and challenges have come in the forms of arts practice, curatorial texts and literature³ but perhaps similarly to the material aspects of oil they come in ebbs and flows. Meanwhile oil remains embedded here, most visibly in oil company BP's sponsorship of the redevelopment of the Aberdeen Art Gallery. Whilst other national organisations are cutting ties with oil sponsorship it remains defiantly stoic here, again in reference to the diminishment of public funds and whilst the government continues to significantly cut funding to the cultural sector, it has continued to subsidise fossil fuels.

Aberdeen does have divergent histories and currently uses of artist-led approaches and collectives are burgeoning. The early 2000's brought *Project Slogan*, an arts café-cum-exhibition and performance space run by Sarah J Stanley. *Limousine Bull Artists' Collective* was formed in 1998 by a group of eight artists who wanted to create a space dedicated



Rachel Grant is a freelance curator based in Aberdeen where she runs Fertile Ground, a critical platform for her practice. Fertile Ground takes a context-specific, experimental approach to curating and builds relationships between the conditions of the local area and the shared concerns of global communities. Projects will often take place outside of arts spaces and primarily focus on commissioning new work from interdisciplinary practitioners.

Recent projects include CRUDE [2021] an exhibition of newly commissioned works from artists and writers that explored complex relationships to crude oil. 'Imagining St Fittick's' a series of online conversational events [2021]. 'Speculative Fiction: Practicing Collectively' [2020]. States of Living: Architecture, Objects, Body [2020] and The Air We Breathe [2018]. From 2019 - 20 Rachel was Shadow Curator for the Curatorial Fellowship, an arts education program that supported five emerging curators to collectively develop a public program supported by Peacock Visual Arts.

1. Creative Scotland. 2017. Understanding Diversity in the Arts. Creative Scotland, 2016. Scotland: Creative Scotland.
2. Daggett C. Petro-masculinity: Fossil Fuels and Authoritarian Desire. Millennium. 2018;47(1):25-44. doi:10.1177/0305829818775817
3. Artist Merlyn Riggs VOP [Very Ordinary Person's] tent (2008). Set up as her undergraduate degree show in opposition to the VIP tent erected for BP staff and selected audiences, on the opening night of Gray's School of Art degree show. BP was the previous sponsor for the undergraduate degree show for over a decade. Jon Blackwood's curatorial text Positive Geographies as part of an exhibition of the same name (2018) and Derrick Gunt's The Nu Oil are just a few examples of this.

to the support and development of students and emerging artists in Aberdeen. It became a registered charity run by volunteers and ran until 2013. *Tendency Towards*, set up in 2017, is an artist-led initiative operating a programme of exhibitions, workshops, discussion and engagement events nomadically across the city. *Hysteria Collective*, founded in 2018 by Mae Diansangu and Hanna Gia Louise, is an intersectional feminist arts platform for women, non-binary and gender-marginalised creatives. Originally formed through a monthly performance night, the collective has moved into the realms of manifesto making and commissions. 2019 saw the launch of *Haar(bour)* (formerly *Haar Contemporary Art Journal*) as a publication design collective that seeks to make links between the North East and the wider arts community. Nomad is another artist run-initiative based in Aberdeen which was launched the same year to encourage an open support system for emerging creatives who have lived and worked in the city. There are possibilities for other ways of working here, ways of working that are collaborative and operate on the ground — artists are already doing it. Much of this activity, however, relies on secondary jobs and individual's capacities in the longer term to sustain undersupported cultural work. The question of how to resource and represent a cultural offer that exists beyond large scale public galleries and Etsy markets remains unanswered.

The research for this exhibition invited conversations with artists, writers, and cultural workers in both Aberdeen and Plymouth which were grounded in trying to articulate the conditions affecting their practice. It has been a way of trying to re-engage critically with the conditions of Aberdeen and to understand Plymouth from a distance at a time when physical visits couldn't take place. These conditions range from the very immediate effects of regionality on the arts ecology as well as reflections on wider systems of politics and economy. More specifically to Aberdeen, key issues emerged around diversity, responsibility, access and agency. These are familiar tropes that are part of any arts ecology that is peripheral and emerging. Furthermore, this discussion often happens in informal spaces: homes, pubs, between agreeable groups; or is kept within the confines of institutions. In response to this problem of open dialogue the exhibition programme includes *Where do we go from here?* a series of public conversational events that invites contributions on the challenges and opportunities of working in Aberdeen's visual arts sector, by those working in it. Resisting previous top-down approaches to cultural development, it instead takes a co-authored approach that could be developed and sustained beyond the timeframe of the exhibition and beyond the gallery walls.

Paradigms are systems of ideas, values and practice that constitute a way of viewing reality. The artist's works as such are wide ranging in character. Paradigms are often explored through everyday environments, and can't be talked about without speaking to the paradigm shift that has been the two years. The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the world in significant and historic ways, the effects of which have been felt in societies and territories the world over albeit in very unequal forms. It forced adaptations to new ways of living, felt more acutely by those with protected characteristics and had governments at all levels operating in a context of radical uncertainty. It created new conditions for arts and culture and artists, exhibitions and public programs took to online space. These continuing shifts are

present in the work of artists; Rhys Morgan, Carly Seller, Molly Erin McCarthy, Phoebe McBride and Abby Beatrice Quick which has all been made over the course of the last eighteen months. At times this is dealt with through concepts for example; isolation, healing and queer identity in the context of lockdowns and ideas of a 'new normal'. Through the exhibition others have had the opportunity to realise physical works disrupted by Covid-19 and previously adapted to online spaces. New commissions of work from the artists based in Aberdeen reflects a tentative opening up for travel as new bodies of work were made during an international residency.

Rhys Morgan's *A Quiet Exile* (2020) is a new iteration of *Texture Shots* (2019-) a project that explores ideas of queerness in the everyday. During national lockdowns queer spaces were unable to operate and ranged from the delay of Pride marches to the closure of saunas. Whether these spaces open up is uncertain and have consequences for the communities that rely on them. This particular work explores ideas of separateness through the lens of queer experience and spaces through Morgan's personal and diaristic observations. Reflecting shifting ideas and experiences the assemblage of images, text and jarring sound change over time.

Healing Tool I: Hugging Machine (2020) by Carly Seller is a performance to video in which Seller performs with a soft sculpture resembling arms and made from silk naturally dyed with foraged plants. The work, made during the first lockdown connects ideas of the body and healing and includes a story of Seller collecting medicinal herbs from her own local area prompted by the Indian healthcare practice of Ayurveda, where fabrics are dyed with medicinal herbs. As the performance unfolds the contact between Sellers body and the sculpture become increasingly desperate and rapid as she attempts unsuccessfully to wrap the inanimate arms around her body. A reflection of her own and others physical isolation during the first lockdown who felt the implications of the loss of touch between people.

Molly Erin McCarthy presents sister works in the form of video *Western Approach to Paradise* (2019) and sculptural installation *The Bones of the Bridges of Sighs* (2021). These works sit between reality and speculative fiction where remnants of a real footbridge in Plymouth demolished as part of the city redevelopment are discovered during a fictional expedition to a post-climate collapse oceanic earth. Casts of the relics of the demolition, appropriated archival material and 3D scans that reference Plymouth's oceanic exploration intersect with an imagined world of a post-climate climate collapse where the earth is submerged underwater. It holds together future imaginaries of climate crisis and of Plymouth as the city's infrastructure continues ongoing phases of regeneration and redevelopment.

New commissions by Abby Beatrice Quick and Phoebe McBride were made during an artist's residency in Pano Lefkara, Cyprus. A rural community set in the hilltops, the village has been continuously shaped by wildfires. This year, Cyprus faced one of the most destructive fires in history which burnt through several villages, killing four people⁴ in the village of Odou.

Phoebe McBride's *Intangible Landscapes* (2021) deals with ideas of loss within the region; the loss of the land

from wildfires and the loss of cultural knowledge and traditional skills from the perspective of women. The lace makers of Pano Lefkara are exclusively women, once hailed for saving the region's economy; they are now exploited by the tourist trade. This coupled with migration of young people from the area means that lacemaking has become increasingly precarious work. McBride uses moving images and fictional text to explore forms of preservation, between stories preserved in heritage museums and those held in the bodies and knowledge of women in the region.

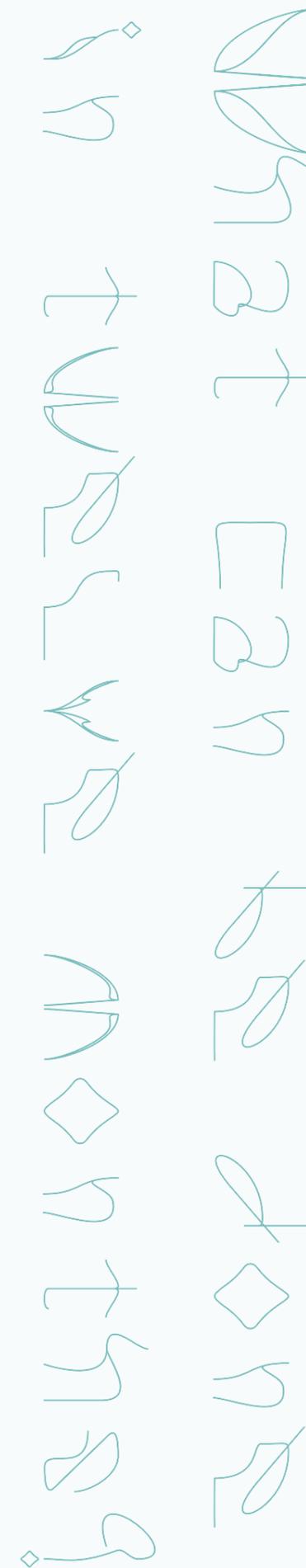
Inferno (The Earth Wept As I Felt Her Crawl Into My Skin) (2021) is a body of work by Abby Beatrice Quick concerned with the multiple dynamics of forest fires in the region, through investigating ideas of the sublime in the context of ecological crisis, destruction and romanticism. Forest fires shape the land and lives of those living in Pano Lefkara, when they happen lives are lost and communities displaced. It is also centred in local culture and folklore through stories such as the 'Burning Fox', religious iconography and shapes the ecology of the region, through flora that thrives in wildfire. In this way, it is continuously shaping and re-shaping the land, ecology and communities at the forefront of climate crisis inviting a space of tension between renewal and destruction.

Plymouth based writer and producer Tilly Craig was commissioned to produce a new text *GHOST LINES*. Aberdeen and Plymouth's long standing industrial relationships with the sea and mineral extraction on land and sea offer familiar traces around their coastlines; Craig focuses on tracing the relics, histories, folklore and residue of industry often revealed only with the outgoing tide.

This exhibition has been possible through an opportunity supported by Look Again and prompted by BAS9 — and it is perhaps an example of the hard to read 'significance' of the show visiting Aberdeen. The exhibition is significant for the artists and wider network involved however its meaning and impact beyond this - like many exhibitions — if anything at all, is temporary and small. The groundwork for sustaining and developing an arts ecology in Aberdeen is urgent and the public programme invites a space for gathering around those concerns. It relies however on those willing and able to contribute — who shows up and who feels able to speak — it might in short fall flat on its face. It also has to operate through actions and a willingness to work together beyond these small-scale conversations, as groundwork for the future happens with multiple people over time. Whilst not significant now perhaps it's interesting to think what the 'significance of the BAS9 show' for the arts ecology in Aberdeen might be when it's hosted in Plymouth in one year's time.

What can be done in twelve months?

I would like to thank the artists and cultural workers from Aberdeen and Plymouth who gave their time and energy into sharing their practice and reflecting on these subjects with me beyond those included in the exhibition. Formal/informal, recorded/unrecorded conversations that took place in the pub, cafe, studio, in our homes or online. The where and how changed but always filled with generosity, critical questions and reflection.



4. President Nicos Anastasiades described it as 'the largest since 1974', [twitter] when the island was divided after Turkey occupied its northern third. The fires killed four people, Egyptian labourers in the village of Odou

Ghost Lines

by Tilly Craig

GHOST LINES explores the coastal locations of Plymouth and Aberdeen and their communities through folklore and relics of industry in their land and seascapes.

Tracing interaction and movement of both human and non-human, the work draws on shared and distinct myths alongside the impact, impression and residue of human ritual intervention - in its multitude of forms - on the environment, both past and present.

If you catch the train at low tide going anywhere north of Plymouth, leaving the city's sprawl behind, the houses give way to river banks and the track hugs closer to the water's edge. Looking out to your right, you'll see the dark limbs of shipwrecks reaching quietly out of the river's dense, exposed mud bed. [Fig. 1]



Fig. 1. Hulk on Plymouth foreshore. [Photo: Tilly Craig].

An hour into your journey, somewhere near Dawlish, the exposed cliffs suddenly turn a deep ochre as the track tilts slightly towards the sea on your right. During storms at higher tides, waves come crashing down across the tracks here, spraying the windows and often damaging the line. But at low tide great ribcages, hulks of fibreglass or wood that were once seaworthy, lie dormant. Some look almost intact, all are thick with cormorants and curlews, seaweed clumped as if it's hiding something. Twice, every day, these foreshore hulks are exposed and reclaimed with the tide.

Tilly Craig is a writer and producer based in Devon. She holds an MA in Literature & Film from the University of Exeter. Tilly's experience in arts writing, production and marketing includes developing publications, films and events for cultural organisations such as The Box, Plymouth College of Art and KARST gallery and studios.

Tilly has worked in a consultancy capacity with artists Still/Moving and LOW PROFILE to develop marketing strategies. She is also a member of production agency FLOCK.

Her own practice examines place, identity and the occult within both historic and contemporary contexts and environments. Alongside working with FLOCK, she is a member of Black Mirror research network. Her writing on art and film has been featured by Elephant, Suspira, Broccoli and Record Collector magazines, and in artists editions and independent zines.

She was recently editor and producer on the catalogue for artist Mohini Chandra's exhibition, Paradise Lost (2021).



Fig. 2. Wrecks of Millom Castle (right) and Lynher (left) on Plymouth foreshore. [Photo: Stephen Johnson/The SHIPS Project]] http://www.shipsproject.org/Wrecks/Map_Foreshore.html

Plymouth's long standing industrial relationship to the sea makes its surrounding coastline and riverbanks an inevitable graveyard for vessels. Still, every time I catch the train going north, I am transfixed by these strange, abandoned husks whose silhouettes and resident wildlife change with each passing. Subdued and unmoving, haunted by questions of their crew, cargo and journeys. Fully exposed they are at once intriguing and preposterous like any ruin. But at dusk, or rising tide when partially submerged, the cold creep of the water laps as they reconfigure themselves as tombs. [Fig. 2]

It is not only their ghoulishness that is so captivating, it is their promise. Was there once a great adventure upon this vessel? Who did it carry, and what did they bring? Marine archaeologist Mallory Hass notes, "There is archaeological evidence of every human endeavour to do with the sea because those interactions have left their mark on the seabed. The tangible remains of Plymouth's broad and deep maritime history are scattered all over Plymouth Sound." (1)



Fig. 3. Wreck of G Koch, Aberdeen. <https://www.scottishshipwrecks.com/loss-of-the-g-koch/>

Aberdeen and neighbouring Peterhead and Fraserburgh were the base for a huge fishing fleet and have remained the primary fishing ports of Scotland. In support of the fishing industry, shipbuilding flourished in the area, constructing vessels for fishing companies both locally and across the UK. Many of these vessels would also meet their end around the Scottish coast. (2)[Fig. 3]

Seafaring is steeped in myths and lore of treasure bounties and sirens seducing sailors to their graves. Even navigating the tides, for "the act of chart reading" Robert Macfarlane writes, "...is part data-collection and part occultism. Sailors, like mountaineers, practise their map clairvoyance based on intuition and superstition as well as on yielded information". (3)

Deeper into the South West is the neighbouring county of Cornwall whose boundary falls on one side of the river Tamar, while Plymouth borders the Devon riverside. Myth hangs thick as sea mist in the air here, where the land narrows before giving way to the Atlantic, the folklore is - naturally - imbued with water. On Cornwall's northern coast, a holy well so renowned it has a whole stretch of white sand dunes named after it¹ is buried deep in the

1. Holywell Beach



Fig. 4. St Michael's Mount. [Photo: Tilly Craig].

recesses of a sea cave and entirely inaccessible during high spring tides. (4) [Fig. 7]

Water sprites beckoning seafarers to their graves have incarnations in the folklore of many cultures - Undine, Melusine the Lorelei, water-nixy, sirens and mermaids - not least the still pools and rivers of Dartmoor. (5)

Water spirits are not uncommon in Scottish folklore either. Kelpies - water-based shapeshifters, and Broonies or Brownies - small, solitary domestic entities which have an association with pools and streams - were told of throughout Scotland and rest of the British Isles. (6)

Alongside water sprites and a wealth of sailors' and fishers' suspicions (7), the Aberdeen witch trials of 1597 provide evidence of folk beliefs and are notable for their accounts of fairies, mentioning the Queen of Elfhome - suggesting descent from the Celtic pantheon (8).

Specific to local lore around Aberdeen is a tale tied to Den Finella, a valley leading to treacherous sea cliffs and rocks around the now-submerged village of Miltonhaven. The valley's name references an epic tale from 995AD telling of a Pictish noblewoman (Finella) who sought revenge following her son's execution by Kenneth II, King of Scots. (9)

Long before global warming threatened future submersion of land, tales of lost towns and vilages, deluged by the ocean, have persisted in memory. Celtic folk tells us of these sunken kingdoms: Lyonesse (Cornwall), Tir na nog (Ireland) and Cantre'r Gwaelod or the Lowland Hundred (Wales)². (10) These drowned landscapes and submerged cities do not exist in folklore alone; the remains of woodland, villages and ritual sites³ have all been discovered below the tideline off the coast of the British Isles.

Around St Michael's Mount⁴, a tidal island not far from the fabled site of lost Lyonesse, a forest of tree stumps reveal themselves annually at the lowest tide of the year, reconfiguring the surrounding landscape as forest, grounding fables in reality. (11) [Fig. 4]

The knowledge of these stumps conjures reimagined environments but their image, wooden relics of another world thrusting from the depths, bring to mind those shipwrecks puncturing the foreshore. Memorials of both natural and industrial engulfment and an omen of rising sea levels.

A submerged forest has been documented in Bovisand Bay and more recent remains, including harbours, quays and "infrastructure leftover from the industrialization on the rivers and waterways leading inland" (Hass) in the rivers and on the coastline around Plymouth. [FIG 5]

Further along the coast are more substantial losses: Dunwich, a small village in Suffolk was once the 10th largest town in England before being swallowed by the sea. In the

2. On the basis of bathymetric evidence, all of these islands fall within the area of an ancient "shelf" that once existed as a continuum of the European land mass. (10)

3. The oldest metal axe cuts in Britain have been detected in the timbers of Seahenge, felled more than 4,000 years ago. The circle of 55 posts, around the upended roots of a giant oak, had originally been built on swampy land well inland.

4. The island's Cornish name, Karrek Loos yn Koos translates to 'Grey Rock in the Wood', indicating it's former surroundings.

13th and 14th centuries, the town was hit by a succession of storms which resulted in the loss of its harbour and started its decline. Underwater research carried out by divers unearthed a series of submerged buildings, including ruined churches, a toll house and shipwrecks no one previously knew existed. (12)

Doggerland covers an underwater body of land that once enveloped the UK and parts of Europe. The mesolithic plains of Doggerland were slowly consumed by the sea in a post-ice-age thaw over the centuries. The first known relic of Doggerland - a tool - was discovered in the 1930s by fishermen and the mass was later mapped by scientists using oil and gas technologies (70, Macfarlane). [Fig. 6]

Over a century ago, Clement Reid published Submerged Forests (1913) a radical proposition for the time which suggested that an entire landmass existed beneath the North Sea. Reid's theories were discredited during his lifetime but have since been substantiated by evidence and bolstered by technological advancements such as seismic scanning.

Miltonhaven, near Den Finella was once a key seaport and coastal community around 32 miles south of Aberdeen and was populated by smugglers, lime workers and fishermen. After the entire village was washed away, all that exists now of Miltonhaven is an empty shoreline. Reports describe an outcrop of limestone rock "that stretched in a reef across the bay, like a natural breakwater guarding the little village from the angry sea." In 1750, a lime kiln was built on the shore at Miltonhaven and the rock was blasted out of the water.



Fig. 5. Submerged forest. [Clement Reid].

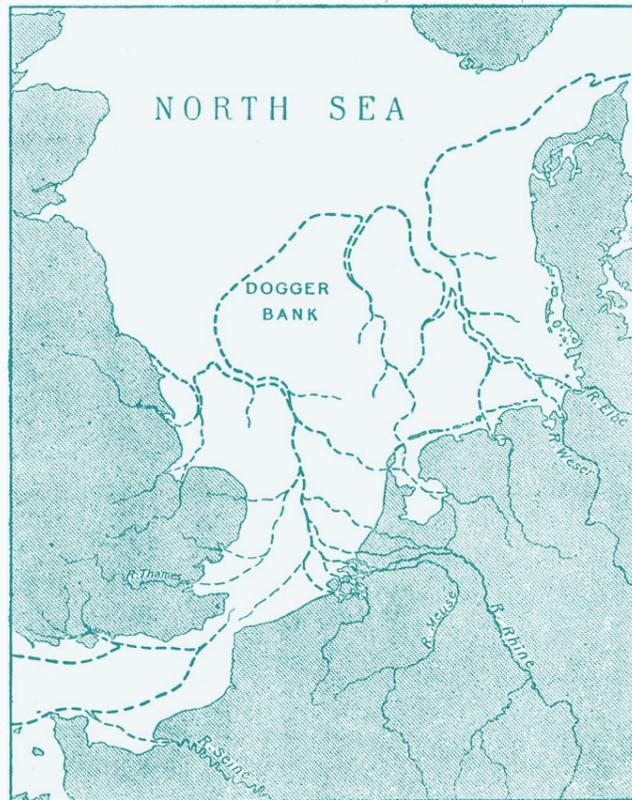


Fig. 6. Map showing Dogger Bank. [Clement Reid].



Fig. 8. Botallack mine, Cornwall. http://photoeverywhere.co.uk/britain/cornwall/botallack_mines.jpg

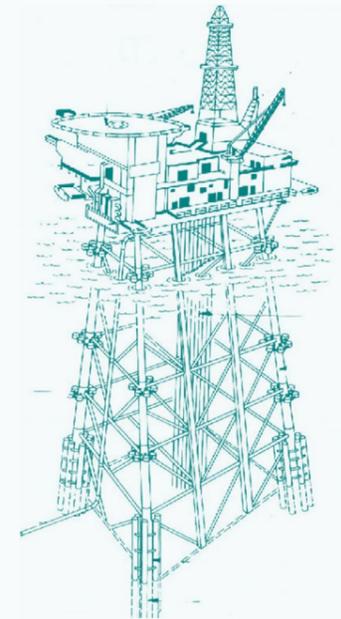


Fig. 9. Sketch from: Condition Assessment Techniques for Aged Fixed-Type Offshore Platforms Considering Decommissioning: a Historical Review.



Fig. 8. Botallack mine, Cornwall. http://photoeverywhere.co.uk/britain/cornwall/botallack_mines.jpg

The lime trade increased industrialisation in the area and the ledge of limestone, which ran in front of the shorefront houses, wore "precariously thin." Some time in the 1790s the waves overwhelmed the village and it disappeared beneath the sea where it remains over a hundred yards offshore. There is disparity over when the village was destroyed - one account said it was swept away bit by bit following a storm in 1792, while an article in the Geological Journal said the sea moved 150 yards inland one night in 1795. (13)

The extraction of natural resources from the earth and ocean echoes around the coastlines surrounding both Plymouth and Aberdeen, far into the past and reaching ahead. Alongside oil⁵ and flint in Aberdeen(14), gold was discovered in 2015, with a deposit found in nearby Towie. (15)

Granite, mica, copper, tin, lead, silver, arsenic and limestone were all mined between Dartmoor, the Tamar Valley and into Cornwall. The cylindrical stonework towers of disused engine houses and vast pastel pools puncture the landscape of the South West as visual reminders. Hidden below the sea and extending out from the coast around Devon and Cornwall are the relics of submarine mines. Some, like Botallack mine, reach out 2.5km under the sea. (16, 17)

With industrial change comes the inevitable ebb and flow of people to carry out the work.

In May 2021 it was confirmed that Drakelands, a formerly closed-down tungsten mine on the outskirts of Plymouth, would reopen under its new ownership. The mine was previously operated by Australian company Wolf Minerals Ltd until it filed for administration in 2018 when the mine closed and was sold to a private UK company. (18)

In the North Sea, over 180 oil rigs have been documented. With production peaking around 2000, reports detailing plans for the decommissioning process are paving the path for these future relics of industry. Unlike the shipwrecks on Plymouth's foreshores, twice daily covered and revealed, these great structures are resolutely both buried deep below and held aloft over the waves. [Fig. 8]

"All maritime cultures have lore about objects and substances that are thrown into the seas to calm them when a craft is in danger" notes Robert Macfarlane. "Ale, oil or blood are poured overboard to soothe the waves. Coins, bodies, swords, screeds of wool [...] are yielded to the maelstrom." (Macfarlane, 127)

Macfarlane goes on to describe these placatory or assuaging votive offerings as "oil on troubled water". With climate change and rising sea levels threatening to drown islands and coastal communities, we have drifted far from the amniotic connection we once held with the sea. How might we calm these increasingly troubled waters when offerings have been replaced by withdrawals? The very thing that was once offered to placate the ocean has been extracted from its core. Like the misperception of Reid's concepts as only myths, perhaps it is time to reconsider the reverence for the sea behind these ancient rituals.

5. Since its discovery in the North Sea in the 1970s

(1) Chandra, M. Paradise Lost exhibition catalogue (2021)
 (2) <https://www.scottishshipwrecks.com/8-east-scotland/>
 (3) MacFarlane, R. The Old Ways
 (4) St Leger-Gordon, R.E. The Witchcraft and Folklore of Dartmoor, Peninsula Press, 1965.
 (5) Courtenay, M.A. Folklore & Legends of Cornwall, Cornwall Books, 1989.
 (6) <http://www.nefa.net/archive/peopleandlife/customs/folk.htm#>
 (7) https://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/map/text/47_North_East_Fisher_Beliefs_and_Traditions.pdf
 (8) https://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/map/text/33_The_Laird_of_Morphie_and_the_Water_Kelpie.pdf
 (9) https://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/map/text/39_Finella_-_Killer_and_Enchantress.pdf
 (10) <https://placefieldnotes.wordpress.com/2020/07/16/doggerland-a-submerged-landscape/>
 (11) <https://www.falmouthpacket.co.uk/news/11020472.update-evidence-of-ancient-forest-exposed-on-beach-at-mounts-bay-pictures/>
 (12) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-35549952.amp>
<https://www.ancient-origins.net/news-history-archaeology/7000-year-old-forest-and-footprints-uncovered-atlantis-britain-005913>
<http://www.unofficialbritain.com/lost-british-landscapes/Seahenge> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/nov/20/maevkennedy>
 (13) <https://investaberdeen.co.uk/key-sectors/oil-and-gas>
 (14) <https://www.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/village-smugglers-was-washed-away-1493427>
 (15) <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/business/north-of-scotland/819091/gold-mining-company-extends-aberdeenshire-search-following-discoveries/>
 (16) <https://www.miningsearchesuk.com/2021/01/28/urban-mining-in-and-around-plymouth/>
 (17) <https://www.nmrs.org.uk/mines-map/metal/cornwall-devon-mines/st-just-area/botallack/>
 (18) <https://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/news/plymouth-news/villagers-fear-hemerdon-tungsten-mine-5415785>

Phoebe McBride



Intangible Landscapes (2021) is a body of work created in response to an environmental arts placement which involved mapping firebreak trails in the mountains of Cyprus. The placement was based in Pano Lefkara, a village famed for its delicate lacework. Passed on from mother to daughter, Lefkara Lace is an art practiced exclusively by women and is said to have saved the area from economic devastation. Yet, due to a level of exploitation from the tourism industry and the migration of younger generations, lacemaking is becoming an increasingly unsustainable practice.

Through a combination of fictional text and moving image, 'Intangible Landscapes' considers themes of both tangible and intangible losses within the region; from loss of land due to wildfires to loss of cultural knowledge and traditional skills. Looking to the voices of women in the area, the work explores the push and pull between internal and external landscapes- the stories that are on display in heritage museums and those that are formed by lived experience.



These stories hold a particular tension within an unforgiving landscape of vast and barren firebreak trails, which weave through the mountains as though they had been stitched into the land by the lacemakers themselves.



Phoebe McBride is a multimedia Artist currently based in Aberdeen. McBride holds a BA (Hons) in Fine Art: Painting and Printmaking from Glasgow School of Art (2017). Her body of work for Paradigms has been informed by a recent environmental arts placement with Grampus Heritage and Training which involved mapping fire break trails across Cyprus.

McBride's practice is concerned with exploring the space between what is real and what is imagined by using moving image, text and photography to create poetic documents of the everyday. Her research involves using fiction as a method to explore real, imagined and inaccessible environments.

Recent projects include 'Letters to the centre of the world' - an exhibition and letter writing workshop hosted by NOMAD Aberdeen and 'With the North sea' - an exhibition and series of events curated as part of the 2020 Curatorial Fellow with Peacock and The Worm. She is also one half of Haar(bour) publication design collective.

Western Approach to Paradise

(2019) is a love letter to a demolished footbridge told through fragments of data on a spaceship terminal. Constructed during the post-war rebuilding of the city, demolition began in 2018 and ran to 2020 as part of redevelopment works in Plymouth. Western Approach to Paradise imagines a future in which remnants of the bridge are discovered during a scavenging expedition to a post-climate collapse, oceanic Earth. Extracts from newspaper articles, references to ocean exploration methods, and research into architectural materials used across Plymouth combine to form lines of code on the scavenger ships terminal.

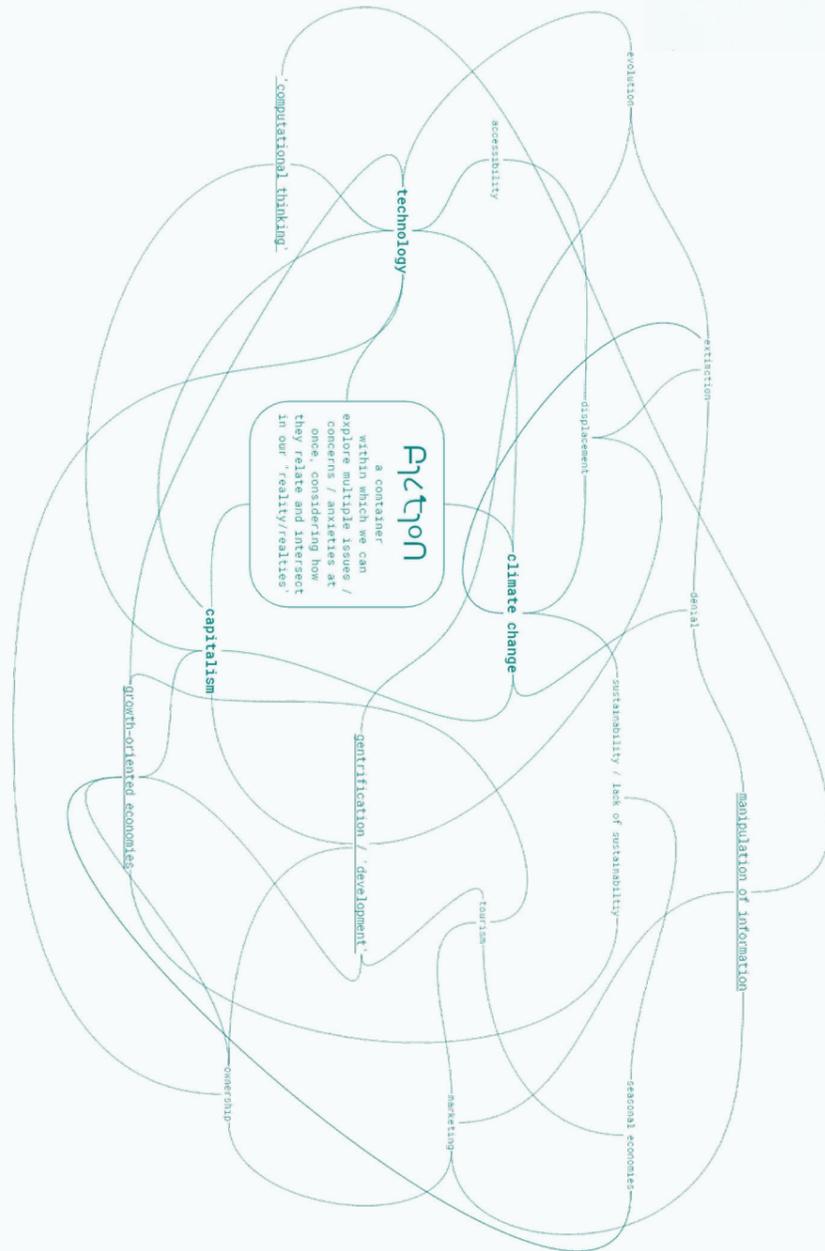


The Bones of The Bridges of Sighs

(2021) is a sculptural work that expands on the world-building established in Western Approach to Paradise. Through a combination of materials and processes from across industrial and household spaces, the work builds on ideas of value and nostalgia that inspired the sister video.

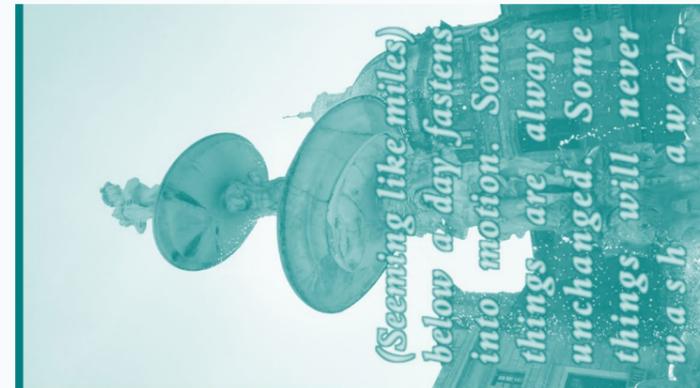
Molly Erin McCarthy (a.k.a molly.erh) is a multimedia artist based in Plymouth, UK. Her practice moves between physical & digital processes, iterating across sculpture, video, interactive/online media, GIFs, drawing & collage.

Her work explores the interconnectedness of things, considering how the contemporary experience of 'reality' is actually a tangled web of many worlds. Using world-building techniques drawing from sci-fi, video games and online communities, McCarthy maps out these relations by intertwining fact & fiction alongside past, present & future. Common themes in her work include : nostalgia / ecology / evolution / heterotopias / archeology / mapping / devon & cornwall. McCarthy received a First Class BA (Hons) in Fine Art from Plymouth College of Art in 2020. Alongside her practice she has worked with organisations such as Plymouth Art Weekender, KARST Contemporary Arts & MIRROR. She is currently a Co-Director of the member-led creative network CAMP.



Molly Erin McCarthy

Rhys Morgan



A Quiet Exile (2020) is an exploration of the immediate ideas of 'separateness', which became universally familiar during lockdown, through the lens of queer experience and spaces. The title is inspired by the oft-exaggerated language that has been used around lockdowns globally. Similarly, 'exile' has at times

been used to exaggerate situations to imply a state of oppression - such as millionaires living in 'tax exile'. For most, exile is something you are forced into to escape persecution or punishment, or something that is a punishment in of itself; for others it is something that is self-imposed. Lockdown has been something which treads a similar boundary, with everyone experiencing restrictions in different ways.

The seemingly endless restrictions had a hard impact on queer experience and queer spaces. There was a new kind of denial to areas of queer life, evocative of José Esteban Muñoz's idea of 'Queer Utopian Memory'. With queer spaces from Pride marches to saunas being unable to operate, there was a renewed sense of prohibition. A censoring of and from queer acts and spaces. These changes could be temporary; but then historically huge societal shifts and traumas have often caused permanent differences.

Commissioned by Field Notes as part of a series of online commissions entitled, 'From The Field' in 2020.

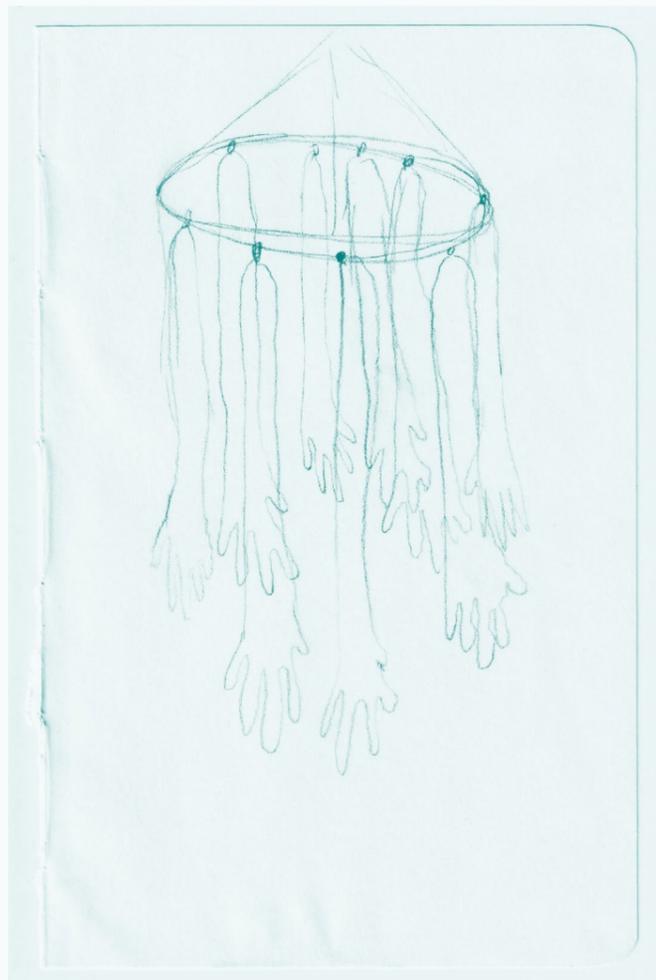


Rhys Morgan is an Artist and Producer based in Plymouth, UK. Having studied at Falmouth University he has been working and exhibiting around the South West and the wider UK since 2014. His work often explores ideas around information and power structures, the interaction of this with queer experience and how this affects the expected norms of day-to-day queer existence. He is currently undertaking an MFA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths, London.

Healing Tool I: Hugging Machine was created in May 2020, during the first coronavirus lockdown. Responding to personal and collective experiences affecting the body during this time: the lack of comforting and vitally important human touch; the energising stimulation of touching plants and receiving warmth from nettle stings whilst foraging on daily exercise walks; the anxieties of touching things that other people may have previously touched in the supermarket.

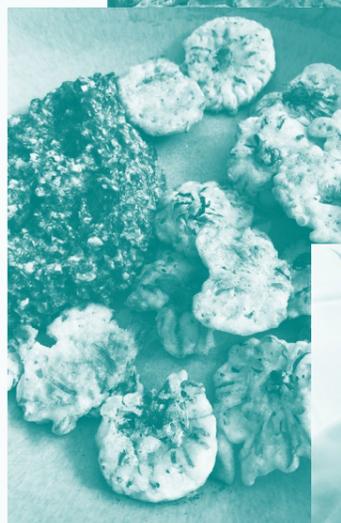
The sculpture is the result of an honest attempt to make a functional, soothing contraption. A device that attempts to replicate the feeling of being hugged, of being held. It comes from a place of hope, but also of slight desperation. Medicinal plants that have been used traditionally to heal the heart and lungs are embedded in the fabric so that the healing essence of these plants can transfer from fabric to the skin by touch. Interacting with the sculpture however lacks the presence and responsiveness required for human connection, making the encounter one of frustration and failure.

The work was commissioned by The Box as part of the State of Emergency micro-commissions, 2020.

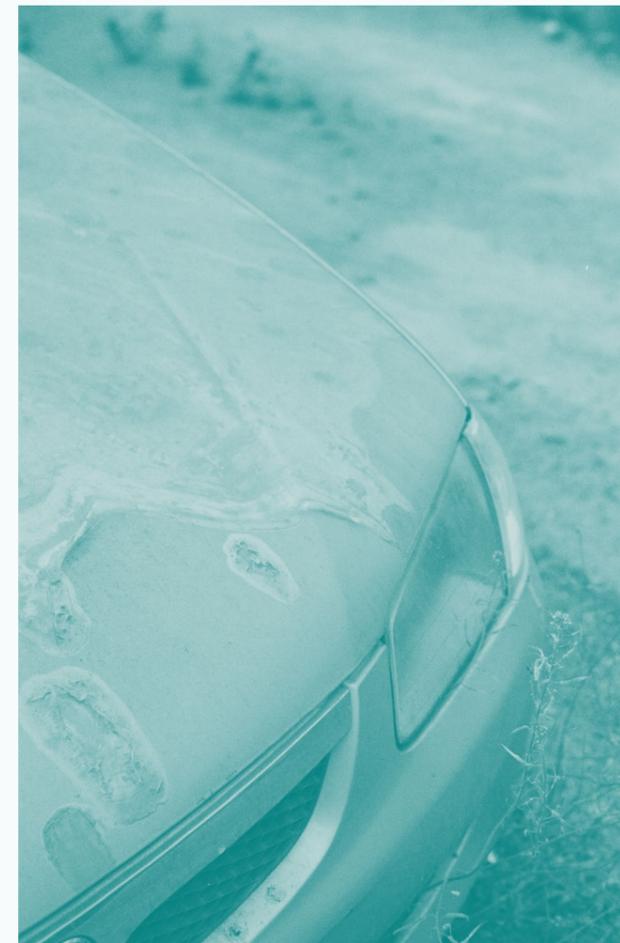


Carly Seller is based in Plymouth where she works across performance, moving-image, photographic processes, drawing, and object-making. Playful contemplation is at the heart of her practice, using meditative and processed methods to test the potentiality and limitations of materials and the body. She uses embodied approaches to explore how human bodies relate to space, and how feelings and sensations from inner landscapes can be made visible. Seller received an MA in Photography and the Land from Plymouth University in 2016. Some recent exhibitions include Plymouth Contemporary (2017) & the Jerwood Drawing Prize (2017-18). Her live performance, Resonant Vessels, was presented at KARST in 2020, funded by a Curator Space Artist Bursary. She is currently working on experiments in sound funded by Art Council England's Developing Your Creative Practice fund. Alongside her art practice, Seller works as a creative facilitator and holistic practitioner within yoga, sound therapy and reiki.

Carly Seller



Abby Beatrice Quick



Inferno (The Earth Wept As I Felt Her Crawl Into My Skin) (2021) is a body of work created in response to a five-week environmental arts placement, mapping 'fire break' trails in the mountain regions of Cyprus. It is an investigation into our relationship to fire across the various scapes of ecology, myth and matter.



What began as an inquiry into the island and its inhabitants situated at the forefront of climate crises bled into realms of spirituality at the threshold between body and terra, fable and truth.

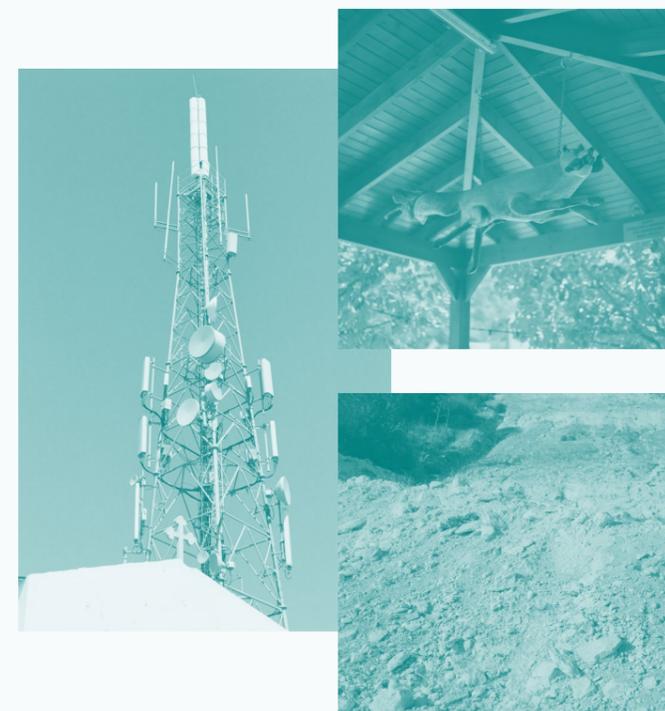
Firewatch towers bend over forested land weathered by lifetimes of rebirth and renewal as local villagers offer waxed votives to Saint Michael, Archangel of Fire. Sunburnt car bonnets lie still in barren villages at the fringes of ecological destruction as they sink into their surroundings. Fire break trails steeped in limestone murmur spells for protection as Orthodox churches bear witness to what is said to be the greatest forest fire in Cypriot history.

For fire, so wild, so glowing and elemental ignites hidden wounds and unseen truths that may be reflected in the human psyche; or the inferno within.

Abby Beatrice Quick is an image maker (of the moving and the still), artist and sometimes-DJ in worlds of myth between swamp and sky. Her approach to image making is rooted in a pull towards perceptions and constructions of reality, whereby the camera becomes a vessel for exploring possible worlds.

Her work explores themes of spirituality, ecology, belonging, and the space between worlds of the material and intangible, she holds a degree in Contemporary Art Practice from Gray's School of Art (2018). After one year spent as graduate-in-residence and darkroom technician assistant, she completed peacock & the worm's Curatorial Fellowship program in 2020.

More recently she has returned from an environmental arts placement mapping 'fire break' trails across Cyprus, feeding into a new body of work for Paradigms. As well as receiving funding from Aberdeen City Council to develop and deliver analogue photography and darkroom workshops in partnership with the Anatomy Rooms, she co-runs aerial community radio and is one half of both haar(bour) publication design collective and miasma projects.





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