



New Perspectives on the Rural: Landscape, Community and Creativity

Wednesday 16 December 2020
11:00-15:00 GMT
Research Symposium

Welcome

Norwich University of the Arts, in association with the Broads Authority and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is pleased to present an online research symposium on the contemporary image of rural lands, focusing on creative practices that draw attention to environmental issues and debate.

This symposium forms part of 'Water, Mills and Marshes: the Broads Landscape Partnership,' an ambitious regional programme encompassing 38 projects across 55 partner institutions. One of the projects, Mapping the Broads, involved three outstanding illustrators, all lecturers at Norwich University of the Arts on BA (Hons) Illustration, who produced work over a three-year period that responded to their experience of the landscape and working with communities that live in the area. This work was exhibited at the EAST Gallery NUA early in 2020.

I welcome you to the symposium and look forward to your participation.

Professor John Last

Vice Chancellor

Norwich University of the Arts



New Perspectives on the Rural: Landscape, Community and Creativity

11:00 - 11:10	Introduction and Welcome Professor Simon Willmoth Professor of Research Management, Norwich University of the Arts
11:10 - 11:55	<i>Connecting with Landscape: Living in a Changing Environment</i> Emma Stibbon Artist and Senior Lecturer, School of Art, University of Brighton
11:55 - 12:15	<i>Connecting People with the Broads</i> Andrew Farrell Programme Manager for 'Water, Mills and Marshes: the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme'
12:15 - 12:35	<i>Reconnecting with Nature</i> Glyn Brewerton Senior Lecturer in Illustration, Norwich University of the Arts
12:35 - 13:00	Discussion Panel Andrew Farrell / Emma Stibbon / Glyn Brewerton Chaired by Professor Simon Willmoth
13:00 - 13:10	Break
13:10 - 13:55	<i>Rural Mythologies</i> Dr Rosemary Shirley Associate Professor in the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester
13:55 - 14:15	<i>Place and a Place Making: Water, Mills and Marshes</i> Neil Bousfield Lecturer in Illustration, Norwich University of the Arts
14:15 - 14:35	<i>A Broads Typology</i> Peter Nencini Senior Tutor (Research) in Illustration, Royal College of Art
14:35 - 15:00	Discussion Panel Dr Rosemary Shirley / Neil Bousfield / Peter Nencini Chaired by Professor Simon Willmoth
15:00	Final Remarks

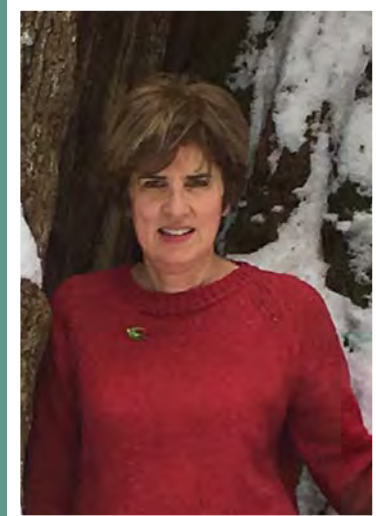
EMMA STIBBON

Artist and Senior Lecturer, School of Art, University of Brighton

Emma Stibbon produces large-scale drawing and prints depicting environments that are undergoing dynamic change. Often working in the field, she has undertaken placements in Antarctica and the High Arctic, and the volcanic landscapes of Iceland, Italy and Big Island, Hawaii.

Stibbon has recently exhibited her work at the Alan Cristea Gallery, London; Galerie Bastian, Berlin; the Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne; the Polar Museum, Cambridge; the Royal Academy, London; Potsdam Kunstverein and Museum of Contemporary Art, Hangzhou, China.

Her work is held in private and public collections including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery and the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. She was elected Royal Academician in 2013.



Connecting with Landscape: Living in a Changing Environment.

Emma Stibbon's engagement with the natural world has led her to visit some of the most remote locations on our planet – she considers her drawing practice as an act of witness to a changing environment. Her experiences of the polar regions and the extraordinary beauty of ice shelves and glaciers set against their evident retreat has galvanised her conviction that art has a role to play in communicating to wider audiences. In her talk she will present her research into how we can learn through cross-disciplinary dialogue

with scientists and communities that live in environments that are undergoing change. Presenting some of her observations in the field, she will look at how the visceral elements of nature might be communicated to the viewer through creative practice and installation in the exhibition space and beyond. Her presentation will look at how creative methods of engaging with the natural world have an important role to play in the urgent issues of our time.

[Emma Stibbon RA on Drawing Matters](#)

ANDREW FARRELL

Programme Manager for 'Water, Mills and Marshes:
the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme'

Andrew Farrell is the Programme Manager for the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme. He is a geographer and historian with a background working in museums in both the UK and USA.

Originally from Alabama, he has spent the last 5 years working with landscape heritage projects in East Anglia including investigating the archaeology of US Army 8th Air Force bases and contributing to recent publications about George Orwell, the Kinder Transport and the surrender of the German U-boat fleet in Harwich more than 100 years ago.



Connecting People with the Broads

The Broads National Park is Britain's largest protected wetland and is home to a quarter of the UK's rarest species. A haven for wildlife and an archaeological treasure trove, the Broads' significance locally, nationally and internationally cannot be underestimated. Thanks to a £2.4 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Broads Landscape Partnership is engaging people who live in, work on, and visit the Broads with its unique built and natural landscapes.

The importance of connecting people to their local landscapes has come into sharp focus in 2020 with more people across the country realising the value of green spaces near their doorstep. We imagine that these places were always there waiting for us, but the Broads is not a place of permanence. It is a living, dynamic and still threatened landscape. Working with our partners, we are recording, improving, encouraging, preserving and shaping this magical water-land for future generations.

GLYN BREWERTON

Senior Lecturer in Illustration,
Norwich University of the Arts



Glyn Brewerton is a Senior Lecturer in Illustration at Norwich University of the Arts. Since 2017, he has been working with the Norfolk Broads Authority in the UK on a National Lottery Heritage Fund and Norwich University of the Arts funded project titled; Water, Mills and Marshes: Mapping the Broads. This project illuminated mapping and illustration in response to visitor sightings of wildlife at Wheatfen Broad in Norfolk, an area of natural beauty and rich biodiversity. In his practice, Glyn incorporates industry and research experiences and his past research projects have been informed by creative collaborations with schools, performance artists, animators and

graphic designers. His approach to illustration is wide ranging and influenced by a number of years working with digital illustration. More recently, his practice has returned to drawing and interpretations of oral histories, working with university students and schools on projects that encourage participants to interact creatively with their rural surroundings. In 2007, Glyn was shortlisted for the Jerwood Drawing Prize with a drawing titled 'Ghost', which documented the traces of the Slate Mining Industry in Snowdonia. Recently in June 2020 the drawing 'June - A visual map of the Wheatfen Broad Visitors Book' was longlisted for the 2020 Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize.

Reconnecting with Nature

Reconnecting with Nature presents a documentation of work produced between March 2019 and March 2020 that aimed to serve as an illustration of the essential role that creativity has in society as a tool to engage youngsters and adults with their natural surroundings.

The work shown in the presentation begins with an investigation of the visitor book located at Wheatfen Broad in Norfolk, showing drawn detailed 'maps' which measure the moment of human engagement with the site. Later, in a pedagogical project with Acle Academy, Glyn worked with a class of Year 8 students

to record their experiences of Polkey's Mill in Halvergate Marsh, through drawing and writing. The resulting book, displayed later in the 'Mapping the Broads' exhibition at the EAST Gallery NUA, contains a glimpse of the magic and euphoria that the students felt, many of them experiencing the wilderness of the rural Norfolk for the first time. The project set out to show how public creative projects that engage with the rural landscape can remedy what Richard Louv describes as 'Nature Deficit Disorder' (Louv, 2005).

[Reconnecting with Nature Film](#)

DR ROSEMARY SHIRLEY

Associate Professor in the School of Museum Studies,
University of Leicester

Dr Rosemary Shirley is an Associate Professor in the School of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. Her research centres on cultural representations of rural places and she has published widely on this subject including her monograph *Rural Modernity, Everyday Life and Visual Culture*. She co-curated the critical landscape exhibition *Creating the Countryside* at Compton Verney and her writing was included in the *Documents in Contemporary Art* edition: *Rural* (Whitechapel/MIT Press 2019).

Her most recent curatorial project is the online exhibition [Everywhere: Life in a littered world](#)



Rural Mythologies

Rural mythologies are the stories we are told and the stories we tell ourselves about the rural. This paper examines how these stories circulate in popular culture; it reflects on how these stories have changed or intensified during the pandemic; and considers the argument that the foremost societal relationship with the rural is now one of consumption. Informed by curatorial research carried out in relation to the major critical landscape exhibition *Creating the Countryside*, the paper will argue that one of the possibilities

of contemporary art practice is to bring into visibility more complex renderings of rural places than those offered by more dominant cultural forms. Drawing on the work of a number of contemporary artists whose practice critically engage with important landscape and or rural themes, it will discuss the representation of land as a site of production, contemporary rural communities, alternative or speculative landscapes and human/non-human entanglements.

NEIL BOUSFIELD

Lecturer in Illustration, Norwich University of the Arts

Neil Bousfield created a home on the Norfolk coast, a territory in dispute with water and the sea. His practice explores the role of memory, narrative and environmental and geological narratives within the construct of place. The objective is not only to create an understanding for the phenomena of place but to raise questions of landscape value within the relationship between land and sea.

Keywords: narrative, place, home, memory, place identity, place attachment, place dependency, landscape value, sea-level rise.



Place and a Place Making: Water, Mills and Marshes

Where we live and who we are is inextricably bound to and encompassed within the notion of home and place and the concepts of place identity and place attachment. Undifferentiated space becomes place as we endow it with value through the process of experience, memory, history and dwelling. To dwell in a place is to build, it is to invest, to create

and make and the deepest sense of place is home, an intense feeling of place.

A research process is undertaken, documented and presented in order to quantify and interrogate processes held within the concept of place attachment and the emotional construct of place.

PETER NENCINI

Senior Tutor (Research) in Illustration, Royal College of Art

Instagram [@peternencini](#)

Peter Nencini makes architectural models, typographic forms, workshop props and graphic surfaces. In collaboration with writers, designers and fabricators, he has worked with ARCA (Archive for Rural Contemporary Architecture), Turf Projects, Eastside Projects Birmingham, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Walker Art Center Minneapolis, Svenska Tecknare, New York Times, Théâtre National de Toulouse and Salone del Mobile Milan. He teaches at the Royal College of Art – previously Norwich University of the Arts and Camberwell College of Arts.



A Broads Typology

Is there a right and a wrong way to look at the landscape?

This body of work considers the Broads a restless site, where non-humans and humans constantly navigate each other's behaviours and deeds.

From walks along the 37.5 mile Wherryman's Way — with a focus on the abrupt urban-feral-rural transition from Great Yarmouth to Breydon Water — a family of digital and physical forms have developed. The forms, created by sifting through site photographs and reducing images down to skeletal shapes, critique distinctions between the 'natural' and the 'artificial', the 'native' and the 'foreign'.

External Links

Norwich University of the Arts (NUA)

<https://www.nua.ac.uk/>

NUA Illustration

<https://www.nua.ac.uk/study-at-nua/courses/ba-hons-illustration/>

NUA Research

<https://www.nua.ac.uk/study-at-nua/research/>

Mapping the Broads: Community and Creativity Exhibition at EAST Gallery NUA

<https://www.nua.ac.uk/events/all/mapping-broads-community-creativity-exhibition/>

Broads Authority

<https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/>

Water, Mills and Marshes

<https://watermillsandmarshes.org.uk/>

Wheatfen Nature Reserve

<https://www.wheatfen.org/>
