

Water & Man

Lead Author: Katrina McPherson

Co-Author(s): Rob Heaslip

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Unit of Assessment 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

Output Category: Film



<https://vimeo.com/katrinamcpherson/water?ts=0&share=copy>

Water & Man (screendance)

Single screen film; 7' 48" mins/stereo.

Summary Statement (300 words)

Water & Man is a meditation on the presence and absence of water and a creative response to the story of the mythical Irish water spirit Am Brollachan, filmed in Midlothian and the Pentland Hills, Scotland.

The work investigates:

1. How a non-dialogue, screen performance-based artform might highlight the coexistence of humans and natural elements.
2. How the chosen filming and editing methodology supports an artistic engagement within historic, contemporary and future time.

The filmmaking draws on McPherson's practice of 'mise-en-scene directing', where the design elements of the work are pre-planned based on the film's concept, yet the moments of filming, including the performer's movement and the camera framing, are freely improvised. This generative methodology, resulting in an immersive creative experience recalling Jean Rouch's concept of "cine-trance," in which "the filmmaker becomes entranced by the spirit of the subject and a merging of filmmaker and subject ensues". (MacDougall, 113)

Water & Man is shaped through repetitive montage, an editing technique developed by McPherson, drawing on postmodern dance and video art. Here, sequencing of single and patterns of images create a dynamic whereby multiple timeframes become visible and unfurl simultaneously.

By re-presenting clips from earlier in the timeline, this 'cut-and-paste' process provides identical data, whilst the reading of the work progresses, evolving through layers of recognition and (re)contextualisation. Shifting patterns of repetition and looping of images encourage in the viewer a "conscious act of seeing." (Banes, p. xxv).

Similarly, the accumulation of images alters temporal and spatial perceptions, propelling us toward the future of the work, echoing Neimanis and Loewen Walker's concept of "thick time" in the "stacking" of past, present, and future within the screen choreographic whole. These temporal and spatial shifts resonate, leading to moments of stillness, of "stopped time," inviting further interpretations beyond the viewing's end. (300)

References

Banes, S. (1987). *Terpsichore in Sneakers*. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

MacDougall, D. (1998). *Transcultural Cinema*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

McPherson, K. (2019). *Making Video Dance*. (2nd edition). New York and Oxon: Routledge.

Neimanis, A. and Loewen Walker, R. "Weathering': Climate Change and the 'Thick Time' of Transcorporeality." *Hypatia* 29, no. 3 (2014): 558–75.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/24542017>.

Contextual Information

Production Credits:

- Directed by Katrina McPherson & Rob Heaslip
- Performance & Choreography Rob Heaslip
- Camera & Editing Katrina McPherson
- Music: Philip Jeck
- Funding: Creative Scotland

- *Première:* Dance Camera West Festival, Redcat Theatre, Los Angeles, January 2022.

- *Project website:* tbc

Presentations:

Water & Man has been screened widely at international festivals and was awarded Best Abstract Experimental Film at the Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival, November 2022.

Festival adjudicator, the Canadian performer Louise Lecavalier wrote of *Water and Man*: "Almost haunting me, may be my overall favorite, concept, beauty of the shots, the performer is so just in every movement, editing perfect -- it makes me try to understand and it holds me in suspension."

- Screendance Festival at Dansmuseet Stockholm, April 2022
www.screendancefestival.com
<http://www.dansmuseet.se>
- Red Rock ScreenDance Film Festival, St George, Utah, USA; 1-4 June, 2022
<https://www.stgeorgedance.com/screen-dance>
- American Dance Festival Movies by Movers Festival, June 2022
<https://americandancefestival.org/movies-by-movers/>
- Exeter Dance Film Festival, 15 Sept 2022.
- Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival, LA, 15 Nov 2022.
www.dare2danceinpublic.com
- Light Moves Festival, Limerick, Ireland, November 2023.
<https://lightmoves.ie>
- CAPITOL Dance & Cinema Festival (Washington, DC), June 2024*.

Installation presentations:

Invited to be installed as part of the *Goethe-Institute Glasgow's 50th Anniversary* events on October 28th, 2023.

At the *In Shadow Festival*, Lisbon, Portugal from 24 November to 15 December 2024.

Additional Production Credits:

Camera Assistant Colin McPherson @germanocean

Costume Advisor Alison Brown @alisonbrownthreads

Bead Specialist Jill Skulina @jillskulina

Soundtrack Philip Jeck – Demolition Written & performed by Philip Jeck Published by Touch Music/Fairwood Music UK Ltd.

Sound design John Cobban @jlcobban with Katrina McPherson

Directed by Katrina McPherson & Rob Heaslip

Producer Helen McIntosh @helen_mcintosh_ Production Manager Fi Fraser @fifraseroutrage

Supported by Creative Scotland @creativescots, in partnership with Summerhall @summerhallery and Dance Base @dancebase