



CeMoRe Summer Symposium

Being at Sea:

More-than-human mobilities in and on the water

with special online guests Maria Borovnik and Mimi Sheller.

Lancaster University, 26th June 2026, 9am-1.30pm

Hybrid Event: [Please register here for in person or online tickets](#)

This half-day research symposium focuses on the more-than-human mobilities of living in and on the sea in any form. Building on current themes of water, oceans, and coasts we invite participants to share research about the mobilities of living in and on the sea. From seaworm casts built from shifting sands to limpets and their home scars, seaweed holdfasts, oil rigs, seagrass, boats, weather, bridges, migrations, myths and stories this interdisciplinary day will explore the tensions between mobility and anchorage within a fluid environment. The symposium extends Cemore's focus on Climate Emergency to more-than-human thinking about the sea, for a rich multi-disciplinary gathering. The name Being at Sea also indicates the shifting uncertainties of working with fluid boundaries in our constantly changing political, technical, social and environmental emergencies.

Session 1

9.00- 9.30: Lynne Pearce & Jen Southern: [Introduction - Wet and Dry ontologies of seaweed](#)

9.30 – 10.00: Maria Borovnik: [Gazing at the Sea, Longing to be Elsewhere: When seafarers stay at sea for too long](#)

10.00-10.10: Nathan Jones: [Unsecurities Lab and the Sinking of the Felicity Ace](#)

10.10-10.20: Serena Pollastri: [A seascape epistemology for urban futures that move with the water](#)

10.20 Discussion

10.30 Break

Session 2

11.00 Debbie Yare & Jen Southern: [Rogue touch and turbidity: conversations with the intertidal zone](#)

11.10 Ellie Barrett: [Nature's Way of Working Stone: Collecting the coastline with a child](#)

11.20 Louise Mullagh: [Reading the Sands: Walking, Data, and Repertoire Knowledge in Morecambe Bay](#)

11.30 Amy Dickson: [Seaweed Transfer, 2025. screening](#)

11.40 Jamie Jenkinson: [Jelly Beach + TERRA screening & publication](#)

11.50 Discussion

12pm Break

Session 3

12.30 Jo Carruthers: [Nature's Play, Micro-Mobilities and Soft Fascination](#)

12.45 Abi Lafbery: [From Sea Gooseberries to Sewage: More-than-human Entanglements in Outdoor Swimming](#)

1pm Mimi Sheller: [Theorizing from Caribbean Seas: tidalectics, mangroves, and sacred passages](#)

Please join us for lunch from 1.30pm.

Speakers & Abstracts

SESSION 1

Lynne Pearce & Jen Southern: Introduction: Wet and Dry ontologies of Seaweed

Introducing the theme of *Being at Sea* we will investigate the more-than-human mobilities of seaweed, in both its wet and dried state, in order to extend existing understanding of infrastructure. In contrast to definitions which presume that infrastructure to be inanimate and supremely functional-- built by humans in order to serve humans-- our more-more-than human approach argues for its potential vitality and, by implication, its need for protection.

Lynne Pearce is Professor of Literary and Cultural Theory at the University of Lancaster and co-Director (Humanities) of Cemore. She was instrumental in establishing the field of Mobility Humanities, and since 2012 has published extensively in Mobilities and Cultural Geography. Her most recent book is 'Britains Changing Roadscapes: Mobility, Place, Attachment, Loss'.

Jen Southern is an artist, Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and digital media, and co-Director of Cemore at Lancaster University. She specialises in site-specific and participatory digital art, focussing on more-than-human mobilities. She collaborates with artists, technologists, participants and natural systems to produce live installations that combine material and digital experience.

Maria Borovnik: Gazing at the Sea, Longing to be Elsewhere: When seafarers stay at sea for too long

Objectified and normalised as 'maritime labour', seafarers are expected to efficiently move large vessels filled with commodities across the globe. This talk offers a contrasting perspective by positioning seafarers as sentient human beings. The focus is on affects, dreams and memories seafarers engage in while facing the unpredictability and (im)mobilities of life at sea.

Maria Borovnik is a Senior Lecturer in Development Studies at Massey University, Aotearoa New Zealand. Her research interests lie in the intersection of mobilities, development and maritime geographies with a strong focus on seafarers; she is currently exploring the consequences of the crew change crisis experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nathan Jones: Unsecurities Lab and the Sinking of the Felicity Ace

Unsecurities Lab is a workshop format using immersive art works to engage teams of specialists in foresight on topics of high complexity. This talk focuses on our most recent cycle: SUNK COSTS, based on an artwork about a container ship that set on fire, taking thousands of luxury electric cars to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

Nathan Jones is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art (Digital Media) at Lancaster University, and co-editor of the art-language-technology publisher Torque Editions. His work experiments with models for contemporary art as a research environment.

Serena Pollastri: A seascape epistemology for urban futures that move with the water.

This talk will reflect on the tensions between the inherently fluid nature of water and the permanence and rigidity of the hydraulic infrastructures that shape our cities. Drawing from a 'seascape epistemology' (Ingersoll, 2016) I will speculate on amphibious and regenerative approaches as a radical alternative for adaptive urbanism.

Serena Pollastri is a Lecturer in Urban Futures at Imagination Lancaster at the School of Art (Architecture) and a co-founder of the Coastal Collective. Her practice-based research is concerned with developing and

applying design methods and approaches for regenerative coastal futures, particularly through collaborative, hands-on approaches.

SESSION 2

Debbie Yare & Jen Southern: Rogue touch and turbidity: conversations with the intertidal zone

The sea shore is changing rapidly at Red Bank, in an area that was once salt marsh. Searching for complexity rather than clarity we will discuss creative and mobile approaches to participatory research with the rich interactions of rock, algae, mud, barnacles and shrimps as they start to take hold in this evolving ecosystem.

Debbie Yare's art practice moves with and is shaped by the more-than-human Morecambe Bay, where she lives. Recent work has considered salt marsh ecology, coastal change, the archive, and seaweed. She works between and across media with interests in video, photography, writing, drawing, performance and socially engaged practice.

Ellie Barrett: Nature's Way of Working Stone: Collecting the coastline with a child

This presentation traces entanglements between sculpture making, maternal care and embodied experiences of water and the shore. An ongoing collaboration with my four-year-old daughter introduced the practice of collecting as an artistic method, which draws together Henry Moore's sculptural making processes alongside young children's knowing and becoming via engagement with coastal landscapes.

Ellie Barrett is a sculptor, writer, researcher and artist-mother with a specialism in socially-engaged sculpture. She is currently working with the Henry Moore Foundation to develop a new early years' programme; and Burnley Civic Trust and Blaze Arts on a public realm commission, co-produced with young people in Burnley.

Louise Mullagh: Reading the Sands: Walking, Data, and Repertoire Knowledge in Morecambe Bay

Data-driven accounts of place have a particular authority, but the sand of Morecambe Bay expose their limits. The channels shift, the tides move faster than a galloping horse and no dataset can keep pace. This presentation explores what walking reveals that data cannot; embodied, mobile, repertoire knowledge of place.

Louise Mullagh is Lecturer in Performance and Place at Lancaster University. Her research explores how embodied, sensory encounters with place produce forms of knowledge that data-driven approaches cannot replicate. Working on and around Morecambe Bay, she uses walking as both methodological and theoretical practice to argue for the value of repertoire knowledge in an increasingly datafied world.

Amy Dickson: Seaweed Transfer, 2025.

16mm film transferred to digital video

Seaweed collected in Morecambe produces an image on 16mm film using Phytography- a specific cameraless technique developed by artist and filmmaker Karel Doing in 2016.

Amy Dickson is an artist who works with experimental film, video and live performance. She is co-director of the arts organisation *Jwllrs* - a free alternative art school in Morecambe with a program of contemporary art exhibitions, talks and events. Amy is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Arts.

Jamie Jenkinson: Jelly Beach + TERRA

Sharing two quite different works – Jelly Beach, an improvised smartphone video, from an ongoing beach walks series; and TERRA, a research/metaphor heavy performance collated into print from a series intended to diffract our nuclear coastline – in conversation with Morecambe Bay.

[Jelly Beach, iPhone 7 Plus, 24/05/20](#)

TERRA, publication, 2026

Jamie Jenkinson is an artist, researcher and educator from Morecambe. Co-founder of alternative art school *Jwllrs*, Morecambe; and associate lecturer on MA Visual Communication at the Royal College of Art, London.

SESSION 3

Jo Carruthers: Nature's Play, Micro-Mobilities and Soft Fascination

This paper attempts to weave together a passage about Margaret's visit to the seaside from Gaskell's *North and South*, Schiller's theory of the 'play drive' (*spieltrieb*), and human experience of the micro-mobilities of the natural environment. Drawing on Attention Restoration Theory and the specific idea of 'soft fascination', I will present work in progress that argues that it is the micro-mobilities of (green and) blue spaces that produces restorative experiences for humans within the more-than-human natural environment, and especially the seaside.

Jo Carruthers teaches in English literature with an interest in place and mobilities. Her books include *Sandscapes: Writing the British Seaside* and *Anticipatory Materialisms in Literature and Philosophy 1790-1930*. She is working on a long-term project on the texture of roughness and its relation to the aesthetics of class in the nineteenth century.

Abi Lafbery: From Sea Gooseberries to Sewage: More-than-human Entanglements in Outdoor Swimming

My research attends to the relations between wetsuits and whales, sea gooseberries and sewage and plastics and planets. In this talk, I will discuss the rich more-than-human encounters of swimmers in the NW coast and Lake District, and the implications of these for swimmers' understandings of flora, fauna, water, weather and pollution.

Abi Lafbery's Phd explored how outdoor swimmers develop feelings of connections to their bodies, sense of selves and the outdoor swimming assemblage. She is particularly interested in how the practice of outdoor swimming can contribute to wider conversations about how to live well as part of a multispecies community in crisis.

Mimi Sheller: Theorizing from Caribbean Seas: tidalectics, mangroves, and sacred passages

Caribbean theorists, writers, and artists have contributed key concepts that draw on the sea. This talk will consider how critical mobilities theory interacts with ideas of tidalectics, mangrove thought and the relational theory of the undersea as a sacred space of crossings and transmotion.

Dr. Mimi Sheller is the Dean of The Global School at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA. She was founding co-editor of the journal *Mobilities*, founding co-director of *Cemore*, and past President of the International Association for the History of Transport, Traffic and Mobility. She helped to establish the "new mobilities paradigm" and is considered a key theorist in the interdisciplinary field of mobilities research and in Caribbean studies.