

A Table of Elements: An exhibition of work by Helen Lindon, Joanna Jones and Clare Smith exploring 'the elements' and the related ideas of climate and weather

Lindon Studio, 23 Wear Bay Road, Folkestone CT19 6BN 22-24 October 2015

Climate allows humans to live culturally with their weather ...¹

Different cultures have sought to make sense of the world, the environment, the weather and climate. The interaction between weather and cultures is central to the idea of climate: for Mike Hulme climate is an idea that relates more to order and stability, a making sense of changing and unpredictable weather.

... human beings live in climates – amidst the particular fluxes of weather that they encounter in different places, visceral experiences which are interpreted through their imaginative worlds.

The words bleak, gloomy, cold, warm are also the words we use to describe feelings, mood, human qualities. We talk of facing the elements, the atmospheric forces of wind and rain - the air and water of the four elements in ancient Greek philosophy (air, water, fire, earth) according to which the world was classified, a development of the ideas of Thales who held that everything was made up of water.

The works in the exhibition are linked by the element of water - more specifically the sea.

Helen Lindon's work is from the series "Drowned World":

"As I make my work I see, hear and feel the sea churning and pounding... relentlessly rising and falling through all seasons and all weathers. I love it and fear it and wonder at it - in awe of its immense power and beauty. The sea defences here are constantly under stress from the crashing waves and in the not too distant future, the relationship between land and sea will change dramatically - the ice caps are melting, sea levels are rising and wild, extreme weather conditions are becoming familiar."

Joanna Jones' film, *La Mer* charts the forms and structures of twenty-four painting actions over a couple of months skillfully brought together by filmmaker Dominic de Vere. The evolution of the fluid egg tempera painting is accompanied by an interpretation of Debussy's *La Mer*, in three movements, by Sally Beamish for the Trio Apaches. Debussy started his work in 1903 in France and completed it in 1905 at the Grand Hotel Eastbourne on the English Channel coast. The painting (185x260cm) is included in the exhibition.

¹ Mike Hulme, *Climate and its changes: a cultural appraisal*. Article first published online: 21 MAY 2015 DOI: 10.1002/geo2.5 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/geo2.5/full>

In Clare Smith's work the sea, across which people and goods travel, are transported and migrate, is the connector between lands and the means by which her forebears arrived in Malaya (now Malaysia) from Southeast China. Her installation (*Inherited*) - paper cut-outs using found atlas pages of Straits Chinese porcelain and Chinese export ware from cargo shipwrecked in the Malacca Straits - investigates the notion of imported identities.

Artists' Biographies

Helen Lindon has been concerned with ecology and the environment since the 70's. Her work has developed through experimentation with materials and ideas of space, colour and atmosphere. She is now working on the subject of Climate Change and Sea Level Rise. Her present practice investigates ideas of micro/macro - her images could be of a larger universe or looking through a microscope. Many patterns and images are replicated in both. Natural materials - sea, rainwater and carbon are used to make large scale drawings using tiny marks. These take hundreds of hours and become for the artist and viewer a contemplation on climate change. Helen trained at The Byam Shaw and went on to become an Associate Lecturer at Byam Shaw, Central Saint Martins and London College of Communication (all University of the Arts, London). She has also worked on artist, student and feminist initiatives. She shows her work mainly in London Galleries but lives and works overlooking the sea in Folkestone.

Joanna Jones's practice bridges painting and performance. She returned from mainland Europe to settle in Dover in 1997. After a foundation year at Northwich College of Art, she went on to the Byam Shaw School followed by the Royal Academy Schools. She won first prize in the Greater London Council's painting competition London 1969 before graduating from the Royal Academy Schools in 1970. She was co-founder of the London studio collective, *The Works* 1973-75. From 1978 to 1997 she lived in Germany, where she established her painting practice exhibiting nationally and internationally. In 2000 she received an ACE Year of the Artist award for a projection on the White Cliffs at Samphire Hoe. In 2006 she took her performative practice into the public realm co-founding Dover Arts Development (DAD) with Clare Smith in 2006.

Clare Smith's practice involves pattern, chance and process, often using strategies such as cutting, tearing, gluing and stitching. A prevalent element of her work is the grid - its rigid structures, which regulate and provide order, are fitted into, broken down or rebelled against. Other elements relate to materials, craft and objects. Smith works with drawing, print media, installation and painting to investigate the tensions between identities and traditions informed by her Chinese/English heritage. There is a delicacy and fragility to her work, reflecting a constant sense of the precariousness of physical existence. Collaboration is part of her practice and she is co-founder of Dover Arts Development (DAD) with Joanna Jones. Clare's studio is in Dover and she has an MA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins. She has shown in Kent and beyond.