



4th International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Emotional Geographies 1-3 July 2013 at the University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Session Summary	
Session Title	Emotional geographies of the coast (Session 2): Encountering the elements
Session Abstract	<p>The coast is where the land stops and the seas and oceans start. An obvious point - but one of great significance for terrestrial beings for whom water is an alien element. This presents human (and non-human) communities with all manner of fundamental physical, social, cultural and economic challenges and opportunities. Coasts are powerfully affective margins because they are where we confront the enigma that is the oceans. Those with high (macro) tidal ranges, and/or those vulnerable to erosion, inundation and facing climate change induced sea level rise, are mobile, and turbulent and subject to a series of rhythmic and novel changes on time scales that range between the hourly, the monthly the seasonal and beyond. Emotions are fluidly mobile. They flow through and over us, can wash us away - can flood and ebb in the body and in collectives of bodies like a tide in complex rhythms - become turbulent, then calm.- or even a storm surge they can unsettle a body. The emotive registers of coastal experiences are multiple, ranging from the joys of holiday making to the profound dread of loosing ones' home(land) through coastal erosion. Between these 'extremes' are a whole host of emotionally charged practices which include terrestrial and marine based recreation, on and offshore power generation schemes, coastal management consultations and decision making. As sites of emotional epiphany (tidal) coasts have long been the focus of artistic muse in terms of literature, sculpture, painting and performance.</p> <p>This session seeks to explore any of the topics related to emotional geographies of the coast mentioned above.</p>
Keywords	

Presentations		
#	Title	Author Name
1	Exploring the space between words and meaning: understanding the emotional geographies of surf spaces	Jon Anderson
2	The influence of the weather on tourist experiences	Jelmer Jeuring Karin Peters
3	Oileán: a narrative of change	Anna Ryan
4	Lost in translation: an artist's role in fostering the principle of community ownership in the development of viable coastal management strategies.	Simon Read

Session Convenors and Chair	
Session Convenor Name	Affiliation
Owain Jones	University of Gloucester
Bettina van Hoven	Department of Cultural Geography, University of Groningen
Session Chair name	Affiliation
Owain Jones	University of Gloucester

Session presentation details

Presentation 1	
Title	Exploring the space between words and meaning: understanding the emotional geographies of surf spaces
Abstract	<p>This paper explores the potential of the written word to evoke emotional engagement with the littoral space of the coastline. Through focusing on the relational sensibilities created through the act of surfing, the paper seeks to explore how these emotions are articulated by surfers in order to share their feelings with others. In doing so it draws attention to the 'intersubjective space' (after Thrift, 1996) between writer and reader and its potential to overcome the paradox of representation. In this space the written word has the potential to combine with readers' own experiences, however indirect or tangential, to create a currency of communicated lived experience. In this space, knowledge of surfing is co-created by writer and reader (or by surfer and non-surfer) and becomes freighted with empathic resonance. In order to explore whether the potential of this space can be realised, the paper presents examples of surf writing which seek to communicate the relational sensibility of surfing and asks the reader: can 'only a surfer know the feeling'?</p>
Author name	Author affiliation
Jon Anderson	Cardiff School of Planning and Geography, Cardiff University
Presentation 2	
Title	The influence of the weather on tourist experiences
Abstract	<p>As one of its main resources, weather is an integrated part of tourism. Yet little is known about how individual tourists experience the weather and how it affects their subjective perception of their holidays. The weather appears to have a prominent place in language and the use of the weather in narratives of tourists can provide insight in how the weather affects tourist experiences. Based on a qualitative analysis of online travel blogs written by Dutch tourists, sixteen weather themes could be distinguished, together representing how the weather was narrated about by tourists travelling in several countries across the world.</p> <p>Also, different impact themes emerged describing how the weather impacted on the tourists; Tourists revealed positive, negative or neutral evaluations about the weather impacts. Such evaluations pertained to several types of experiences, including emotional reactions such as happiness and fear, but also feelings of (dis)comfort and (bad) luck. The findings of this study can be used for future research on tourist behaviour and how specific weather types and impacts influence decision making of tourists in terms of itineraries and activities. Especially in coastal areas, where tourists and tourism industry are affected by and depending on 'the elements', knowledge about weather experiences and the feelings and emotions they evoke are argued to be a promising topic of research, by means of qualitative methods that are able to reveal these experiences within micro-level contexts in which the process of tourist experiences occur.</p>
Author name	Author affiliation
Jelmer Jeuring	Université Joseph Fourier, Grenoble France / Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.
Karin Peters	Wageningen University & Research Centre, Wageningen
Presentation 3	
Title	Oileán: a narrative of change
Abstract	<p>This paper is a story: a fictional story of an elderly man living alone at the edge of a group of fictional islets in 2013. These small islands sit near a coast physically similar to parts of the western seaboard of Ireland or Scotland; his home, the last remaining inhabited structure on the islands, faces the horizon of the 'mainland'. And so begins the story of the man.</p> <p>The crumbling wall tangled the light. Thrown off by the low wall, the rays wove across the roughness. In the distance the expanse of sea propelled a liquid reflection upwards. But on the ground, deep in the recesses and caught in the shadow, a man moved; slowly and deliberately following the depth of the darkness. His movements, traced across the well worn</p>

sand, sedimented the patch of flat ground hidden behind the dune, mounded up by the repeated winter storms.....

Embedded within the story will be implicit references to current academic interests specific to this session and to the conference theme as a whole, including the relationships between the body and its (coastal) surroundings, between ageing and (coastal) landscape, between emotions and physical change – of the body and of the land (and sea). Through the story, these relationships will be considered within the specific physical and social context of this outlying coastal region, a place under significantly increasing pressure from intensifying storm surges. The telling of the story draws attention to parallels between human and nonhuman forces and experiences.

The story will be told to the backdrop of a series of approximately twenty carefully taken photographs around the edges of the island of Ireland, where land meets sea. These photographs will document vulnerable coastal areas that are visibly changing, season by season, year by year, decade by decade. The photographs will be both records and abstractions, thus, like the story, will be specific yet universal at the same time. The form of this conference paper and its presentation aims to build on academic approaches that pursue critical writing via creative and fictional forms. The visual imagery will tell a second parallel story.

Author name	Author affiliation
Anna Ryan	School of Architecture, University of Limerick



Presentation 4

Title	Lost in translation: an artist's role in fostering the principle of community ownership in the development of viable coastal management strategies.
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Abstract

It has been routinely assumed by those entrusted with policy development that the arts have little place in societal adjustment to the challenge of environmental change and, if there is a role, it is little more than interpretation or commentary. Although this could be taken as an insult, the arts community often appears complicit through apparently confirming the stereotype of the independent artist, who seizes complexity and renders it as a beautifully polished nugget, a potent metaphor to excite the imagination of the lay public.

I have been working so long, deeply embedded in the discussion about how to develop estuarine and coastal management strategies with a strong and well-informed community voice at their core, that although I do this as an artist, I accept that I am so completely absorbed that formal decision making processes are just another extension of an aesthetic standpoint. Perhaps this is what is meant by the expression, “losing yourself in your work”.

Since the 1990’s, working on the East Anglian Coast of the UK, we have been faced with the need to develop an adequate level of community understanding of coastal and estuarine processes to enable a more constructive public contribution to the consultation process. My understanding is that strong commitment always flows from a sense of ownership and that the issue of Flood Risk Management is no exception to the rule. Until recently this has been conducted through government agencies in a paternalistic way on behalf of communities who only recently have become directly engaged with the process. This is new territory and as such demands new approaches engaging a wider range of skills and disciplines, including the arts because a shift in approach also engages a shift in cultural understanding of how particular environments work.

With reference to specific projects based both in the studio and in the estuarine and coastal landscape, I propose to discuss how as an artist I endeavour to place myself in the public debate, whether as such my contribution becomes lost in translation and whether this matters.

Author name	Author affiliation
Simon Read	Fine Art, Middlesex University, UK



Short biographical notes of session organisers and presenters

Convenor and Chair	See Session 1
Jon Anderson	Jon Anderson is a Senior Lecturer in Human Geography in the School of Planning & Geography, Cardiff University, UK. His research focuses on the relations between culture, place, and identity. He is particularly interested in the geographies, politics and practices that such relations produce. Jon has published widely, most notably a textbook ‘Understanding Cultural Geography: Places and Traces’ (2010). Further information on his work can be found at www.spatialmanifesto.com

Simon Read	Simon Read is a visual artist and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Middlesex University UK. He has been working for many years to explore and promote an understanding of the cultural implications of environmental change. With particular emphasis upon coastal and estuarine processes, he has been collaborating with communities and with government agencies to foster a sense of ownership of policy development. To this end as an academic he has also been keen to develop interdisciplinary partnerships. As an artist he considers his practice to be a catalyst in understanding natural processes, their management and the interface with policy development. He has exhibited widely across the UK and internationally, is represented in several public collections and has undertaken a wide range of public commissioned works.
Anna Ryan	Anna Ryan is an architect, cultural geographer and windsurfer; she graduated with a B.Arch. from University College Dublin in 2000 and a PhD from University College Cork in 2008. She worked as an architect with internationally acclaimed Grafton Architects in Dublin for a number of years and was editor of <i>building material</i> , the journal of the Architectural Association of Ireland. Since 2007 she is a full-time lecturer in architecture at the new School of Architecture University of Limerick where she teaches Design Studio, History and Theory of Architecture, drawing, writing, and photography. Her book, <i>Where Land Meets Sea: coastal explorations of landscape, representation and spatial experience</i> was published by Ashgate in 2012.