

ELIZABETH OGILVIE

BODIES OF WATER

Exhibition Events

Thursday 19 January

Gallery 1, 7pm

Join Elizabeth Ogilvie for an informal talk about her installation 'Bodies of Water' and her continued fascination with water.

Thursday 2 February

Meeting Room, 7pm

Chris Jeffries, Professor of Environmental Engineering at Abertay University will discuss the environmental impact of water from our cities with artistic and architectural solutions.

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 January

Activity Room, 12.30 - 5.30pm daily
Water Lot o' Experiments Weekend

The activity room is transformed into a science lab for the weekend with the help of Sensation Science Centre. See the water cycle in action, form a cloud in a bottle and learn about some of the extraordinary properties of ordinary water.

These events are **free** – just turn up.

Dundee Contemporary Arts

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Exhibition Information

'Time lost looking at the sea is precisely loss of time'
Thomas A. Clark, 2000

Elizabeth Ogilvie has been making work with water for over ten years. She has spent time studying its natural rhythms and patterns. She is inspired by water; the way it moves, how it changes form, what it looks like at different times and in different places. Since childhood she has lived within close proximity of large bodies of water: her grandparents came from the now uninhabited island of St Kilda and her current home is literally surrounded by the sea; a converted cinema on the Fife coast in which every window offers an unencumbered view of the North Sea.

Water is arguably the most important substance on the earth and our most precious resource. *'Over two-thirds of the planet's surface is covered by liquid water and over one-twentieth by ice'*. All life is dependant on water; our own bodies are over 70% water. Ogilvie's work aims to bring us closer to this fundamental matter. Her large scale watery installations offer people the opportunity to reflect, observe, examine and contemplate, to understand that: *'like a person, water has immediate, evident, and familiar characteristics that*

16.12.05
12.02.06

can be understood only, if at all, by a consideration of its deeper makeup, of the hidden factors that shape its behaviour'

Philip Bell – Life's Matrix A Biography of Water, 2000

'Water, like art, means everything. In some way at a certain level, it is recognisable, whether salt, fresh, tap, puddle, bottle, flood, well, radiator, heavy, loch, oasis, river, lake, sea or ocean. It is wet – yet as limitless as the sky'

Sacha Craddock, 1999

More recently Ogilvie has become concerned with the global politics of water and aims 'to promote a greater respect and understanding for water' through her work. Water management, use and abuse is a pertinent topic as half the world struggles to find clean, hygienic water and arguments over the ownership of contested waters are rife. Through her installations Ogilvie draws our attention to the global bodies of water, their constant and cyclical movement across the earth.

'The sea says no to names and nationality'

Douglas Dunn, 1999

'Bodies of Water' is a new series of works designed specifically for DCA's galleries. Ogilvie has created a unique

and impressive environment which examines the properties of the water cycle by combining music, architecture, video, light and water.

Gallery 2 acts as a portal to the main installation. It shows the results of Ogilvie's collaboration with the internationally renowned Taiko drummer Joji Hirota. They began performing together in 2003 after discovering that they share a common fascination with water having both grown up near the sea in Scotland and Japan respectively. The three-screen video installation documents their recent performance. Joji on the left expresses his experience of contemplating water throughout his musical performance, Ogilvie on the right is responding to the music and affecting the water with a rod. The mesmerising effects of this collaborative performance are visible on the projected pool of water echoing live events which take place in Gallery 1.

In Gallery 1 there are two large pools surrounded by a raised wooden platform. The first pool is still, a tranquil body of water which offers us an opportunity for contemplation and a new perspective on our surroundings. Acting as a reflective surface the pool mirrors the rest of the installation and the architecture of the gallery space.

Over the pool grainy black and white footage illustrates three of the main processes within the water cycle. Using CCTV cameras and other modern technologies Ogilvie has made visible the intimate nature of vortexes, meanders and currents.

The second pool is active; a cycle of water events are set into motion by a hidden pump and a series of pipes in the ceiling. These events are enhanced and reflected onto the gallery walls by a number of powerful theatre lights. The cycle moves from still water to gentle rainfall followed by heavy downpours, deluge and finally cascades. The whole process which takes place throughout the gallery, in the pools and on the projections, echoes the cycle of water, its diverse effects and remarkable phenomena. In the left hand ancillary room there is a small interactive pool where the viewer is invited to experiment and create their own water effects.

An enclosed and controlled environment, Ogilvie's exhibition cannot help but recall the famous body of water that lies beyond the gallery walls.

*'Restless Sea
Turbulent Sea
Lounging sea
Sea neither-one-thing-nor-another'*

Douglas Dunn, 1999

Elizabeth Ogilvie lives in Kinghorn, Fife. She has had solo exhibitions throughout the UK, including the Third Eye Centre, Glasgow (1980), the Serpentine Gallery, London (1981), Arnolfini, Bristol (1995). In 1999, she collaborated with poet Douglas Dunn on an installation 'into the oceanic' for Taigh Chearsabhagh, North Uist and was recipient of a Creative Scotland Award in 2001. She has been a lecturer at Edinburgh College of Art for many years.

For more information about the artist please visit the Information Room just outside the gallery entrance where you will find books, articles and reviews of her work.