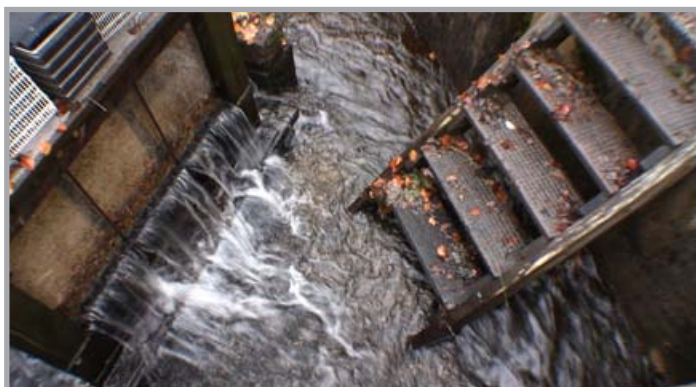


# SNAP

Notes + Activities for Students

## Victoria Clare Bernie Slow Water

9th April - 5th June 2011



# Victoria Clare Bernie

## Slow Water

Victoria Clare Bernie's practice centres on the representation of landscape in Northern and Western Scotland. 'Slow Water' is a new project of work derived from research undertaken during a recent Leverhulme Trust Artist-in-Residency post at the Scottish Association for Marine Science Research Laboratory (SAMS) based at Dunstaffnage near Oban. Victoria worked for ten months in collaboration with marine scientists, freshwater scientists and the Hydro to realise a form of liquid atlas as a record of water and landscape in Scotland now. It aims to map the present condition of water in Scotland, to study change in the landscape over time and in doing so to record the activities of industry and stewardship that maintain that landscape. Working with digital video and filmmaking, drawing and photography, Victoria's work seeks to identify and record an alternative image of Northern and Western Scotland as a worked and working landscape, a counter to the more familiar image of the Highlands as an under-occupied, melancholy and apparently untouched terrain. It is a visual document at once beautiful and unsettling in its ability to depict the details of insect life and death in a Highland loch, the particularities of water science and at the same time, the monumental charms of industrial infrastructure.

'Slow Water' takes the form of three large scale installed video works depicting scientific fieldwork practices, hydroelectric infrastructures and the minutiae of water and landscape across the seasons together with digital drawings, photographic landscape surveys, scientific taxonomies and fieldworking videos.

'Slow Water' was created with the support of: The Leverhulme Trust, SAMS (the Scottish Association for Marine Science), The Hope Scott Trust and developmental support from the Film and Video Umbrella.

A minigraph with a commissioned essay by Eric Laurier, Fellow in Human Geography at the University of Edinburgh, accompanies the show.

**EVENTS: Talk and Exhibition Tour of 'Slow Water' with Victoria Clare Bernie: 14th May, 3pm.**  
**Seminar – 'Video Art Scotland 2' 4th June, 3pm.** Using Victoria's work as a starting point, this seminar will look at current video practice and the influences upon it. Participants to be confirmed.

### More about the artist:

Victoria Clare Bernie undertook an MA in Fine Art at Edinburgh University and Edinburgh College of Art, a Postgraduate Diploma at Edinburgh College of Art and a Master of Architecture History and Theory at McGill University, Montreal. Her work has been exhibited in gallery and non-gallery sites including Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute, Bonhoga, Shetland, Drum Castle in Aberdeenshire, Catterline Arts Festival, Aberdeenshire, 'Northern City: Between Light and Dark' at Lighthouse, Glasgow and 'Can art save us', Millenium Gallery Sheffield. An earlier work was included in 'Invisible Fields', new moving image work by women artists in Scotland, shown at An Tuirrean in Skye and at Street Level Photoworks in 2005. She has been the recipient of awards from the Leverhulme Trust, The Scottish Arts Council and the Hope Scott Trust. In 2007 she received a Film and Video Umbrella Project Development Award and in 2008 her work was included in the Film and Video Umbrella submission to the Zoo Art Fair. Victoria is currently working in North West Scotland on a video project supported by a Visual Arts Artists Bursary from Creative Scotland.

# Victoria Clare Bernie : Slow Water

## Activity 1. Get creative mapping!

Victoria Claire Bernie's work aims to create a 'liquid atlas' or in other words to chart the present condition of water in Scotland. Although this is an improbable task her work opens up interesting questions about how we might map our landscapes, environments and cities from the perspective of the social, natural and built world.

Cartography is the study and practice of making maps. Think about how cartographic languages might diversify our understanding of locality considering our bodies, our communities, our cities and our environments.

Consider what the term 'personal geographies' might mean to you and what you could map. Is it possible to map your bedroom, your eating habits, your bodily functions, your senses, your use of language, your journeys, your expenditure, your relationships or even your future?

Now think about what appropriate visual aids and methods you would use to map a personal geography. Remember this doesn't need to use the same methods as what you'd find in an atlas or road map. Think about modes of creating diagrams and what will be your own set of parameters or conditions for charting. You will need to consider the maps purpose, naming/ labels and imagery.

Draw out your personal geography: think about the rules and symbols for how your information is presented. Perhaps the idea is for the map to be transplanted into different media such as online, or made into a sculpture or photograph; consider how this would work.

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## Activity 2. Discuss fictionalized landscapes:

Bernie's video work combines landscapes and sounds from various locations in Scotland and edits them together as though they depict one place. In this way you could say she creates an imaginary or fictionalized landscape.

In a group select examples of artworks, which depict fictionalized landscapes. Compare the different approaches and discuss what aspects you think are most successful. Think about why the artists might have created these imaginary places and what the images could evoke for the viewer.

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## Activity 3. Discuss working with experts from different disciplines:

Crucial to the development of Bernies' exhibition *Slow Water* was the artist's access to the scientific community. During a period of ten months Bernie worked at the Scottish Association for Marine Science Research Laboratory (SAMS), based at Dunstaffnage near Oban, with marine and freshwater scientists. This period of research enabled her to develop a unique relationship with the landscape and create a new body of work.

Artists now work in a wide variety of ways and it's becoming increasingly common for them to intersect their work with other research disciplines, producing unique outcomes.

Do you think Bernie's work looks like it relates to science and/or geography? Why?

Can you understand how an artist might combine science/ geography and art? Do you think you could be inspired by some aspect of science/ geography to create an artwork?

Are there any other subjects that you think could influence your art?

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Further Reading:

The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography, by Katharine Harmon with essays by Gayle Clemans