



WATERLINES

STORIES OF URBAN EBB AND FLOW

December 15 -
March 22, 2022

curated by Arlinda Shtuni



WATERLINES: Stories Of Urban Ebb And Flow

December 15, 2022 - March 22, 2023

Somerville Museum

curated by Arlinda Shtuni

Waterlines: Stories of Urban Ebb and Flow brings together five noted local artists, whose newly commissioned and freshly rendered works invite us to reflect on and examine our relationship with water.

As human beings, we are powerfully drawn to water. Every important passage of our lives is touched by water. However, as urban dwellers, we often have an abstract connection to it, as invisible infrastructures and complex systems of water lines bring it to us. Over time, our need for water has shaped our urban environments. Yet, as water cycles change, and our cities densify, how can we envision the future? How will we navigate droughts and floods, learn to adapt to our changing environment, and move in new ways?

The artists immerse us in sights and sounds, letting us viscerally feel our way through possible future environments. Treating water as a sculpting fluid, elemental force, consciousness, and sonic material, they invite in both the translucence and reflective shimmer of its surfaces and the overwhelming and terrifying power of its undercurrents. This sense of contrast and mutability is refracted throughout the exhibit—addressing the water inside and around us, and the fragile balance between them.

Ann Hirsch and Jeremy Angier's multimedia odyssey, *You Are Here*, challenges our sense of place, as it envisions fourteen different waterscapes projected across the topography of Somerville. While, Georgie Friedman's *Confluere*, multi-channel, site-specific, video installation "floods" the historic, two-hundred-thirty year old Charles Bulfinch flying double staircase with faraway tidal waters.

Caitlin & Misha's *Surface Tension* uses the streamflow data api from USGS to map the surface water of the U.S. in real time and to highlight the interdependence of the local and the global water systems. The work also draws a naturalistic comparison between the flow of the rivers and the movement of fluids in our own bodies, reminding us that our watery bodies are nature.

Artists Heather Kapplow and Faith Johnson look to our daily rituals and spiritual practices as ways to awaken and restore our relationship with the inner and outer bodies of water. Kapplow's

installation, *Seeking the Source*, surveys the contemporary practices of dowsing or water divining, and searches for ways to heighten our intuition through object- and sound-collecting. Johnson's installation brings into the museum water collected from natural local sources, and lets us commune and find a sense of balance with it through guided meditations.

The exhibit also showcases *Dialogues with Water*, a site-specific installation of soundscapes and sound acousmatic works by a group of Northeastern University music students guided by Professor Hubert Ho. These aesthetically eclectic pieces cast water sounds as material, allowing us to have unexpected sonic encounters with water in the gallery space.

Ultimately, *Waterlines* invites us to deeply explore the ecological, spiritual, and social dimensions of water and urges us to reawaken our personal connection with it.

-Arlinda Shtuni

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

A+J Art+Design/ Ann Hirsch and Jeremy Angier

Caitlin & Misha

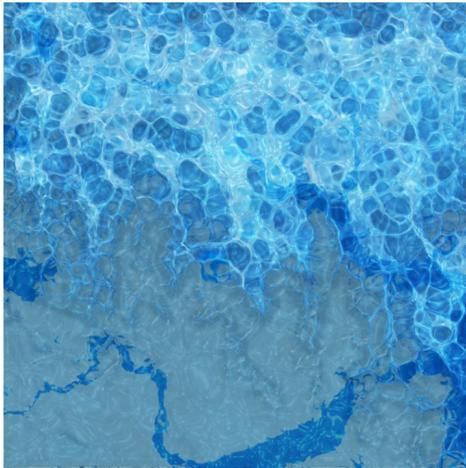
Faith Johnson

Georgie Friedman

Heather Kapplow

A+J Art+Design/ Ann Hirsch and Jeremy Angier

You Are Here



You Are Here (animation still)
Image Credit: © A+J Art+Design, 2022

Water covers 70% of the Earth's surface and makes up 60% of the average human body. As we go about our daily lives we think more about the land under our feet than the water around us and in us.

You Are Here explores interactions between land and water, substance and light, physical object and digital image. A six-minute multimedia odyssey transforms your sense of place with a sequence of fourteen varied waterscapes projected across topography of the Somerville area.

A+J Art+Design was founded by Somerville-based artists Ann Hirsch

and Jeremy Angier. The team uses digital and analog processes and a range of sculptural media to create accessible, multi-layered and visually compelling three-dimensional storytelling experiences. They create both temporary and long-term public art installations and have won local, national and international accolades.

Caitlin & Misha

Surface Tension



Surface Tension (Mississippi Flooding), *Surface Tension* (Rivers), Image Credit: Caitlin & Misha

Water supports life but can also drown and destroy. People are mostly water, but the melting ice caps threaten our very existence. Harnessing this elemental force requires a balancing act and this artwork is a reflection on humanity's fraught relationship with freshwater.

As an element that is constantly in a state of flux, water is shared among people and this visualization is a response to how intrinsically linked we are to water and to each other via water. We decided to focus on freshwater, which people drink and interact with every day and simultaneously pollute via a myriad of human activities. *Surface Tension* uses the streamflow data api from USGS which is updated daily and provides information for 11 thousand sites. The movement (blobs) in *Surface Tension* are the data points for the streamflow percentile column for the date on which you are viewing it. All of the surface water on Earth is

interconnected, and the disturbances at the specific points ripple out and interfere with each other, influencing each other and combining into an aggregate pattern of interdependence. In addition to providing a reference point for the data, the rivers simulate the movement of fluids both across the earth's surface and in our own bodies.

This is the first exhibition of the percentile sorted variant of *Surface Tension*. It shows the sites with minimal changes in streamflow first and ends with the sites that are experiencing the most anomalous streamflows and enables easier comparison of locales across the continental U.S.

Surface Tension was created during an Immersive Scholar Residency at NC State funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation. More information available at caitlinandmisha.com/surface-tension.

Faith Johnson

The Magic of Water



The Magic of Water, Image Credit: Faith Johnson

The Magic of Water installation combines the crystalline and water like qualities of glass and mirrors to create a sacred vessel. This container holds local waters from the Mystic River, Walden Pond, and a secret spring in the Emerald Necklace. I spent time building relationships with each source through deep inner listening, year round dipping (in Walden Pond), and gathering the waters with gratitude.

Working in the realm of vision, imagination, and belief, I activate the installation through guided water meditations which connect participants to the consciousness and magic of water. The meditations were developed in response to metaphysical experiences I had with the waters of my ancestral

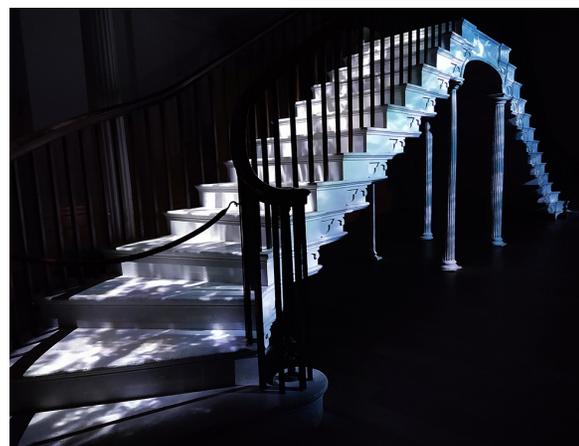
Scandinavia. They are centered around envisioning a time when the waters flow in balance and joyfulness once more and ecological friendship is reignited or deepened. If something is to come into being it must first be envisioned and believed to be possible.

These local waters were gathered on the traditional lands of the: Massachusetts, Pawtucket, Nipmuc, Agawam, and Naumkeag. This project is an adaptation of the Water Keepers' Library project (2016-present), which houses water from around the world.

Guided water meditations to be held:
Saturday, January 7, 11:30 am
Saturday, February 11, 11:30 am
World Water Day, Wednesday, March 22, 7:30 pm

Georgie Friedman

Confluere • Latin: *To flow together; con-* (“with; together”) + *fluo* (“flow”)



Confluere
(installation view),
Somerville Museum,
2022. Image Credit:
Georgie Friedman

Confluere (To Come Together) is a multi-channel, site-specific, video installation inspired by, and designed for the two-hundred-thirty year old Bulfinch "flying double staircase" and the lands historically inhabited by the Pawtucket confederation of Algonquin-speaking tribes, including the Massachusetts.*

This installation aims to create a visual environment in which global tidal waters / the past and the present / and the distant and the local / flow together and apart / divided and rejoined / by the architectural form.

Georgie Friedman dedicates this piece to the memory of George Fifield, great friend and curator, as he flows beyond this known world.

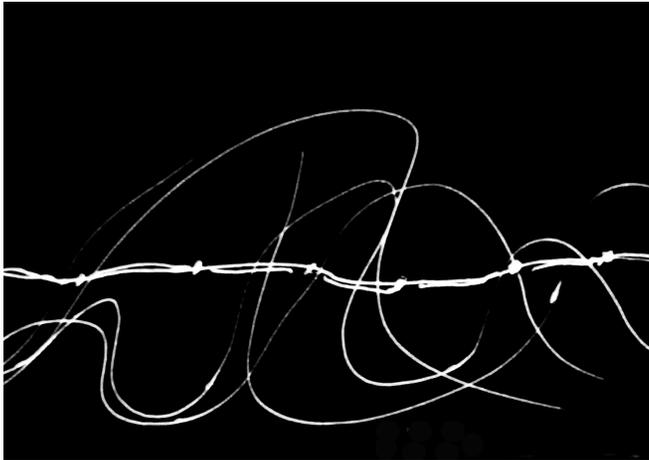
* Charles Bulfinch (born 1763, Province of Massachusetts Bay, a British Colony), who is regarded by many as the first American-born professional architect (of European-descent), designed the "flying double staircase" (1792) as part of his commission for the new Charlestown house for shipping merchant, Joseph Barrell. It was relocated to the Somerville Museum for historic preservation.

Prior to colonization, the Massachusetts people did not live in settled communities, but migrated seasonally, in bands, throughout their territories. The Massachusetts do not exist in any organized band, tribe, or nation today, but many Wampanoag and Nipmuc tribal descendants claim Massachusetts ancestry. Native Americans have lived throughout what is currently known as Massachusetts and Rhode Island for over 12,000 years.

Source: www.library.wit.edu/guides/native-american-heritage

Hey There Kapplow

Seeking the Source



Seeking The Source,
Image Credit:
H. Kapplow

Seeking the Source uses water as a metaphor for intuition, and the tenacious persistence of dowsing in the modern world as a symbol of our commitment to retaining and nurturing intuitive understanding, even as we rely on technology and enlightenment-age logic to navigate our daily lives to a degree that should make intuition obsolete. I am interested in how we flow smoothly between these two seemingly contradictory ways of knowing the world.

Seeking the Source was created through research into the history and contemporary practices of dowsing or water divining; through group conversation about personal experiences with intuition; and then through object- and sound-collecting.

Each object on display has a unique soundtrack, accessible via a numbered,

scannable QR code. The numbers of the QR codes map against numbers in the vitrines accompanying each object. The playlist for *Seeking the Source* is also accessible for the duration of the exhibition at: https://soundcloud.com/seeking_the_source/sets/seeking-the-source-playlist and via this QR code:



if you'd prefer to listen in more detail outside of the museum setting.

The development of *Seeking the Source* has been supported by The Somerville Museum, Flux Factory, ARoS Museum, Useful Art for Communities, and USF Verftet.

Dialogues with Water

Dialogues with Water is a site-specific installation of soundscapes and sound acousmatic works by a group of Northeastern University music students guided by Pr. Hubert Ho.

From inviting us to follow the journey of underground water rise to the surface, to letting us meditate near calm waters, and thrusting us into a storm, these aesthetically eclectic

pieces respond to the exhibit in myriad ways. At times, the sonic landscapes meld naturally with the artworks; at others, the sounds work in counterpoint with them, prompting full immersion and deep reflection on our complicated relationship with water.

PARTICIPATING MUSIC STUDENTS

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Simon Aber | Marc D'Almeida |
| Andrew Abrego | George Hagopian |
| Connor Albright | Liam Martley |
| Peter Benson | Jakob Philippe |
| Aidan Bouchey | Spencer Rosenfeld |
| Paden Cerbone | Deanna Turner |

Special thanks to the Department of Music and the College of Arts, Media, and Design at Northeastern University. The students and Pr. Ho graciously thank curator Arlinda Shtuni for her invitation and support to include the soundscapes in this exhibit.

Public Installation

The public installation of *Waterlines: Stories of Urban Ebb and Flow*, on view at the Inside-Out Gallery, was created in conjunction with this exhibit. It features artwork from Ted Ollier and runs from December 9th, 2022 - January 31, 2023.

Rivers, nature's wild running waters, have carved landscapes and drawn ecologies, shaping the habitats where we live since time immemorial. Flowing down from source to mouth, they meander and change, grow and recede. Over time, we have tamed the rivers, damming and shifting their flow to sculpt the environment around us, claiming their beds to possess more fertile land on which to grow our food and build our cities. And through these processes, we have altered their flow and sediments.



Ted Ollier's series renders the bodies of several major rivers in their majesty and vulnerability. And through transforming them into stitchwork pieces, he offers a fresh lens through which to relate to them.

"Now the rivers in the earth are like the pulsating blood vessels of a man. As the blood flows through them they throb or are still in accordance with their own times and measures. So it is with the rivers. Their rise and fall, their going and coming are like human respiration, like breath coming in and out."

-Wang Chong, first century Chinese naturalist

Graphic Geologies, (public installation series), Ted Ollier
Image Credit: Yorgos Efthymiadis

PROGRAMS

For more information about events and programs related to this exhibition, please visit:

somerwillmuseum.org/waterlines

Curator Tour

February 18, 2023

5 - 6 pm

A Dinosaur Annex Ensemble Performance

Music of the Waterliness

March 12, 2023

3 - 4:30 pm

Music of the Waterliness is a program of compositions centered on the aesthetics and discourses surrounding water, fluidity, and nature, interspersed with open-form pieces that respond to the artworks on display. It follows in the long musical tradition of composers finding inspiration in water and its various manifestations: as a source of natural beauty, as a crucial element for human survival, and as the basis for sound and sonic material itself.

Water Walking Tour

Seeking the Source: An Expanded Experience

March 19, 2023

1 - 2:30 pm

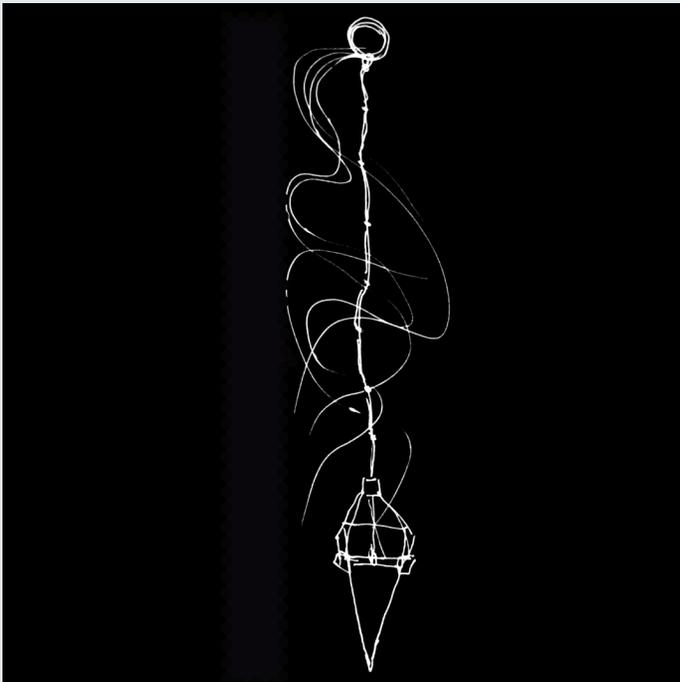
There is a buried river under Somerville. Let us see if we can find traces of it together and follow them, shall we? We'll meet at the entrance to the museum, but the museum will be closed, so dress for the weather and have everything you might need with you for a 60-90 minute-long ramble.

World Water Day Celebration

March 22, 2023

6 - 8 pm

A celebration of water as a source of creativity and flow, with a poetry reading by Dara Barrois/Dixon, Dan Chelotti and Beth Ayer, concluding with a water meditation by artist Faith Johnson.



"Seeking the Source 3", Image
Credit: H. Kapplow

WATER QUESTIONNAIRE

The project began by asking people from around the world to share personal musings, stories and rituals they associate with water, as well as to offer proverbs, sayings and lore from their culture. We invite you to reflect on your own relationship with water by answering the questions provided here or by taking the questionnaire online:



The questionnaire will continue to serve as a repository of responses and will remain open in perpetuity.

WATER QUESTIONNAIRE

1. When you think of water, what words, sounds, images come to mind?
2. What water-related expressions, sayings, simile, metaphors in any language can you think of?
3. Water is anomalous, treading between order and disorder, shapeshifting, containing and moving energy. In 2016, scientists discovered a phase of water that is not solid ice, liquid water, or vapor gas. At 50 degrees Celsius, water behaves like liquid crystal. Do you have a favorite water shape? Why?
4. "Dreaming beside the river, I gave my imagination to the water, the anonymous water knows all my secrets. And the same memory issues from every spring," wrote Gaston Bachelard. When do you find yourself wanting to be by the water?
5. What is a meaningful water-based ritual to you? It could be personal, cultural, spiritual or inclusive of these; as simple as taking a bath or as elaborate as a baptism.
6. "The waters are nature's storehouse in which she locks up her wonders," wrote English writer, Izaak Walton. Each culture has its own beliefs and myths about water, along with its river gods and sea monsters. What is a memorable sea story or sea creature to you?
7. If you could bottle a vial of water, what kind would it be?
8. "What water gives, water takes away," says a Portuguese proverb. Could you share a personal story where water played a special role?



Graphic Geologies, (public installation series), Ted Ollier
Image Credit: Yorgos Efthymiadis

SPONSORS

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Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



EVERSOURCE



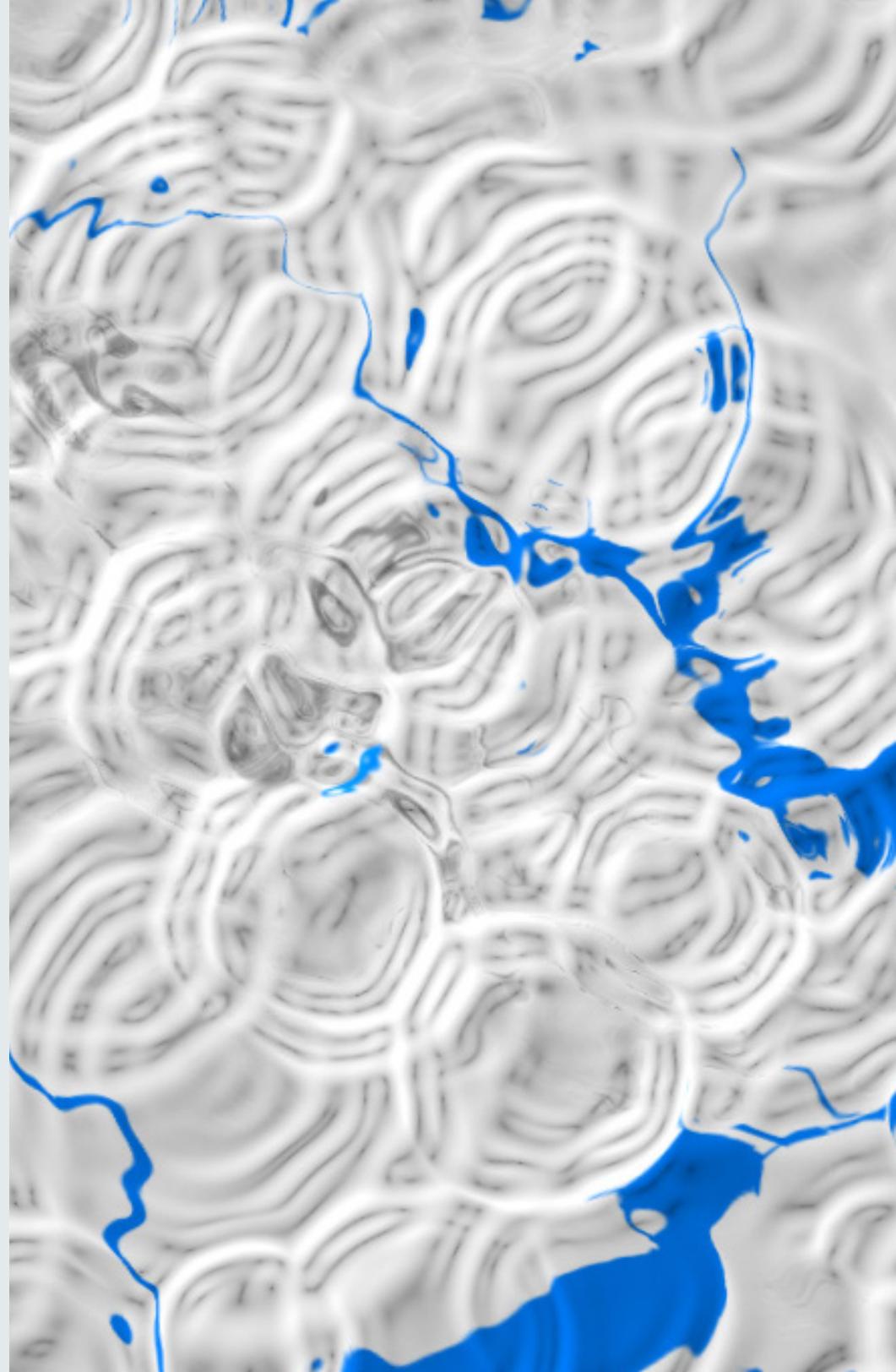
Eastern Bank

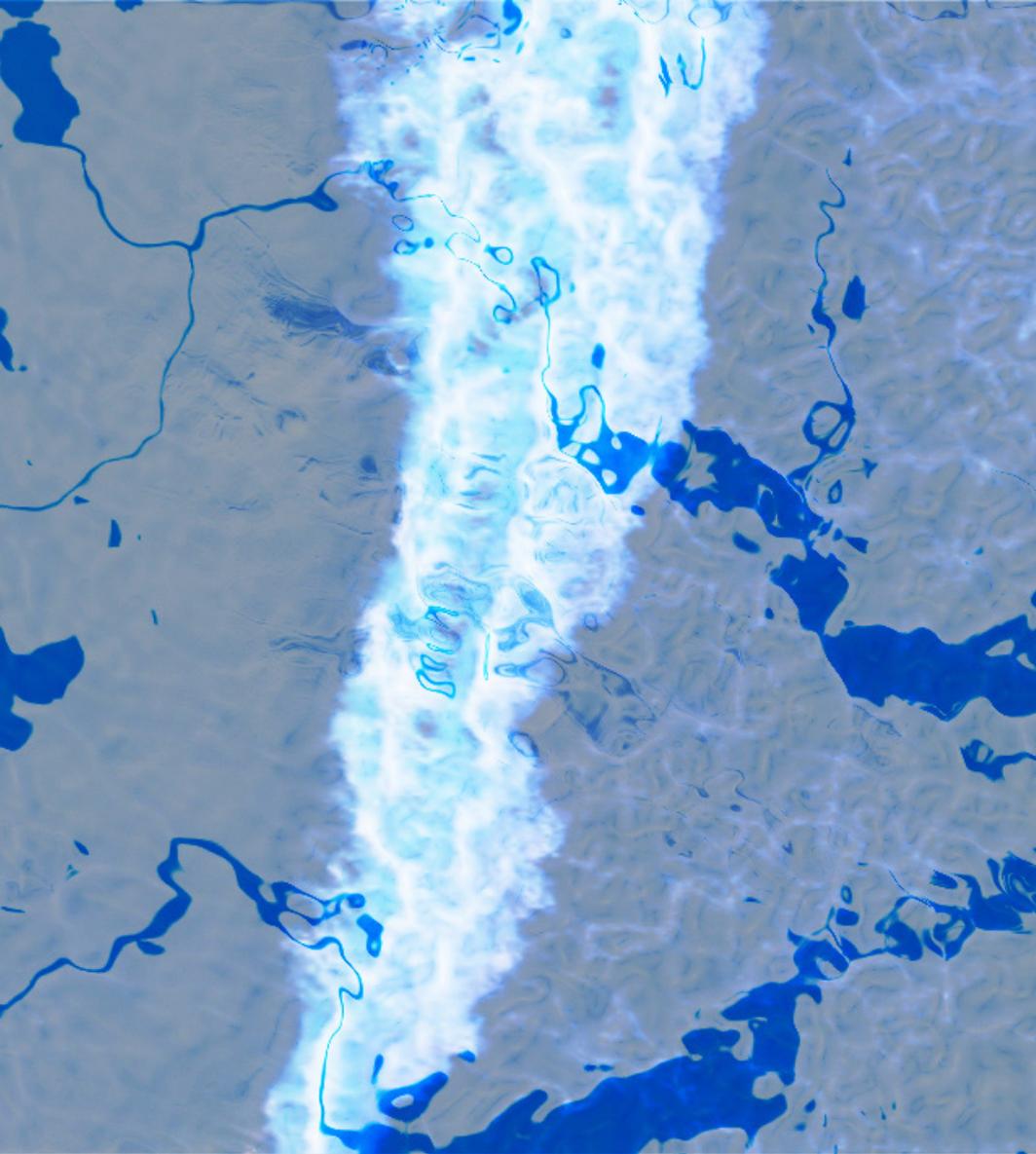


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A + J Design, "Overwhelm Still 3" (detail)





Front Cover:
Surface Tension (Rivers), Caitlin & Misha

Back Cover:
Overwhelm Still 1, A + J Art + Design

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