

CREATIVE BRIEF

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project is about slowing down; about connecting with life in ways that are mindful, multi-sensory and critical. Although 'Letter to Water' may evoke a multitude of personal and diverse topics within each of us engages with it, the main focus is on water, its many iterations, and on becoming aware of the scope of plastic pollution in relation to the individual.

An 8' x 8' x 8' steel pipe structure forms a cubic enclosure. The outside of the structure is covered in stretchy white fabric that serves as projection surface from multiple sides. An opening and additional signs invite us in. Once inside, we are surrounded by 5,000 plastic water bottles that line the walls and floor. The space is intimate, light and feels somewhat claustrophobic. A layer of bottles is stretched across the space at approximately chest height, forming a permeable barrier between the lower space and the upper space of the cube. We can lay down, kneel, stand up, touch the bottles, and make sounds with them. Pillows and chairs are provided outside and inside the cube. Paper and pencils are provided to write a letter to water, which they then slide into a bottle to become a permanent part of the installation and for others to read.

In one of the four corners a constant, slow drip of water fills a glass and overflows by the end of the day.

A video and sound-score are playing on loop for 20 minutes, starting times are announced outside on a sign. We hear voices of children talking and singing about water, we listen to the sounds of water, to poetry and people asking us to engage mentally, or physically, with the topic of water. The goal of these auditory, visual and haptic engagements with water is to refine our mindfulness about water and the way we affect it and are affected by it.

AUDIENCE

This installation is for audiences of all ages and abilities and allows about 6 people in at a time. Since it was created in collaboration with elementary school children, it has many elements that speak particularly to that age group. The installation is designed to be accessible to people in wheelchairs.

PERCEPTION

'The Letter to Water' is multi-sensory and all-immersive. The experience will be individual, simply because we can never fully know what others are experiencing, understanding or misunderstanding. Imagery and auditory stimuli guide us on our way to contemplating topics of water, water bodies, bodies in water, the body of water, the water in our bodies, and so on... We are asked to change perspective constantly. We are encouraged to imagine what kind of water we 'are', realizing that we all are about 80% water. The metaphors used, the words chosen, the imagery and materials presented all bring us to contemplate the delicate balance of ecosystems and our own enmeshment within them. In Wilmington, NC, where the first installation will be presented in the spring of 2018 (work in progress) has a current water crisis. A company has been releasing toxic chemicals into the drinking water supply for many years. 'The Letter to Water' is not a lecture, or a historical/scientific account of water, but more a philosophical rendering and opportunity to examine our very personal relationship to water by engaging with the installation in physical and critical ways.

NEEDS

There is a lot of plastic pollution all around us, our creeks are lined with the nastiest of civilization's castoff's, our rain is acid and our air is polluted. We have come to take it for normalcy. Our children learn that that is how the world is. We need to step back, change our view point, and become aware again, so that we can take better care of ourselves and of future generations.

Water quality is an issue that we are not necessarily aware of at first sight, since our water looks clear and is generally abundant.

We crave unusual, visually and emotionally stimulating experiences that address our intellect. This installation invites us to watch, listen, touch, play and ponder.

MATERIALS, TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

The installation consists of steel pipe system scaffolding. An interlocking assembly and disassembly allows for quick and structurally safe set-up and strike. The construction's outer perimeter is clad in a simple 2x4 wood frame onto which stretchable fabric is tied. The fabric forms a visual barrier for privacy while in the interior and serves as a projection surface on 5 sides. The steel structure weighs approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ a ton. For this assembly, so far, we need the scaffolding, a rubber mallet hammer, 12 pieces of 8 foot long 2x4 pine, 160 eye hooks, 320 square feet of stretchy white fabric, a sewing machine, white yarn, tie-line, scissors, and a marker. 5,000 plastic water bottles were collected and cleaned with the help of the university of Wilmington recycling facility and students. I connected about every 100 of them into 12 foot long strands. The connection material is by 18-22 gauge wire.

The slow drip is achieved by means of an IV drip bag hanging from the top pipe. I need one to 5 video projectors to achieve full surround projection effects. Only the projection onto the ceiling fabric is actually fully in focus and visible from the inside. The side projectors will only show clearly on the outside but not on the inside where they cause visual effects and dynamic color changes.

Further needed to achieve these effects are: a semi dark space, 5 projectors (can be done with one, depending on budget), cable, extension cords, laptop, clip-on lights, 4 sticks of fluorescent lights or light rope for around the bottom of the structure.

Inside and outside the cube: paper strips, pencils, signs (paper) and a table outside near the cube where info material and mailing list sign -up sheets are set-up.

TIMELINE

November 2016 - July 2017	Development of overall theme, concept, and section titles, gathering of interview material, video footage and editing, choreographing stage performance, lighting and costume design for 'The Light of the Water' (commissioned by UNCW) etc
July 26 th , 2017	Premiere stage performance 'The Light of the Water' at UNCW
September 15 th - Decemeber 15 th :	Development of installation concept, construction plans, developing unique audience interaction aspects:
November 2 - 10, 2017	Meetings with local potential venues for the installation in Wilmington, finding tech crew, logistics and budget discussions on site, storage facility negotiations, audio record musician playing water instruments and aquarium, audio record audiences, do interviews, etc
December 15 th	Initial project proposal deadline
March 1 st , 2018	Grant proposal NC Arts Council, https://www.ncarts.org/resources/grants/grants-organizations/program-support For exhibition in other venues across NC
	Edit audio and video for installation (condense and change 60 minute worth of material to 20 minute loop, include new audio recordings)
March 22-25, 2018	Planned opening at SARUS Festival for Site-specific & Experimental Art, Wilmington, NC www.sarusfestival.org , minimal funding secured (see budget), work in progress
Summer 2018	Tentative exhibition time frame, UC Davis on campus
2018/19/20	San Francisco recycling facility grant opportunity, details tbd
	Pursue discussions with the Manetti Shrem museum, possibility for exhibition in 2018/2019, contact Jennifer Wagelie, Ph.D., Academic Liaison