

## Seeping, maintaining, flooding and repairing: how to act in a both/and world

PERDITA PHILLIPS

Independent Artist/Researcher, Walyalup/Fremantle

This paper outlines the experiences of a short artist in residency called *Follow the water* at the Vancouver Arts Centre in Albany, Western Australia that began in November-December 2018. Investigating the local network of urban and peri-urban drainage, the project was an attempt to reframe drains from what they are normally seen as—of a way of transferring ‘problems’ to elsewhere—into a space of reparative engagement. Intimate, makeshift walks were taken with drain allies along road culverts and agricultural drains and through snaky, polluted and weedy country. Walks were recorded with cyanotypes and a further cyanotype workshop was conducted with the public on the subject of local watercourses. Whilst being attentive to the local stories of water, settler history and regeneration, the project nevertheless attempted to problematise the current quasi-legal and commonplace notions which see the flow of water leaving a property downstream (and downslope) as being ‘not my problem’. In a small way, this art project works through the ‘impurity of caring’ (that acts of caring contain the *wish that it were not so* (Shotwell), at the same time that they are entangled) with a tactical move that I have termed ‘porous repair’. It therefore provides a short example of the complications of *thinking through* water stories using artistic means.

### Seeping, maintaining, flooding and repairing

I have been thinking a lot about seeping, maintaining, flooding and repairing and the similarities, contrasts and contradictions within and between them. For example, to maintain does not only mean to keep something going, but also to state something strongly. To repair is to restore, but also to frequent a place regularly. To seep is to move slowly, to flood is to be fast.

As a practicing artist I have created a number of socially engaged projects that involve water. For *Carry me, join me* (2016; Figure 1) human participants collected water samples and transferred samples of ‘miasma’ (air) between twenty-two water-bodies that had either been substantially modified or subsequently artificially created over the original, rich and bountiful wetlands of central Perth. I asked human participants to re-join these wetlands, and re-establish the fractured communication lines between them as part of a symbolic act of reconnecting the wetlands.



**Fig. 1** Perdita Phillips, *Carry me, join me*, 2016, a participatory project with 8 human participants and 22 waterbodies in central Perth, Western Australia. Image © Perdita Phillips

For the past few years my activities have been focussed on small acts and local places, not directly where I live, but down in Albany in the southwest of Western Australia. *Follow the water* was a residency and project about drains and draining, initially undertaken at the Vancouver Arts Centre in Albany, Western Australia, beginning in late 2018.

Kinjarling<sup>1</sup> (Albany) is unceded Menang Noongar land. Beginning as a military outpost in 1826, Albany was WA's earliest European settlement. Kim Scott's novel *That Deadman Dance* (Scott) is a speculative account of indigenous-settler relations in early Albany, including a character based loosely on Mokare, who was a major interface between cultures and whose statue can be found in the main street (York Street). Today, Albany's economic landscape remains focussed on export of agricultural, mining and forestry products. A common sight are trucks carrying wood chips (*smashed-up forests*) back and forth to giant stockpiles at the port (Figure 2). During my 2018 residency I could hear these trucks running *night and day*.

But Albany is also a network of water; a tale of two catchments and two parts of a city. Figure 5 is a map of stormwater drains. It shows the original town cradled between Mount Clarence/Corndarup and Mount Melville/Manitchpurting/Kardarup, draining into Princess Royal Harbour to the south. On the other side of these hills there are watery landscapes and swampy ground. These low-lying sponge landscapes suck up water over winter and let it slowly leak out over the long dry

summers. The original swamps are now transformed into ovals and sports grounds and semi-rural lots (see also Figure 24). You can see the course of Yakamia Creek, much altered into a series of drains and Tjuitg-ellong/Lake Seppings that survives more or less intact. Both creek and lake end up draining to the east into Oyster Harbour.



**Fig. 2** Woodchip truck above and freight train below: extractivist economies in Albany. Photo © Perdita Phillips



**Fig. 3** Mt Clarence interceptor drains constructed 1897–1903. These are close to parallel to the contour and were designed to catch overland flow in the belief that this would stop the town below being flooded. Photos © Perdita Phillips

## Drains

In common with many western cities, engineering issues of water management in Albany are often about where it collects and how it drains away. The old part of the city has a network of early stone drains including interceptor drains that drape across the slopes of Mt Clarence and Mt Melville (Figure 3). Many of the streets in the old town still have open stone drains taking water down to the sea. These are stormwater drains. On the left of Figure 4 is a picture of the old town drains and on the right, Yakamia



**Fig. 4** Old (town) and new (Yakamia) drains. The street drains and the straightened, controlled creek both show the continual tension between seeping, flowing and maintaining. Photos © Perdita Phillips

Creek. In both cases, orthodox drainage engineering has always been to dig a drain and make water move through the landscape as quickly as possible to the receiving water body—where it is no longer a *human* problem. Drains convey problems *away*.

In one century, a lot of the history about the old town drains has been lost. There are no existing/accessible council engineering records; rather I was working with a local historian reconstructing the story from letters and articles in the local newspapers. Whilst post-dating the early convict era, the old town drains were a significant public achievement of late nineteenth to early twentieth century European settlement. The main street has always had a ‘drainage problem’. We see the hard surfaces of roads and buildings, and, again, the Enlightenment aim of shifting water to ‘elsewhere’ as quickly as possible. This is of course connected to greater historical forces: the straightness of drains and the way that water is directed down to the sea “the same way colonial Reason drives meaning to the Truth” (Neimanis, “Water and Knowledge” 63).

Today the stormwater drains in York Street are buried like you find in most western cities—water is controlled and invisible until it is A PROBLEM (see Figures 6 and 8). Nonetheless, one thing that does strike you is the care taken in the slow construction of the exposed drains you *can* still see—with each stone carefully placed. Looking straight down you can see the smaller infill placed between in this mortarless construction.

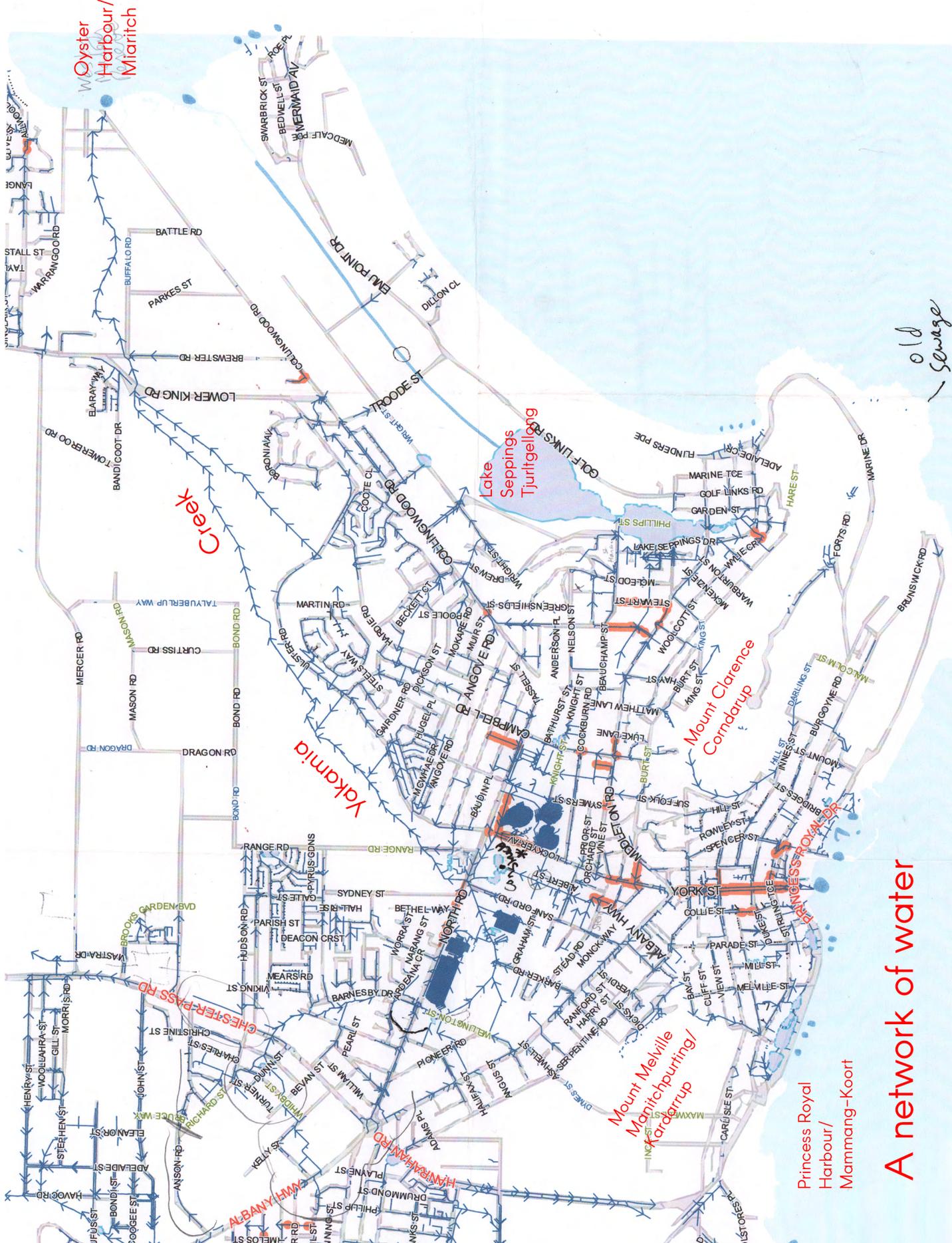
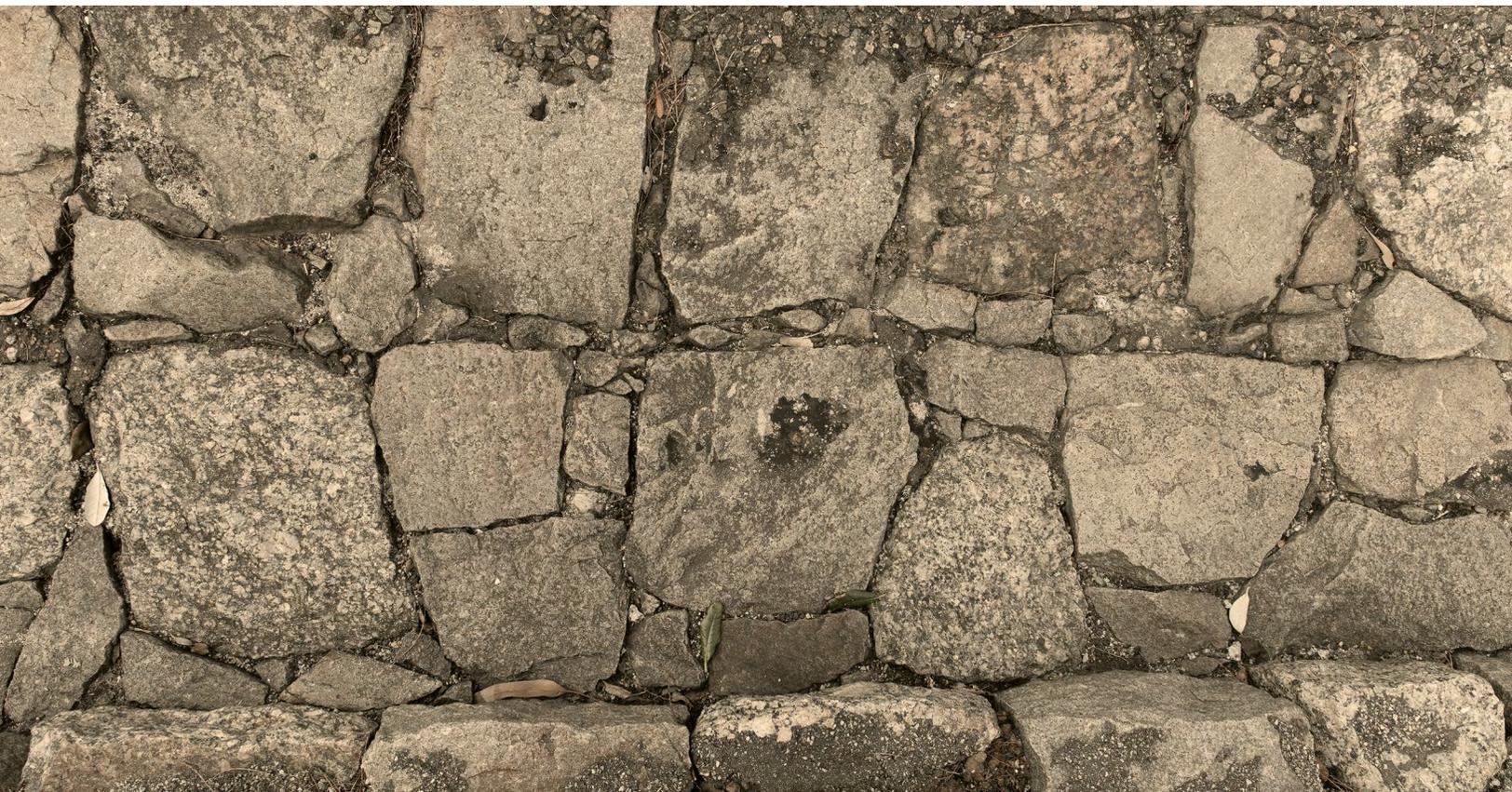


Fig. 5 Map of surface and enclosed street drains of the newer (draining into Oyster Harbour) and older (draining into Princes Royal Harbour) Kinjarling/Albany.



**Fig. 6** Albany floods: overflowing drains on York Street, Albany ca.1920. Water catastrophically interrupting the fabric of the town. Source: Albany History Collection 2325P

**Fig. 7** “Colonial” drains: detail of mortarless construction of kerbing at Duke Street. Strips of bitumen have crumbled, and the permeable pavers have been re-exposed. Water moves *across* and *through*. Photo © Perdita Phillips





**Fig. 8** York Street today, the same location as Figure 6, where the open drains have been replaced. Photo: *follow the water* participant.

Whilst local myth call these ‘convict’ drains, recent unpublished historical research (by the author and historian) suggests that they were mostly nineteenth century replacements of the original wood-lined ditches. Both wood and stone are evidence of settler histories of extraction: the forests that likewise supplied wooden cobbles for the streets of London (Tillson) are mostly gone, but the stone quarries are still visible nearby.

Figure 9 shows a semi-rural block owner asking for clean sand (clean fill) so that they can build their house above the water table. Much of the lower land draining into Oyster Harbour is low-lying and sea levels are rising slowly with climate change (Bicknell). As part of my watery enquiries with people and organisations, I discussed these issues with the city’s drainage engineer who brought up the legal concept of the Common Enemy Doctrine, one of three approaches in European law to surface water moving across legal boundaries (Dobbins). Applying the Doctrine, a landowner may repel surface waters as necessary (as during a flood), without having to consider the consequences to other landowners (N. K. G.). It gives an individual landowner the unqualified right to dispose of water. The underlying theory is that these waters are the *common enemy of man* to be fought off by each property owner as



**Fig. 9** Perdita Phillips, *Clean fill*, 2018, digital print. Residents asking for sand, to try to raise house pads above the surface expression of the water table. Image © Perdita Phillips

he [sic] sees fit. If water falls as gentle rain, then it's OK to fill your rain tanks. If it runs off your land onto another property, then it's *not your problem*.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this entwining of common good and private property, water and boundaries, living things and their assemblages that I began the residency. I set out to address this mode of thinking that does not “take seriously the vitality of nonhuman bodies” (Gibbs 467). This thinking, expressed at the local level, that ‘my responsibility stops at the property boundary,’ is also writ large in climate change debates: wash the problem down the road and you are no longer responsible. And the corollary of this—the dog poo fairy—is that someone else will clean up after me (Figure 10). I was gathering stories of estranged boundaries between people and other people and between people and the living waters of more-than-human worlds.



**Fig. 10** Mutenup (Parade Street Park), with stormwater drainage sump in the foreground, and the Dog Poo Fairy. Photo © Perdita Phillips

**Fig. 11** Listening and *following the water*: drain cover and sound recording of Kardarup giving up water, well into the summer months. Photo © Perdita Phillips

But wait, just for a moment.  
Pause.



Let's listen to what the water of Kardarup is trying to tell us as



it flows down to the sea in this drain recording. How can boundaries be made permeable? How can these stories between people and more-than-human worlds be unravelled (or re-ravelled)? It is my contention that the current state of affairs in society today asks for a form of critical hope in a time of uncertainty (Phillips). My current interests are in addressing how we can be 'both' and 'and' at the same time: the role of complicity in social-ecological systems and how to maintain a contingent—yet effective—position as an artist, consumer and great ape. We are inside the 'problems' and the problems don't have neat solutions (Shotwell).

## Weeds

So we return now to the drains to tease out some of these ideas. As places that accumulate water in a Mediterranean climate, they are full of weeds, and without human intervention, the drains will choke up as life overflows. A weed is something out of place, but they are also a vibrant pulse of life. A weed interferes with human use and values (for example, in preventing the flow of drains) or decreases biodiversity because it overwhelms local species and causes local extinctions. But how do these facts and judgements address *who* brought the weeds there in the first place? What does local or ‘native’ mean in the context of settler colonialism (see, for example, Head and Muir; Head; Trigger and Mulcock)? Can there be settler colonialism without weeds or weeds without settler colonialism? We have all seen the pink stain denoting areas sprayed with herbicide, making visible the systems of extractivism. Where is the agency of the weed? Where is the agency of the other plants that are overwhelmed? What happens when there is a flood of weeds? Is this contested space of plants in- and out-of-place akin to what Lauren Berlant calls “the common of awkwardness, complicity, and intimacy” (Berlant 407)? Do we need to hold onto opposing ideas—weeds and un-weeds—at the same time?

### Fig. 12 (Background)

Weedy Taylorina (*Psoralea pinnarta*) at Yakamia Creek  
Photo © Perdita Phillips

Fig. 13 Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), a weed of wetlands in Yakamia Creek and the ‘War on Weeds’ sentiment of local catchment carers. Photos © Perdita Phillips



## Porous Repair

When I arrived in 2018, the City of Albany had just begun building a biofiltration wetland project on Yakamia Creek which would part the flow of water and use wetland plants to take up nitrogen and phosphorus from some of the flow. This would help the health of Yakamia Creek and decrease the nutrient load in Oyster Harbour. It’s a step forward in understanding the water’s point of view and the benefits of slowing water down—of absorption—rather than speeding it up—and

**Fig. 14** City of Albany engineers transforming drains into wetlands (2018) along Yakamia Creek. Photo © Perdita Phillips

not treating Oyster Harbour as an ‘away’ place for polluted water. But I wondered what could add more to this large-scale science-based

engineering ‘solution’ to water concerns. What happens at a change of scale, change of sensibilities—at the *back* of industrial properties or over the *fence* from peoples’ houses *where the needs are*? My creative project aimed at making local people rethink ‘not my problem’ and sense how they are *entangled with* water’s movement downhill, and the ways that water negotiates and exceeds western human systems of classification, value and engineering control.



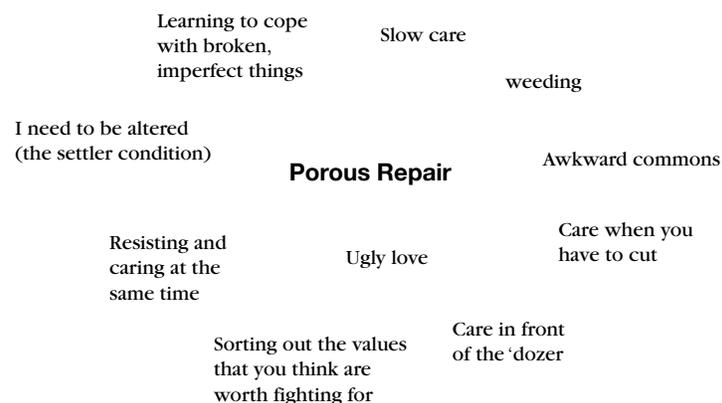
**Fig. 15** Perdita Phillips, *Tangled bank (after Darwin)*, 2018, digital print. Thinking *with* drains we sense the flourishing of others taking up their positions in this ‘unreasonable’ space. Image © Perdita Phillips

For feminist philosopher Nancy Tuana

[t]he boundaries between our flesh and the flesh of the world we are of and in is porous. While that porosity is what allows us to flourish—as we breathe in the oxygen we need to survive and metabolize the nutrients out of which our flesh emerges— this porosity often does not discriminate against that which can kill us. We cannot survive without water and food, but their viscous porosity often binds itself to strange and toxic bedfellows. (198)

Over a lifetime our bodies can act as accumulators of biotoxins such as pesticides (Chojnacka and Mikulewicz). Local councils spray drains or adjacent areas to control weeds. Chemical constituents (harmful or not) travel through plant and human and water bodies. And yet we care for places and more-than-human species, even when we feel we are acting with confusing goals and incomplete knowledge. Such is the nature and dilemma of much local conservation action—and also the entwining of an aesthetic of careful attention, with commitment: “a practice that engages in the challenges involved in attempting to bring forth something new, and sticking with it no matter what...” (Hester and Millner 91).

So what might be a porous repair? Porous repair includes caring, repairing, and reparation. It is insecure and impure. It is wrapped up in failure at the same time as it is hopeful and preparing. It is a response to witnessing (see Best; Boscacci) but more risky—as it embraces the possibility of dissolving itself—or when repair is



**Fig. 16** *Thinking with* porous repair: a schematic of different aspects of what this might encompass. In some cases, these work against each other, in the both/and condition.

successfully done that it is no longer needed. Improvising on the words of Kim Hall, it is “changing not stable, interactively emergent not innate, and contingent and provisional not eternal” (Hall 210). It encompasses thinking time in a different way and thinking through entanglements with others. Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher’s well-known definition of care begins:

On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (quoted in Engster 50)

How do you repair porously? *Follow the water*, no matter how small.

You engage people in intimate, embodied walks as “strategies for experiential knowledge acquisition through direct or imagined engagement with the multiple temporalities and more-than-human co-constituents” (Rawlings 2). *I took people on walks* to trace the stormwater outside their house down to the local confluence. *People took me on walks* to their favourite drains. We were “rechoreographing” drains (Neimanis “Thinking with Water”) in a generative way. We enacted small acts of continuing care across, in and through boundaries, aiming for new values to seep into consciousness. We walked along/with overgrown paths, moving with snakes and birdlife and scrambled over forgotten ground, downhill to (and with) swamps and waters. Figures 19 to 22 show cyanotypes created *in situ* at the end of the walks. We stopped and listened to animals, mountains and wind in the grass.

Porous repair works with an aesthetics of action, entangled.

“Interdependency is not a contract, nor a moral idea – it is a *condition*. Care is therefore concomitant to the continuation of life for many living beings in more than human entanglements – not forced upon them by a moral order, and not necessarily a rewarding obligation” (Puig de la Bellacasa 70, italics in original).

**Fig. 17 (background)** Perdita Phillips, *Drain with found mandarin*, 2018, digital print. *Following the water* flowing from the watershed, through the suburbs, down to the sea. Photo © Perdita Phillips



Fig. 18 Combined cyanotypes made *in situ* by the participants of *follow the water* walks.

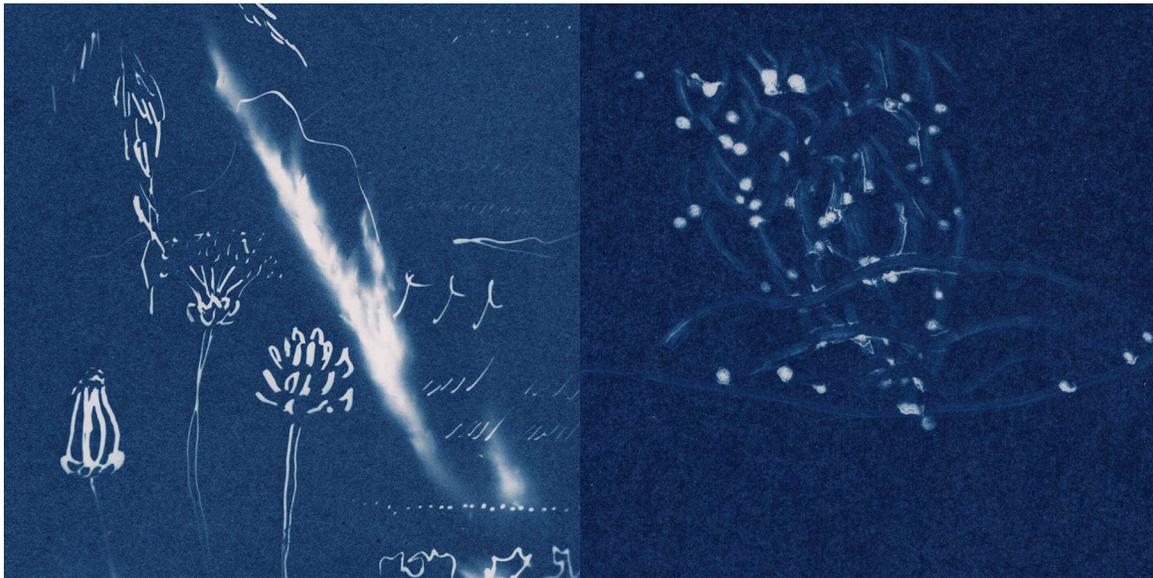


Fig. 19 Listening to Tjuirtgellong.

Fig. 20 Mountain listening.

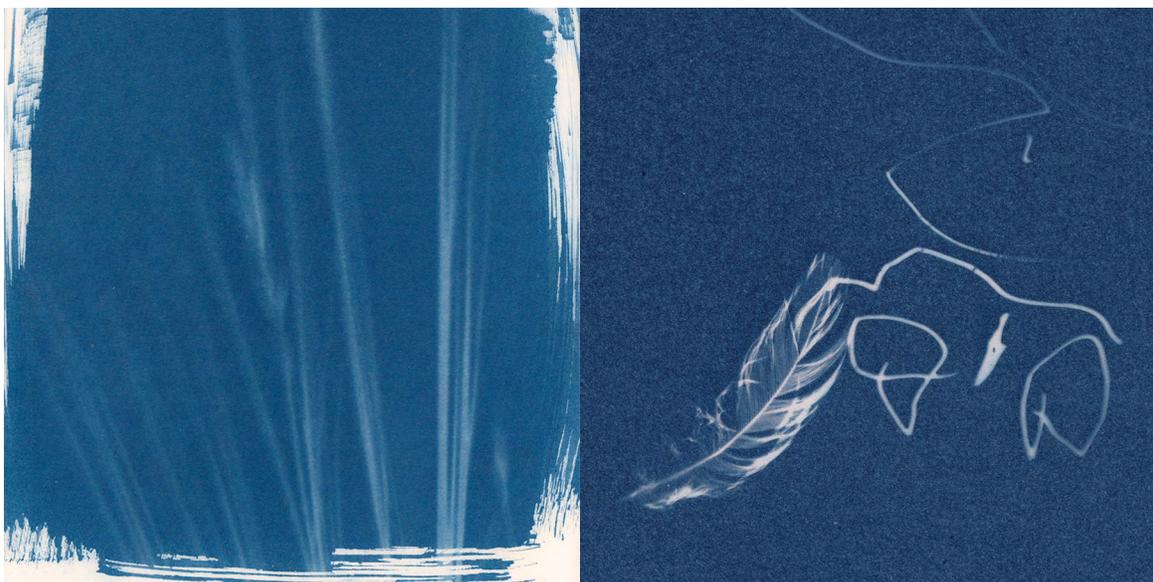


Fig. 21 Wind in grass.

Fig. 22 Quiet drawing.



**Fig. 23** Perdita Phillips, *Entangled*, 2018, digital print. Oyster Harbour samphire, seagrass and plastic. *Thinking with*: the ‘receiving body’ is not just an abstract hydrological concept. Image © Perdita Phillips

### Following the water

Figure 24 is a view to the northeast from the top of Mount Melville/Manitchpurt-ing/Kardarup. You can see a thin interruption of the urban fabric that is Yakamia Creek as it flows past the school and the sports grounds of Centennial Park. A tiny patch of Wattie (*Taxandria juniperina*) woodland still exists to the left of the sports grounds. These swampy grounds were once the sponge landscapes. In less than two hundred years, great transformations have taken place, but the water still flows.

I walked Yakamia with environmental professionals (see Figure 25). I asked them about weeds, incomplete flourishing and restoration ecology. I asked them to think about their feelings and transient sensations. Just by slowing down and re-walking routes we pass by every day, Yucky Mia (as one of these walkers noted) was transformed back into Yakamia. When care is partnered with walking the drains it exceeds the boundaries of humans. More-than-human care is “decolonial, fractal, iterative, non-linear, resilient, multi-sensory, experimental, ancient, futuristic, speculative, intentional” (INIVA).



**Fig. 24** Perdita Phillips, *Sponge landscape*, 2018. One of the few remaining thickets of Wattie can be seen as a dark square on the far left. Yakamia Creek flows from the top left to the mid right, past the sports grounds. Photo © Perdita Phillips

**Fig. 25** Perdita Phillips, *Flourishing without purity*, 2018, digital image. With re-sensitisation, Yakamia as a dry 'environmental issue' is transformed back into an affective place of potential porous repair. Photo © Perdita Phillips





**Fig. 26** Perdita Phillips, *Dealing with the runoff*, 2019, brochure. A historian, a civil engineer and an artist lead local humans on a tour of forgotten infrastructure and historical interactions with water. Image © Perdita Phillips

It poses questions including: “What are the politics of cohabitation, across organic, technological and spiritual realms? How fixed and porous are the boundaries between us?” (INIVA).

I organised a public history walk by an artist, a historian and a civil engineer, *dealing with the runoff* (Figures 26-27). We followed the water of the old town, down towards the shore, along the historical drains of inner Albany. Bringing together our different systems of understanding, we started with the basic questions of when, where, why and how they were built. We spoke of ship’s ballast and cholera, modern drainage sumps that slow down water and allow it to infiltrate, grandfather’s axe and the earliest wooden drains. But also, I hoped that the weaving of stories made people think about following their own water connections.

### ***Responding with listening to others***

And still there is Yakamia’s beautiful confluence into Oyster Harbour (Figure 28). What to do?!? Talking to the local natural resource management project officer in 2018, she had her work cut out for her because there are a *lot* of private semi-rural properties and the multiple owners along Yakamia Creek make land care co-operation difficult. Each owner is concerned for their own possessions and perceives

**Fig. 27** *Dealing with the runoff*, interceptor drains on Mount Melville/Kardarup. Acting *with* drains, we ‘alter’ hydrology. Photo by Ian Herford



themselves as being separate from the world around them. Yet the weeds and the biological community of the Creek tells us that we live interdependently. Marcus Baynes-Rock describes the multispecies commons as

where social, biological and historical processes are so inextricably entwined with wider ecological processes as to be inseparable...[it] explicitly deconstructs limited conceptions of the social and weaves them back together with multiple other threads that coalesce to create a greater, tangled web of ecological processes. (210)

Underlying the project as a whole is the conundrum of action and inaction. It has some resonances with AM Kanngieser's propositions for sound in the Anthropocene (Kanngieser). My first response to *follow the water* has been to hold on to emptiness; the space between sounds. Or, in humans' rush to act, we sometimes neglect to respect what we might at first *perceive* as emptiness. Porosity is as much about the emptiness between grains of sand. The pull of rock and water is to command us to be aware of unfamiliar registers. The human inaction is not passive, but for leaving spaces open. Then there is listening and attentiveness: refraining from filling up spaces with sounds, and instead recognising inequalities and times when *others* should speak. Kanngieser writes "[t]he creation of the commons requires responsiveness, a turning toward one another, at the same time leaving space for adversity and silence" (83). Listening is a *learning* of place and nonhuman agencies: an aesthetic that "pays attention to all those who have a stake and will be affected by our decisions" (nikolić and Elfving).

**Fig. 28 (This page and over)** Perdita Phillips, *Yakamia Creek reaches Oyster Harbour: a confluence of salt and fresh*, 2018, digital photo. The health of Oyster Harbour has been the focus of local landcare groups. Photo © Perdita Phillips





**Fig. 29** *Turtle crossing hatchlings crossing* (2018–2019). With water we get life intersecting with major roads. Photos © Perdita Phillips

**Fig. 30** *Follow the water*: different tones of response including holding open spaces but also acting in a both/and world: what do these mean, too, in a watery context?

Then there are times when emotional and affective work needs to be done. You have to be open. You have to be affected. You have to make art that affects others, not waiting for the perfect time to act. Just like a flood, there are also strong moments where action is needed and is appropriate too.

Action	[search for something other than its antonym]
Holding on to emptiness	Seeping
Listening	Maintaining
Emotional/affective work	Repairing
Strong moments	Flooding

The both/and condition is thus “holding on to more than one possibility, more than one scale or perspective, more than one experience, more than one response or solution, at the same time” (Neimanis and Phillips 136). It is not easy. It is the awkward commons. It is *wishing it were not so* at the same time as being entangled in places and species (Shotwell). Porous repair is small acts of continuing care across, in and through boundaries and membranes. It is *working with* the many holes of the unknown in eco-social systems. It is flexible and contingent, imperfect and impure.



I will finish by showing you these Wattie trees at Lake Seppings/T'juirtgellong (Figure 31 and link to video). They form thickets that can grow up to 13 metres high. These are a remnant patch left after the larger sponge landscape (wetlands) have been cleared. In the distance is the hum of the main roads, but if you listen closely, you can hear the creaks and groans.

Please view the short video *Wattie* (2018) here: <https://vimeo.com/361410743>

**Fig. 31** Wattie (*Taxandria juniperina*) living together with their feet in the water (and showing crown shyness). Photo © Perdita Phillips



## Porous repair in 2021

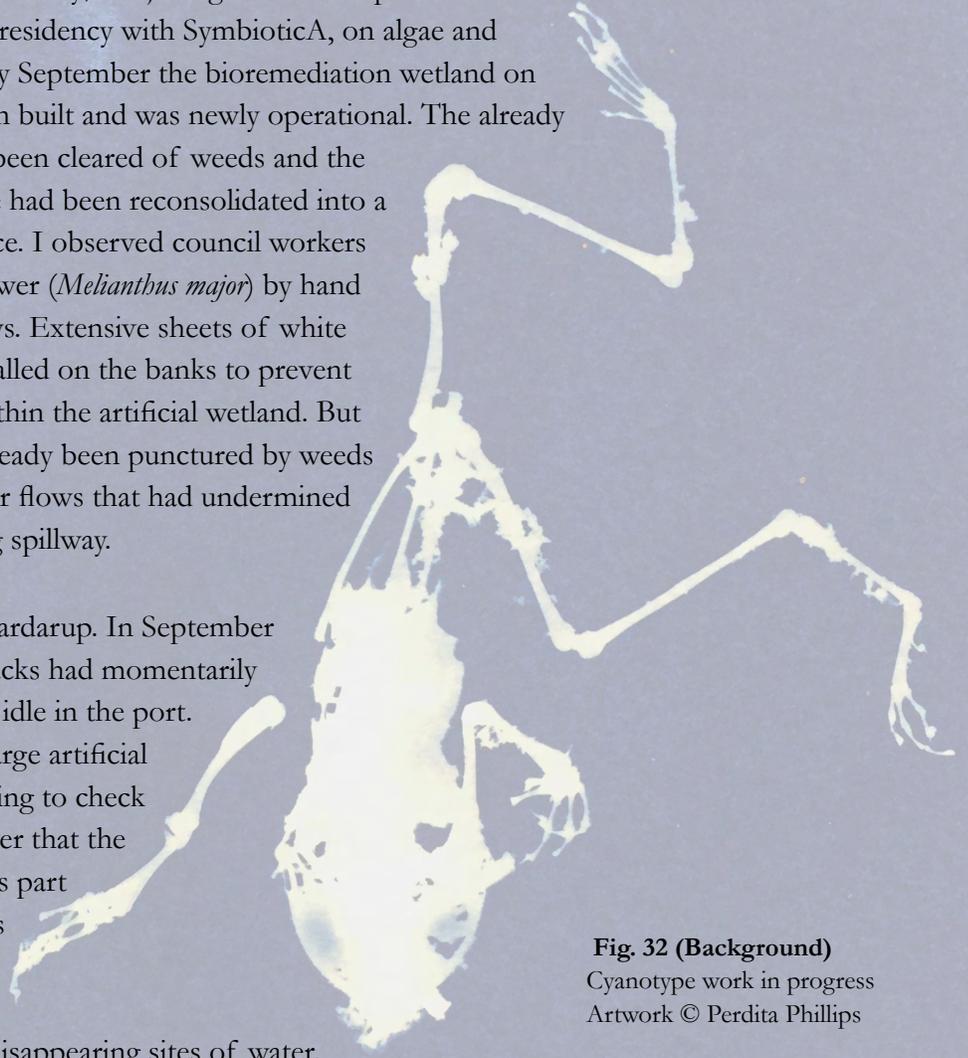
For 2020, my main intention was to work *with, for* and *alongside* Yakamia Creek. Like many people it was also time for me to be personally challenged by decolonising histories, with the plan of working further on this as I *followed the water*. Instead, in Western Australia we watched COVID-19 affect the rest of the world from behind firm, impermeable state borders. Where fire ravaged the east coast of Australia, Western Australia had a more temperate season. International trade and travel was curtailed, and local travel restrictions and other ructions caused by COVID-19 meant that I couldn't travel to Albany/Kinjarling until late September. However I was able to negotiate an artist in residency with SymbioticA, on algae and extractive economies. By September the bioremediation wetland on Yakamia Creek had been built and was newly operational. The already straightened creek had been cleared of weeds and the trapezoidal drain profile had been reconsolidated into a bare and geometric space. I observed council workers weeding cape honey flower (*Melianthus major*) by hand from the wetland inflows. Extensive sheets of white geofabric had been installed on the banks to prevent weeds from growing within the artificial wetland. But this white purity had already been punctured by weeds and interrupted by water flows that had undermined parts of the engineering spillway.

I visited the seeps of Kardarup. In September 2020, the wood chip trucks had momentarily stopped and ships were idle in the port.

I went searching for a large artificial wetland where I was going to check for algae, only to discover that the lake had been filled-in as part of landscaping masterplans for Centennial Park.

That led to night-time forays, photographing disappearing sites of water.

In Figure 33, a paperbark tree (a wetland tree planted by the council), stands next to a carpark, behind the Albany Town Hall. When Mokare died in 1831 he was interred under the present-day town hall site. When Alexander Collie, doctor, resident magistrate and friend to Mokare was dying in 1835, he asked to be buried alongside Mokare. Sometime later his remains were disinterred and moved to the Albany cemetery. "What happened to Mokare's remains after the exhumation is unclear, but there is no evidence to suggest that they were treated with the respect



**Fig. 32 (Background)**  
Cyanotype work in progress  
Artwork © Perdita Phillips

afforded those of Collie” (Green). Kim Scott brings a version of this traumatic episode to life in *That Deadman Dance*. “It is not like the passion of flood or the persistent wind lifting the soil to expose the bones at the core of the country. It was deliberate and careless all at once” (Scott 353). And after the earth is rent and the bones are trampled, it is the rain that is sung into being by the character, Menak. That night the increasing rain tumbles down the rocky slopes of the town, over and around the buildings and down the drains and into the sea. For 2021, there is still more that remains unfinished for seeping, maintaining, flooding and repairing.



**Fig. 33** Perdita Phillips, *Lost Swamp* [In the vicinity of the Albany Town Hall], 2020, digital image. Image © Perdita Phillips

I am reminded of Deborah Bird Rose’s appeal to the concept of shimmer—that to side with the animate world is to act with integrity:

In this time of extinctions, we are going to be asked again and again to take a stand for life, and this means taking a stand for faith in life’s meaningfulness... in the midst of all that we do not know, we also gain knowledge. We are called to acknowledge that in the midst of all we cannot choose, we also make choices. (G61)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Follow the water* takes place on unceded Menang Noongar Boodja and this paper was written near Walyalup, on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja. I acknowledge and pay my respects the Whadjuk people as the traditional owners of the country where I live. Their continuing connection to land, sea and community is central to Australian life. Some of my ancestors cleared the land, and today I still benefit from ongoing structural inequalities. I acknowledge and recognise all First Nation peoples who read this paper. Parts of this project were supported by the City of Albany through the Vancouver Arts Centre and the State Government of Western Australia through DLGSCI-funded SymbioticA Residencies for Western Australian artists and researchers [www.perditaphillips.com](http://www.perditaphillips.com)

## WORKS CITED

- Baynes-Rock, Marcus. "Life and Death in the Multispecies Commons." *Social Science Information/Information sur les Sciences Sociales*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2013, pp. 210–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0539018413477521>.
- Berlant, Lauren. "The Commons: Infrastructures for Troubling Times." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2016, pp. 393-419. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775816645989>.
- Best, Susan. *Reparative Aesthetics: Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
- Bicknell, Charlie. *Sea Level Change in Western Australia: Application to Coastal Planning*. W.A. Government Department of Transport, Coastal Infrastructure and Coastal Engineering Group, Perth, 2010.
- Boscacci, Louise. "Wit(h)nessing." *Environmental Humanities*, vol.10, no. 1, 2018, pp. 343-47. <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-4385617>.
- Chojnacka, K, and M Mikulewicz. "Bioaccumulation." *Encyclopedia of Toxicology*, edited by Philip Wexler. 3rd ed., Academia Press, 2014, pp. 456-360.
- City of Albany. "Restoring Menang Noongar Boodja." *City of Albany*, 1 July 2020, [www.albany.wa.gov.au/news/restoring-menang-noongar-boodja/320](http://www.albany.wa.gov.au/news/restoring-menang-noongar-boodja/320). Accessed 1 Dec. 2020.
- Clement, Jean-Pierre. *Review of Soil Conservation Legislation: Carnarvon Horticultural Area*. Department of Agriculture and Food, Perth, Western Australia, 2002.
- Dobbins, Donald V. "Surface Water Drainage." *Notre Dame Law Review*, vol. 36, no. 4, 1961, pp. 518-26, <https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol36/iss4/5/>.
- Engster, Daniel. "Rethinking Care Theory: The Practice of Caring and the Obligation to Care." *Hypatia*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2005, pp. 50-74. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3811114>.
- Gibbs, Leah M. "Bottles, Bores, and Boats: Agency of Water Assemblages in Post/Colonial Inland Australia." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2013, pp. 467-84. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1068/a45107>.
- Green, Neville. "Mokare (1800–1831)." *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/mokare-13106/text23711>.
- Hall, Kim Q. "No Failure: Climate Change, Radical Hope, and Queer Crip Feminist Eco Futures." *Radical Philosophy Review*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2014, pp. 203-25. <https://doi.org/10.5840/radphilrev201432614>.
- Head, Lesley. *Hope and Grief in the Anthropocene: Re-Conceptualising Human–Nature Relations*. Routledge, 2016.

**Fig. 34 (Background, previous page)** Perdita Phillips, *seep*, 2020, digital image. *Working with* small springs on the side of footpath near the Vancouver Arts Centre (below Kardarup). Photo © Perdita Phillips

- Head, Lesley, and Pat Muir. "Nativeness, Invasiveness, and Nation in Australian Plants." *Geographical Review*, vol. 94, no. 2, 2004, pp. 199-217. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30033971>.
- Hester, Bianca, and Jacqueline Millner. "The Practice of Remaining Perpetually Contingent." *Feminist Perspectives on Art: Contemporary Outtakes*, edited by Jacqueline Millner and Catriona Moore, Routledge, 2018, pp. 79-91.
- INIVA (Institute of International Visual Arts). "Call for Proposals: More-Than-Human Care." *INIVA*, 4 Sept. 2018, [iniva.org/blog/2018/09/04/call-for-proposals-more-than-human-care/](http://iniva.org/blog/2018/09/04/call-for-proposals-more-than-human-care/). Accessed 12 Dec. 2018.
- Kanngieser, Anja [AM]. "Geopolitics and the Anthropocene: Five Propositions for Sound." *GeoHumanities*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2015, pp. 80-85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2373566X.2015.1075360>.
- N. K. G. "Waters and Watercourses: Common Enemy Doctrine Applied to Waters Artificially Diverted from a Watercourse." *California Law Review*, vol. 29, no. 22, 1941, pp. 262-64. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3477667>.
- Neimanis, Astrida. "Thinking with Water." *Thinking with Water*, edited by Cecilia Chen, Janine MacLeod, and Astrida Neimanis, McGill-Queens UP, 2013.
- . "Water and Knowledge." *Downstream: Reimagining Water*, edited by Dorothy Christian and Rita Wong, Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2017, pp. 51-68.
- Neimanis, Astrida, and Perdita Phillips. "Postcards from the Underground." *Journal of Public Pedagogies*, no. 4, 2019, pp. 127-39, <http://www.publicpedagogies.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/12-Neimanis.pdf>.
- nikolić, mirko, and Taru Elfving. "Experiments in Breathing, Contagious." *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*, vol. 46, Winter, 2018, pp. 24-33.
- Phillips, Perdita. "Thirteen Figurings: Reflections on Termites, from Below." *Animal Studies Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2016, pp. 23-47, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/asj/vol5/iss1/3>.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, María. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. U of Minnesota P, 2017.
- Rawlings, Angela Marie. *Performing Geochronology in the Anthropocene: Multiple Temporalities of North Atlantic Foreshores*. 2010. U of Glasgow, PhD thesis.
- Rose, Deborah Bird. "Shimmer: When All You Love Is Being Trashed." *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*, edited by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing et al., U of Minnesota P, 2017, pp. G51-G63.
- Scott, Kim. *That Deadman Dance*. Picador, 2010.
- Shotwell, Alexis. *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times*. U of Minnesota P, 2016.
- Tillson, George William. *Street Pavements and Paving Materials: A Manual of City Pavements: The Methods and Materials of Their Construction. For the Use of Students, Engineers, and City Officials*. John Wiley and Sons, 1900.

Trigger, David S, and Jane Mulcock. "Native Vs Exotic: Cultural Discourse About Flora, Fauna and Belonging in Australia." *Sustainable development and planning II*, edited by A G Kungolos et al., vol. 2, WIT Press, 2005, pp. 1301-09.

Tuana, Nancy. "Viscous Porosity: Witnessing Katrina." *Material Feminisms*, edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, Indiana UP, 2008, pp. 188-213.

**Fig. 35 (Background)** Back to the stone: imagining the seeping. Photo © Perdita Phillips

---

## NOTES

1 Dual-naming, recognising Menang Noongar Boodja was officially endorsed mid-2020 (City of Albany).

2 "The flood is a common enemy against which every man has a right to defend himself. And it would be most mischievous if the law were otherwise, for a man must then stand by and see his property destroyed out of fear lest some neighbour might say 'You have caused me an injury'" (Clement 12, citing an 1874 English case).