

Water Ways: a different view of the river

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Introduction

Water Ways is an exhibition developed through a Master of Research in Creative Practices in the Glasgow School of Art. The aim of my research was to investigate to what extent the experience of art might influence scientific approaches to the natural world. The primary objective of the study was to investigate the reactions of a group of hydrological scientists to the experience of an art exhibition (Water Ways) centered on the theme of water, which symbolized the river which they also worked with. Water Ways was partly created from my experience of field work in the Eddleston Catchment.

Method

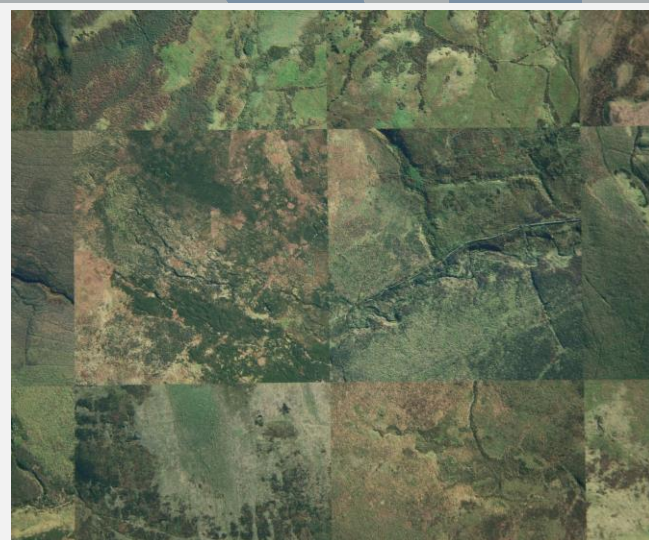
A psycho-social method, the Visual Matrix (Froggett et al., 2015) was chosen as the research method because it provides a way to understand tacit knowing (knowledge that is verbally difficult to express), which arises from the experience of an artwork. Because this method focuses on visual images rather than words, it is a useful qualitative technique for understanding the context and meaning of artworks.



Eddleston Water

Some conclusions

- The experience of Water Ways followed by a Visual Matrix Workshop, allowed scientists to think differently about their work and question ways in which they could change the way they carry-out or influence their work.
- They realized that scientific concepts that they used, they took granted, not realizing that other people do not use or understand the same concepts. This led to scientists becoming aware that they needed to communicate differently to non-scientists.
- Awareness of emotional aspects in the working environment also helped scientists understand their emotional relationships with people and the natural environment and take better account in the way they disseminated their scientific work.



*Close-up of collage of the upper
Eddleston Catchment*

References

Froggett, L., J. Manley, and A. Roy, 'The Visual Matric Method: Imagery and Affect in a Group-Based Research Setting', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 16 (2015)