

Drawing Water: (a)drift on the Shannon

Keywords: psychogeography; collective drawing; publishing; placed-based narratives

1. Workshop Organizer/s

Organizer Name	Email	Affiliation
George Jaramillo (Lead and Contact)	g.jaramillo@gsa.ac.uk	The Glasgow School of Art
Leah Fusco	leah.fusco@rca.ac.uk	Kingston University

Abstract

This workshop offers a guided walk and documentary fieldwork exercise in response to the cultural, political and socio economic landscape of the River Shannon, through expanded drawing methods. Moving between the two host venues of Limerick School of Art and Design and the University of Limerick via the river, we will explore, and extend, drawing approaches as tools for the discovery and communication of place in design practice.

The workshop focuses on the development of experimental approaches to drawing by merging methods from disciplinary fields and exploring relationships between scientific and experiential modes of measurement. Using the psychogeographic *drift* as the approach, we interpret drawing as a knowledge-seeking process, putting forward Serra's Verb List as a practical and discursive starting point to consider the function of drawing beyond its traditional status of artefact, asking: How do we draw in, on, with, or through the landscape? How can the processes and outputs of expanded drawing practice catalyse change by enabling new understanding and knowledge in collective place-based design research? Visual material generated throughout the day will be captured through physical and digital data to create a graphic representation of the experience, resulting in a visual/textual/oral cross section of the River Shannon.

2. Context of Workshop

Drawing Water: a(drift) on the Shannon

This proposal puts forward a guided walk and experimental fieldwork exercise in response to the cultural, political and socio economic landscape of the River Shannon. Moving between the two host venues of Limerick School of Art and Design and University of Limerick via the river, we will explore, and extend, expanded drawing approaches as tools for the discovery and communication of place in design practice.

Building on one of the key themes of The (Act of) Drawing in Design (Research), we are interested in drawing as a knowledge-seeking process, impacting and informing broader place-based research. In particular, the workshop will focus on the development of experimental approaches to drawing by merging methods from disciplinary fields and exploring relationships between scientific and experiential modes of measurement using the psychogeographic *derive* or drift as the approach.

Interpreting drawing as an 'act', we put forward Richard Serra's *Verb List* as a practical and discursive starting point to consider the function of drawing beyond its traditional status of artefact. How do we use line and mark to move through the landscape? How do we draw in, on, with, or through the landscape? Moving through the different zones of the River Shannon reveals shifting geographies, stories and land uses, from industrial heritage to wetland conservation. We ask participants to choose tools, objects and materials to respond to ideas of navigation, mapping, scale, distance and viewpoint as they move through these zones.

Alongside the practical documentation of the walk, we will record conversations and reflections to capture the process of 'thinking through making'. This material will be captured through physical and digital data on the day, to capture a graphic representation of the experience, resulting in a visual/textual/oral cross section of the River Shannon.

Key discussion points will include:

- How can the processes and outputs of expanded drawing practice catalyse change by enabling new understanding and knowledge in collective place-based design research?
- What is the wider significance of this knowledge making? How can new knowledge gained through the act of drawing be harnessed to impact on how a place is understood, interpreted, protected and used via policy, community initiatives, heritage, and conservation.

Main Organisers Experience

Dr. Jaramillo has over ten years of running public engagements from his work at Yosemite National Park as a park ranger to student-led walking tours of Edinburgh as guest lecturer in

the honours Geography classes. In his tenure as researcher and lecturer at the GSA he has developed a drawing workshop at Loughborough Drawing symposium where he explored the pedagogical efficacy of collective drawing.

Leah Fusco explores ideas in relation to place, people and time through visual communication. Drawing on geographic and historic subject matter, she is interested in past, present and future stories that observe the shaping of communities by physical environment. Her practice is concerned with developing methods for visual storytelling through documentary narrative, with a focus on experimental fieldwork approaches. She has contributed to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across illustration, animation, drawing, visual communication and landscape architecture.

3. Planned Activities and Expected Outcomes

John Berger mentions 'To draw is to look, to examine the spectrum of appearance' and it is in this examination that this exploration constellates a spectrum of encounters along the water's edge. This workshop will be organised as a psychogeographic *derive* or drift as 'a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances' where our encounters are enacted through our drawing. Each exercise builds upon themes of 'meaning making' and knowledge creation where notions of drawing from mark making and mapping, to observational representations. From short one and two minute exercises to longer periods of collective drawing and reflection, we develop a growing archive through the day. We follow an itinerary that will ebb and flow along, beside, and across the River Shannon as we traverse our journey from the centre to the University. It would follow accordingly:

Itinerary

- *10:00 - 11:00 - Looking through drawing*
The workshops would begin at the Arts and Design Centre walking through the city towards the river. Here our drawing encounters are quick successive thumbnail sketches, allowing the body and hand to open up to the day's activities. It will explore the successive iterations of construction upon the landscape, through a series of rubbings and successive layerings.
- *11:00 - 12:00 - Knowing through drawing*
At this point our walk will carry us towards the canal and its point of departure from the river. Contemplating the artificial nature of the waterway in relation to the meandering river will provide scoping for collective drawing. Here our first departure from individual drawing to collective knowing will allow the group to merge its different perspectives using observational and contour techniques.
- *12:00 - 13:00 - Lunch*
- *13:00 - 14:30 - Feeling through Drawing*
Exercises will now turn towards the river's edge and up through 'natural' settings outside of city centre. This part of the workshop will engage longer sessions of

collective drawing, working against the flow of the river and using it as our reference point in a longer session. The flows of the water will be analysed with our drawings in relation to the counterpoints of the edge.

- 14:30 - 15:00 - *Reflecting through drawing*

As we make our way closer to the university, we will encounter new enacted spaces within the wetlands and small islets within the river. Here an analysis of more-than-human relations will allow for new meanings form from our initial city views. The workshop will end at the University centre.

- 15:00 - 15:30 - *Break*

- 15:30 - 16:30 - *Curation of drawings*

Expected Outcomes

We expect four outcomes from our participants:

- Demonstrate the use of a *derive* in urban-peri urban exploration through drawing and text
- Illustrate these values through synthesis of forms and spaces represented in their drawings through individual and collective sketchbook work.
- Assemble these forms into a collective archive through a live feed and micro-site
- Value the human and more than human entanglements within the Shannon River region

4. Intended Audience

This workshop would be ideal for anyone open to exploring the city through drawing to those participants who are looking for a unique exploration of the city's 'edges'. This workshop allows for multiple abilities and does not expect participants to have refined skills. Drawing can seem to be only for an audience of already trained illustrators, but we would prefer to invite all members of the design community as we believe that drawing as inclusive collective maker provides a way of engaging those who may have trepidation in drawing. Our walk will also follow as open and accessible path providing a truly open programme for everyone involved.

We believe the ideal number of participants to be around 10 - 15 participants, anymore and the intimacy of the group is lost.

5. Length of Workshop

Drawing as any activity requires time to warm-up, develop and cool down, as it is not only a physical but mental act. Therefore, we are proposing a full-day workshop as we feel this provides the appropriate amount of time to develop the skills through the day of

exploration, understanding, and reflection. It allows for all participants to become comfortable with themselves and others to share their own work within this public surrounding. Furthermore, the trip will occur rain or shine.

6. Space and Equipment Required

We would not require any space as we would use the city and its environs as our studio and workspace. We would possibly need a room at the University of Limerick for a final reflection but that is not necessary if space is limited.

7. Potential Outputs

Two outputs are expected from the workshop. The first will be the day's live updates and images from the workshop streamed via online platforms (Instagram/Twitter) with ongoing reflections, thoughts, scans and photographs of the event. This can be viewed by all conference participants. This is then collected with audio reflections and developed into a microsite as documentation of the event, in order to provide a permanent and free archive and resource.

The second is a collective drawn response in the form of a concertina book. We intend to donate this book to a local museum/ gallery/ centre in connection to the River Shannon as a resource to inform future discourse on heritage, landscape and engagement through design practice.

Both outputs consider the act of publishing as a form of site specific activity, developed in real time and designed to capture knowledge and understanding as it unfolds.

About the Organisers:

George Jaramillo George is a Research Associate/Lecturer at the GSA as part of the Innovation School. His research focuses on challenging Highland Romantic perceptions and acknowledging contemporary ruralities and developing new creative industries engendering a future heritage of the region.

Leah Fusco Leah is currently undertaking a practice-based PhD at Kingston University, supported by the London Doctoral Design Centre. She is exploring experimental image-led practices in the documentation of lost places, using the case study of a deserted medieval village in East Sussex. Leah is a visiting lecturer on the MA Visual Communication programme at the Royal College of Art.