

Changing Channels

January-July 2021

Changing Channels was a creative project led by local artist in residence for Canal Ward, Saffy Setohy, in collaboration with visual artist Margaret Kerr, with support from dance artist Lizzie Rawes, and producers Feral Arts.

Working alongside communities in Canal Ward, Changing Channels explored the regeneration of the Forth and Clyde Canal and our changing relationship with it, through experiencing the place with all our senses.



Background and context to the project

Saffy lived in Firhill by the canal for six years. During this time she witnessed the redevelopment of the canal into a 'green corridor', and surrounding industrial buildings transformed into cultural hubs. Boat moorings become full as a water-dwelling community emerges, and new moorings are built. She often wonders about who gets to connect with and enjoy this regeneration, and how that contributes to a communities' sense of home and belonging.

Working in response to the canal site, this residency felt like an opportunity to enable a space with the participants in which to explore our changing relationship to a place historically linked with heavy extractive industry, patriarchal capitalism, and in latter years, territorial gang-related issues. Furthermore, the Covid pandemic provided a challenge and opportunity to explore alternative ways of creating connection.

Approach

In working within this context the approach was to facilitate participants to explore ways of learning about, noticing, and being with the canal environment, other species, and themselves. Activities were developed to connect and support participants' sense of place, and their embodied experience, both alone and shared. We offered and facilitated tools for perceiving things that might not normally be noticed or sensed.

The canal is an artery in the body of the city. What are the practices that arise from this place?

Our approach was led by the place and informed by our work with mindfulness, somatic movement and contemplative practices. It included;

Paying attention to subtle details and listening to the place rather than re-telling its history.

Valuing subjective and layered experiences of a place.

Developing reciprocal relationships- touching the place and being touched back by it.

Cultivating connection in a time of fear and disconnection.

There were two main practical elements to the project:

- an online workshop series in collaboration with a group of local women of all ages. The workshops were accompanied by activity packs designed by Margaret and Saffy, designed to invite new ways of experiencing the local canal environment through the senses and mindful creative practices. During the workshops there have been discussions about tensions and dialogues between nature and the urban environment, regeneration, gentrification, rewilding and care
- a school workshop series at Hamiltonhill Claypits with class P6 from St. Theresa's Primary School in Possilpark. The workshops explored our relationship with the environment and how we can care for it through sensory exercises, meditation, historical research and tree planting, engaging the children's own sense of connection with their local environment

Working with practices of Sampling, Mapping, Tracing and Tuning, we have touched on conversations around care, regeneration and rewilding. The practices have generated collections of found

objects, drawings, writing, photographs and sound, as well as collective actions such as tree-planting.

These explorations generated drawings, writing, photography, rituals and collections of objects, curated into an exhibition at Lambhill Stables for the community to enjoy and reflect alongside.

Week 1: Sampling

1. Recording surface textures

Go for a walk for about 10 minutes along the canal.

As you are walking, take time to notice the different textures on the surface of the canal water- different patterns as the wind changes, the change of light in different places, changing reflections and the effects of things floating in the water.

Take 3-5 black and white images of these water surface textures.

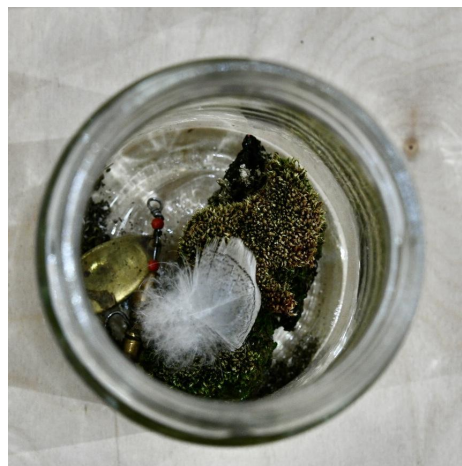
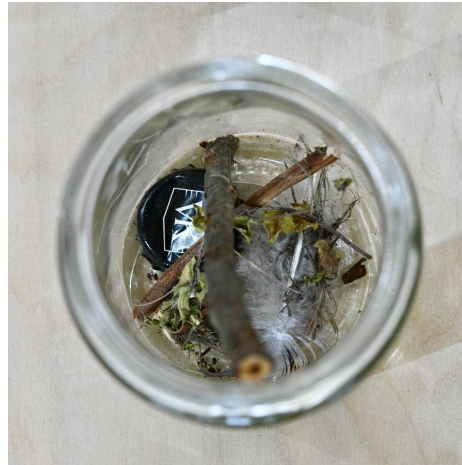


2. Collecting objects

As you continue to walk for a few minutes, notice if any items on the ground particularly attract your attention. If it feels right, pick it up with the tongs, and place it in your jar.

Take time to collect 2-5 more items.

Use the tongs to arrange them in your jar in a way that



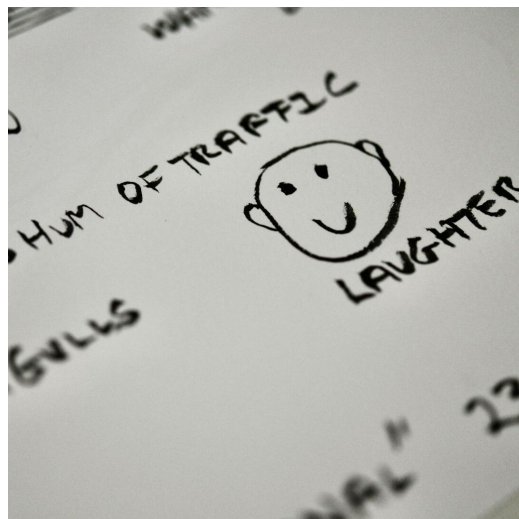
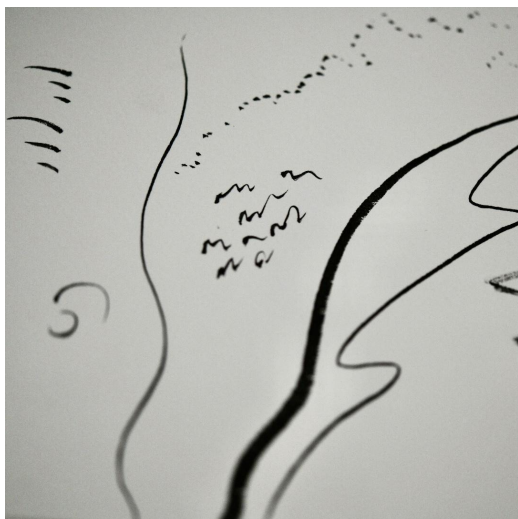
feels right or interesting to you.

3. Gathering sounds

Find a place to rest.

Tune into all the sounds that you can hear - listen for at least 3 minutes.

For the next 3 minutes, make marks on watercolour paper with your black brush pen, to document the sounds in some way.



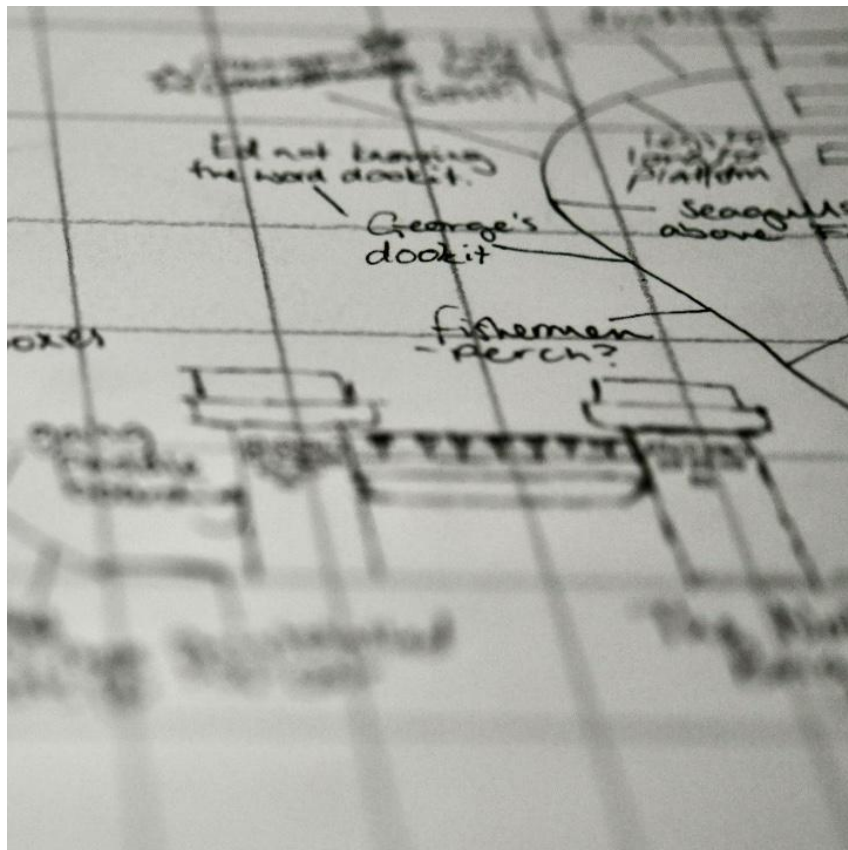
Week 2: Mapping

1. Charting your experience

Go for a walk along the canal for around 10 minutes, pausing here and there for a rest.

In each resting place, draw a line with your black fine pen on the squared paper to mark the section of the pathway that you just took.

Write a word or two to map your physical sensations, as



well as what you can see and hear. Don't worry about trying to accurately draw or represent your pathway.

2. Scoping near and far

Find a spot to take a really close up black and white photo of something that interests you on the canalside. This might be a plant, tree, bird, or the ground for example.

From the same location, then take a photo of what you can see further away. Repeat this another 2 times.



3. Circle surveys

Use your wooden ring like a camera viewfinder to help you focus on a particular view.

Enjoy that view for a minute or two, then write three words in your journal for what you see. It might be colours, shapes, textures.....Repeat this 2 more times- viewing and writing three words in your notebook.

When you get home, write each word on its own paper



circle with the black fineliner pen. You will then have 9 paper circles, each with a word on. Play with placing these circles into different arrangements- rearranging the shapes and the words.

Week 3: Tracing

1. Marking sensations Notice the sensations under your feet as you walk along the canal for 10 minutes. If you can, try and do a circular walk - going out and coming back along the path, or crossing over a bridge and walking back on the other side. Write down the sensations in your journal for 3 minutes.

When you get home, using your black fine pen, copy the words you wrote in your notebook onto the outside of your wooden ring. Write all the words the

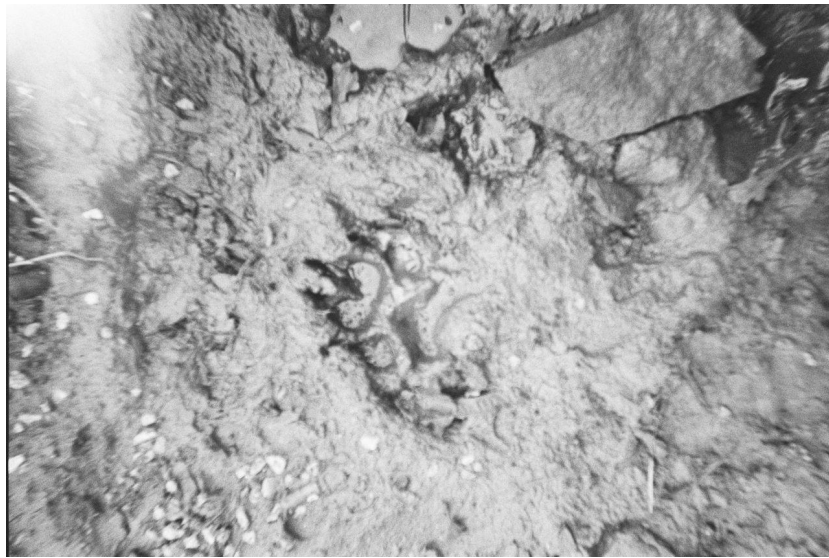


same way up, with some space between.

2. Touching place: With the graphite stick and blank postcard, make 1 rubbing of a seat, railing, wall or tree bark along the canal, marking the front of the postcard. As you are making the rubbing, notice if there is a question coming to you about the place you are sitting, or from the material you are rubbing. Write this on the back side of your postcard.



3. Tracking animals: Take 3 black and white close up portrait photos of traces of humans and other animals bodies eg. a foot or paw print, fur, feather



Week 4: Tuning

1. Walk with a sense of awe and wonder along the canal for 10 minutes.

What are the things that you appreciate about the canal? Savour and notice all the sounds, textures, sensations, smells that it offers you.

In your journal, write a list of what you notice.

As you are walking, see if you can find a stone- something big and smooth enough to write on. Carry this stone with you, as you walk with a sense of wonder.

2. What is your hope or wish for the canal? (you could think of it as a blessing, prayer, offering). Eg. To hold...and be held. To be appreciated.

With the white acrylic pen, write this hope or wish on your stone. You can write on both sides if you wish. Let it dry for a moment, and keep it.



3. What's the best thing that you will remember about the canal?

Write this simply with the black pen on the front of the blank postcard.

Then, holding up the card with one hand, take a photo of the postcard with the canal in the background of the image.

Sign and date the back of the postcard with your black pen.



School workshops

Through a series of workshops, Saffy Setohy and Lizzie Rawes worked with class P6 of St. Teresa's Primary School in Possilpark. Together we explored the nearby Hamiltonhill Claypits Nature Reserve, which many of the children had never visited before.

Pottery journey meditation

Look carefully at your piece of treasure.

What colour & shape is it?

How does the texture feel?

Are there any pictures or patterns?

How old is it?

Is it heavy or light?

Imagine the clay that made it, being dug out of the ground.
Can you see the person digging it?

See the clay getting transported, down the water, carried far away from Glasgow.

Where is it going?

The clay is being formed by hands into something new.

What is it becoming? Who is making it?

The clay is getting pressed, shaped, fired, dried, and painted into a beautiful object.

The object is getting sold , or perhaps given as a gift-
where does it go?

How is it used? What does it hold?

One day, somehow, it gets discarded, lost, broken.

The pieces travel all the way back to Glasgow, on different types of transport. By land, water, air, carried by people and animals- horses towing the cargo boat long the canal

See yourself, treasure hunting, here. Finding your special piece, working with your group. How do you feel?

Open your eyes, and tell me about your treasure.

Describe it to me; the journey it has taken, and how you feel.



About the artists

Saffy Setohy

Glasgow-based Saffy is an artist working across choreography, performance, participatory work, facilitation, and movement direction in an expanded field. Interdisciplinary collaboration is at the heart of her work. Saffy is influenced by somatic practices, and philosophies of ecology, feminism and new materialism, leading her to explore non human-centric ways of relating to place and choreographing attention. Through creative practices and conversation, she seeks to facilitate situations in which new, and potentially transformative connections and perceptions can emerge. She has made various collaborative installation, outdoor, sited, stage and screen works for rural and urban contexts, commissioned and presented in the UK and internationally.

www.saffysetohy.co.uk

Margaret Kerr

Margaret works as an artist, psychotherapist and outdoor educator. Her focus is on the ways in which we are separated from, and connected to the rest of nature. Her work involves spending time outdoors drawing, painting, and making objects, often in the company of others. Her hope is that by mindfully exploring the places where we live and visit, alone and together, we can discover the ways that we have become disconnected from nature, and celebrate the connections which endure. She combines traditional crafts and modern methods in making her work, and has a special interest in Scottish history and the traces that have been left in the land by those who have gone before us. She has an MFA in Art and

Humanities from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design in Dundee, and is currently doing a part time PhD there.

Special thanks to all the participants:

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Thanks also to:

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Creative Communities: Artists in Residence is a Glasgow-wide initiative, funded by Glasgow City Council and delivered by Glasgow Life, supporting artists in residence in every ward of the city.