BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

LIVING WITH BEACHES
Experiences, Interactions, Management

10th December 2020

Scientific dialogues, screenings of artistic films, meetings with beach actors

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> ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

There has been a significant renewal in research on foreshore socio-ecosystems, particularly beaches, in recent years due to the intensification of global changes – climate, eutrophication, biodiversity - and thus to an intensification of management issues. The beach is also where "new body models" are invented. These new body models are more or less closely related to the agency of the elements and natural beings and are directly linked to lifestyles and the ways in which the beach and shoreline are appropriated.

The aim of the "Living with beaches" study days is to gain a better understanding of how the complexity of life forms and human and non-human experiences can be apprehended in these fragile, dynamic environments facing strong socio-cultural, heritage, aesthetic, ecological and economic challenges. They also aim to identify new inter- and transdisciplinary research prospects, with a focus on local experiences and case studies. The program will set the viewpoints of researchers in the human and social sciences (history, geography, anthropology, sociology, environmental aesthetics, arts), alongside those of researchers in environmental sciences, specialists in dune, beach and foreshore ecosystems (ecologists, phycologists) and those of management and culture stakeholders and their partners

> SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Collectif *Plages vivantes - Humanités environnementales* :

> Joanne Clavel, Esthétique environnementale, CNRS, UMR LADYSS

> Alix Levain, Anthropologie sociale, CNRS, UMR AMURE

> Florence Revelin, Anthropologie de l'environnement, UBO, UMR AMURE

> INFO & REGISTRATION

Registration is free but required:

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> WITH THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF

PROGRAM

Thursday, December 10th

Living with Beaches

9h00-9h30 > Connection time to Zoom

9h30-10h30 > Introduction – Living Beaches, Environmental Humanities
Joanne Clavel (CNRS), Alix Levain (CNRS), Florence Revelin (UBO)

10h30-11h15 > Johan Vincent, Université d'Angers (ESTHUA)
«Bodies on the sand : from the impossible tan to the impossible dynamic beach ?»

11h15-12h > Elsa Devienne, Northumbria University, Newcastle
« Beyond Baywatch: Contemporary Challenges facing Los Angeles's Beaches (1970s-present) »

12h-12h45
> Discussion
> Sharing of the short film **«boy»** (1995) by Rosemary Lee
Images credit for all boy Rosemary Lee and Peter Anderson. Production shot by Margaret Williams

12h45-14h > Break
14h-15h > Stefan Helmreich (MIT, USA) **« On the Beach - Some fragments »**
15h15-16h > Clara Breteau, Université de Caen
« The beach as a place where a sensitive imaginary of the sea is formed »

16h-16h45 > Victoria Hunter, University of Chichester
« Dancing the beach, in-between Land, Sea and Sky »

16h45-17h45

> Julie Perrin, Université Paris 8, IUF
« Choreographing for a shoreline »

> Sharing of the short films of the choreographers Rosemary Lee, Lia Rodrigues, Anna and Lawrence Halprin
Photo : Screenstill Roswitha Chesher (2019)
Photo credit Circadian-Rosemary Lee

17h45 > Discussion - Conclusion

Photo credit 'Passage for Par' by Rosemary Lee, commissioned by CAST for Groundwork, Par Sands Beach, Cornwall 2018 - Photo: Graham Gaunt © CAST (Cornubian Arts and Science Trust)

Sommaire

Introduction

There has been a significant renewal in research on foreshore socio-ecosystems, particularly beaches, in recent years due to the intensification of global changes – climate, eutrophication, biodiversity - and thus to an intensification of management issues. The beach is also where “new body models” are invented. These new body models are more or less closely related to the agency of the elements and natural beings and are directly linked to lifestyles and the ways in which the beach and shoreline are appropriated.

The aim of the “Living with beaches” study days is to gain a better understanding of how the complexity of life forms and human and non-human experiences can be apprehended in these fragile, dynamic environments facing strong socio-cultural, heritage, aesthetic, ecological and economic challenges. They also aim to identify new inter- and transdisciplinary research prospects, with a focus on local experiences and case studies. The program will set the viewpoints of researchers in the human and social sciences (history, geography, anthropology, sociology, environmental aesthetics, arts), alongside those of researchers in environmental sciences, specialists in dune, beach and foreshore ecosystems (ecologists, phycologists) and those of management and culture stakeholders and their partners

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Bodies on the sand: from the impossible tan to the impossible dynamic beach?

• Biography

Johan Vincent, PhD in History, associate researcher at TEMOS (UMR 9016) and ESO-Angers (UMR 6590), is a contract researcher at the UFR ESTHUA Tourisme et Culture of the University of Angers, working on the theme of tourism studies in connection with the RFI Angers TourismLab. He is the author of ten books and about fifty scientific articles on the themes of the history of tourism, heritage, natural risks and land dynamics.

• Short abstract

Beach uses evolved throughout the 20th century, the tanning revolution leading bathers to adopt increasingly sedentary behavior. Until the beginning of the 20th century, populations occupied limited portions of the beach: the bathing site was a space used for discussion, which could be located on or off the beach (first promenades, casinos, cafés). The rest of the beach was used for strolling, car and horse traffic, or traditional activities. In the frame of exceptional events, the beach was adapted to host cycling and horse-riding events, or to set up sports pitches (especially tennis courts). The beach became a space for socializing.

The practice of tanning, which became popular in the 1910s and 1920s in Europe, changed this use of the beach. The increasing number of sunbathers spread out (physically and spatially) resulted in larger portions of the beach being privatized. The aestheticized, "sunbathed" body became a priority, relegating other activities either to other areas of the beach or to neighborhoods adjacent to it. The beach was "cleaned" of anything that might hinder the bather's comfort: socially (traditional activities) and physically (rocks, wrack and marine debris). This transformation of uses does not happen without criticism.

The effects of the new wave of mass tourism that came about after the Second World War were nevertheless more strongly criticized from the 1970s onwards: the "sunbather" body itself was called into question, and "mindless sunbathing" was -theoretically- no longer en vogue. Urbanization of the coastlines was a cause for concern, while the effects of coastal erosion were again being raised when they affected the developments made during the thirty-year post-war boom. In the 1990s, coastlines appeared to be in danger (Roland Paskoff's book *Côtes en danger* was published in 1993), as did sunbathers' bodies (denunciation of the immoderate practice of tanning as a potential skin carcinogen).

In response to these challenges, local authorities started changing their way of managing the beach in the early 21st century: the "cleaning" (always the obsession with order and cleanliness) aims to be rational, in particular with regard to the wrack line, backed by a communication campaign (from the local authorities, the State or associations). For the sunbathers, a campaign highlighting the dangers of tanning was repeated each year. However, despite a so-called more "experiential" dimension of tourism which has developed, the principles of the dynamic beach during the COVID-19 health crisis of 2020 have been more or less accepted (especially the prohibition to lie on the sand), proving the cultural anchoring of beach use patterns (in Europe), originally presented as a trend ("sunbathing trend"). The need to raise public awareness illustrates that these changing uses also have political dimensions that are not necessarily straightforward.

- Long abstract

Beach uses evolved throughout the 20th century, the tanning revolution leading bathers to adopt increasingly sedentary behavior.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, tourists occupied limited portions of the beach: the bathing site was a space used for discussion, which could be located on or off the beach (first promenades, casinos, cafés). The rest of the beach was used for strolling, car and horse traffic, or traditional activities.

Facilities did exist but in limited number. When bathers started to flock to the sea, the first demand was to destroy rocky outcrops, but in the middle of the 19th century, the development of a seaside resort was not yet considered a priority. In 1850, the inhabitants of Quirouard, in the Préfailles area (west of France) stated that, in order to attract more bathers, all they needed was a location offering all amenities. The prefect's response was to order boulders to be removed, and yet only to make this beach a landing place.

At the end of the 19th century, the boom in seaside activities made facilities more necessary. In 1883, the Croix-de-Vie town council wanted to blow up the sharp rocky heads in the small bay of Boisvinet, because it "believe[d] it [was] its duty to make it easier for all those who come there in search of joy and health to do so comfortably and safely". In the 1920s, the Damgan municipal council requested that the prefectural decree of January 28, 1911 be amended to give individuals and the municipality the right, in return for a fee, to remove the pebbles from the beach, deemed to be a nuisance.

From the end of the 19th century, when modern sporting activities became popular in the western world, the beach was adapted to host cycling and horse-riding events, or to set up sports pitches (especially tennis courts). The beach became a space for socializing.

The conquest of the beach by sunbathers' bodies: the prevalence of aestheticism

The practice of tanning, which became popular in the 1910s and 1920s in Europe, changed this use of the beach. The increasing number of sunbathers spread out (physically and spatially) resulted in larger portions of the beach being privatized. With the beginning of the rural exodus, aesthetic standards changed. The naked body retained its morally dangerous potential as did tanning, which involved regaining control of one's body. But tanning was also viewed as a right: the right to use one's body as one sees fit. In Loctudy (Finistère) in 1936, having contravened a municipal decree, Mr. Roullet expressed outrage at "measures such as these [which] are of another age and incompatible with the current thinking of our civilization. It is to want to give France a stupid and unjust reputation of absurd modesty". Denying this right made staying on a beach unbearable and could only drive tourists away.

The aestheticized, "sunbathed" body became a priority, relegating other activities either to other areas of the beach or to neighborhoods adjacent to it. Fishing nets could no longer be spread on the parts of the beach frequented by tourists nor could animals be washed in the sea this area. Moving traditional activities away from the beach, which had already begun in the second half of the 19th century, became an imperative in the 20th century when tanning claimed exclusive use of the beach in favor of bathers.

The beach was "cleaned" of anything that might hinder the bather's comfort: socially (traditional activities) and physically (rocks, wrack and marine debris). Even uses linked to seaside activities, like sports, were relegated. Until the beginning of the 20th century, sports facilities were still unusual and sporting events were most often held on a beach, in especially prepared fields, on the public highway or in rivers. It was not therefore uncommon for sports tournaments to be held on the beach (as was the case for tennis at Royan before 1910) in the absence of proper pitches or clubs. Then sports facilities were built in the neighborhoods adjacent to the beach. The beach also lost its use as a route. It became a place used exclusively for seaside resort purposes, a transformation of use facilitated by ever-increasing accessibility.

The beach and the nearby shoreline were used to attract tourists. They had to be as comfortable and safe as possible. In the 1950s and 1960s, a major effort was made to make bathing safer.

The beach in danger: a surge of utilitarianism through heavy work

The effects of the new wave of mass tourism that came about after the Second World War were nevertheless more strongly criticized from the 1970s onwards: the "sunbather" body itself was called into question, and "mindless sunbathing" was -theoretically- no longer en vogue. In 1971, the French Ministry for the Protection of Nature and the Environment distributed the brochure *N'abimons plus le Languedoc* [*Let's no longer spoil the Languedoc*]*,* with the aim of reconciling those whose actions contributed to the creation or degradation of landscapes and those who restored or repaired them in this area of Southern France. This action came in the wake of the distribution of a national brochure for the protection of sites and monumental ensembles, which was distributed in late 1970. The directive of August 25, 1979 on the protection of the coastline limited the right to build directly on the seafront, but for environmental associations, such as the CPNS of the canton of Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie, the damage had already been done and the provisions of the legal text were insufficient in sectors subject to coastal erosion.

Urbanization of the coastlines was a cause for concern, while the effects of coastal erosion were again being raised when they affected the developments made during the thirty-year post-war boom. In an article published in *Le Figaro* in 1983, the journalist Yvan Christ wondered whether a sort of “Great Wall of China” might not be built following a possible experiment in the Vendée to save the buildings along the shoreline: he evoked the construction, 155 meters from the high-water mark, of breakwaters 25 meters wide at the base, 4.70 meters high above the sand and 110 meters long. Although the project was ultimately abandoned after strong opposition from environmental associations, the principle was revived in the form of a lighter system that was tried out in the 2000s, without proving satisfactory. At La Grande-Motte (Hérault), the construction of a breakwater system began in 1984 to make the beach grow and relieve congestion.

At the same time, the cleanliness of the beach became a public safety imperative. In 1970, the “Que Choisir” consumer association alerted public opinion to the catastrophic state of beach pollution by publishing the secret results of surveys carried out on the French coast. In 1974, the Ministry of Health classified beaches according to their pollution level. The edition of *Le Point* gave it a lot of prominence, pointing its finger in particular at the 7 beaches with unacceptable bacterial pollution. A directive of December 8, 1975, adopted at the request and on the proposal of France, set quality standards for sea bathing water for all the countries of the Common Market. The aim was to equip municipalities with waste water treatment systems to ensure that beaches were healthy and, more generally, to protect the marine flora and fauna near the coast.

Henceforth the beach was sifted. Before the 1971 tourist season, 8 of the 20 coastal municipalities of the Vendée used the sifting machine of the department civil engineering service, known as Rolba. During the season, the town of Les Sables d'Olonne used a truck, a dumper and a team of 6 to 8 men to clean the Grande Plage every day. The other beaches were also cleaned. In the other seaside resorts, litter collection was done manually, “either daily, two or three times a week, or episodically when the seaweed deposit is a nuisance for bathers”. Volunteers also helped collect garbage. In three municipalities, wrack was still collected by farmers.

Companies therefore offered their services. The main argument in the brochure for the Rolba sifting machine was that clean beaches sell best: “Offer your holidaymakers the cleanest beach with the UMA 50. Get rid of all kinds of garbage, such as paper, bottles, bottle tops, ice cream cups, seaweed, kelp, etc.”. According to Sotraplex's brochure promoting its rake machine, the aim was to keep beaches clean and inviting, to restore the shoreline after storms and to remove garbage and debris from the sand after oil pollution or maritime accidents, without removing the sand.

The conquest of respect for the biodiversity of the beach: a transformation of the utilitarian vision through light work

In the 1990s, coastlines appeared to be in danger (Roland Paskoff's book *Côtes en danger* was published in 1993), as did sunbathers' bodies (denunciation of the immoderate practice of tanning as a potential skin carcinogen).

In response to these challenges, local authorities started changing their way of managing the beach in the early 21st century: the "cleaning" (always the obsession with order and cleanliness) aims to be rational, in particular with regard to the wrack line, backed by a communication campaign (from the local authorities, the State or associations). Thus, on an information board entitled "rational cleaning of "clean" and "living" beaches", at the entrance to the beach, the town of Saint-Hilaire-de-Riez states it has been practicing selective cleaning of its coastline since 2002: "only waste resulting from human activity is removed. The wrack line, the natural discharge of a living ocean, is left". However, this statement did not prevent the sifting machine from being used on the beach of Sion in July 2013.

The consequences of the clean-up of the Erika oil spill (1999) may have accelerated awareness in France. The report by the Economic and Social Council of the Pays de la Loire Region acknowledges that "the advice of scientific experts was not respected in the field because tourist pressure meant that a rapid clean-up had to be carried out before holidaymakers arrived". The Oil Spill Observatory believes that the effects of the clean-up were too frequently added to the impact of the pollution itself. The environmental association CPNS of the canton of Saint-Gilles-Croix-de-Vie explained in its 2001 newsletter that "the logic behind the beach clean-up was an economic logic directed at the tourist season and not a clean-up logic that respects the ecosystems. [...] To preserve the dynamic balance of the dune, no annual plants, algae or any driftwood must be removed". Two years later, the association expressed its exasperation at the "excessive cleaning of the beaches: remove just what is necessary, sort and put sand and gravel back where it came from (still excess cleanliness in the Vendée!)."

For the sunbathers, a campaign highlighting the dangers of tanning was repeated from the 1990s onwards. The increase in the number of cases of skin cancer in France – 4,000 cases of melanomas in 1995 – is a source of concern for the medical community and public authorities, but people continue to think that tanning makes them look good. Despite the so-called more "experiential" dimension of tourism which has developed, the principles of the dynamic beach during the health crisis of 2020, defined as a beach near one's home, where people would go to walk, run and possibly swim, but not to lie on the sand, have been more or less accepted. The number of penalty tickets has not been reported (except anecdotally) and the measure has been implemented mainly through "awareness-raising". But this difficult acceptance of the principles of the dynamic beach demonstrates the cultural entrenchment of a use (in Europe), originally presented as a fashion ("the tanning fashion"). The need to raise public awareness illustrates that these changing uses also have political dimensions that are not necessarily straightforward.

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Beyond *Baywatch*: Contemporary Challenges facing Los Angeles's Beaches (1970s-present)

- ## Biography

Elsa Devienne is a lecturer in US History at Northumbria University. Its work focuses on environmental history, urban history, and history of body, gender and sexuality. In 2020, she published *The Sand Rush : An Environmental History of the Los Angeles's Beaches in the 20th century* (Editions de la Sorbonne).

- ## Short abstract

In this presentation, I will explore the many challenges that have faced the Los Angeles beaches since the late 20th century, including privatization, ocean pollution, erosion, racial tensions, budget cuts and coastal residential development. In doing so, I propose to go "beyond *Baywatch*", that is to go beyond the image circulated in popular culture of a dreamy beach landscape of vast shores, beautiful bodies, and peaceful social order. By taking seriously the phenomenal success of the 1990s tv-series, which revolved around the lives of Los Angeles lifeguards, I will show how the persistent appeal of the Southern California beachscape in global imaginaries relies on Hollywood's long-standing fascination for the Southern California beachscape and, at the same time, was enabled by a little-known regional history of coastal modernization. As such, *Baywatch*'s success testifies to the enduring legacy of postwar infrastructure investments in the shores and reveals the nostalgic appeal of the beach as a peaceful—and, most importantly, *white*—agora in a troubled age of racial tensions and environmental challenges.

- Long abstract

Southern Californians do not like it when their beaches are closed, even when public health is at stake. In the spring of 2020, the beaches of Los Angeles and Orange counties became a flashpoint of the coronavirus debates when Governor Gavin Newsom ordered them closed. Outraged by what they perceived as an authoritarian measure, some went so far as to claim that Californians had "an unalienable right to a day at the beach."[1] While the spring 2020 closure of the shores may have appeared unprecedented to residents with a short memory, the reality is that Southern California beaches have had to close to the public for multiples reasons over the past few decades. Sewage and oil spills—an almost monthly occurrence in the 1980s and 1990s—have often caused local restrictions. And in the aftermath of the 1992 Rodney King uprisings, beachgoers were also disappointed when some beaches and nearby parking lots were closed in the immediate aftermath to deter gang fights. Pollution and racial tensions are only some of the recent challenges that have restricted access to the biggest public spaces of the metropolitan region. The ardent fight led by several beach homeowners—most famously in Malibu—to prevent the public from enjoying what they consider to be *their* beaches is another form of beach closure that we can add to the list. But the shores' main enemy today would not just result in temporary closures: the climate crisis and human-caused sea-level-rise threaten the beaches' existence itself. Of course, this issue is far from being specific to the Los Angeles area. Scientists predict that "almost half of the world's sandy beaches will have retreated significantly by the end of the century as a result of climate-driven coastal flooding and human interference."[2] Even so, in Southern California, where going to the beach is akin to a birth right, the combination of environmental and social challenges affecting the coast represents a fundamental threat, which hits at the region's cultural identity, historical heritage, and its most valuable real estate. What is L.A. without its beaches? Looking back at the recent history of the Los Angeles's coastline, at a time when the popularity of the Southern California beach lifestyle reached new heights just as new and old challenges collided on the foamy shores, the verdict is clear: the region has much to risk in a future of sand scarcity.

In this presentation, I explore the many challenges that have faced the Los Angeles beaches in the late 20th century and early 21st century, including privatization, ocean pollution, erosion, racial tensions, budget cuts and coastal residential development. In doing so, I propose to go "beyond *Baywatch*", that is to go beyond the image circulated in popular culture of a dreamy beach landscape of vast shores, beautiful bodies, and peaceful social order. By taking seriously the phenomenal success of the 1990s TV-series, which revolved around the lives of Los Angeles lifeguards, I show how the persistent appeal of the Southern California beachscape in global imaginaries relies on Hollywood's long-standing fascination for the Southern California beachscape and, at the same time, was enabled by a little-known regional history of coastal modernization. The TV-show's predominantly white cast and reassuring storylines which systematically ended with a restored social order and a clean beach also proved a winning combination. As such, *Baywatch*'s success testifies to the enduring legacy of postwar infrastructure investments in the shores and reveals the nostalgic appeal of the beach as a peaceful—and, most importantly, *white*—agora in a troubled age of racial tensions and environmental challenges.

It says something about the powerful pull of the Southern California beach culture in global imaginaries that *Baywatch*, the hourlong drama that debuted on NBC in 1989, was rescued from cancellation and complete oblivion by viewers abroad. Far from an instant success, the show was initially cancelled after one season of mediocre ratings. According to executive producer Doug Schwartz, it was "only because of the British that the

[1] George Skelton, "Newsom Could Use Some Beach Time," *LA Times*, April 30, 2020.
[2] "World's Beaches Disappearing due to Climate Crisis," *The Guardian*, March 2, 2020.

show was saved."[3] For the first time in TV history, reported *Variety*, "foreign sales to overseas broadcasters [drove] the production of a US series in syndication."[4] For its second season, *Baywatch* left the NBC mothership and was now produced by an independent production company, All American TV, and sold by distributors to multiple domestic and international broadcasters. Aired in 72 countries in 1992 (it would eventually reach 145 countries by the end of its run), the show was, according to a British TV journalist, "incredibly bad but compulsively watchable."[5] The compulsion not only buoyed the show for 11 seasons; it eventually gave rise to a global franchise, complete with a spin-off (*Baywatch Nights*) and countless branded products, from Barbie dolls to air fresheners. By 1995, the *New York Times* claimed that "*Baywatch* had a wider audience on the planet Earth than any other entertainment show in history." "Apparently," the journalist noted somewhat sarcastically, "nothing c[ould] match the magnetic pull of wet California girls—and guys—on a beach."[6] Most critics agreed with the diagnosis: the show's fundamental strengths, they said, resided in its generous display of beautiful bodies and its gorgeous backdrop of vast, sandy beaches.

Europe's enthusiasm took even the show's publicists by surprise. One explanation often thrown around, at least in the UK where 10.5 million viewers tuned in to ITV for the Saturday "teatime show," was that watching *Baywatch* "was like having a holiday in Florida." Little did it matter that the series was actually shot on Will Rogers State Beach in Los Angeles, "the real stars of the show" were "the sun and the sea," and regional nuances escaped most British viewers anyway.[7] In France, the show's title was loosely translated to "Emergency in Malibu" (*Alerte à Malibu*), in an attempt to capture the evocative power of the famous Hollywood beach enclave. The fact that Malibu's geomorphology is quite distinct with its rugged coast and tiny pocket beaches—a far cry from the large and crowded beaches featured on the show—did not seem to bother anybody. For European viewers, *Baywatch* represented a fundamentally *American* landscape, just as powerful in its evocations as the New York skyline or the rugged canyons of the Death Valley. By 1993, the show's UK ratings had doubled and the notion that watching *Baywatch* amounted to a virtual escape from the dreary British (or French) winter was accepted as fact. According to Paul Talbot, the president and CEO of Fremont, *Baywatch*'s international distributor, "the appeal of the series in Britain [wa]s 'very evident to anyone who goes out into the street in Glasgow in January at 10am to get a look at the sun before it goes down.'"[8]

What few British viewers realized, however, was that the shooting location they pined for on Saturday evenings was not the product of California's bountiful nature, but rather a fabricated—half-natural, half-artificial—landscape. In the early 20th century, the beaches of Los Angeles presented a very different look from the glamorous shots of sandy shores in the *Baywatch* credits; they were, for the most part, dirty, crowded, and badly eroded due to the haphazard construction of jetties and piers. Pollution from untreated sewage, industrial effluents, and oil extraction was a critical issue. The majority of the coastline was private and inaccessible to the public. Yet in the 1930s, Los Angeles became the birthplace of a leading beach modernization campaign, which coalesced around a group of engineers, public officials and business leaders invested in reimagining the shores as vast and clean parks opened to the public. In the postwar period, their vision became reality when, thanks to California's booming economy, which generously fed state coffers, large sections of the shoreline were acquired and redeveloped. Particularly impressive was the pumping of over thirty million cubic yards of sand (excavated from offshore sources and nearby dunes) on the eroded beaches of the Santa Monica Bay, the coastal indentation that lies along metropolitan Los Angeles. In some places, the

[3] *Daily Mail*, March 5, 1994, 4-5.
[4] *Variety*, December 24, 1990, 17.
[5] *Daily Mail*, April 7, 1990, 21.
[6] *The New York Times*, July 3, 1995, 41.
[7] *Daily Mail*, April 7, 1990, 21.
[8] *The Times*, January 21, 1995.

results were astounding: “at one point,” reported a specialist publication, “a 300-yard stretch was widened 700 feet.”[9] By the late 1960s, the beaches—widened and cleaned up of sewage and oil derricks—were finally equal to Los Angeles’s ambitions as a global metropolis.

Will Rogers State Beach, where *Baywatch* was filmed, received particular attention during that period. Purchased by the State in 1942, it was set to become a model of what a modern beach should look like. In the early 1950s, the North Beach Center, a “strictly modern, multi-purpose building” was erected on the site to provide all the accommodations necessary to attract a middle-class public (comfort stations, change rooms, refectory, telephone booths, etc.). In the opening credits of the popular SoCal tv-series, the shimmering sea paired with the shots of crowded, yet pristine, strands reflected decade-long efforts by beach modernizers to reinvent the coastal landscape for the modern age.

While the stunning outdoor filming set was indubitably an attraction for viewers close and far, the coastal landscape itself was not enough to explain *Baywatch*’s popularity. Take the example of *Eldorado* (1992-1993), a BBC series revolving around the lives of British expatriates living in a Spanish coastal resort. Despite the sunny locale, the show was cancelled after only one year. According to *Guardian* journalist Judy Rumbold, *Eldorado* failed because it involved “pale, ordinary plebs like you and me,” whereas *Baywatch* featured “sexy youngsters who were clearly born with sand between their toes” and for whom “unwanted body hair and melanoma were foreign concepts.” Britons did travel via the small screen, but the local bodies evidently mattered as much as the destination. The show’s close shots of women’s almost-bare behinds and men’s ripped abs may have drawn the ire of UK’s TV censors, but they soon became its most iconic, and mocked, features. *Baywatch*’s appeal in Europe was thus largely based on the fascination for the latest trends in beauty—from fake tanning to silicon breasts—coming from America and, more specifically, Southern California.

This was not Hollywood’s first attempt at turning a beach-based show into an opportunity to display some of the industry’s best bodies. Ever since the movie industry relocated to Los Angeles from the East coast in the early 20th century, the shores attracted writers and directors for precisely that same reason. The beach, more than any other setting in early Hollywood, enabled directors to point their cameras at bodies and, in particular, semi-naked bodies. From the burlesque beach comedies of the early 20th century, to the mid-century teen pics movies set at the beach, the beautiful bodies of Hollywood became an essential element of the Southern California beachscape, just as indispensable as palm trees and lifeguard towers.[10]

By the early 1990s, then, television audiences worldwide were very familiar with the setting and lifestyle portrayed in *Baywatch.* California, although suffering from the drying-up of defense money as the Cold War thawed, still held a special place in American visual culture as home to Hollywood and “America’s bright, strange cultural outrider.”[11]

At the same time, the beaches of Los Angeles were beset by a flurry of problems and challenges that threatened to diminish their century-long appeal. With more than 90 million people visiting them every year, the beaches were “plain overused” claimed the *LA Times*. Crowds brought with them “traffic snarls, garbage and crime.” Even this most urban of problem, graffiti, found its way on the beach, with lifeguard towers often desecrated by rival gangs seeking to establish their turf. But the threats ran deeper: human-caused erosion had reduced El Segundo’s beach to “a sliver” and famished Venice Beach of sand.[12] In addition, sewage and plastic pollution was a constant problem. Following the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which drastically

[9] “Million Cubic Yards of Sand Dredged from Santa Monica Harbor,” *California Coast* 4, no. 1 (January 1950): 3.
[10] Elsa Devienne, “Spectacular Bodies: Los Angeles Beach Cultures and the Making of the ‘California Look’ (1900s-1960s),” *European Journal of American Studies* 14, no. 14–4 (December 11, 2019).
[11] “California: Is it Still America’s Promised Land,” *Time*, November 18, 1991.
[12] Rotella Sebastian, “Hyperion Plant Expansion,” *LA* Times, July 26, 1987, WS4.

reduced property taxes in the State, local authorities were left without a sufficient budget to maintain public services, including beaches. By the 1980s, the county had to resort to contracting with private companies for sponsoring deals. And by the early 1990s, budget cuts had reached deep and the county threatened to pull its iconic lifeguards. No lifeguards, no cleanup crew and, in some exclusive areas like Malibu where beach homeowners fought tooth and nail to keep their stretch of sand private, no beach at all? Was the beach doomed to "fade into nostalgic memories" mused a baby boomer who had spent his youth on the sands?[13]

The phenomenal success of *Baywatch*, just as the SoCal beachscape came under threat, was certainly linked to a wistful wish to return to the beach of the 1960s, at least for American viewers. Some critics agreed: as a "titillating yet innocent" show, *Baywatch* was "almost a piece of nostalgia, with its bevy of voluptuous beauties in bathing suits, set in a dorm-like L.A. beach culture that never really existed."[14] Even so, the show did not shy away from contemporary issues. Episodes revolved around sewage spills, gang fights, crime, and homelessness as much as it played up the romantic lives of the cast.

If nostalgia was the draw, it played heavily on racial anxieties, which grew louder as new waves of immigrants settled in the State, turning Los Angeles, according to author David Rieff, into the "Capital of the Third World."[15] The TV-show featured a lily-white team of lifeguards up until its seventh season (1996), when African-American actress Traci Bingham and Latino actor José Solano joined the cast as regulars. Before that, the sole black character was Sgt. Garner Ellerbee, the police officer assigned to the beach neighborhood, whose dislike for swimming and wearing shorts ostensibly separated him from the team of ocean gods and goddesses. The unbearable whiteness of *Baywatch*, however jarring when set in an increasingly multi-ethnic city, bore some resemblance to reality. The vast majority of lifeguards were still white in the 1990s.[16] The crowds and victims of drowning depicted on the show did include a more diverse cast, but more often than not, they played into racial stereotyping, with Latino youths portrayed as inner-city gang bangers.[17] In that sense, the *Baywatch* beach represented a white refuge, one to be preserved from an incoming tide of racial others whose presence on the sands proved disruptive. The sun-tanned lifeguards, symbolized a whitewashed version of Southern California beach culture of yesteryears, standing as the last rampart preventing the onslaught.

While there were multiple threats endangering the SoCal beachscape in the 1990s, from budget cuts to ocean pollution, the coastal landscape of today has one main enemy: the climate crisis and sea level rise. In a 2017 article, a group of engineers and marine scientists who modeled shoreline response to climate change, soberly concluded that "31% to 67% of Southern California beaches may become completely eroded by 2100" due to sea-level rise.[18] Yet, the dire scientific warnings do not seem to dampen Hollywood's enthusiasm for Southern California beaches. That same year, Paramount Pictures released *Baywatch*, a much-anticipated film adaptation of the now legendary TV-show. Complete with cameos by David Hasselhoff and Pamela Anderson, the film played up on the audience's nostalgia for the red one-piece bathing suit and the infamous slow-motion running scenes. A movie based on nostalgic yearnings for a TV-show, which itself had based its appeal, at least

[13] Charles Perry, "On the Beach, "*LA Times*, June 24, 1990.
[14] Chris Willman, "Tarzan,' 'Baywatch' Stand Corrected" *LA Times*, Sep 27, 1991, OCF30.
[15] David Rieff, *Los Angeles: Capital of the Third World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991).
[16] Arthur C. Verge, "George Freeth: King of the Surfers and California's Forgotten Hero," *California History* 80, no. 2/3 (2001): 82–105. More specifically, out of 110 permanent county lifeguards, two were African Americans, two Asians and two Latinos. Kathleen Kelleher, "First Black Lifeguard Working to Blaze Trail," *LA Times*, March 28, 1993, accessed on 18/08/20 at https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-03-28-we-16355-story.html
[17] See for instance season 2, episode 8, "Point of Attack" and season 4, episode 10, "Tower of Power."
[18] Sean Vitousek et al., "A Model Integrating Longshore and Cross-Shore Processes for Predicting Long-Term Shoreline Response to Climate Change," *Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface* 122, no. 4 (n.d.): 782.

in the US, on nostalgia for the beaches of the 1960s, was always going to be tricky business. With a budget of approximately $68 million, the reboot only made $57.2 million upon its theatre release in the US. But once again, the movie was rescued by its international audience; The SoCal beachscape, with its vast beaches, instantly-recognizable lifeguard towers and beautiful bodies, still proves powerfully magnetic for viewers abroad. Yet the question remains as to whether, beyond its Hollywood veneer of glamour, the coastal landscape itself will survive the next century.

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On the Beach – Some fragments

- ## Biography

Stefan Helmreich received his PhD in Anthropology from Stanford University and is now professor of cultural anthropology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His research examines how biologists think through the limits of "life" as a category of analysis. Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas (University of California Press, 2009) is a study of marine biologists working in realms usually out of sight and reach: the microscopic world, the deep sea, and oceans outside national sovereignty. This book charts how marine microbes are entangled with debates about the origin of life, climate change, property in the ocean commons, and the possibility of life on other worlds. An earlier book, Silicon Second Nature: Culturing Artificial Life in a Digital World (University of California Press, 1998) is an ethnography of computer modeling in the life sciences. In 2000, it won the Diana Forsythe Book Prize from the American Anthropological Association. Helmreich's newest book, Sounding the Limits of Life: Essays in the Anthropology of Biology and Beyond (Princeton University Press, 2016) asks after changing definitions of life, water, and sound. He is at work on a new book about wave science, in domains ranging from oceanography to cosmology to medicine to acoustics to social theory.

- ## Short abstract

What happens on the beach? One thing is this: waves arrive, break, swash. Writers, artists, and many others have worked to capture in words, paint, and music how these wave dynamics unfold. So, of course, have scientists. That is the story — the history — I tell in this talk, telling the tale of research conducted at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California from the 1940s to today. I track changing scientific motivations to understand waves on the beach, motivations that move from the military (timing amphibious invasions), to the recreational (predicting wave forms and forces for surfing), to the ecological (mapping beach erosion and sea-level rise). I argue that the science and symbolism of waves on the beach is strongly shaped by imperatives historical and social.

- Long abstract

American wave science was forged in the crucible of World War Two, as researchers at Scripps — in alliance with other U.S. institutions as well as with, particularly, British researchers — turned their attention to predicting patterns of waves arriving on shores held by the Axis powers. That work turned waves into strategic, if temperamental, environmental infrastructure for the amphibious landings of Allied troops in North Africa, Europe, and Oceania.

The Scripps wave story as usually told centers on oceanographer Walter Munk, born in Vienna in 1917. Munk finished a bachelor's degree in physics at Caltech in 1939 and applied for American citizenship that same year, after the Nazis annexed Austria. He moved to Scripps, to start a PhD under Harald Sverdrup, another expatriate European, who had moved from Norway to become director of Scripps in 1936, after leading Amundsen's Polar Expedition in the 1920s. When Germany invaded Norway, Sverdrup extended his stay in the United States. In the early 1940s, at the request of the United States Army Air Corps, Munk and Sverdrup began working to determine whether wave weather might be predicted to time Allied amphibious invasions. Munk and Sverdrup's work became decisive for the landings of "duck boats" at Normandy on June 6, 1944, D-Day. To generate their approach to wave prediction — to improve upon the in-place Steere Surf Code, which was, like the Beaufort scale of wind speeds, a "rule of thumb" set of guidelines — Munk and Sverdrup first needed to gather data: spatial data.

While there would eventually exist dozens of "wave stations" around the world from which observers would report incoming wave heights and periods, much proof-of-concept work was done at Scripps, which hosted a long pier from which observations could be made. In one Scripps document, "Height of Breakers and Depth at Breaking," from March 1944, authors report on a preliminary project in which "four or five [aerial] photographs were taken of a single well-defined wave as it advanced from the outer end of the pier to the point of breaking." Such photos were later synchronized with underwater measurements of pressure, which corresponded to the rise and fall of waves at surface. Munk argued that one could use photographically captured changes in wavelength and speed as waves travelled to shore to infer the changing depth of the water beneath. A once-confidential document on the "Effect of Bottom Slope on Breaker Characteristics as Observed Along the Scripps Institution Pier" provided an illustration, wavy lines ranged against a grid backdrop, underscoring waves' amenability to measure.

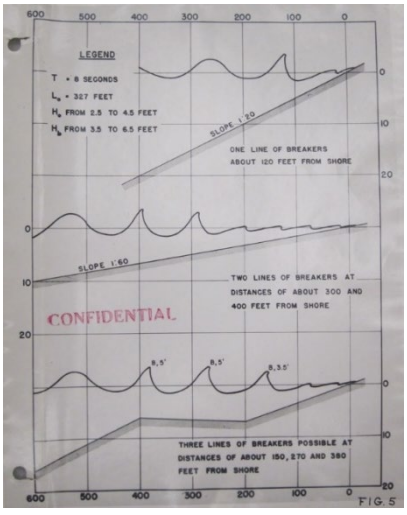

Figure 1: From "Effect of Bottom Slope on Breaker Characteristics as Observed Along the Scripps Institution Pier."

Recordkeeping — and standards for understanding what waves *were* — became essential to wave science. In "Proposed Uniform Procedure for Observing Waves and Interpreting Instrument Records" from 1944, Walter Munk was already offering a rubric for such features as *wave height*. He wrote that "the wave height shall be taken as the average of the highest one-third of the waves observed during a time interval of at least ten minutes," spelling out the measure he would later call *significant wave height*. Such measures came increasingly to be embedded in wave monitoring and recording devices. The unfolding story of wave inscription devices at Scripps can be tracked through a run of papers and diagrams in the archives of the Institution, from early examples such as Cecil La Fond's 1937/38 wave recorder to a long and crumply scroll of wriggly wave height measures on October 3, 1966 that I found rolled up in a cardboard box, a dry archival trace of a once watery wave.

Figure 2: "Eugene Cecil LaFond [circa 1938] standing by his wave recorder installed near the end of the Scripps pier." Eugene LaFond Papers, 1937-1939, BOX 18, FOLDER 16, Scripps Institution of Oceanography Archives.

How were waves becoming knowable at this mid-twentieth-century moment? Through time-and-motion studies at piers and beaches, but also through something relatively new to wave science: aerial photography, a representation of the sea *flipped* from looking across the horizon — the seascape — to looking *down* on the sea as a kind of map of itself. This permitted a view from *above*. With sequences of shots lined up to create a stepwise, flip-book cinema, such views could foretell futures by turning wave *time* into wave *space*.

Figure 3: Vertical, Swell from NW, May 6, 1950. Willard Newell Bascom Papers, 1945-2000, BOX 3: Photographs, Wave Project, UC Berkeley. Waves are to be read from left to right.

Earlier, nineteenth-century viewings of waves from above developed in concert with the surveying of ocean space from cliffs, a vantage from which, as Tara Rodgers has shown, mostly male scientists often described the sea as a flux to be brought into calculative order by an objective observer. Hermann von Helmholtz wrote, "[A] great multitude of different systems of waves mutually overtopping and crossing each other […] is best seen on the surface of the sea, viewed from a lofty cliff […] I must own that whenever I attentively observe this spectacle it awakens in me a peculiar kind of intellectual pleasure." Recall and contrast Willard Bascom's outdoorsy manliness as he sought to measure waves from a point of view *in* the water, here fusing a dedication to disinterested accounting with an in-the-thick-of-it heroism, one that historian of science Naomi Oreskes has argued crafted mid-century oceanographic objectivity as a potent mix of masculine detachment and passion, often erasing the labor of those many women who were tabulating, calculating, and theorizing ocean data, from sea and sky. At work in twentieth-century aerial photography, of course, were additional military aims — of eliminating the horizon by rising above it, using this reorientation to bring the future into view in the present.

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The beach as a place where a sensitive imaginary of the sea is formed

- ## Biography

Clara Breteau did her phd as an AHRC Whiterose postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds in cultural geography and cultural studies. She is a Cambridge graduate and also holds degrees from La Sorbonne and ESSEC in France. Her phd thesis – *Poiesis in the Era of Metamorphosis* - uses the concepts of *poïesis* to shed a new light on contemporary alternative habitation forms and is currently being rewritten as an essay to be published by Actes Sud. Since March 2020, Clara has been working as a post-doctorate researcher at the University of Caen, investigating how the living world in marine environments nurtures our perceptions and imaginaries of the sea.

- ## Short abstract

The purpose of this contribution is to present the main focuses of the *Sensitroph project: perceiving the sea from the shore.* Launched in March 2020 by the Normandy-based branch of the BOREA laboratory along with the Paris-based LADYSS laboratory, the project is funded by the Fondation de France and investigates seashore users' everyday perceptions and interaction with the marine living world, with the objective of integrating cultural indicators into marine ecosystem modeling. This contribution will focus more specifically on one of the components of the Sensitroph project namely the ethnographic study of sensitive attachments to and imaginaries of the sea. As the project has reached the end of a first phase of field surveys conducted from June to October 2020, we will propose a first series of case studies, looking at how beaches offer crucibles for the development of sensitive imaginaries of the sea. We will seek in particular to understand the way in which marine living worlds contribute to the production of affects and images: what are the beings, signs and phenomena which, like those shells we hold to our ear to hear the sound of the sea, allow us to develop from the beach an intimate perception and imaginary of the sea? From a corpus of observations carried out on six beaches located along the coast of the Seine Bay (Etretat, Le Havre, Houlgate, Luc sur mer, Port-en-Bessin and Saint-Vaast -la-Hougue), we will first study the way in which the agency of the sea and its living world are reflected on the shore in images and drawings which stimulate the imagination and feed into it. In a second part, we will see how the beach gives rise to the deployment of a whole spectrum of perceptions which break from the prevalent scopic predation in contemporary capitalized beaches by operating a series of cross-fertilizations and entanglements between human and non-human worlds. As hybrid figures multiply, from starfish children to bird-men, burrowing bathers and shellfish fishermen, the beach's "habitat" and its network of signs is also transformed into a "garment" that envelops beings in its metamorphic fabric.

- Long abstract

In August 2019, while strolling on the beach at Trouville, a young boy found a bottle which had been thrown into the sea at Le Havre, on the north bank of the Seine estuary, with inside a message containing invocations to a "jinn of the seas"[19]. As this anecdote shows, the monetary quantification of ecosystem services only gives a partial and narrow view of the intense relationships that human societies have with their natural environments in general and with marine worlds in particular, a rich source of tales and legends. Beyond the famous "disenchantment of the world" identified at the beginning of the 20th century by the sociologist Max Weber[20], it may well be the case that forms of ordinary animism still underlie the social fabric, creating strong emotional ties with the material world[21]. At a time when we are witnessing the rapid collapse of ecosystems under the weight of anthropogenic pressures, it appears more necessary than ever to measure the significance of what else is being lost along with the living world, and what of our cultures, imaginaries and intimacies is at stake when the “health” of ecosystems is threatened.

The *Sensitroph project: perceiving the sea from the shore*[22] therefore has the ambition of understanding how the richness of marine food webs not only pertains to questions of “food” in the metabolic sense but also nourishes, internally and existentially, human beings and the places they inhabit. Funded by the Fondation de France over a period of two years and focused on the coast of the Seine Bay in Normandy, the project brings together researchers in systems ecology, human geography and environmental aesthetics as well as partners such as the Conservatoire du Littoral and the French Biodiversity Office. In terms of methodologies, the project combines quantitative and qualitative survey methods (online questionnaires, an ethnographic survey) applied to a variety of seashore users of the Seine Bay whose results, after analysis, will be used to design a series of cultural indicators that will be integrated into the spatial models of local marine food webs. The objective is to better understand the form and nature of our relationships with the marine living world as well as their cultural enrichments, in order to envision possible futures of the coast under different scenarios (climate change, new developments in the fishing industry, building of new wind farms, resources management).

The contribution to the “Living with beaches” conference will aim to present the main strands of the *Sensitroph project: perceiving the sea from the shore,* with a specific focus on one of its components, namely the ethnographic study of sensitive attachments to and imaginaries of the sea. Mini case studies, derived from the first phase of field studies conducted from June to October 2020, will then be presented, looking at how beaches offer crucibles for the development of sensitive imaginaries of the sea. We will specifically seek to understand the way in which living marine worlds perceived from the beaches contribute to the production of affects and images: what are the beings, signs and phenomena which, like those shells we hold to our ears to hear the sound of the sea, allow us to develop from the beach an intimate perception and imaginary of the sea?

[19] Marie Zinck, “Un texte à la gloire d’un joueur du HAC découvert dans une bouteille à la mer à Trouville”, *Parisnormandie.fr*, August 19, 2019.

[20] Max Weber, *L'Ethique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme*, Paris, Plon, 2010, p. 117, 134, 177 & 179.
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, e.g. NY, Penguin Book, 2002 translated by P. Baerh & G. C Wells.

[21] Animism is approached here as a new political, epistemological and social paradigm that interrogates "[the] animated character of things perceived", thus offering tools to overcome naturalistic and dualistic ontologies associated with the current environmental crisis. See for example David Abram, *Comment la terre s’est tue. Pour une écologie des sens*, Paris, La Découverte, 2013, p. 83 and Isabelle Stengers, “Reclaiming Animis,”, *e-flux*, No.35, July 2012, http://www.eflux.com/journal/36/61245/reclaiming-animism/, last visited on April 8, 2018.

[22] See https://borea.mnhn.fr/fr/programme-recherche/sensitroph.

We will build upon the observation that both popular and ordinary perceptions of and relations with marine living worlds have been so far largely overlooked when it comes to studying this new sensitivity to the sea also known as the " lure of the sea "[23]. According to recent historiography[24], the latter developed spectacularly starting in the 18th century in Western societies under the major influence of theologians, writers, painters as well as the aristocracy who invented the seaside resort. Despite these illustrious forerunners, our intimate relationships with the sea and with its worlds have rarely been studied by the social sciences from the angle of what the sensitive experience of coastal spaces by their users could generate in terms of imaginaries.

If we narrow down the perspective to beaches, broadly defined as sandy foreshores, one can note that the humanities and social sciences have long been marked by anthropocentric and ecologically decontextualized approaches to this space. These prevail for example in Barthes' essay "The Myth of Today", which regards beaches as mere accumulations of discursive and strictly human "semiological material": "how many truly 'insignificant' fields do we navigate in a day? Very few, sometimes none. I am here, facing the sea which, no doubt, carries no message. But on the beach, what a wealth of semiological materials! Flags, slogans, signs, clothes, even tanning, which are so many messages to me"[25].

Concealing "the life of signs and the signs of life"[26] other than human, this vision of the beach appears to be symptomatic of the humanities which, despite the development of neo-materialist and biosemiotic currents[27], are still reluctant today to begin their "non-human turn"[28]. In the field of cultural geography, work has been done that tries to understand how the "tangible reality" of the beach "feeds the imaginary necessary for human well-being", but it nevertheless remains attached to an "elementary" vision of the seashore reduced to "an interface between the different basic elements"- - water, air, fire and earth[29].

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Figure 1 : An elementary vision of the beach: a hut and a parasol on the sand and water line with the sky and the sun in the background, on a bathroom tile in St-Vaast-la-Hougue

[23] Alain Corbin, *Le Territoire du vide. L'Occident et le désir de rivage*, Paris, Flammarion, 1988.
Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea – The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750 – 1840*, L.A and Berkeley, California Press, 1994, Translated by Jocelyn Phelps.
[24] *Ibid.* See also Françoise Péron & Jean Rieucau (dir.), *La Maritimité aujourd'hui*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000.
[25] Roland Barthes, "Le mythe d'aujourd'hui" in *Oeuvres complètes*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1993, p. 685-6.
[26] Jesper Hoffmeyer, *Biosemiotics, an Examination into the Signs of Life and the Life of Signs*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008.
[27] See *ibid.* and Rick Dolphijn & Iris Van der Tuin (dir.), *New Materialism. Interviews & Cartographies*, Ann Arbor, Open Humanities Press, 2012.
[28] Louis-Claude Paquin, "Le Nouveau Matérialisme", lecture given at the University of Québec in Montreal, November 2015, p. 11, http://lcpaquin.com/epistemologie/materialisme.pdf, last visited on October 9, 2017.
[29] Jérôme Lageiste, "La plage, un objet géographique de désir", *Géographie et cultures*, No.67, 2008, p. 7-25 (7, 13 and 17).

In this lecture, we will therefore try to tackle the still as yet little addressed question of how marine living worlds shape and feed our sensitive ties to the sea through a series of "immediate" reflections and hypotheses taken directly from the field. Using a corpus of observations carried out on six beaches along the coast of the Seine Bay in Etretat, Le Havre, Houlgate, Luc sur mer, Port-en-Bessin and Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue, we will first study the way in which the agency of the sea and its living world are reflected on the shore in images and patterns which stimulate the imagination and nurture it[30]. So doing, we will counter a certain hylomorphic approach to the beach, which regards it as an inert space where only representations formed "independently" of it are created[31].

Far from constituting a mere surface of projection, the beach appears more as a "fabric", both trophically and aesthetically in which human and non-human bodies share foods while intermingling and mixing their forms. Contrary to a certain consumerist touristic aesthetic where marine environments are perceived through the two extreme poles of scopic drive and the ingestion of seafood, we will see how the beach gives rise to the deployment of a whole spectrum of perceptions which break from predation by operating a series of cross-fertilizations and entanglements between human and non-human worlds. As hybrid figures multiply, from starfish children to bird-men, burrowing bathers and shellfish fishermen, the beach "habitat" and its network of signs is also transformed into a "garment" that envelops beings in its metamorphic fabric.

Figure 2 : The restaurant with panoramic views plays with the "eating the sea" fantasy with its promise of capturing the depths of the sea both visually and gustatorily

[30] Our reflection echoes Gibson's theory of "affordances", see James J . Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, New York, Taylor & Francis Psychological Press, 1979

[31] See for example Tim Ingold, *Making. Anthropology, Archeology, Art and Architecture*, London/New York, Routledge, 2013, pp. 20-1: "whenever we read that in the making of artefacts, practitioners impose forms internal to the mind upon a material world 'out there', hylomorphism is at work".

Figure 3 : Figures of bird-men on the beach at Houlgate

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Dancing the beach: In-between Land, Sea and Sky

- ## Biography

Victoria Hunter is a Practitioner-Researcher and Reader in Site Dance and Choreography at the University of Chichester, UK. Her research explores corporeal engagements with space and place through embodied movement practice and site dance. Her edited volume *Moving Sites: Investigating Site-Specific Dance Performance* was published by Routledge in 2015 and she is co-author of *(Re) Positioning Site-Dance* (Intellect 2019) with Melanie Kloetzel (Canada) and Karen Barbour (New Zealand) exploring regionally based site-dance practice in relation to global socio-economic, political and ecological themes through a range of interdisciplinary perspectives including; feminist scholarship, human geography, neoliberalism and New Materialist discourses. Her monograph '*Site, Dance and Body: Movement, Materials and Corporeal Engagement*' is due for publication with Palgrave in Spring 2021.

- ## Short abstract

Site-based dance and movement practice can be defined as a dance practice created and performed *in situ*, in response to particular sites and locations. The practice is wide-ranging and varied in terms of its aims, location and focus, from the rural to the urban, the political to the spectacle. In this presentation I consider how beach sites can be explored through phenomenologically informed movement inquiry. I propose that this type of work offers up other modes and ways of 'knowing' environments and nonhuman components, providing additional layers of information and embodied knowledge with which to consider beaches and watery, coastal places. This work demands a form of corporeal present-ness that brings us back to the body and reminds us of the similarities and synergies between our own material make-up of calcified bones and watery interiors, in relation to the sedimented layers of rocks, particles of sand, and the silty porosity of sea beds intrinsic to these environments.

The collection of ideas I present is framed by my engagement with new materialist research and phenomenology and, in particular, notions of body-world entanglement and a questioning of how a sense of moving along with an environment can be invoked through creative arts practice (in my case site-based dance and movement). To do so I employ methodologies that work *with* a site as opposed to imposing an external narrative or agenda *on* a site through a demarcated or 'framed' performance event *per se*.

- Long abstract

What occurs when a moving, dancing body becomes immersed and
entangled within the beach-scape?
What is revealed regarding processes of being and dwelling *with* and *in* the beach?

The beach as a naturally kinetic site presents movement practitioners with a challenge to engage, respond and negotiate with a particularly active and energised environment in a process equitable to a form of movement duet in which a kinetic enmeshment between moving-body and moving-site occurs.

I am personally intrigued by this particular form of 'liminal' dance work, existing physically on the borders between land and sea, comprising artistically hybridised components of pedestrianism, gestural, and non-stylised dance and movement practice, situated on the threshold between choreographed dance performance and environmental movement practice. This work explores a form of choreographic and corporeal curiosity and a fascination with the relationship between body and environment, flesh, sea and sky. I am not interested in performance outcomes in a conventional sense but in movement methodology and the corporeal expression that emerges from encounters between bodies and sites.

This approach produces spontaneous, unscripted dance, presenting an immediate unfolding of process and product, a form of choreography-in-the-moment, an approach described by Australian dancer-researcher Gretel Taylor[32] as; 'dancing the place' as opposed to 'dancing in the place' (p.72).

How this mode of exploration operates in practice is illustrated here through the presentation of one of the many scores (defined loosely as a series of instructions or tasks) that I employ in this work. The site-score exemplifies a type of phenomenological exercise that I developed to encourage the dancers to take the site 'in' to the body and explore connections between body and environment. Through this process of 'being', noticing and responding, a form of organic movement improvisation began to emerge, unique to each individual yet containing common movement themes, dynamics, speeds, pauses, shapes and bodily/ movement forms.

In her paper *Beaches and Bodies*, creative writer Jenn Webb[33] also acknowledges the beach as a cultural construct governed by 'erratically enforced social rules' (p.1) but, through an exploration of the body as a primary form of experiential navigator in the landscape, she also identifies the beach as 'a place where the body (temporarily) wins the struggle between nature and culture, between social constraints and unspoken desires' (p.1). Webb explores how the coastal environment invites the individual into an immersive experience not offered by other, everyday interactions with the world. The potential to dig into the landscape, run sand between the fingers, swim and take the site 'in' to the body is an experience not afforded in quite the same physical and experiential way by parks, rural landscapes or cityscapes.

This sense of re-connecting with 'natural elements'[34] of landscape and environment afforded at the beach potentially reminds us of our own organic relationship to the world and brings us back to more fundamental, bodily processes of engaging with the world through a range of sensory, visceral and kinaesthetic processes. Jen Webb encapsulates this notion when describing her own experience of the beach:

[32] Gretel Taylor, 2010, *'Empty? A critique of the Notion of 'Emptiness' in Butoh and Body weather training,* Theatre, Dance and Performance Training 1(1):72-87
[33] Jenn Webb, *Beaches and Bodies,* 2000, [unpublished conference paper] *On the Beach Conference*, Cultural Studies Association of Australia, University of Queensland, Brisbane December 2000.
[34] *Ibid*

> Absorbed by salty wind, deafened by the roar of water on rocks,
> overcome by rolling waves, disturbed by the plangent cry of gulls.
> Jen Webb (p.3)

Here, Webb captures the multi-sensory nature of the body-beach interaction, one in which our bodies are placed alongside expanded planes and horizons, vertiginous cliff edges, undulating sand dunes, topographies created (often) by natural phenomena of wind, rain and tides, occurring in stark contrast to the human-made regulated environments which we inhabit on a daily basis.

Returning to the notion of liminality and a consideration of the beach as a liminal place of encounter the dance theorist Valerie Briginshaw[35] observes:

> Beaches also exist between land and sea. As shorelines,
> they form borders and boundaries. They are particular
> liminoid or in-between spaces.
> Valerie Briginshaw (p.60)

Approaching the beach as an 'in-between', liminal site offers up a degree of uncertainty and opportunity for those engaging with it. The unpredictability and precarious nature of this liminal place holds the potential to present the individual with new ways of experiencing and engaging with the world and, through so doing, invoke new-found experiences of self-awareness and potential ways of being-in-the-world, Webb observes:

> Think, for instance, of the peculiarly evocative relationship
> between the water and the edge of the land: the uncertainty and
> indeed the mutability of that edge's location metaphorises the
> uncertainty about where the body ends and the rest of the world
> begins.
> Jen Webb (p.3)

The exploration of this relationship founded the basis for my own movement explorations conducted in a coastal location in North Norfolk (May 2010). The movement interactions engaged me in a walking exploration of the waters edge during which the balance point of my body was tested as I fell into and was supported by the stiff coastal wind. Through this exercise I began to physically explore the sensation of being suspended in the air, grounded by gravity whilst moving on the precarious dual limen between sea and shore, land and air. This precarious positioning called into question both physically and conceptually notions of located-ness, problematising where the body was situated in this exchange in a process that constantly shifted and changed with each movement and adjustment of the body.

[35] Valerie Briginshaw. (2001) *Dance, Space, and Subjectivity.* New York: Palgrave.

This level of uncertainty encapsulates and amplifies the uncertainty of location, potentially leading to a questioning of the individual's locational 'fixity' and assuredness of the stability of place. Webb observes how this perceived lack of stability and associated problematising of location 'can be read as a metaphor for the insecurity always attached to ontological questions – what am I? Who am I?' (p.3). Webb's observation helps to position the beach as a contentious and paradoxical place, offering up opportunities for pleasure, danger, escape and disappearance. Through the body's immersion into the sand and sea, rain and wind and, through the projection of oneself imaginatively and viscerally through the landscape into the vistas, planes and horizons beyond, the beach presents the opportunity to metaphorically escape from oneself and, in particular, the form of self practiced and performed[36] in everyday life situations. Leading to a sense of absence from the habitual social self and self-norms through entering into a state of limbo where everyday life, behaviours and actions are suspended. Paradoxically however, when engaging with the beach we are also entering a physically unstable, dangerous place where self-preservation dictates that we *do* attend to ourselves to prevent sinking, drowning, stumbling and colliding with the environment. Through this process we are made very aware of our physical presence and its management within and negotiation of the site-interaction during which, any attempt to escape from attending to our physical self is prevented.

The boundaries of the body and its engagement with nonhuman elements in this process become fluid and permeable. Through processes of engagement and immersion within the beach location the 'messy materiality'[37] of the body and its "insecure boundaries"[38] become exposed. Human geographer Robyn Longhurst explores theories of 'corporeogeography' when considering the body's relationship to the world. In particular, she presents notions of the body's 'fluid boundaries'[39] as a challenge to ideas of fixity and impermeability between body and world, and though doing so, challenges us to consider the 'runny, gaseous, flowing, watery nature of bodies'[40]. Longhurst's positioning of a porous, open body is exemplified particularly well through movement explorations that, necessarily explore the 'messy' materiality of bodies in 'messy' coastal locations in which water, sand, mud and slime become enmeshed, embedded and *sited* within both physical entities of body and environment. Her perspective on bodily porosity chimes with Neimanis'[41] observations regarding watery relations and transcorporeality when she observes,

> A watery body sloshes and leeks, excretes and perspires. Its depths gurgle, erupt. A body of water also extends transcorporeally, into other assemblages; watershed, cistern, sea; and other bodies that are human, vegetable and hydrological. (p.46)

In Neimanis' writing she reflects more generally on how art works or creative interventions might heighten our awareness of these watery relations. She suggests that artistic and creative acts such as writing, images and installation performances act as 'proxy stories' that operate as 'avenues for de-sedimenting our human-scaled perspective' (p. 55). Such artistic and imaginative acts, she argues provide, 'access to an embodied experience of our wateriness that might otherwise be too submerged, too subcutaneous, too repressed, or

[36] See: Erwin Goffman, (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* London: Penguin. (Voir la traduction française de Alain Accardo (1973) *La Mise en scène de la vie quotidienne,* Paris : Minuit.)

[37] Robyn Longhurst (2001) *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*. London: Routledge.
[38] *Ibid*
[39] *Ibid*
[40] *Ibid*
[41] Astrida Neimanis (2019) *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*, London: Bloomsbury.

too large and distant (or even too obvious, mundane and taken for granted), to readily sense.'(p. 55). In this discussion, I extend this notion to encompass dance performances in beach sites that draw attention to watery relations and human-nonhuman entanglements. Doing so however, I propose a caveat that such work *enacts* rather than represents (via proxy) the enmeshed relations at hand.

This open-ended liminality of coastal locations combined with an awareness of a porous and open body, pushes movement practitioners to explore potential limits, boundaries and possibilities of the body in this particular type of landscape. The range of movement possibilities arising from the beach interaction can appear endless, freeing up the choreographer from using codified movement vocabulary which may appear inappropriate or redundant in this context. More basic and simplified actions involving whole-body actions and reverting to processes of movement exploration that incorporate basic rolling, running and walking actions[42] might appear most appropriate and relevant in this context.

Through this practice, I argue that a particular form of dwelling-in-the-beach occurs in which the dancer comes to 'know' the site well through detailed exploration of specific elements in which a particular, experiential 'world' is constructed. This proposition is informed by Tim Ingold's 'dwelling perspective'[43](p.153) in which he develops Heidegerrean notions of dwelling and temporality in relation to human-environment relationships, '...in dwelling in the world, we do not act upon it, or do things to it; rather we move along with it'. (p.164). This sense of 'moving along' with the landscape articulated by Ingold informs my own framing of the practice here as a dance *with* the beach site in which a relationship of co-existence provides the source, content and context of the movement outcomes performed by the dancer. This subjective process of dwelling-in-the beach invoked through improvised movement exploration facilitates a particular form of worlding to occur in which the dancer aligns themselves with the 'themes and atmospheres present within a particular world'[44]. Facilitated by a mobile process of dwelling in which both the body and site are co-perceived by the dancer, as they move along with the natural rhythms, contours, vistas and directions of the site.

This territory can be illuminated through the application of Merleau-Ponty's notion of 'Le Chiasme'[45] as a theoretical lens with which to explore the nature of the site-body-self interaction. Merleau-Ponty's notion enables us to identify, in this context, an intertwining between body and world through an engagement within an interstitial territory in which body-self and site become entwined, overlap and engage in a 'messy' exchange facilitated by a process of reversibility. Merleau Ponty in *The Visible and Invisible* (1968) describes this process:

> Once a body-world relationship is recognized, there is a ramification of my body and a ramification of the world and a correspondence between its' inside and my outside, between my inside and its' outside. (p.136)

This process involves therefore a form of phenomenological reduction in which the process of intentionality operates as a two-way process involving the dancer's intentionality towards the world and the world's intentionality towards the embodied subject.

This mode of movement inquiry, telling 'of' the site, foregrounds the body and the corporeal as the primary mode of engaging with the world and reveals a form of 'being-in-the-world' in which body and world entwine.

[42] See : https://vimeo.com/93771175 Amy Greenfield, Tides, 1982
[43] Tim Ingold, (1993) « The Temporality of the Landscape », *World Archaeology* 25, n° 2: 152-74.
[44] Kathleen Stewart, (2012) *Ordinary Affects*, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
[45] Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. (1968) *The Visible and the Invisible* [Trans: Alphonso Lingis]. U.S.A: Northwestern University press. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Le visible et l'invisible*, Paris, Gallimard, 1964.

It requires the mover to remain open, present and aware of the body in site and to respond instinctively through a form of pre-reflective practice in which the individual's sense of self is never-the-less present.

The resulting movement content emerging through phenomenological inquiry is not therefore, empirically representative of the environment but instead, expresses the mover's visceral and embodied response to the world and its materials in abstract form 'coloured' and 'flavoured' by their lived-experience of site.

Whilst I began this research with an aim to corporeally find a way 'in' to the beach site and employ a range of scores to help facilitate the individual's explorations, what also emerges for some participants is an expression of emotional experiences encountered both during and following the movement episodes. The horizon-line exploration was particularly noteworthy in terms of the range of emotions evoked revealed through post-practice discussions with the dancers. A number of participants reported feelings of trepidation, melancholy and unease during the practice whilst others recalled feelings of elation, potentiality and 'import', reflecting a wide range of epic emotional resonances mirroring the epic scale of the horizon-line encounter experienced in this work.

Many participants expressed feelings of being emotionally 'moved' by their dance explorations and encounters with the beach-site. Others expressed feelings of wistfulness and melancholia experienced during the more contemplative (i.e. texture and horizon-line) scores whilst one dancer expressed how the work invoked memories of her recently deceased father and for her, the process of dancing on the beach became one of 'offering up' a tribute or eulogy to his memory.

In order to theorise these responses it is perhaps useful here to return to Ingold's 'dwelling perspective'[46], a viewpoint that alludes to a type of subject-environment relationship in which sites are experienced in a significant manner, infused with memories, associations and affects through which a deep-seated sense of connectivity develops. Ingold's perspective is bound up with notions of temporality and mobility in which the passage of time as a component of human existence and landscape inhabitation, development and deterioration is acknowledged. Through this perspective, Ingold proposes that all perceptual encounters with landscape are informed by the experiencer's inherent awareness of the past histories, activities and lives of previous site inhabitants he observes;

> To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past. (p.189)

Whilst Ingold applies this perspective to a broader discussion of landscape archaeology and anthropology, I am suggesting here that, in this practice a 'dwelling perspective' informed by a subjective awareness of past activity and a sense of ontological lineage encountered at the beach-site co-exists with a more subjective felt 'sense' of historicity. In the movement based beach-site exploration process this may inform the performer's corporeal sense of engagement and emotional connection with the beach-site in a more individualised and subjective manner through a form of embodied memory that, in turn invokes real-time emotional responses.

This subjective sense of historicity encountered through associations and connections emerging from embodied memory can be seen to operate within the site-dance process outlined here in an existential manner. Through connecting with this beach-site I am also connecting with every beach-site I have ever encountered as my embodied memory brings to bear imprinted and embedded memorial resonances to this

[46] Tim Ingold, (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge.

'present' engagement with the site. Thereby invoking physical and emotional responses that entwine at the nexus of interaction between past associations and present, real-time experiences of the beach-site.

However disparate and illusive the nature and subject of these invoked emotions might be and however unquantifiable they may appear as research outcomes what interests me here is the very existence of these emotional states and traces as tangible and valid components of the practice itself. In this work, the process of freeing up habitual modes of being, the giving over of oneself to the practice and the associated cessation of holding oneself and our emotions 'at bay' appeared to become entwined within the movement explorations as the practice developed. I am suggesting here that this 'freeing up' of behaviour effectively opens up a space in which emotions, memories and associations commonly held in check are enabled and allowed to emerge, not in the form of an emotional outburst but as a key component in our process of attending to ourselves in a truly holistic sense.

Through this discussion of coastally located site-dance I argue that the practice reveals the multiplicitous nature of the beach site and, through doing so highlights the complexity of human processes of engaging with coastal locations. Through phenomenologically based movement inquiry the practice enables individuals to engage with the many layers and nuances of coastal landscapes. These components include formal, tangible elements of sand, sea, rock faces and precipices encountered alongside more 'informal' site components of rhythm, texture, speed, distance and scale experienced subjectively by the perceiver. In this sense, the practice constitutes a mobile process of collage in which multiplicities of inside, outside, space, time, memory, emotion and affect assemble, dissolve and re-assemble through the dancer's motion and motility. Through phenomenological movement inquiry participants are able to immerse themselves corporeally within this multiplicitous encounter and to play along with, question, explore and work-through a range of embodied responses encountered in the moment of interaction.

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Choreographing for a shoreline

- ## Biography

Julie Perrin is an assistant professor in the dance department of the Paris 8 Saint-Denis University (MUSIDANSE laboratory – E.A. 1572) and a researcher at the I.U.F. (2016-2021). Her research focuses on contemporary dance from 1950 onwards in the United States and France, with an emphasis on spatiality in dance and site-specific choreography. She is the author of: *Projet de la matière – Odile Duboc: Mémoire(s) d'une œuvre chorégraphique* (CND / Les presses du réel, 2007); *Figures de l'attention. Cinq essais sur la spatialité en danse* (Les presses du réel, 2012); *Composer en danse. Un vocabulaire des opérations et des pratiques* (with Y. Chapuis and M. Gourfink, Les presses du réel, 2019). Her writings are available from: www.danse.univ-paris8.fr.

- ## Short abstract

The proposal from the *Living beaches Environnemental Humanities* group to watch films together presenting choreographic approaches to beaches is an opportunity to observe how a choreographic point of view can transform this environment into one conducive to performance creation or dance experimentation. In turn, this leads us to reflect on what this novel choreographic transformation of beaches can tell us about the relationship that humans have with such an environment. In the choreographic examples presented, the shoreline will therefore be the subject of a dance and not simply its backdrop.

The presentation will be based on examples scattered throughout the 20th century, taking the risk of connecting historically distant examples but also very contrasting geographical realities, since the term "shore" may refer to a very wide range of places chosen by different choreographers. The precise history of the relationship choreographers have with seas and shores remains to be told, and it is still too early to present synthetic conclusions, unlike painting or literature, whose relationship to shores is well documented. This journey through a few photographic or filmed images will be an opportunity to advance some hypotheses and is intended as a distant introduction to the three films that will be shown.

- Long abstract

The proposal from the *Living beaches Environnemental Humanities* group to watch films together presenting choreographic approaches to beaches is an opportunity to observe how a choreographic point of view can transform this environment into one conducive to performance creation or dance experimentation. In turn, this leads us to reflect on what this novel choreographic transformation of beaches can tell us about the relationship that humans have with such an environment. In other words, if I may allow myself to add a word to the title of these study days, in the same way as a danced or choreographed gesture is introduced onto the shore, an opportunity to discuss "living choreographies with beaches".

This presentation will be based on examples scattered throughout the 20th century, The precise history of the relationship choreographers have with seas and shores remains to be told, and it is still too early to present synthetic conclusions, unlike painting or literature, whose relationship to shores is well documented. Although it is not the ambition of this presentation, we will keep in mind what such a research program would open up. Its masterful model would undoubtedly be the approach initiated by Alain Corbin, the construction of a history of Western sensibilities to shores. His perspective is inspiring for dance studies, because Corbin is interested in a "somatic culture" and attentive to "everything that concerns the body, perceived as a central source of sensation"[47] . In his essay *Le Territoire du vide. L'Occident et le désir du rivage 1750-1840* (Flammarion, 1990) and then in *Le Ciel et la mer* (Bayard, 2005), the historian engages in resolutely multidisciplinary research to draw up a history of ways of appreciating the shoreline over the centuries. The strength of such a study lies in its ability to show that the shoreline is at the crossroads of different fields: social practices (as varied as fishing, leisure activities, therapeutic resorts or tourism); scientific theories linked to the knowledge of living things, the Earth, the climate (in particular geography, geology, meteorology) and the human body (in particular medical theories prescribing visits to or, on the contrary, avoidance of the seashore, but also representations of the human body and the circulation of aqueous or aerial fluids); or knowledge of belief systems (i.e. the way in which the sea, underwater spaces or meteors are apprehended according to representations that may be superstitious, religious, mythological or folkloric). Throughout Western history, contrasting scientific schemas, social practices, emotional expressions and rhetoric have contributed to shape the shoreline. Finally, the history of the forms of attention and sensitivities to the shoreline is interwoven with that of its representations through art. Indeed, Corbin's work, like that of other thinkers (Bachelard, for example), has shown the part art can play in the construction of representations, aesthetic appreciations and ways of frequenting shores. Art contributes to building shore sensitivity because, like other disciplines, it involves selecting certain elements within the visible range and shapes them or stages them in a way which makes them play a particular role - be it symbolic, sensitive or political. It contributes to making the elements of the world around us appear differently and thus modifies, if not our ways of acting and feeling, then at least how we look at them and the attention we pay to them.

If art can become a clue, specific to each epoch or culture, that reveals a way of appreciating and inhabiting the world, its role in history is not just that of a witness. It also contributes to forging our ways of seeing, feeling, standing and moving. As such, it seems important to me to observe the choreographic approaches to the shore from two angles: on the one hand, choreographic art is a reflection of its time because it adopts conceptions of the shore that are specific to the science, beliefs, lifestyles, political and social concerns of that time, but also because it adopts conceptions that are specific to choreographic styles or artistic codes. For there are undoubtedly in this history of choreography for shores in the 20th century, stereotypes, codes,

[47] Alain Corbin, *Le Territoire du vide. L'Occident et le désir de rivage*, Paris, Flammarion, 1988. (See also: Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea – The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750 – 1840*, L.A and Berkeley, California Press, 1994, Translated by Jocelyn Phelps). Alain Corbin, *Le Ciel et la mer*, Paris : Flammarion, coll. Champs, p. 12 [1st ed., Bayard, 2005].

gestural and choreographic continuities that stem from a form of properly choreographic artialization[48]. Such artistic staging based on identifiable choreographic codes is likely to give rise to the constitution of dominant perceptive schemas through which the perception of reality solidifies. It is, strictly speaking, what we call the invention of a landscape, that is to say the invention of specific and common ways of appreciating a portion of territory[49]. How choreographic artists have contributed, in a singular way, to "forging" coastal landscapes, by nurturing our imaginaries and representations and by opening the possibility of connecting and moving differently in these places, remains to be shown.

However, Alain Corbin also invites us to beware of false historical continuities. He writes: "In a word, for two and a half centuries, the Western world has kept its taste for shores; but its inhabitants have not been drawn to them to satisfy the same desires"[50]. This evokes not only historical differences, shifts in the forms of and reasons for appreciating the shoreline, but also, at the same time, dominant models and social distinctions in the ways of apprehending, considering or representing it. There could be an opportunity here, for the history of dance, to investigate the reasons for choosing the shoreline as a place for the practice or monstration of dance. And to examine, given the apparent gestural and choreographic continuities, the complexity of the temporalities which form the web of the present, notably the anachronistic persistence or resurgence of gestures and affects, as choreographic archetypes.

If choreographic art draws from a common scientific or social culture an understanding and apprehension of where it takes place, if it mobilizes the codes specific to its genre - ways of symbolizing or representing its relationship to the world or of translating its perception of it - then it may well open up other sensitivities to the shores, loading them with other desires and symbolizations. This is the second angle that contributes to the specific story of the attraction of the sea and the coastline. Choreographic art, as a field of activity per se, is not a mere reflection of pre-existing practices and rhetoric ; it is also able to construct modes of figuration and forms of sensitivity to the environment arising from the very specific nature of the activity it is engaged in.

At this stage, it is probably necessary to differentiate between dancing practices at the seaside on the one hand (dance workshops, outdoor dance camps, or more ritualized forms like those developed by Anna Halprin on the beaches of Sea Ranch in California) and, on the other hand, the performance dance forms presented on shores as a work of art for an audience. The former offers the participants the possibility to experiment with the shoreline through their own behavior with no other aim than to develop, as the case may be : a new range of movements inspired by the geographical configurations of the shoreline; an exploration of perception and sensations triggered by the environment; a new approach to the technical knowledge of the gesture in a questioning context; an imaginary of movement; self-development; a new way of exploring an environment through an activity different from the usual uses of the place; ecological awareness through the way the dancing subject experiences their position as a living being; a form of spirituality or communion with the world; new ways of being together, with other people, or living together with other beings, etc. This non-comprehensive list is in itself revealing of the range of factors driving the dancing activity, forming different and sometimes cumulative, filters for apprehending the shoreline. A more detailed analysis of how the response to these factors in turn reveals the tacit codes established by choreographic culture - particularly in its pedagogical dimension – would be necessary.

[48] Alain Roger uses this term, borrowed from Montaigne, to refer to the transformation of the territory through art performance, *Court traité du paysage*, Paris : Gallimard, NRF, 1997.
[49] Cf. Anne Cauquelin, *L'Invention du paysage*, Paris : Presses universitaires de France, coll. Quadrige, 2000.
[50] Alain Corbin, "L'émergence du désir du rivage ou la spécificité d'une forme de fascination de la mer", *Le Ciel et la mer*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

Performance dance forms, for their part, are likely to share the same traits as above, but they are also driven by the desire to give form and coherence to a work: by defining themselves as choreographies, they integrate artistic criteria (aesthetics, style, duration, composition, etc.) and establish an audience to which they are addressed. In other words, these performance dance forms have a dual relationship, with the coast and with the public. It is no longer simply about living an experience in relation with the sea, the sky or the immensity, or the sensation of the dancing subject, the pleasure of their own motor activity connected to their imaginaries or sensations; it is also about creating the frameworks allowing this experience to be conveyed to others. The object is to represent the experience, not simply live it, and make it visible where it is still fairly imperceptible. In other words, transforming lived experiences (sensitive, political, spiritual, kinetic, proprioceptive and so on) into something meaningful by giving them a form through which a worked sensitive reality is revealed. A work of art is a composition of materials and sensations. Although the relation to the shoreline involves a series of practices, research, investigations, whether in situ or not, the choreographic work is the means to give it form for others. It invents appropriate frameworks so that it can be shared. An example of such frameworks is the definition of a point of view or visibility framework: where will the audience be located and how can the choreography draw their attention to certain elements rather than others? What type of activity will the audience be engaged in – will they be static or led to perform actions? These frameworks are also strongly supported by the very structure of the work - its duration, the organization of its material, its dramatic logic. These frameworks thus create a relationship to time and space that will inform the way the shore is apprehended: they become filters through which “living choreographies with beaches” take shape. Here again, as for outdoor dance practices, it would be interesting to look into whether the shoreline is a good location for calling into question performance norms, because it would imply, for example, exploring longer time scales in order to feel the passing of time and the different changes (in light intensities, tides, activities of the living world, etc.).

It is probably because choreography can be shared on the very site of its creation - the shore - that it opens up the possibility of exploring other formats than those constrained by the cultural structures in which art is normally presented. Indeed, unlike painting or reading, where the relation to the shore is mediated through the painting or book itself, and also through the exhibition space or the context in which the reading takes place, site-specific choreography invites the audience to the very site of its creation. Knowledge of the place is thus collectively shared or called into question, at the same time as the dance is performed. This co-presence ensures a simultaneous experience of the environment as revealed by the choreography. Many shoreline choreographies, however, are primarily designed to be filmed or photographed. In other words, the camera immediately establishes a frame, as well as variations in shots and fields, which can be induced by the choreography but are obviously accentuated by the camera, since it is no longer possible to let one’s gaze wander outside of the camera’s frame. The haptic, gravitational, meteorological, acoustic, olfactory, etc. relationship to the site that the audience would have shared is thus mediated through the analogical image, which has its own codes and aesthetics of representation. Choreographies performed before an audience have also been filmed or photographed. It is mainly from a corpus of such films and photographs of choreographies on shores that I have developed my reflection.

My presentation will consist in presenting initial hypotheses about the archetypes on which a choreographic relationship to the shore was established throughout the 20th century. These archetypes are precisely the sign of the constitution of a common culture, a guarantee of complicity between dancers and with future spectators. They are the pre-condition for a specific culture to emerge and the basis of the choreographic invention of a coastal landscape. I will therefore insist on what the dances have in common rather than on what sets them apart, based on a selection of a few examples of interest from among those I have come across.

As a preamble, it is important to highlight that behind the word “shore” lies a highly varied range of places chosen by choreographers: a deserted, immense, natural beach on the Pacific coast; a narrow, urban beach in the south of France; a Breton beach on the Atlantic coast; a Belgian beach on the North Sea coast; the shore of a landfill site in Tokyo Bay; the east coast of Greenland, etc. The very diversity of these geographical realities points to the difficulty, and even the extravagance, of navigating through such contrasting examples. All the more so as my interest is in choreographies that seek to establish a relationship with the shores rather than those which use them as a backdrop.

This journey through a few photographic or filmed images is intended as a form of distant introduction to the three films that will be projected: *Circadian*, a 24-hour choreography created in 2019 by the British choreographer Rosemary Lee for 24 professional and amateur dancers of different generations, accompanied by the composer Isaac Lee-Kronick. The choreography was presented on the beach at Lowestoft (Suffolk, UK) and resulted in a 15-minute film. *Passage for Par* was created in 2018 by the same choreographer on Par Sands Beach in Cornwall (UK), with 30 women. The site was chosen for its dramatic contrasts, being both a site of geological interest for its tidal expanse with its glittering deposits of quartz and mica and a pronounced industrial landscape. The film lasts 3 minutes. The third film is entitled *Lia* (16 minutes) and was made in 2015 for the series “An episode of the South” by Fernando Arias with the Brazilian choreographer Lia Rodrigues whose voice-over accompanies the images and evokes, among other things, her relationship with water and the ocean.

Rosemary Lee
Choreographer
rosemarymlee1@gmail.com

Short movie "boy" (1996)

Choreographic videos, "Passage for Par" (2018) and "Circadian" (2020)

- ## Biography

Known for working in a variety of contexts and media, Rosemary creates large-scale site-specific works with cross-generational casts, solos for herself and other performers, video installations and short films. Her work is characterised by an interest in creating a moving portraiture of the performing individuals and communities she brings together, whilst also exploring and highlighting our relationship with our environment.

Rosemary writes:

"I have always been interested in how I might create work, whether live or on film, that enhances the viewer's awareness and perception of the environment. I hope I might stimulate the audience to notice more, hear more, feel the earth and air through their skin, reawakening a physical, sensorial response to the landscape they are part of and made of."

- ## Artistic Films projected

➢ **boy (1996)**

Length 5 minutes / A film by Peter Anderson and Rosemary Lee / Performed by Tom Evans / music and sound design Graeme Miller / Photo credit Rosemary Lee and Peter Anderson. Production shot by Margaret Williams (1995)

A nine year old boy moves with stealth and energy through a dramatic coastal landscape. boy explores the imaginary, magical world of the protagonist, rippling with animal imagery and shamanistic conjuring, it is about the boy's perceptions of the world and his realisation of his own place in the universe.

boy was short listed for the IMZ Screen Choreography Award and received special citation for the Choreography for the Camera Award at Moving Pictures Toronto.

➢ **Passage for Par (2018)**

Conceived and choreographed by Rosemary Lee / A two-minute short promo film, shot and edited by Graham Gaunt / Commissioned by CAST for the Groundwork programme, Par Sands Beach, Cornwall 2018 / Photo credit 'Passage for Par' by Rosemary Lee, Photo: Graham Gaunt © CAST (Cornubian Arts and Science Trust)

Passage for Par was created specially for and presented on Par Sands Beach

At the turn of the tide 30 women rhythmically snake their way across the tidal landscape, tracing meandering pathways through the wet sand, their outlines etched against the sea and sky.

- **Circadian (2020)**

A 15 minute dance film / Created by film maker Roswitha Chesher and choreographer Rosemary Lee / Music and sound editing by Isaac Lee-Kronick.

From one afternoon to the next over the summer solstice weekend 2019, one of 24 dancers, predominantly drawn from the eastern region and ranging in age from 10-70+ years, performed a short solo on the hour every hour. Premiered at the First Light Festival and set against a landscape of changing skies, sea and light on Lowestoft's south beach, each performance of Rosemary Lee's Circadian was accompanied with the same absorbing song performed live by singer/ composer Isaac Lee-Kronick. Beginning with the youngest and ending with the eldest, each dancer brought their unique quality to this repeating, ritualistic performance.

This film captures moments from each dancer's solo through daylight, dusk, moonlight and dawn weaving them together to create a new ensemble work for screen. More than a just a document of the live work, the very essence of Circadian's epic scale and intimate nature is distilled into a dance film in its own right.

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