

High Tide (Mersey 2099)

our lives, our land, re-imagined, re-shaped

'In our small country we have to act now as if we were about to be attacked by a powerful enemy. We have first to make sure our defences against climate change are in place before the attack begins. The most vulnerable places are the cities close to the sea level now, and among them... Liverpool.' – JAMES LOVELOCK, *The Revenge of Gaia* (2006)

Geographic location: Merseyside (Mersey Basin)

Period: 2009/2010

As a natural progression on from the success of the *URBAN/ECOLOGY* project which took place during Liverpool Biennial Independents 2008, Gaia Project and Living at the Edge (L@tE) in partnership present **High Tide (Mersey 2099)**; a major new inter-disciplinary art/science climate change project, taking place during Liverpool's 'Year of the Environment 2009' and beyond into 2010.

Project directors:

James Brady (Gaia Project), Janette Porter (L@tE)

Artists:

David Haley, Janette Porter, Tim Pugh, Àgata Alcañiz, Stuart Carter, Elizabeth Willow, James Brady, Jacqueline McCormick, Scott Thurston, Robyn Woolston, Gordon MacLellan

Science partners:

Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory
Liverpool John Moores University, School of Biological & Earth Sciences

Project partners:

Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory, Liverpool John Moores University, MIRIAD (Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design), Landlife (National Wildflower Centre), FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology), CIWEM (Chartered Institute for Water and Environmental Management), University of Salford,

Funder: Environment Agency

Project brief:

High Tide (Mersey 2099) suggests a view 90 years into the future. The proposition is that after the accumulative effects of sea level rise, storm surges and coastal erosion – as a result of climate change – the landscape and coastline of Merseyside could change dramatically and the River Mersey may permanently flood large areas of lowland, currently home to tens of thousands of people. The landscape and everyday life of local communities will be changed and redefined by natural forces beyond our control. This project aims to explore ideas as much about whom we are and our spirit as individuals and communities in the face of the challenges that climate change brings, as it is about our relationship to the landscape and natural environment.

Together, eleven UK based artists will interpret and explore the theme *High Tide* in collaboration with two leading UK environmental scientists, and their academic teams. **High Tide (Mersey 2099)** is a conceptual platform through which the artists and scientists can engage in a unique dialogue with the objective of developing collaborative practices. It is envisaged that a new inter-disciplinary 'knowledge-base' will be generated as a result of this project.

The 'corridor of biodiversity' that is the Mersey Basin floodplain will be the primary geographical context of the project. Through collaborative work (in diverse forms) the artists and scientists will speculate, predict and conceive possible future scenarios for the existence of life in Merseyside, where the land meets water. With a particular focus on direct engagement with local communities, the artists in particular will work in public spaces, natural habitats, and places where material cultures are manifest and shared – responding to the psychogeography and the spirit of place and people. These points of public 'grass-roots' engagement will be catalysts for enlightenment and raising awareness of key issues in the climate change phenomenon.

A programme of site-specific interventions, events, artworks and mini exhibitions (as generated through the project) will be co-ordinated to take place across the city of Liverpool and the wider region of Merseyside in 2009/10. Although geographically scattered, these artworks will be strategically connected by the concept of an expanded notion of the 'exhibition' and united under the common ethos and *High Tide* theme.