

Progress Report: BSG Working Group on 'Visualising geomorphology: Earth Surface Processes, Landforms and The Arts'

The remit of the Visualising Geomorphology Working Group (WG) is to promote the science of geomorphology through engagement with the arts (broadly defined), and therefore raise the profile of the BSG. The WG was funded for one year initially (Feb 2015-Jan 2016), with funding for a second year being contingent on demonstration of satisfactory progress. This report is an update on activities undertaken in the first 8 months.

An initial list of 12 people was invited to join the WG (8 geomorphologists/Quaternary scientists/geographers, 4 artists), all of whom accepted. Following email discussions about the WG scope and focus, 10 people attended the first meeting (Oxford, June 2015). Notes from the very productive meeting are appended at the foot of this document, and the Action Points listed have since been undertaken or are in progress. We envisage that the composition of the WG may change slightly over time, and other BSG members are welcome to express interest in contributing.

Progress against the four specific potential outputs proposed at the time of application for the WG is as follows:

- i) an annual report for hosting on the BSG web pages – *see this document, which will be forwarded to the BSG administrator;*
- ii) a short 'position paper' for ESPL (ESEX Commentary style) – *Tooth circulated a full draft of a possible paper before the Oxford meeting. Comments were received from WG members by email ahead of the meeting and the structure and content was discussed further at the meeting. A second draft is nearing completion and will be circulated to WG members for further comments before additional revision and submission (likely Oct/Nov);*
- iii) a bespoke exhibition on art-geomorphology collaborations at a future BSG Annual Meeting (potentially Plymouth 2016) – *Tooth has initiated discussion with the Conference Chair (Pete Downs) about a potential WG contribution at Plymouth. The initial idea is to have an exhibition (posters, images, other exhibits) possibly entitled '10 Ways In Which The Arts Can Help Communicate Geomorphology' on display for the duration of the conference;*
- iv) contributions to larger collaborative meetings (e.g. 'Art, science and the Anthropocene' to be held at Aberystwyth University, Feb 2016), perhaps drawing on outputs from previous relevant Working Groups (e.g. Carbon and Geomorphology, Anthropocene) – *Ruddock and Tooth have produced a flyer for this meeting (now entitled 'Strata: Art and Science Collaborations in the Anthropocene' and to be held in Jan 2015) and have started to distribute the flyer to relevant individuals and organisations. The WG will contribute to one or more themed sessions (e.g. 'Earth', 'Water').*

Additional activities include:

- i) a proposal by Whalley for a book/web resource on representations of specific landscapes in various art forms (painting, sculpture etc.). A draft book outline and potential chapter structure has been circulated among WG members for comments;
- ii) email discussions about various issues relevant to considerations of geomorphology-art relations (e.g. Yinchuan's Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) that is designed to reflect China's Yellow River);
- iii) discussions between Tooth and Deborah Dixon (Glasgow) have taken place over a possible session on geography/geomorphology-art collaborations at the next American Association of Annual Geographers meeting (San Francisco, March 2016).

Following the Aberystwyth meeting, and prior to the Plymouth exhibition, another WG meeting will likely be held in Oxford in 2016 to discuss ways in which geomorphology and the BSG can benefit from what is a potentially very fertile area of collaboration.

Stephen Tooth and Heather Viles, Sept 2015

Visualising geomorphology: BSG working group

Notes from our first meeting, Oxford, 19th June 2015

Present: Stephen Tooth, Heather Viles, Brian Whalley, Julian Ruddock, Jessica Lloyd-Jones, Ant Dickson, Simon Dixon, Varyl Thorndycraft, Harriet Hawkins, Hywel Griffiths.

Apologies: Anna Falcini, Henry Lamb.

1. Stephen reviewed the background to, and aims and purpose of, the working group and highlighted the activities that we had outlined in our original application.
2. All participants spoke briefly on their particular interest and experience with art:geomorphology engagements. Topics covered included music and sound, video, poetry, lantern slides, landscape art, photography, sculpture, land art, performance. Some common themes were: an interest in illustrating environmental flux and change; combined use of LIDAR data for both science and artistic purposes; art as communication for key geomorphic issues such as processes, environmental history, and landforms; art:geomorphology relations and the Anthropocene. Harriet spoke about her experience with an AHRC project on sci:art collaborations and the need for us to think about questions such as: who are our audiences? what are the most relevant ways to engage with these audiences?
3. We discussed the draft of the ESEX paper and the comments received on it via Dropbox. All were happy with the overall structure and focus. Issues focused on included:
 - a. Getting the best title – contributions welcome!
 - b. Acknowledging an earlier period where art and geomorphology were more closely linked.
 - c. Portraying a richer sense of current art practices and approaches including participatory art and multisensorial art.

Action point: Stephen to propose a submission date and timetable to completion
4. Julian and Stephen introduced plans for a conference at Aberystwyth University (January 2016) on art:science and the Anthropocene with sessions on atmosphere, biosphere and geosphere. The group expressed enthusiasm for leading on, and taking part in, the geosphere section, and this would likely provide the opportunity for a second meeting of the working group (second year's worth of BSG funding permitting).

Action point: Julian and Stephen to confirm dates and timetable
5. We discussed the possibility of the group putting on an exhibition in association with the 2016 BSG Conference in Plymouth (probably in September). Questions raised included: how can we provide a safe and secure space for exhibits? And could we get a journal to sponsor it?

Action point: Stephen and Heather to consider ideas and discuss with the Plymouth conference organisers
6. We discussed funding sources and potential activities to fund. Ideas centred on funding one or more artists to work with us, and establishing a network to generate further projects. A Leverhulme Artist in Residence bid would be attractive, but can

only be made through a single university department or institution with a working space (we discussed whether BSG could apply with a National Park or National Trust site). The AHRC have a highlight notice in 'Science and culture' and could provide funding for an art:geomorphology network. NESTA and the Arts Council might also provide funding for relevant activities.

Action point: Heather to initiate a list of funding sources and circulate to the group

7. Other group activities and outputs were discussed - with Brian proposing a book/web resource on representations of landscapes.

Action point: Brian to draft a concept note by end of July and circulate to the group.

Heather Viles
22nd June 2015