

# I AM WATER



I AM WATER brings together members of the Kingston community to generate discussion on clean water, current ideas on sustainability and what we can do to ensure safe water into the future.

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I AM WATER is a Kingston Artist project which aims to  
champion our right to clean water.

The content of this book explores the theme of water, and  
specifically Lake Ontario and its watershed.

Funds collected by this charity, and the purchase of this book,  
will be donated to Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, a not-for-profit  
Canadian registered charity, dedicated to the protection of water.

Through visual art, storytelling, lectures, and song, I wish to  
connect people on a poetic, political, and local level.

Su Sheedy, artist and curator



My quietest moments and my greatest challenges have all been related to water. Being pounded by wave after wave in a marathon swim, or being softly lulled by gentle waves. The warmth of a summer's day dip, or the treachery of frigid water and hypothermia. The peacefulness of an hour's swim along the Kingston waterfront, or the ordeal of fighting through day after day of continuous swimming as I struggle to achieve my goal.

There is a comfort as I sink below the surface of the water and the sounds around me diminish and soften, but that silence can be deafening in the middle of the night as I face the loneliness that comes with my sport. But I am hooked. I love the feeling of weightlessness and the ability to move in all directions without the restrictions of gravity. For the young people with disabilities whom I work with, the impact is even more valuable. On land these young people may be unsteady on their feet, or require equipment like wheelchairs or walkers to get around, but in the water their disabilities disappear.

Water is the great equalizer.

It is independence.

It is freedom.

DR. VICKI KEITH C.M., O. Ont. LLD, ChPC



## Artists

- Joe Calnan °
- Pauline Conley °
- Jane Derby °
- Ben Darrah °
- Mora File °
- Dave Gordon °
- Andrea Graham °
- Maggie Hogan °
- Dorene Inglis °
- Susanne Langlois °
- Don Maynard °
- Marney McDiarmid °
- Astrid Michels °
- Chris Miner °
- Erika Olson °
- Matt Rogalsky °
- Preston Schiedel °
- Su Sheedy °
- Andrew Sims °
- Rebecca Soudant °
- Sharon Thompson °



JOE CALNAN

BATTEAU PLAT  
fir, plywood, elm  
1.5 x 23 x 4'

This is a batteau plat, a type of boat that emerged on the Saint Lawrence River in the 1660's when the colonists of New France realized that their boats were inadequate for the challenges of the rivers of Canada and that birch bark canoes took a lot of skill to use. The batteau plat represents the power of water as a catalyst for the cultural synthesis between Europeans and Indigenous Peoples of Canada. It is a fusion of the shape of the birchbark canoe with a construction technique used for workboats of the shallow estuaries of western France. From the turn of the eighteenth century until the 1820's, almost all of the cargo and passengers that traveled between Kingston and Montreal travelled in a batteau. The shape and dimensions of this piece were scaled off of an archaeological drawing of a batteau plat that was abandoned on a beach in Quebec City and buried under landfill in 1751. The colours blue and red recall the paint colours on the first batteaux plats to ascend the Saint Lawrence to Lake Ontario – those brought to Cataraqui by Count Frontenac in August, 1673.



PAULINE CONLEY

20 DAYS WITH LAKEY

oil on paper

20 images, each 7.5 x 11 inches

December 2011 to March 2012

Inspired by the premise of I AM WATER, 20 Days with Lakey documents 20 visits to one spot on the Kingston shore of Lake Ontario, through journal entries and painted studies created en plein air. The intention of this project was to document Lakey folding himself into winter. Many things came to us (squirrels, geese, fata morgana, the tyranny of traffic noise, and worried neighbours), but winter never really did.



BEN DARRAH

WHITE WATER CANOE

Acrylic on Canvas

77 x 49"

In our increasingly mediated experience with the natural world it is still possible to find poetic meaning. A paddle strips away any metaphor and allows you to appreciate the motion, the flow, as you cut through the water. My work is about using images to trigger associations of such experiences. Hopefully you have experienced the calm and the exhilarating splash, or the burn in the shoulder and the joy of a clean line through the water – and can call on these memories when looking at this work.



JANE DERBY

DIORAMA OF SOUTH LAKE CREEK 2012  
recycled household cans on plywood  
12" by 72"

My work is a diorama inspired by the austere textural beauty of the wetlands of the Rideau system, in particular the creek that lies between South and Gananoque Lakes. The piece is made of recycled household cans, rusted and shredded to simulate the variety of surfaces in a landscape made up of grasses and earth and water. The somber tones serve as a memento mori to this essential element in the lower Great Lakes basin eco system, a reminder that two thirds of the original wetlands have been lost, and continue to disappear, diminishing at the rate of 1000 hectares per year.





MORA FILE

WATERS EDGE

branches, feathers, Lake Ontario stones, snake skin  
zebra mussels, clay, metal, acrylic  
36 x 22 x 22"

The Salmon River at the foot of my garden is a continual reminder that change is always constant. That Spring is the time of rebirth; for renewal, nesting, nurturing the young, for seeing the potential of all that we have been blessed with. Willow trees, strong and flexible draw life from the river, the Dogwood with its deep red, igniting the winter landscape, anticipating the spring-thaw; Wild Blackberries reaching, bending, all embracing, sustaining its hold on the landscape; Wild Grapevine reaching up, determined, seeking the support to grow skyward above the rivers dance. So fragile is this landscape, like the egg left unattended and vulnerable; we are its protector.

We will leave this legacy for our children, Grandchildren, Great Grandchildren; for them to explore, to play in, to swim in, to paddle along the rivers flow. This is the dream I have to share with you, and to honour all that is sacred. A life embracing the gifts that lay at the rivers edge as it weaves its way into the mighty Lake Ontario.



DAVE GORDON

BEAVER LUMBER  
acrylic on canvas  
30 x 40"

My painting depicts a beaver dam I encountered on the Perth Road that runs up from Division Street to Westport.

Floating in a bubble is the busy beaver, the logo of the Beaver Lumber Company, once Canada's fourth largest building supply chain. The company identity was created in 1906 and would become an institution in parts of Canada for another 90 years. In 2000 it was purchased by Home Hardware, Beaver Lumber stores were rebranded as Home Building Centres, and the Kingston store where I used to shop for picture wire etc. is gone.

My painting is a nostalgic tribute to local industry and nature.



ANDREA GRAHAM

VESSELS  
wet felted wool fibre  
33 x 62 x 12"

These dark watery drops are a refuge where sight and sound are obscured. One could climb inside and float as one with the water. Defy gravity. These are vessels to carry one far across the deep water safely to the other side. They are empty vessels, containers for holding. For some the journey to fill them is for knowledge or love, for others it is simply safe water.





MAGGIE HOGAN

TURN ON  
jute and water taps  
19 x 13 x 3"

I am inspired to create work by the material that I encounter in my everyday life. Examining and re-contextualizing naturally occurring materials and materials that have had a previous life is common practice for me. I like to elevate the ordinary and encourage a second look.

Because Lake Ontario Park is one of my stomping grounds, I often collect material there. Beautiful rocks worn smooth by the regular flow of water sit unattended, move with the current and are free for the taking.





DORENE INGLIS

MAGNETIC ANOMALIES IN THE HARBOUR  
porcelain, galvanized metal, wood stone  
42 x 16 x 16"

Beneath the waters that lie off Kingston's shores there are massive iron ore deposits that create magnetic anomalies. These natural forces can disrupt navigational readings as much as 35 degrees. This phenomenon, combined with inclement weather and shoals, once veered vessels too close to shore, causing grounding and sinking of ships during our Maritime history.



SUSANNE LANGLOIS

WATERLINE  
acrylic on canvas  
24 x 24"

I have been painting the wind turbines of Wolfe Island for about a year and a half. I had never painted landscapes before. I have a view of Lake Ontario and the wind farm from my street. The idea to paint them came to me one day and I knew I could explore this theme for a long time. It has been a way for me to bridge my abstract work with my more realistic still-life work of the past.

I had no intention of making these works political however I was well aware of that potential in choosing a subject that has been divisive. I am open to all forms of discussion that my work may generate, no pun intended. I have been pleasantly surprised at how many people see the beauty in these structures either in a graphic sense, or as symbols of sustainability.



DON MAYNARD

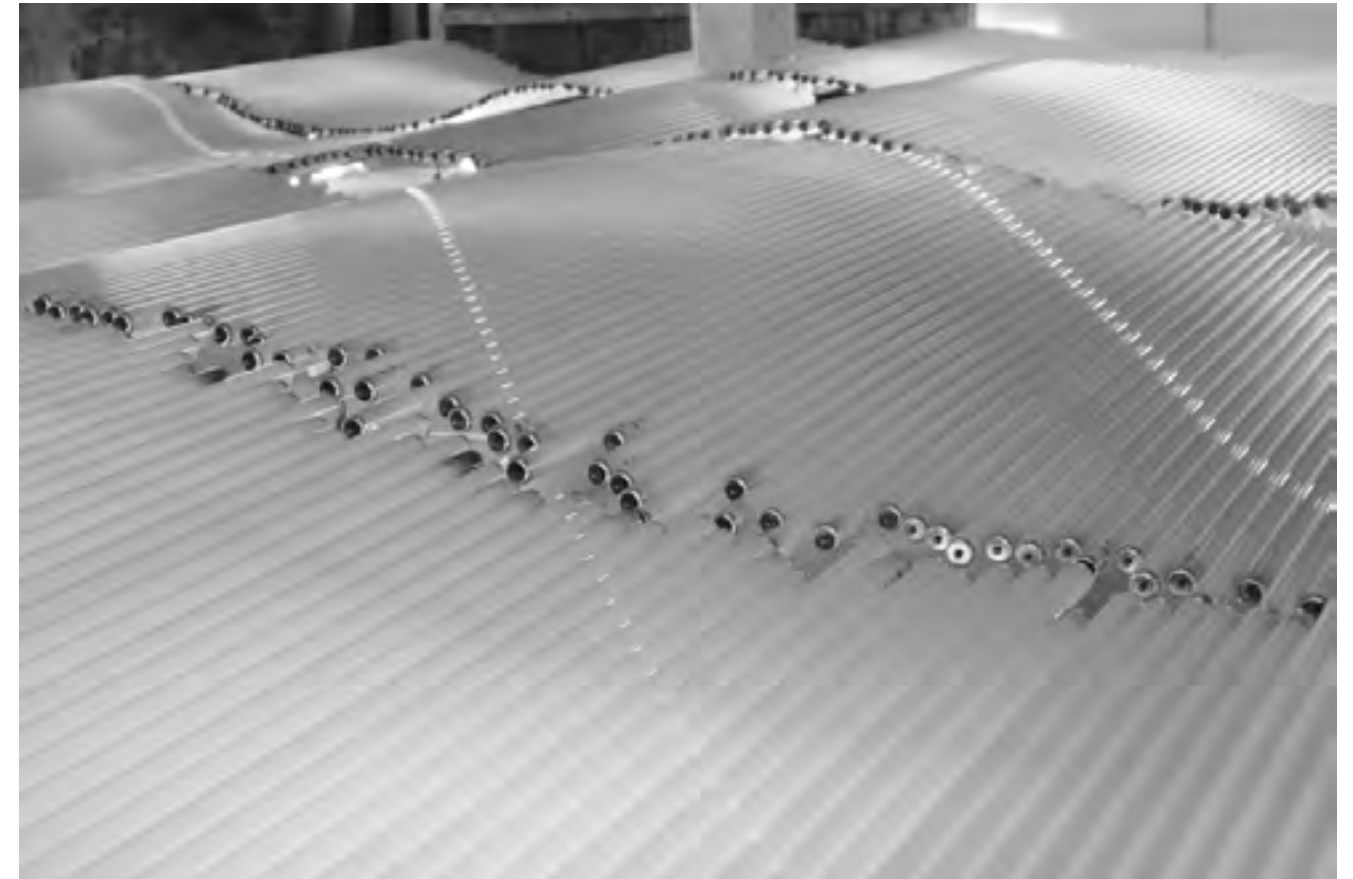
TIDAL MASS  
digital photo  
25 x 33"

I wanted to build an ocean.

I really dislike fluorescent lights. For me, it's a visceral response. I dislike the cold, hard quality of the light, the buzzing sound they make, and the associations with institutional environments.

But when I started building Tidal Mass I found that the bulbs were beautiful, minimal works in themselves, with a large range of subtle variations in shades and tones of white. Burned out, they were even more interesting. When I illuminated them from underneath with multiple light sources the surface of the piece seemed to move, the field of bulbs took on the visual qualities of shifting water. This was when I decided to build an ocean, to take material designed for specific industrial use and transform it into art that makes reference to the natural world.

Tidal Mass existed for one 24-hour period, on September 15, 2007. It was located at the NGB Building in Kingston, Ontario.



MARNEY MCDIARMID

THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BUCKET....

porcelain, wire

8 x 10 x 10"

This classic children's song is illustrative of our government's approach to water conservation. The song is an infinite loop, a frustrating conversation in which every suggested solution is quickly dismissed. And what are we left with in the end?

A leaking bucket.





ASTRID MICHELS

THE BOTTOM

sand, water, plankton, mussels  
plastic, dog pooh, oil, fish  
16 x 26 x 16"

Water is essential for life. Sediments lie beneath the water at the bottom of our lakes, rivers and oceans. They are important components and often contain a long history of environmental information. "The bottom" is a lake model showing both a healthy and a contaminated lake floor; it illustrates interactions between water, sediments and their various life forms including insects, worms, fish and humans.

Water and sediments have been polluted in the past by human activities. Contaminants and waste material still enter the water every day, settle to the lake bottom where they are consumed by small animals and fish and ultimately can also affect humans.



CHRIS MINER

LEMOINE POINT SNOWSCAPE

ink jet photograph

22 x 21"

This photo is deliberately ambiguous. People interpret it differently: some see a cloudscape, some an electron micrograph, others sand and some, snow. Water has this property - it adopts so many forms, it remains endlessly fascinating to us. Although this image could be from many different sites in Canada, this was a snowscape over ice offshore at Lemoine Point. I still find it exciting to be able to walk on a frozen lake where, in summer, I'd be way out of my depth.



ERICA OLSON

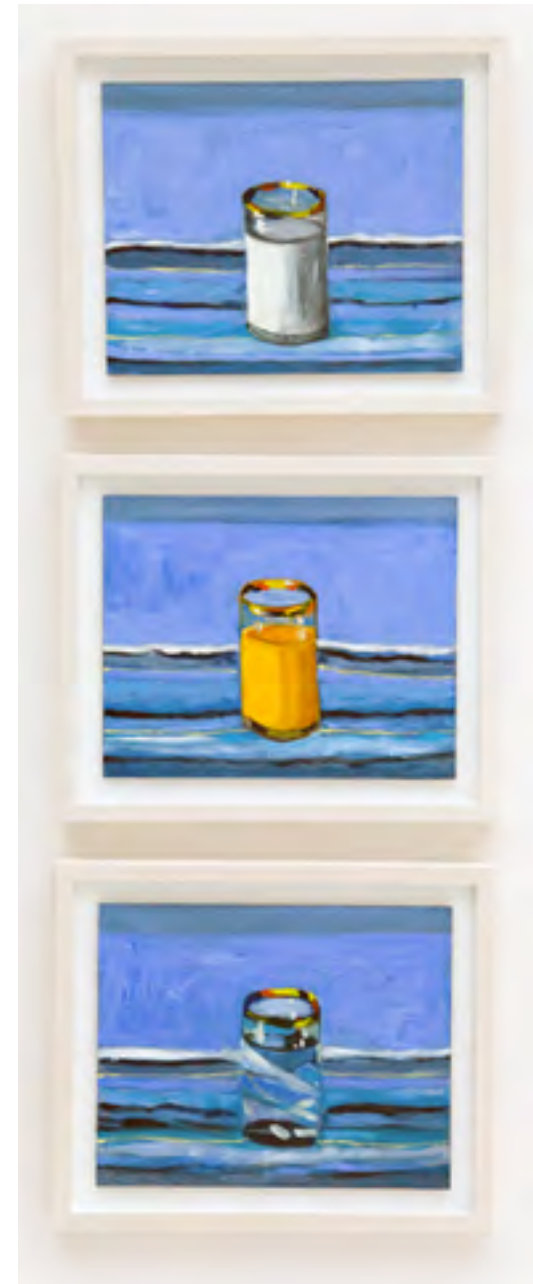
ANIMAL VEGETABLE MINERAL

oil paint on wood

15.5 x 18.5" each

My pieces are titled Animal, Vegetable and Mineral(s) after the childhood game. It lightly but seriously points out not only our dependence on water but other species' dependence and our dependence on them. Plants give us juice and food while certain animals give us milk.

We are always in an interspecies relationship and this relationship starts with precious water.



MATT ROGALSKY

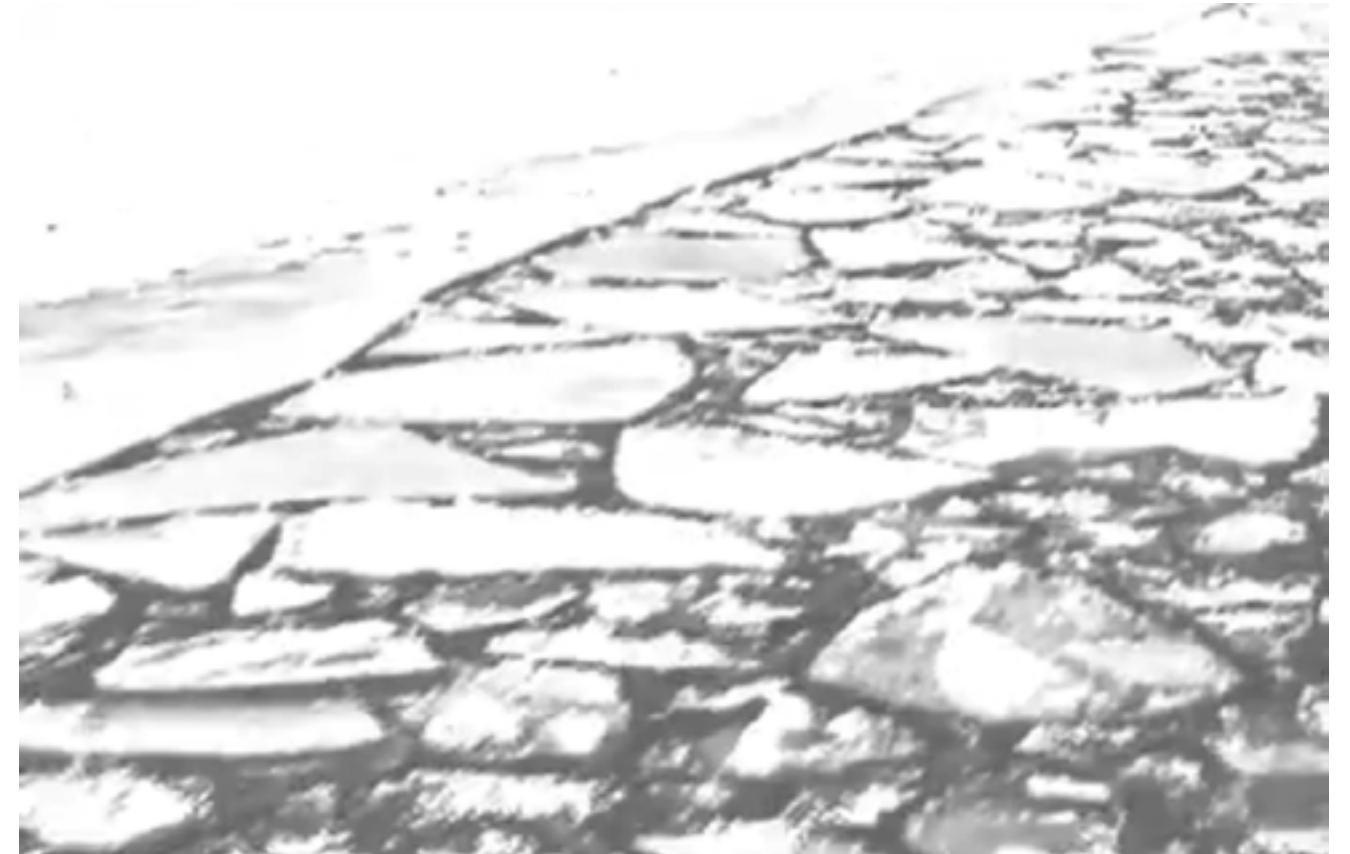
SOUNDFIELD

20 minute 16 second video

for a music track of the same name  
by Rogalsky and Chris Trimmer.

Trimmer and Rogalsky, as part of Kingston-based band The Gertrudes, composed this long track using excerpts of Gertrudes rehearsal recordings, and field recordings from many places around Kingston, as a meditation on the places and people of our community. The waters of Lake Ontario figure prominently.

It was originally intended to be included as a final, “hidden” track on the band’s 2010 album Dawn Time Riot. Rogalsky’s video was shot from the upper deck of the Wolfe Island Ferry in early 2011.





PRESTON SCHIEDEL

DESERONTO

archival silver point contact print

20 x 27"

My work is the product of an interest in the concept of nature and of humankind's interaction with the land. They images are slow transformations of places caught between the will of man and the power of nature. These are not majestic places of grandeur and awe. They are subtle in their beauty, devoid of sound, devoid of people, and devoid of colour.

Artistically, I am attracted to the richness of the visual elements of the subjects. Aesthetically, I am attracted to the various readings that the images offer the viewer. And philosophically I am drawn to the irony of the photographic medium as a tool for documentation.



SU SHEEDY

MARSH MUD  
encaustic on plywood  
10 x 10"

My painting aims to represent changing nature and the instability of things. Just as scent has a powerful potential to stir our emotions, I am interested in texture, how we respond to it physically, and how it connects us to nature.

The marsh is a vast web of life. It is fragile, verdant, and as delicate as old lace. Because it is comprised of animal and plant decay and is alive with leeches, it has a definite 'yuck' factor.

It's time to embrace murky, gooey and squishy.

We all rose from marsh mud, life's essential breeding ground.



ANDREW SIMS

BATHHOUSE

digital photo on matte paper  
75x50 inches

Several generations of industrial workers likely washed up before returning home at the end of their shift in the communal wash basins depicted in this photograph. Now water leaking in through the roof helps mould and moss to gradually reclaim a quintessentially industrial space.

The trace of the human is caught in the early stages of its disappearance into the natural world.

Former Alcan factory Kingston, On





REBECCA SOUDANT

SAILING WITH JOHN  
cotton embroidery thread on canvas  
36 x 46"

Sailing With John is the first panel of my tapestry, "New Born Tapestry". In this panel my water is breaking. The amniotic fluid that has been surrounding John is no longer protecting him from the outside world. Even before we are born we are protected and nourished by water.

In this panel there are also two ships that sail the Great Lakes, one is named after the Ontario Waterkeepers and the other is called "Maude" after water warrior, Maude Barlow. There is the hint of another ship -- my bed.

I too am a sailor on the water with responsibilities to our environment. My husband sails in Kingston and so may John, in time, sail the Great Lakes. The water maybe breaking but I doubt that it is broken.





SHARON THOMPSON

PORTRAITS OF LAKE ONTARIO #1, #2

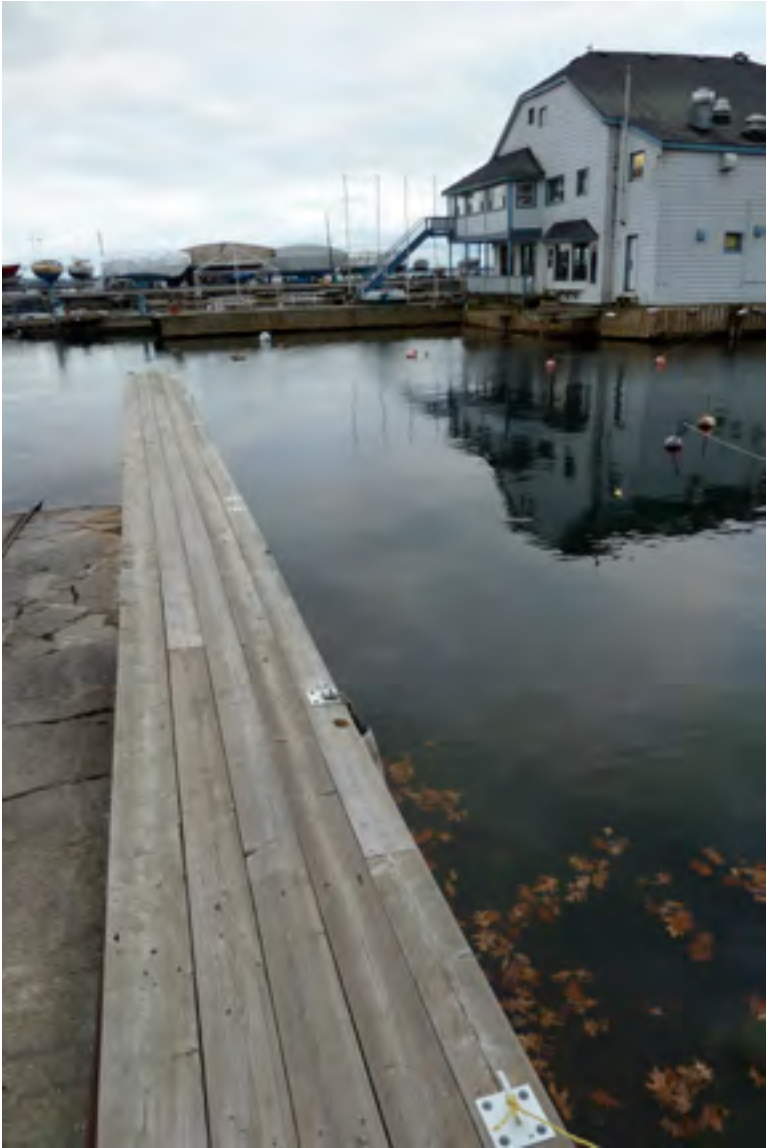
oil on canvas

18 x 36" each

These two paintings, have developed from a series of photographs which I shot of the lake from along King Street during the morning, noon and dusk of November 17, 2011.

It was my intention to recreate the feel and sense of Lake Ontario rather than to execute its appearance. At a certain point the paintings took on a life of their own. I stopped referring to the photographs and instead relied on my imprint of the sight, sound and feel of the lake.





KINGSTON YACHT CLUB, FOUNDED 1896

## Musicians

Justin Bird °

Chris Brown °

Kevin Bower °

The Gertrudes °

" For You",  
a song I recorded for waterkeeper with Sarah Harmer and Chris Brown...

close your eyes and dream  
dreams are precious things  
don't fight this feeling  
it's a fight you can't win  
for here we are together

and love is all around  
see what we have found  
now is the season  
let it come raining down  
from this heart that does bleed for you

for you

worry nevermore  
what this heart is for  
I'll keep you safe here with me  
this is more than a dream  
for I can make it real  
for you

for you

JUSTIN BIRD

## The Waterkeeper

Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink  
Truth evaporates in air, expectations sink

River running like a child, never aimless, ever wild-  
Join the chorus of the sea,  
Sing for you, sing for me, sing for us all.

I've been living on the mountain  
Where the spring, can't reach the fountain-  
And the fish no longer spawn  
I have a feeling they haven't 'just moved on'.  
Now the well is getting low-  
Without its reflection, how will we know-

it's in us all

It's in us all.

Lonely bird around your neck  
Lonely fire on the sea  
Lonely hope  
Lonely crime  
Lonely opportunity  
Lonely-

Water,  
water everywhere.

CHRIS BROWN AND KATE FENNER



..

## THE WOLFE ISLANDER

On the Wolfe Islander  
Leaving behind small  
Pieces of meat  
My soft teeth  
Couldn't chew

I have no  
Room for answers  
But the long surprise  
Of water  
Has plenty

This song was written on the Wolfe Islander. I was mulling on some irritant in my life, and as I stood at the bow of the boat and watched the endless white churning water, my stress dissolved. The water was wise and large and rendered my grief petty. This song is a tip of the hat to the way water communicates.

KEVIN BOWER

Some members of THE GERTRUDES had the pleasure of joining a group of water activists, to paddle down the one of Quebec's longest and wildest rivers: the Romaine River, in the Côte-Nord region near the Quebec-Labrador border. The river empties into the North Shore of the St. Lawrence, on the site of the Mingan Archipelago National Park.

The trip was organized for the purpose of researching the potential effects of Hydro Quebec's proposed four large hydroelectric dams, on what is one of the province's last large undammed rivers. Inspired by these activists, and the magnificent beauty of the natural environment, on that trip, The Gertrudes wrote the song "River", while in canoes, and on the banks of the mighty Romaine.

#### RIVER

Three strokes down the river just to turn out the lights  
But the folks on down the river, they've been staying up all night  
Somebody is going to sell this river, way down to the south  
Cool, clean water, and a fire engine mouth  
And she says, "Don't let this river rise"

Two feet on the brakes for all the answers on the hill  
But these folks just got their pay checks with more money for them still  
Watch out for the bureaucrats, who bend down on one knee  
I'll be damned if they kill the land where the waters all run free  
And she says, "Don't let this river rise"

Four strokes down the river just to turn back on the lights  
But when the sun goes down and the stars come out  
Let's go to sleep tonight  
And she says, "Don't let this river rise"

#### THE GERTRUDES



BOWL    MAGGIE HOGAN & MARNEY McDIARMID, collaborative piece

## Poets

Mary Cameron °

Eric Folsom °

Steven Heighton °

Helen Humphreys °

## The Paddle

Water from the paddle's curved end  
spills on the smooth surface of the lake,  
the drops falling back as we glide

through lilies, fish, turtles – their sinking  
shells through the green – a release of the lake  
back into the lake, perceptibly

joining itself from a brief  
drop-from-drop separation we slip through –  
Wet at the tip, warm

at the core, this is something  
like holding you, holding a breath  
in the stroke, a breath – the paddle's release from the lake

curved on all shores, it fills  
every hollow with lake – you slide into the  
grip of the paddle, your fist and your palm –

and the wood of the woods surrounding us fills  
every hollow with lake, every  
part of us, parts and fills.

MARY CAMERON

from Clouds without heaven, Beach Holme



## HYDROLOGY BLUES

Raindrops tap the water off Crawford Wharf,

A cymbal flash and slow kettle roll,

Temperature gradient, wind, and gravity

Build the beat for an atmospheric set.

Wind shakes the reeds around Elevator Bay,

Rain sluices off the lion's metal mane

At Richardson Beach, and the thunder's heap

Of black whipped cream topples over.

The future leaks possessive pronouns

Through pinpricks of doubt, whatever you believe;

Big rotating shafts of cause and effect,

The sun's affinity for epidermal pillage.

Evening settles and raindrops spin away

Downriver pursuing levitation, rebirth

By evaporation, and we drag our chairs

Past the rim of algae so we can plant feet

In the slow agitation of the waves,

Peripherally aware of the convex horizon,

Flexing curvature of the liquid earth.

Soon the stars come to light,

Frosty green and antique blue,

Beach glass polished and concealed by stones,

Precious in the zebra mussel clarity.

ERIC FOLSOM

## LOST WATERFALLS

*For the strangled impulse there is no redemption*  
—Patrick Kavanagh

There was a waterfall, mapped in the founding  
survey, two hundred years ago and lost,  
eroded—something—so no later crew,  
miner, or bushwalker has seen a thing.  
The river  
it should have ruptured is still there, unspooling  
where it ought to, out of the Burnt Hills down through timber  
east of the Perth Road, chattering with chipped  
fossils, flint-shards sparked by eels, then pooling  
in a colonnade of cedars where the lost  
falls should be exploding, still.

Went looking for you, what I thought was you.  
A skirling of wind in the skymost branches  
and peering round me for the radiant detonation,  
vapours pulsing up from the sinkpool, I seem  
to see the chalk-white shock of it—a cliffslide  
through the cedars' warped, ashen balusters—  
almost feeling the mist of this vision  
condensed to a strange dew's  
trickle down my face.

Wind dwindles then, dies, and that ghost-foam  
flickers, the cataract-roar ebbs to the dodder  
of a stone-bald, greying, oblivious river,  
and I go.

Where have you got to? Gone to. Two hundred years,  
the path healed over, the cedars deadfallen  
or deeper in the sky, the mapmakers  
deeper in the ground.

*There is a waterfall*, they lied,  
afraid that love dries to a dotted line  
on the map, that the river in time  
slips underground, and *This to prove*  
*we were loved*. This whim  
against what drifts to dark.

*We know, of course, it will not be found.*

STEVEN HEIGHTON

A POND IN TWELVE DAYS

1.

The pond looks solid, but one end is thaw.  
What else but to cross the water or hang  
beneath it – like the lanterns fish become  
at dusk, breathing the last of the sun  
through their filmy bodies.
2.

What was melt yesterday has a thin skein  
of ice today. Snow shows the veins of blown  
leaves on the surface. Along the banks, prints  
from the deer who came from the woods to drink here.  
Winter makes a mausoleum of movement and desire.
3.

Leaves have collapsed on the gravelly rind of snow,  
their tracery fine as the stars of mist  
that must stall above this pond in summer.
4.

Warmth has dissolved the snow into the ice.  
It’s milky as the bodies of the fish.  
Around the edge of the pond the ice melts  
first. And around the rocks that rise above  
the surface there is a nimbus of water.  
Dark planets held inside an open mouth.
5.

The leaves and sticks frozen into the ice  
have filtered light and heat through their skins, made  
themselves islands, rings of water around them.
6.

There are holes in the ice where the leaves  
have burned themselves through to the water  
below. The melted end runs off into a small trickle  
over stones. The belt of water around the edge  
has turned from opaque to green, and on  
the frozen half of the pond, water is  
pooling on top of the ice

7.

Half of the pond is melted and the water  
is a dark green, like moss at night. The rest  
is fluid around the edge, and what ice  
there is, is the greeny song of the water  
beneath. The leaves that have not dropped through  
have become a scoop for the water  
collected on top of them. Each one  
becoming its own little pond.
8.

Even though it was cold last night, the west  
end of the pond has remained unfrozen.  
What has changed is the margin of melt  
around the rocks. It has returned to ice.  
When a cold night comes will what is water  
stay as water, and what is mostly ice  
go back to being only ice?
9.

A thin, transparent membrane has started  
to form along the deeper edge of the  
melted part. It is like the skin of hot  
milk or custard, flexible but solid.
10.

It is raining today and the rain has  
undone all of yesterday. The membrane  
is gone, and the frozen edge. The ice  
itself has shrunk from half the pond to a third.
11.

Only a small skin of opaque ice is left  
at the frozen end. What was embedded  
in the ice is now floating on the pond.  
Leaves and sticks are visible on the bottom.  
Two fish sway the murky light of their  
bodies through the deepening green room.
12.

The pond is completely melted. All  
the ice is gone and the water  
is a dark, descending, scale of green.

HELEN HUMPHREYS  
(June 6, 2002, revised June 13th)



BECOMING WATER ROBYN HAMLYN acrylic on paper 18 x 24"

## Speakers

Robyn Hamlyn °

Daniel Hendry °

David McDonald °

Thea Santyr °

Steve Sottile °



My name is ROBYN HAMLYN.

I am thirteen years old and I live in Kingston. So far, my goal in life is to save our fresh water.

I was completely oblivious to the fact that our earth was running of fresh water until June, 2011 when my teacher showed our class a video called Blue Gold: World Water Wars. Blue Gold is Sam Bozzo's award-winning documentary and it is based on Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke's book Blue Gold: The Right to Stop the Corporate Theft of the World's Water.

This video shocked and scared me. I remember asking myself "Is this really happening?" This video also motivated me to do something. I asked my mom what I should do. She told me that I could write our mayor, Mark Gerretsen. I did and the mayor surprised me by inviting me to meet with him. I was over the moon, but extremely nervous. I had never met with a mayor before. I wanted to be prepared so I contacted Sam Bozzo, who then connected me with Maude Barlow. Maude is a Canadian author, activist and is the National Chairperson for the Council of Canadians. She told me that asking my mayor to make Kingston a Blue Community would be a step in the right direction.

In order for a community to become a Blue Community, they have to pass the following resolutions: Recognize water as a human right. Promote publicly financed, owned and operated water and wastewater services, Ban the sale of bottled water in public facilities and at municipal events.

I discussed this with the Mayor at our meeting and he invited me to speak at City Council. On September 20, 2011, I presented to City Council and I am proud to say that Kingston declared themselves a Blue Community that night.

In my letter to Mayor Gerretsen, I had said that I wanted to take this as far as possible and I meant it. In November, I sent out a mass mailing to mayors across Ontario asking them for meetings to make their communities Blue Communities. I got an incredible amount of responses.

The Town of Ajax took my letter and got all three resolutions passed at the end of November. I have already started meeting with mayors and making presentations. I now know how to reach my goal. I have to try and make every community a Blue Community. It's a slow process but I will get there.

Always remember that everyone is put on this earth for a reason.

Believe in the power of one!

Kingston has a vision: To become Canada's Most Sustainable City.

To achieve this vision, our community has built an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) based on 4 pillars... Cultural, Economic, Environmental, and Social pillars of sustainability. Each of the Plan's pillars are supported by community-defined themes, goals and actions.

#### WATER ...

falling under the Environmental Pillar, has its own mission statement which is:  
"Kingston has an abundance of clean, safe and portable water that is used responsibly and is returned to the local environment in as clean, safe, and portable condition as possible."

#### COMMITMENT

Key stakeholders are Community Partners committed to the Sustainable Kingston Plan. This means that all of the committed community's water-related goals and actions are guided by this statement. Right now we have 74 Community Partners to the plan and over 250 submitted Community Actions which fall in line with the plan.

#### ACTION

Commit to Sustainable Kingston and its water-related goals at  
[www.sustainablekingston.ca](http://www.sustainablekingston.ca)

DANIEL HENDRY

Public relations and Promotions coordinator Sustainable Kingston 2012

## USE IT OR LOSE IT.

Sometimes our most valuable assets go unnoticed. Kingston's downtown waterfront is one such example. Richardson Beach has been a popular swimming spot and valued public space since the late 1800s, but since the 1990s this and other waterfront locations have fallen into disuse and disrepair.

Maybe this has to do with the (generally mistaken) notion that the water quality in Lake Ontario is poor. Maybe we have come to expect that a beach should be white sand and palm trees. Or maybe we've turned ourselves into individual "taxpayers" and forgotten about the things we hold in common and that bind us as a community.

Part of the reason for this is that the facilities the city once maintained are not as safe or convenient as they once were. The Beach House at Richardson has been spruced up considerably on the outside, but the change rooms are still dank, and getting into the water on slippery rocks can be treacherous.

Jumping off the pier in front of the water treatment plant is still great fun, but broken glass on the pot-holed concrete deck and the lack of ladders makes it a lot less exciting and carefree than it should be.

The time is ripe for restoring our waterfront and making it more easily accessible for all Kingstonians. As the options for outdoor public swimming are closed off by the privatization of shorelines, and other investment priorities, places such as Richardson Beach are being lost as public assets.

Considerable investments made by the city in recent years to improve sewage treatment and reduce stormwater runoff have resulted in cleaner water and better swimming in the lake. It may not be perfect, but we must engage with our water if we are to learn about its quality.

And we need to make this a year-round commitment. Fall storms and spring thaws remind us of the enormity of the Great Lakes, while winter can bring some of the best skating in Canada. It does not happen every year, but there have been numerous seasons of late where it has been possible to skate to Wolfe Island and even all the way to Gananoque. Understanding the life cycle of our water helps us better understand the full scope of what it means to have and enjoy this precious public asset.

DAVID McDONALD

Global Development Studies, Queen's University

## My Challenge

Water has always been a big part of my life. Among my immediate family there are three cottages on beautiful lakes. One of my family's favourite things to do is swim. Now on the other hand, it took me a little more time to figure out the whole "water" thing.

My life was a little bit hard in the beginning because everyone in my family loved to swim in the lake. My brothers were like little fish that couldn't get out of the water; they never seemed to have any fear at all. Don't get me wrong I knew how to swim. I did swimming lessons at Artillery Park and I was a good swimmer, but there was something about sinking down into the dark, cold water that creeped me out. I just couldn't get myself to jump off that dock.

For the longest time ever, I refused to jump off the dock into the lake. Actually, I would jump in but I would do it by grabbing the dock as I fell; always getting out after a few seconds. Everyone would always say "you can do it". Believe me, I was encouraged by my entire family: aunts, uncles, cousins included, who always thought I could be a strong swimmer. People would try every possible way to get me to swim in the lake. My dad would get into the water and say he would catch me if I jumped in. My brothers would try to push me in. My mother was always telling me not to be afraid. Nothing ever worked to make me comfortable in the water.

Once when I was about 5, my Uncle Greg actually offered me 5 dollars if I just jumped in once. Everyone was watching me and I wanted that 5 dollars so badly, but I just couldn't make myself jump in. There was something about the water -- it was mysterious, dark and it made me uncomfortable.

The first time I finally jumped in and swam, was at my Uncle Giles' cottage on Big Brother Lake. My older cousin Nikki finally got me to jump in and swim with her. The time seemed right. I wanted to feel older and not afraid anymore. I was so nervous but that quickly went away and was replaced by a feeling I can't explain. It felt amazing. I swam all the way to a little island we call "bird poop island" which was about 25 meters away.

The next time I went into the lake, that same weekend, I saw my cousins play fighting in the paddle boats. I swam out to them and started playing around with them too. I had finally conquered my fear of the lake. Those swimming memories, I will cherish forever.

THEA SANTYR



## WATER CONSERVATION

Water is fundamental to life. Yet, it is often taken for granted. By using water wisely, we can reduce costs and environmental impacts today while ensuring that future generations have the same access to clean water that we enjoy. Utilities Kingston offers the following programs to help our Residential and Commercial customers use less water and prevent run-off pollution.

**Water Conservation Demonstration Garden:** Visit our beautiful, award-winning garden or download resources to help you reduce water use and run-off prevention by using sustainable landscaping and gardening practices.

**Water Conservation @ Home:** learn how you can reduce water use and sewer discharges at home.

**Rain Barrel Program:** Utilities Kingston offers Rain Barrels at cost to its customers each spring. Learn how you can use rain water in your yard and garden.

**Water Efficiency Retrofit Incentives:** Commercial and Multi-Residential customers may be eligible for financial incentives from Utilities Kingston for investment in water efficiency.

Water conservation saves you money today while keeping water affordable for the future.

Only 1% of our planet's water is accessible and fresh.

Canada's per capita water consumption 2nd highest amongst developed countries.

Water conservation delays the need to build more water treatment and distribution infrastructure. It also reduces the large amount of electricity needed pump and treat this water.

In 2011 Utilities Kingston employed 120 workers to run over \$1 billion dollars in assets of water treatment, water distribution and waste water treatment infrastructure.

STEVE SOTTILE



XERISCAPE GARDENS

The word xeriscaping is from the Greek word xeros meaning "dry" and landscaping. Xeriscaping refers to a method of landscape design that minimizes water use.

Some suggestions of drought tolerant plants that will work in a Xeriscape Garden in the Kingston area - Zones 5a – 5b

PERENNIALS	ORNAMENTAL GRASSES
Amethyst Sea Holly	Blue Oat Grass
Artemisia	Indian Grass
Autumn Joy Sedum	Little Bluestem
Blanket Flower	Festuca ‘Elijah Blue’
Carpet Bugle Ajuga	Karl Foerster ‘Feather Reed Grass’
Coreopsis	Miscanthus cultivato
Daylily	
Echinacea	
Lamb’s Ears	
Mallow	
Russian Sage	
Yucca	

Organic mulches, such as bark chips, pine needles, wood grindings and my favourite - leaves, collected in the fall should be applied 4 -6 inches deep. These not only keep the soil cool and help hold the moisture, but as they decompose add nutrients back into the soil. Inorganic mulches, such as rocks and gravel, should be applied 2 to 3 inches deep.

Note: All organic mulches should be added each year as they break down.

For more information :  
(613) 542-0693 of GARDEN INNOVATIONS

ANNE MAXWELL



FINALLY THEA SANTYR acrylic on paper 12 x 9"

I AM WATER gratefully acknowledges the visual artists, poets, musicians and speakers who generously donated their time and talent in support of this project.

I would like to thank those who helped me brainstorm, provide information, and help in the promotion of the I AM WATER project:

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Su Sheedy

Lake Ontario Waterkeeper is a Canadian charity working to restore your ability to safely swim, drink, and fish in the Lake Ontario watershed. “Swim Drink Fish” is our dream: to live in communities where every person can safely touch the water, where the water is pure enough for drinking, and where it is clean and wild enough to toss in a line and pull out a fish for your family. We work towards this dream by educating the public about the Great Lakes, connecting people to water using digital media, participating in formal decision-making processes, and conducting research in areas of science, law, policy, and culture.



