ACQUA RES PUBLICA

A PROPOSAL FOR A SERIES OF THREE DOCUMENTARY FILMS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JULIE BALESTRERI EBY,

CODIRECTED BY LAYLA STAATS.

HOW CAN WE RETHINK OUR RELATIONSHIP TO WATER?

Sharon Johnston©

SYNOPSIS

At the heart of our existence, a drop of water crystallizes the quintessence of our common good, of what all life needs. Water is the rhythm of natural cycles and allows all living things to develop. Yet in our contemporary societies dominated by economic exchanges, we often consider it as a simple resource, even as an economic or commercial good. And in the face of climate change, we are beginning to feel and even to pay for the consequences of our activities and our use – and misuse – of freshwater.

In a world where water can be both abundant and destructive, where its absence can cause desertification and threaten entire ecosystems and its overabundance causes catastrophic damage in urban and rural environments, it becomes the reflection of our common destiny. This precious drop is more than a chemical element or resource to be exploited, and remains the most invaluable, even priceless, thing in life. Yet it is taken away, sanitized, distributed, wasted, plasticized, privatized, soiled, purified – under the Anthropocene, water is marked by human footprints and pathways and access is still problematic for 30% of the world's population. According to UNICEF, 2.1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water in their homes.

How do we view water and how should we view it? How do we assess the value we attribute to it? How can we rethink our relationship to this vital element so that the future of the human species and biodiversity can be ensured?

Through a journey through the cycles of water, natural and anthropogenic, the series of documentary films questions philosophers, scientists and civil society members engaged in our relationship with water and the tensions that are becoming more and more prominent between our uses, our needs and those of all other communities of living and the global balance disturbed and affected by our activities.

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Summary

WHY RETHINKING OUR RELATIONSHIP TO WATER IS URGENT?

Reassessing our relationship to water means rethinking our place in the world: our relationship to ourselves, to the others, and to our planet.

We consume it without even realizing it; we let it flow into the sink while washing our hands or waiting for it to be hot enough to take our shower or do the dishes. We buy it in packs of plastic bottles, drink it up from the tap, spoil it, and then flush it. Our relationship with water, which many would call a need for a vital resource, is made the object of a diversion operated by the care of human technology and the sciences accompanying it, from its so-called "natural" environment and has become an ordinary and mundane use. We have channeled rivers to make them flow in a straight line, reducing them to a blue line on a map. Our water needs for our food and hygiene require the creation of networks of pipes and infrastructures for collection, sanitation, and water purification. We have “corseted” water and locked up rivers by reducing them to a single bed and disconnecting them from the subsoil, where they naturally infiltrate[1]. We have made the earth impermeable. We have cut deep into rivers, incising them[2]. We have accelerated its rhythms, diverted its cycles, and dried up the world by rejecting our dirty waters as quickly as possible into the sea. We have captured the small water cycle to arrange it to our convenience to the detriment of the seas and oceans, the large water cycle, and the earth. At a time when climate and environmental changes threaten us, one thing seems urgent: **slow down**. **Slowing down the water rhythm to keep it close to** us - or rather, close to the earth - for longer. **Slowing down its rhythm, slowing down its use, slowing down its pollution**.

Slowing down our lifestyles: to stop fueling global warming and the environmental crisis. Trying to cushion the fall. Avoiding the worst and knowing where and how to land?[3] And why not try to land at sea instead?[4]

Modern man thought he could "dominate nature", but he forgot to think, or rather to rethink his own nature and his relationship with and to the environment, so absorbed in categorizing, drowned in the cultures of "divide and conquer", progress, urbanization, globalization, political economy, and performance. Is he a social and political animal disconnected from the rest of other life? Why do we still think we are superior to other beings and life forms?

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[1] Baptiste Morizot, Suzanne Husky, *Rendre l’eau à la terre,* (2024).
[2] Ibid.
[3] Bruno Latour, *Où atterrir ?* (2017).
[4] Olivier Hamant, Thinkerview, *Survie dans le chaos : La robustesse à l’épreuve.*

Blindsided by ideas of wealth and power, our desire for control has become unmanageable and uncontainable, all victims of the predation and extractivism that drive our deadly economies based on unlimited growth. The world population wakes up thirsty or underwater while the powerful build themselves yachts and space shuttles. We are not all in the same boat, but our trajectory is the same. The same storm awaits us on the horizon. The course is set; it is no longer possible to avoid it. Whether on board a plane or a ship, we will not be able to escape the hurricane that we have helped create. The stakes are not the ship we're on but the future we face. How do we move toward it?

The United Nations and scientists seem to be unanimous. However, we must change our water paradigm. Slovak hydrologist Michal Kravcik began to use the term "new water paradigm" in a 2007 publication, where he and his team of researchers studied our impact on the small water cycle through land development. Nevertheless, this new paradigm has had difficulty emerging since then, and we continue to dry out and impoverish the soil. In 2022, France is launching a ten-year research program, co-led by the CNRS, BRGM, and INRAe, called OneWater - Eau bien commun to meet the challenge of the 21st century. It aims "to develop knowledge in the field of water to change the paradigm and rehabilitate water as a common good".

Source : Google images

But can we count on scientists to solve problems they have helped develop? The answers, as we know, must be political, above all. But policies intersect and clash when it comes to water governance. Social and economic issues are embroiled in. For a long time, delegating to a private company was preferred (Suez, Veolia). Still, recently, local authorities, metropoles, urban communities, and agglomerations have started to take over sanitation and water management services and governance under public management. The Lyon metropolitan area has been offering its residents, starting in January 2025, a so-called "solidarity" pricing system, in which the first 12 cubic meters of water are free, followed by a progressive scale to encourage water savings and make large consumers pay more.

This social policy was decided by establishing a citizens' assembly committed to understanding the issues around water governance and participating in decision-making. This is a new mode of active and participatory democracy that seems to give back a certain agency[5] to citizens, who often feel overwhelmed and powerless regarding environmental impact, the economy, and political decisions.

It is also on the side of civil society, associations, collectives, and uprisings that the earth rumbles the loudest and the waters stir the most. Directly opposed to the legitimate monopoly of violence of the State, activists and demonstrators are on the front lines of the water war that opposes the proponents of mega-basin (mega-ponds) projects and those who oppose them, ready to be "law enforced" by the police. The events of Sainte-Soline in France in 2023 testify to this: the issues of governance and water management are explosive and violent. The State's favor towards the monopoly of agro-industry to the detriment of peasant agriculture led to the imbalance in the value and the flavor that we still too often attribute to water: those of money.

How can we reconnect with the water and the earth? What are the so-called “nature-based” or “low-tech solutions” that could regenerate the rivers and streams we have channeled and concreted over for so long? Could the age-old know-how of beavers help us care for the earth?[6]

Answers are emerging everywhere, but the levers to implement them on a large scale still seem lacking. The tidal wave is before us. Will we succeed in building sufficiently resistant dikes? Will we sink into the land? Shouldn't we start by returning water to the land?

Water is more than a resource, more than a common; it is the essential element for all life on earth. Our relationship with water is a public affair, a res publica, that goes beyond

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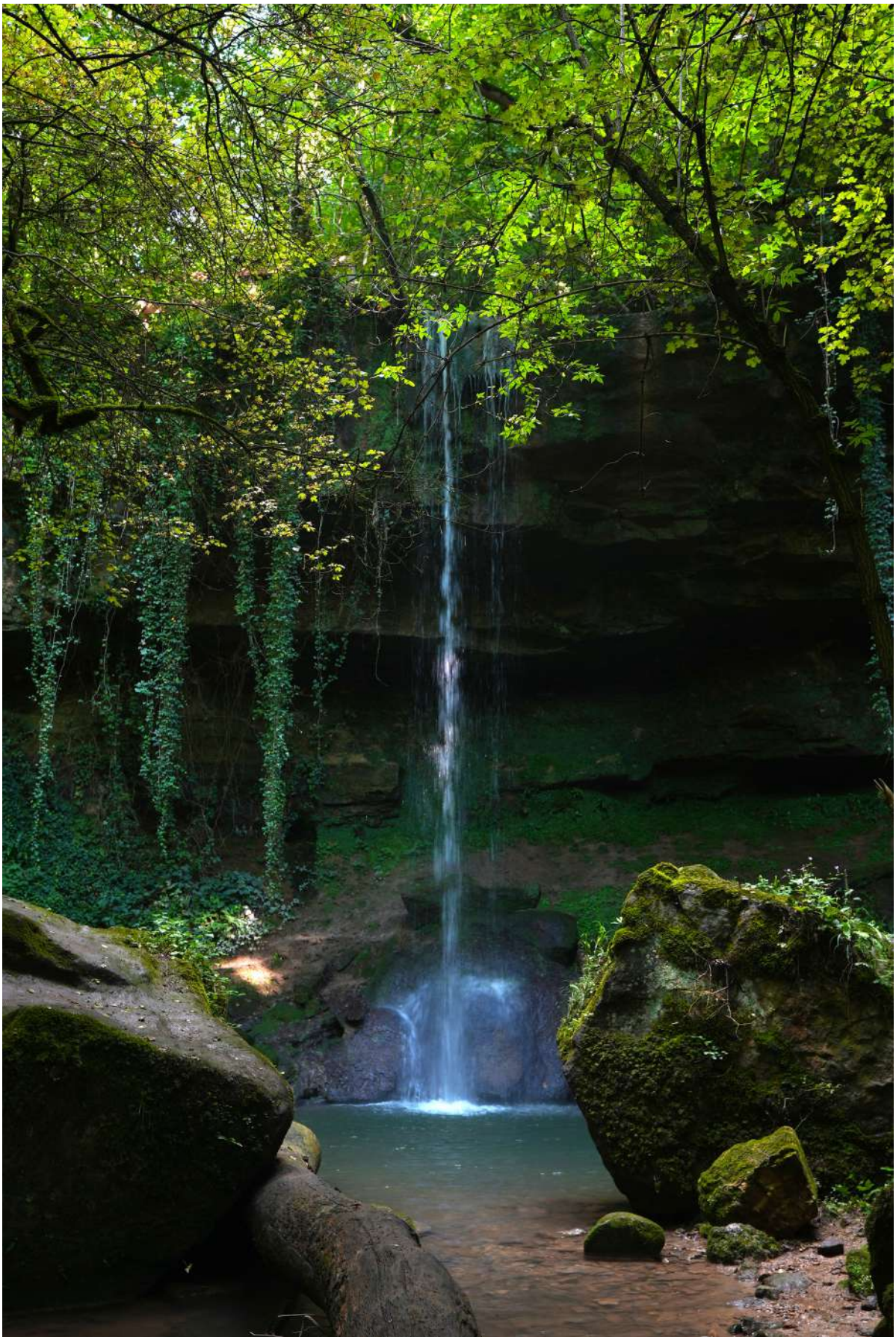
[5] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism andthe Subvertion of Identity,* (1990).
[6] Baptiste Morizot, Suzanne Husky, *Rendre l’eau à la terre,* (2024).

human society to create a democratic discussion encompassing all living communities and to hope for a desirable future for all species.



Julie Balestreri Eby©

THE PROJECT

The series of three documentary films ACQUA RES PUBLICA aims to bring out a new paradigm of water within the citizen community of the world. It aims to fuel public debate, not only between scientists and politicians but by integrating all strata of human society and the non-human species that surround us and make up the world with us. How can we incorporate them, if not through water that unites and connects us all as animals of thirst?[7]

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The films are aimed at every citizen who is sensitive to their environment and concerned about the future of life on our planet, which is constantly being extracted and disrupted. Through the element that gives us life and connects us, the documentary films aim to return to the source of

[7] Jean-Philippe Pierron, *Écologie politique de l'eau,* (2017).

what we are, as a living organism, composed of living organisms, a world of living and interdependent metabolisms, the entanglement of the living. Like a cell, we could not live as an isolated individual, we are part of a whole that we too often forget and neglect. However, we must remember this. We, individuals, are as insignificant as a drop of water for the universe but just as essential for the world's existence as the river.

The series will be co-directed by Canadian director Layla Staats, from the Mohawk indigenous tribe, and French director Julie Balestreri Eby. They will establish a dialogue and narration between their images and ideas, filmed in Canada and France. The contexts and issues surrounding water differ from country to country, yet the challenges are the same: being able to drink, connect to the land, hydrate your mind, cleanse your body, whatever we might mean by a healthy mind and body. The cultural difference between the two directors is articulated as a strength and robustness to consider the issues surrounding water, access, management, and governance. The series develops a postcolonial and ecofeminist approach to talk about the theme of water through the personalities and identities of the two directors, each on one side of the Atlantic and the other telling stories, each reflecting on our world and the world that surrounds us and composes us through the lens of a camera. The richness of this illustrated and animated discussion is made by the encounter with otherness, with the other conception, which enriches one's own. Between the exercise of claiming and the need to express oneself, to find or rediscover one's identity and voice, the directors meet behind their cameras and engage in a discussion as a voice-over. The sequences of each director will be recognizable by their particular styles and voices, but sometimes, they will mix and intertwine to form a common flow. In this flow, the artistic expression and creativity of each marry and dance together.

Animated sequences will also punctuate the films and take the audience into moments of reverie. Diego Graham's talent and care bring to life the cartoons of the surrealist-inspired muralist Dodo Ose. Other animated sequences, more humorous and offbeat, will be produced by the artist Axe Lalime and illustrate certain more difficult propositions to put into images, such as relieving oneself in drinking water.

The creation of an original soundtrack will be added to the story to lull the audience through the waters, images, and speeches. The musician Mathieu Coté will create and orchestrate the musical composition, drawing inspiration from water instruments and aquatic sounds as a common thread.

The two directors' cooperation subtly organizes a mixture of audiovisual mediums, developing their cultural specificities and what unites them as allies of the entire community of living species.

THE TRILOGY OF FILMS

The documentary series will be divided into three films, each focusing on a different theme. Subjects will respond to each other across the three films. Water is the central character, transformed into a multitude of avatars personifying imaginaries of water.

Theme and chapter of the films:

1. ***Water and economy***
2. ***Water and societies***
3. ***Water and democracy***

Subjects:

1. ***Water disconnected to the environment and biodiversity***
2. ***Water management by the commons***
3. ***Water, industry and agroindustry***
4. ***Water and its access in the world***
5. ***Water: « common good », « common » or « common heritage »?***
6. ***Water and civil rights mobilization and activism***

The subjects, each composed of different stories and each with an economic, political, social (and societal) angle, will intersect and overlap throughout the three films, each time through the specific axis of the central question asked through the theme and addressed in a distinctive narrative for each subject.

La Rochelle after the manifestation against « mégabassines » - Julie Balestreri Eby©

La Rochelle, Manifestation against « mégabassines » - Julie Balestreri Eby©

First chapter: *WATER AND ECONOMY*

The first film will focus on the values of water, a notion that is too often limited to the monetary value of water and its economic function. In contrast, its value, or rather its values, depend on a particular culture, representation, and imagination and are inestimable and irreplaceable - unsubstitutable. The price of water is considered an exchange for the service of its distribution, access, and sanitation, except when it is bought in bottles. It is then the object of hoarding, of extractivist predation on the part of multinationals such as Nestlé or Danone, who exploit and dry up underground aquifers and cause real damage in the environments from which they extract it. This increases droughts, degradation of the quantity and quality of drinking water for the inhabitants of the affected region, and causes conflicts of use, but also a substantial loss of biodiversity, mainly due to the plastic pollution that its bottling represents. Riccardo Petrella, author of The Water Manifesto, published in 2001, calls these predators the "lords of water" and "lords of money." They represent the interests of capitalism, political economy, and patriarchy, seizing wealth and natural resources for their pure and straightforward financial advantage.

The price of the drinking water we consume daily from the tap varies greatly; it depends on the policy of the municipality in which we live, which may have chosen to delegate it to a private company or manage it as a public authority. The Lyon metropolitan area is a good example of taking back control of water management after having entrusted it to Veolia (heir to the "Compagnie Générale des Eaux", founded in Lyon in 1853) for around thirty years. The metropolis has set up a new "solidarity" water pricing system, which it will implement in January 2025. This rate includes the first 12 cubic meters of water per household free, considered a vital minimum of access to water of 30 liters per day. This policy was implemented after citizen assemblies occurred to discuss the policy-making of water governance in the metropolis. Citizens are often very little familiar with the "small water cycle," which we have reproduced in our urbanization and industrial organization and captured from the environments. The hydrological and technical water cycle: from the sampling and sanitation station to make the water drinkable, to the pipeline network to transport the water to each home, to the wastewater recovery networks, to the water purification and treatment plant before returning it to the environment where it was taken upstream. It is these infrastructures and their operations that we pay for by freeing ourselves from our water bill. Anne Grosperrin, the president of the public water authority of the Lyon metropolitan area, agreed to film these infrastructures and to respond to an interview to talk about the new policy and governance of water that has become

public again. Lyon's public water is taken from the groundwater of the Rhône, in the Crémieux Charmy catchment area.[8]

Mural by Dodo Ose - Projet Tyxna©

The river, here the Rhone, becomes a materialization of our main character: water in its multiple forms. The river on which we had concrete surgery and experimented. On which we take from and into which we reject our pollution. The enemies of our main character are incarnations of capitalism and patriarchy, who consider the river only as a channel on which to navigate and through which trade can be carried out - thanks to it - men can sell their goods. Goods that would not otherwise be produced without it, whether thanks to the energy it can create or its necessity to operate all transformations of raw materials. Each product manufactured then includes its water footprint: the water it takes to be made. Water is used at almost every industrial transformation and production stage. The biggest consumers of water are primarily agro-industrial operators. In France, they use 70% of water consumption since our intensive agriculture is made possible by the irrigation of previously assimilated land to create fields of seed crops from laboratories and sprinkled with pesticides, fertilizers, and other herbicides, also developed by white coats paid by the chemical and pharmaceutical industry (of which Monsanto, bought by Bayer, holds the monopoly). All these inputs, considered externalities in

[8] https://www.eaudugrandlyon.com/origine-eau-lyon.aspx

economics, are found as particles mixed and dissolved in water, then partially treated and released into the river, which will flow into the sea. Water quality degradation occurs upstream to downstream in a continuum of withdrawals and discharges to which humans, "modern humans,"[9] have subordinated water.

Our economy, its footprint, and its impacts on water have become the sworn enemies of the health of water on Earth and our own.[10]

We cannot speak of the economy as our Nemesis. Yet, the excesses of our productivist, extractivist, patriarchal, and neoliberal systems could well be likened to the four horsemen of the Apocalypse if they continue to sow death, deterioration, and desolation in their paths.

Apo-Calypso, a deified and animated incarnation of our main character, is the one who brings upon us punishment: "the one who lifts the veil" and who gives us the injunction to act - before it is too late. This poetic personification of water will be imagined by the painter Dodo Ose and set in motion by the talents of digital animator Diego Graham.

[9] Bruno Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes*, (1991).
[10] OneHealth, a holistic and systemic approach of the World Health Organization about the environment and human health. https://www.who.int/fr/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/one-health

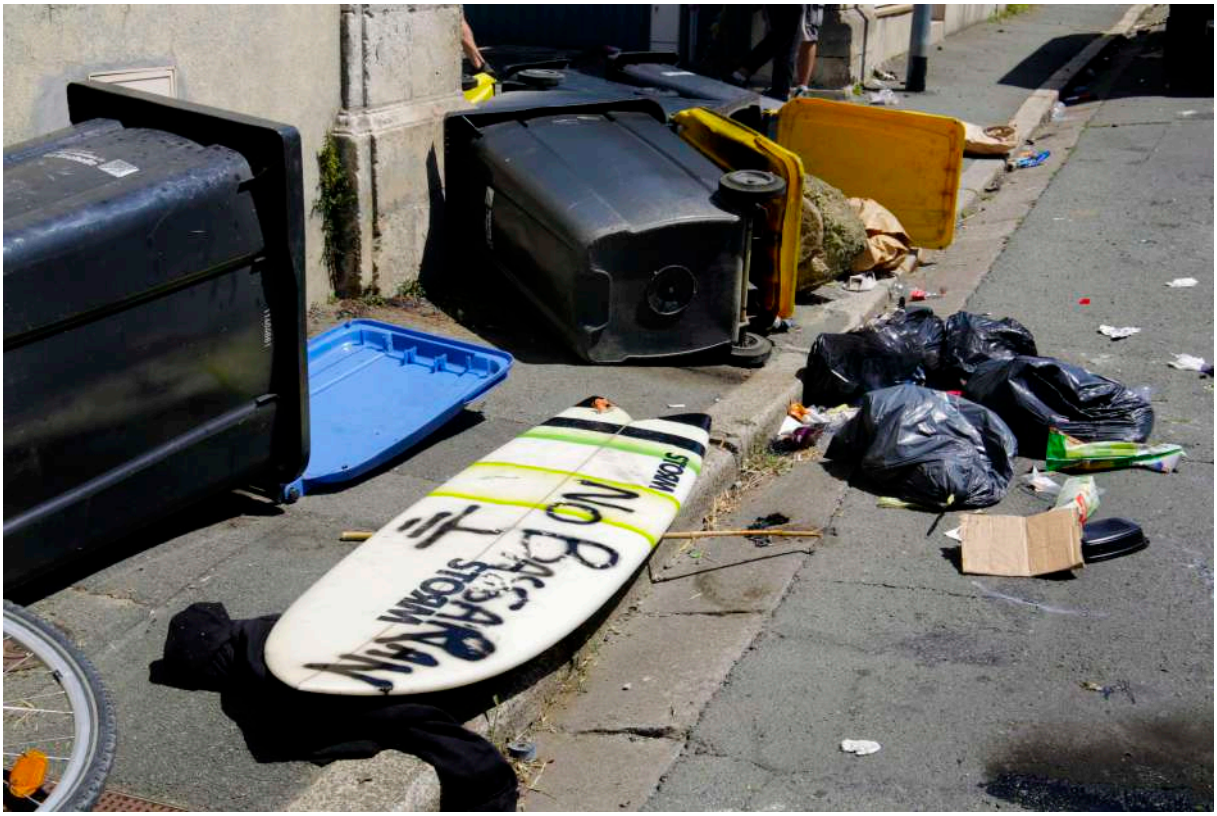
La Rochelle after the manifestation against « mégabassines » - Julie Balestreri Eby©

Second chapter: *WATER AND SOCIETIES*

The second film will focus on water and societies, their relationships, and the representations they have of themselves. We could not be considering Gaia without the water that makes up more than 70% of her, her oceans, and her rivers. The divinities created by the human imagination to represent the powers and forces of the environments surrounding us are personified and hybridized into human, animal, and plant figures. Chimeras are what our minds imagine and sometimes try to interpret and recreate. Mythologies are the basis of all civilizations and establish the culture, rites, and traditions of a population inhabiting a specific territory. We Westerners have studied Greek, Roman, and Nordic mythologies, the legacies of our modern and contemporary civilizations. These myths are the foundations of our conceptions and understanding of the world and what governs it. With these myths, we have created cultures and stories and modified and arranged this world. In this world, we have formed societies. And water, our History and our relationship to water, to this entity that makes up almost 70% of us, also (like our planet), and which also represents our otherness with its oceanic form to face, have created the History of our civilizations with so many peoples and diverse societies that we have mixed over the centuries—a cultural torrent giving birth to breeding grounds. Access to water is what allows each community to survive, to live, and, why not, to prosper. This is why access to water and sanitation is considered a fundamental human right which should be inalienable. And yet, today, access to water is still a geostrategic tool, an issue of domination, of satisfaction; its refusal, its confiscation: a weapon, a power of destruction, even of annihilation. We find our "lords of water" as "lords of war." This feudal vision of dominations on the Earth is considered a wild garden to be mastered, appropriated, and made to bear fruit (even if "to bear fruit" in this archaic rationality means to destroy to reduce to the currency of exchange), which we have heavily inherited as cultured and - acculturated - to Western mentalities, is opposed by a new vision where we form one with our environment, where we consider water as our reflection, our alter ego, our ally.

The wisdom of indigenous peoples who have survived genocides throughout centuries of colonization has much to teach us about the balance that human communities must find to share the earth in harmony with the other communities of living beings around them and with whom they are one. Layla Staats is a survivor of the “cultural genocide” of the First Peoples in Canada. Her activism and her films are reclamations of her identity and her culture, which almost disappeared. These cultures that our ancestors, our distant ancestors, French or English, sent to colonize a new world on imperial orders exterminated. However, the descendants of the first natives have survived from generation to generation, enduring the trauma inflicted by continuing their rites and traditions by transmitting their stories, cultures, and traditions orally. After being uprooted by the trauma of having survived the horrors of colonization, forced assimilation, and cultural genocide, Layla Staats is the voice of societies that have been destroyed, that have resisted, and that demand to be heard, to be considered - finally - at the risk of continuing to decimate all life on Earth.

What societies and communities do we want to recreate? It is by rethinking the foundations of our societies, the mythologies that we tell ourselves to create links and give meaning to our existences, that we will be able to compose the societies of the future because those that bring us together or instead that keep us together at present are fragmented and out of breath. Our societies are drowning in their technical and technological meanders of waters that they have tried to control and master but come back to us in a flood. Like mythologies, biblical episodes mark our imaginations. Let us hope that we can all create together, by listening, words, and interactions rediscovered new beliefs and cosmologies that do not bring us back to these apocalyptic "lords" of our modern world. The choices we must make as a society are civilizational: in what world do we want to live? A world where technological headlong flight appears as a mirage on the horizon while most beings fight for survival? Or a world where we ally and associate as a collective of living species to be more robust and resilient together?



La Rochelle after the manifestation against « mégabassines »- Julie Balestreri Eby©

Third chapter: *WATER AND DEMOCRACY*

The third film will focus on the links between the democratic state of our societies and our relationship with water. Rethinking our relationship with water also invites us to rethink our relationship with the earth, ourselves, and otherness. With what we think of as our otherness and what we think of when we think of unifying. The climate and environmental emergency presents us with challenges humanity has never faced. We must make decisions and make civilizational choices, and the way we make them will affect the future of future generations. Actions that we must take now because inaction and inertia work against us. Only our democracies, founded on ancient Greek and Roman civilizations and liberal and utilitarian philosophies, are running out of steam and are increasingly giving way to unbridled and merciless capitalism, to populism and a rising authoritarianism spreading like gangrene on all continents. Only a third world war would mean a nuclear war and a potential annihilation of the human species and all those who come into too close contact with them. Those who have been made dependent on us. Can we heal and save our democracies and societies before reaching this point of no return? We are getting closer and closer to this point every day, and some would even think it had already been crossed a long time ago. A feeling of desolation and helplessness fills us every day. We are either sick with solastalgia[11] or in complete denial, which leads to populism and fascism. But are we already resigned to it? Faced with the rise of authoritarianism, a wind of revolt is hovering and crossing nations from one political "extreme" to another, from one ideology of democracy and the republic to another.

A democracy, according to Donald Trump, or a republic, according to Vladimir Putin? Is this the future of our governments? The ideologies that we have mistreated that we have opposed to liberalism or communism, vilifying one or the other, seem to be outdated and dissonant today, as if they had been stripped of all their meaning. Our democracies are no more than the shadow of their ideal and our ideals. Chaos awaits us, the question is how and with what robustness will we welcome it. In what system, with what ideologies and utopias, can we survive the dystopia we have created? What history will we write?

A significant part of civil society is mobilizing against our misuse of water in the name of "public interest," "common good," or "commons." These various concepts are sometimes used as synonyms and sometimes as antonyms. What do we put in the public interest or general interest? How do we consider it? What is the common good? And what good are we talking about? Since we have transformed this term from beneficial good to property good. This is why

[11] Solastalgia is a form of eco-anxiety, a psychological and mental suffering caused by fears of change.

some now prefer to talk about the commons instead of referring to this abstract and paradoxical thing, the common good. Elinor Ostrom's theorization of the commons[12] seems to be able to provide us with answers for the good governance of the world that we share with the rest of the living by forming new institutions and an economy around them, by creating collectives of humans and non-humans and by organizing joint action. At present, we are instead realizing the "tragedy of the commons"[13] through greed, but this must not be inevitable. This is not our only option, it is not the only way to do things, as Elinor Ostrom explains, and it is time to rectify the trajectory of our decisions and our political actions to govern and safeguard what we have in common: a world that we share with all the beings and elements of the environments that surround us in interdependence - and not in competition - as is currently the case.

Manifestation in Grenoble against STMicroelectronics - Julie Balestreri Eby©

Les **Soulèvements de la Terre** and Extinction Rebellion are examples of collective citizen movements that put Ostrom's theories into practice to self-manage, organize, and carry out

[12] Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, (1990).
[13] Garrett Haldin, *The Tragedy of the Commons,* (1968).

actions of civil disobedience and awareness-raising among the population, hoping to attract media attention and express development projects that are aberrant for the environment and society in the context of global change, such as the mega-basin projects or the A69, a new highway to be superimposed on a national road (which would theoretically save motorists less than 20 to 25 minutes to connect Toulouse to Castres). However, in the mainstream media, they are considered above all as "eco-terrorists" or "hippies" to discredit them and not as activists or militants, even though they are on the front lines to confront the forces of law and order monopolized by the State to protect the interests of the powerful, often the same ones who also own the medias[14].

These could be called the "lords of technology"[15] like the leaders of the STMicroelectronics "megafactory" manufacturing electronic microchips and computer processors in the name of the "energy transition and French and European economic and industrial sovereignty" (against the technological monopoly of Taiwanese microprocessors) and using nearly 70% of the water consumption of the Grenoble region where they are located[16]. The StopMicro collective is investigating and campaigning against the extension of the Crolles site. It plans to double its production by pumping water from groundwater directly drawn from drilling it wants to carry out on its site extension. Today, the multinational consumes 156 liters per second (equivalent to a full bathtub), or 13,500 cubic meters of water per day (not counting its subsidiary Soitec) from the public company Eaux de Grenoble Alpes. The collective has organized several demonstrations in Grenoble, the last of which brought together more than 2,000 people in the streets of Grenoble.

The 2024 actions against megabasins mobilized nearly 10,000 people (attendance at the Village de l'Eau in Melle, Deux Sèvres), including 8,000 people at the demonstration in La Rochelle and the blockade of the port of La Palisse. A civil wave demanding its opposition to agro-industrial systems to which millions of cubic meters of water are sacrificed for the irrigation of non-food crops and, more broadly, against political inaction on climate and terms of environmental protection. How can we create a human and non-human democratic wave to demand a new use and development of the land and a new organization of living communities

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[14] Les Soulèvements de la Terre is leading an active awareness campaign against billionaire Vincent Bolloré's empire, which extends from agribusiness to logistics and energy, including media, communication, and advertising. The far-right billionaire is acting less and less in the shadow of the politicians he helps to put in power by using economic and financial pressure and disinformation and demonization campaigns, like Donald Trump or Elon Musk in the United States or the late Silvio Berlusconi in Italy.
https://lessoulevementsdelaterre.org/blog/appel-a-desarmer-lempire-bollore#appel-%C3%A0-d%C3%A9sarmer-l%E2%80%99empire-bollor%C3%A9-!

[15] Referring to the work of Riccardo Petrella, The Water Manifesto, previously cited.

[16] Anne Le Strat, *Eau : l'état d'urgence,* (2023).

for a desirable and sustainable future? The ***ACQUA RES PUBLICA*** films aim to propagate elements of response and to launch the public debate so that it reverberates and transforms into political decisions and actions to change our water consumption practices at the civilizational level. This involves a deconstruction of our rationalities, uses, and imaginaries of water[17] and a profound re-establishment of our relationship with water and the earth. Drop by drop until it becomes a massive wave absorbing us.

Illustration of Axe Lalime©

[17] Cécile Nou, Jean-Philippe Pierron, Claire Harpet et Henry Dicks, *Usée, sale, impure. Rationalités, usages et imaginaires de l'eau.* (2015).
Jean-Philippe Pierron, Claire Harpet, *Écologie politique de l'eau. Rationalités, usages et imaginaires.* (2017).

Manifestation in Grenoble against STMicroelectronics - Julie Balestreri Eby©

THE INTERVIEWEES

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation Pedro Arrojo-Agudo is a Spanish doctor, economist, and environmentalist professor at the University of Zaragoza.

He will speak on access to drinking water worldwide, the geopolitical issues of international water governance, and the policies implemented by the United Nations.

Antonella Cagnolati

Co-founder of Solidarité Eau Europe, the European branch of the International Secretariat for Water, Antonella Cagnolati is an economist who has worked for the Council of Europe for almost her entire career.

She will also address the issues of access to water and human rights, the actions carried out by the NGOs she helped to create, and water governance policies at the European level.

Agathe Euzen

As co-director of the OneWater research program—Eau bien commun—and anthropologist at the CNRS, Agathe Euzen specializes in questions of representations of water and its uses in societies.

She will explain the issues and objectives of the French research program and speak more broadly about the relationships and representations of water in our societies.

Anne Grosperrin

As president of the public water authority of the Lyon Metropolis and Vice President of the Metropolis, Anne Grosperrin is responsible for delegating sanitation, environmental preservation, and water governance policies.

She will talk to us about the metropolis's takeover of public water management since 2020, the citizens' assemblies established, and the new "solidarity" water pricing.

Anne Le Strat

Consultant for the Global Water Operator's Partnership Alliance (GWOPA) of the United Nations for Habitat and former director of Eaux Paris from 2010 to 2014, Anne Le Strat published an accessible booklet in 2023 wishing to sound the alarm at Éditions Seuil Libelle.

She will speak on the "state of emergency" of water in our territories, national policies, and global ones that are or should be taken to heal our relationship with water.

Baptiste Morizot

French philosopher specializing in animal tracking and environmental ethics, Baptiste Morizot, has just published, with Suzanne Husky for the watercolor illustrations, Rendre l'eau à la terre, a philosophical essay that looks at "low tech solutions based on processes" reproducing the interactions between the river and the beaver.

He will discuss "beaver medicine" to heal our altered and incised rivers.

Jean-Philippe Pierron

French philosopher Jean-Philippe Pierron, author of La Poétique de l'eau in 2018 and director of two collective works on the rationalities, uses, and imaginaries of water, questions the multiple facets that we attribute to water.

He will discuss the political ecology of water, the ethics and aesthetics that we should devote to it in the face of global changes, and the civilizational choices that we are preparing to make or should make.

Riccardo Petrella

A committed Italian economist and political scientist, in 1998, he published The Water Manifesto for a Global Contract. In it, he predicted that access to water and sanitation would be the crucial challenge of the 21st century and called on the international community to commit and mobilize to prioritize fair practices, governance, and water distribution throughout the world. More than a quarter of a century later, his call seems not to have enough resonance.

He will revisit the decisions made at the beginning of our century and its trajectory, which should be changed before it is too late.

THE DIRECTORS

Julie Balestreri Eby

After her first short documentary film, InEARTHia shot during the New York Climate Week in 2019 and produced independently, Julie Balestreri Eby wants to create committed documentary films to raise public awareness of the challenges of global change and, above all, to make them aware of their own power of creation and change to initiate desirable democratic and ecological transitions.

She has degrees in Philosophy, Communication, and Political Science. She uses the human and social sciences to connect the issues and problems of a world whose future of life is compromised.

Layla Staats

Layla Staats, a multi-talented artist and activist, has made two documentaries on water in North America: Blood and Water (2022) and Boil Alert (2023). In these, she aims to raise awareness about the state of water in Indigenous communities living on reserves in Canada and the United States and reclaim her identity and Mohawk culture from the Turtle tribe, from which she was uprooted growing up.

The appalling conditions of access to drinking water for First Peoples are still the result of extractivist neocolonialist policies aimed at decimating Indigenous populations and destroying the environment on which they depend.

THE ARTISTS

Dodo Ose

Painter and muralist Dodo Ose uses his imagination and love for surrealism to create poetic characters and fantastic scenes that transport viewers into his imaginary, tender, and phantasmagorical world.

He will be responsible for imagining the animated incarnation of our main character, Apo-Calypso, the goddess of water.

Diego Graham

3D modeler and digital artist Diego Graham is the perfect animator to bring to life the characters imagined by Dodo Ose. His drawing talent and his animation experience (video games in particular) will allow Apo-Calypso to wake up and come to life.

His technique and creativity will reinforce the character's depth and the setting's depth and surrealism.

Axe Lalime

Axe Lalime, a graffiti artist, muralist, and digital artist, stands out for his unique, original, and offbeat style. He will be in charge of animating humorous sketches and tiny animated bubbles that will change the rhythm of the narration and give it spice and lightness.

He will create acidulous comic sequences to make the audience laugh or make them grimace.

Mathieu Coté

Pianist and composer Mathieu Coté hears music before imagining images dancing on it. With a master's degree in audiovisual composition, he specializes in creating symphonic and eclectic musical works that blend with the plots of the scenes to magnify the spectator's emotions.

He will create an original soundtrack for this project using water instruments as a guiding line.