



## **Flooding and the City of Culture**

Christopher Skinner

Energy and Environment Institute, University of Hull, Hull, United Kingdom (c.skinner@hull.ac.uk)

In 2017, Hull was the UK City of Culture - the second city to hold the title which is awarded every four years. The year is widely regarded as a major success with a £0 million economic boost for the city and, according to the interim six-month report, an astonishing nine out of ten people in the city had engaged with at least one cultural activity. An estimated 3.5 million attendees enjoyed over 2000 events and exhibits, including the sneaking in of a 75 m long off-shore wind turbine blade into the city centre, a blue sea of naked people, the annual Freedom Festival, and hosting the Turner Prize.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a city at risk of pluvial, fluvial, groundwater and tidal flooding, and having suffered major flooding events in 2007 and 2013, flooding was a theme chosen by several performances, including *Flood!* by Slung Low, and *2097: We Made Ourselves Over* by Blast Theory. The unprecedented increased awareness of cultural activities in the city, and the consequential national media coverage, provided ample opportunities for scientists to be involved and use the platform for science communication.

This presentation will discuss Hull's cultural relationship with flooding and how this was expressed through the performances and events during the 2017 City of Culture year. The opportunities for scientists to get involved, some missed, others taken, will be explored, and the success of scientists' engagements with the City of Culture will be analysed. Finally, recommendations for focussing engagements on the culture of the host city, and a model for seeking opportunities to work with cultural and art activities, as opposed to just using them as a tool, will be proposed.