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## **We are all tributaries: combining art and science to transform human relationship with rivers.**

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What is your relationship with river? This was the central question posed by a series of creative practice workshops with scientists and local authorities who worked with complex flood risk management issues. Many of the flood mitigating solutions offered to managers are based on scientific methods to control and reduce river flooding. Scientific methods not only provide a sense of control towards river dynamics, but also develop a sense of security for people to feel safe from water. Because of climate change, flood events are increasing globally and some countries, like Scotland, are seeking to expand the possibilities of coping with extreme weather through broader, more holistic ways to mitigate flooding.

The aim of this study was to bridge rational knowledge often associated with scientific methods and the tacit knowledge that might emerge through participative art. The creative potential of art and participation in art practice was employed in collaboration with scientists and policy makers to inform future solutions towards flood mitigation.

The research used the theoretical premises described in what Irwin (2013) describes as *a/r/tography*: “drawing upon the professional practices of educators, artists, and researchers, it entangles and performs what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) refer to as a rhizome, an assemblage of objects, ideas, and structures that move in dynamic motion performing waves of intensities that create new understandings.” (p.199). Unlike the outcome and target driven aims of scientific methodology, these “waves of intensities” are crucial to understanding the form of intersubjective work which is crucial for art and creativity in art practice, because this is where affective transformation of meaning and understanding happens, through sensing, feeling and perceiving.

In the case of these creative practice workshops, the transformation that was explored was a shift from anthropocentric thinking about water to non-anthropocentric thought, achieved through sensing, feeling and perceiving. The creative practice workshops at the Scotland flood management conference 2020 were part of a larger process, where the intent was to initiate a transformative process that would work towards developing different ways of thinking in terms of

Flood Risk Management. The process began with an artistic engagement with the river and the development of underwater film of rivers. This was followed by two participatory workshops. The next step consisted of an artistic response to the creative process undertaken by the participants. The last step was an engagement with water management policy makers. This will be further discussed in terms of a transformative process between artist and scientist.