

## Planetary Waters (Bremerhaven, 22–24 Oct 25)

German Maritime Museum – Leibniz Institute for Maritime History (DSM), 27568  
Bremerhaven, Germany, Oct 22–24, 2025

Noemi Quagliati

Planetary Waters - A Challenge Between Abstraction and Empathy.

Organized by:

Katrin Kleemann, German Maritime Museum / Leibniz Institute for Maritime History, Bremerhaven, Germany

Noemi Quagliati, THE NEW INSTITUTE Center for Environmental Humanities (NICHE) / Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Italy

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The intertwined crises of climate change and biodiversity loss urge us to incorporate a planetary perspective into our thinking and actions more than ever before. The conference “Planetary Waters” addresses this challenge by examining water in its many forms—oceans, seas, inland waters, and wetlands—through interdisciplinary dialogues that balance abstraction with empathy. Key questions include: How can the complex effects of climate change on the hydrosphere be made accessible to diverse audiences? Can the humanities and museum exhibitions integrate a planetary perspective while conveying local dimensions in an engaging and empathetic manner? What role can visualization techniques play in this process?

The conference brings together scholars, science communicators, curators, and artists drawing on Blue Humanities to explore human-water relationships while advancing three central goals: deepening the planetary dimension in the humanities, fostering interdisciplinary approaches to water studies, and developing innovative public communication strategies.

Bremerhaven, with its strong maritime heritage, provides an ideal setting for these discussions. Hosted at the German Maritime Museum/Leibniz Institute of Maritime History (DSM) in the Bremerhaven Havenwelten, the conference seeks to illuminate the vital connections between people and water.

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Conference Program:

OCTOBER 22

13:30-13:40 Welcome, Ruth Schilling (Scientific Director DSM, Bremerhaven)

13:40-14:00 Introduction (Katrin Kleemann, Noemi Quagliati, Fabienne Will)

14.00-15.30 Conceptualizing and Narrating Human-Water Relations in Times of Disaster

Chair: Anja Binkofski (DSM, Bremerhaven)

- Anna Barcz (Polish Academy of Sciences), Major Danube Floods in the 19th Century Europe: The Phenomenon of Travelogues

- Victoria Mummelthai (FU Berlin), Drowned Cities, Sunken Empires: Submerged Memory and Environmental Justice in Dishonored and Bioshock Infinite

- Silja Klepp (Kiel University), The Politics of Coastal Erosion in Sicily: Concrete Infrastructures and the Economy of Disaster

- Miles Powell & Dolly Jørgensen (RCC Munich, University of Stavanger), White Bears, Blank Spaces: How Polar Bear Imagery Eroded Regional Specificity in Climate Change Discourses

15:30-16:00 Coffee Break

16.00-17.30 Planetary Crisis and Underwater Heritage

Chair: Brooke Grasberger (DSM, Bremerhaven)

- Jamie Allen et al. (Critical Media Lab Basel), Sunk Costs

- Tülin Fidan & Sven Bergmann (DSM Bremerhaven), Learning to See Through the Deep: Visualizing the Legacy of Dumped Munitions

- Anthea Oestreicher (Zurich University of Arts), Breathing Inverted Spaces: Exchanges in Plankton-Human Relations

- Judith Riemer (Deutsche Fotothek Dresden), Under Water: Strategies of Eco-critical Visualisation in Artists' Photo Books

17:30-18:00 Coffee Break

18.00-19.00 Keynote

- Elda Miramontes (MARUM, University of Bremen), Plastic Pollution from the Coast to the Deep Sea

This keynote takes place in person at the DSM and live via Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85342013908>

19:00 Public Reception

OCTOBER 23

9.00-11.00 Workshop

- Christian Schwägerl (RiffReporter), Lessons from Wetlands Journalism Projects

- Sonia Levy (Royal College of Art, London), Extractive Epistemologies of the Sea: A Discursive Workshop

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11.30-13.00 Consuming Waters: Global (Hi)Stories Between Extractivism and Activism

Chair: Solomon Sebuliba (DSM, Bremerhaven and University of the Balearic Islands)

- Eike-Christian Heine & Agathe Four-Moret (University of Stavanger, Nantes University), From Sea as Resource to Climate Afterthought: Reframing Environmental History in Stavanger's Petroleum Museum

- Julia Schade (Ruhr-Universität Bochum), "Don't extract it, don't consume it." Decolonial Ecologies and Liquid Dramaturgies?

- Stephen Okpadah (University of Warwick), Indigenous Performativity and Hydro-Justice in the Global South

13:00-14:30 Lunch

14.30-16.00 Linking Abstraction and Empathy: Exploring Waters through Arts and Sciences

Chair: Renée Hoogland (DSM, Bremerhaven and University of Southampton)

- Lesley Pleasant (University of Evansville), Scaling Water Perspectives

- Katharine Anderson (York University, Toronto), Atlantic Elements

- Inka Koch & Angharad Dean (University of Tübingen), Into the Wild: Fragile Alpine Water and Biodiversity Through the Lenses of Art & Science in a Transdisciplinary University Course

- Fantina Madricardo et al. (Institute for Marine Sciences Venice), Re-Connecting to the Venice Lagoon Natural and Cultural Heritage Through Science and Art

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-17:30 Museum Tour

18:30 Dinner

OCTOBER 24

9:00-10:00 Keynote

- Anne Hemkendreis (University of Stavanger), Acoustic Empathy: Experiencing Loss in the Submarine

10.00-11.30 Curating Waters – Problems, Potentials, Perspectives

Chair: Amandine Colson (DSM, Bremerhaven)

- Elis Jones (TU Munich), Ocean Health and Ocean Metabolism: Dangers and Opportunities

- Regine Ehleiter (Witten/Herdecke University), Curating Planetary: Tidal Poetics, Global Infrastructures

- Claudia Garradas & Alice Semedo (CITCEM, University of Porto), The Memory of Water: Curating Absence and Empathy in Maritime Museums

11:30-12:00 Coffee Break

12.00-13.30 Final Discussion and Conclusion

For questions, please contact one of the organizers, Dr. Katrin Kleemann (DSM), Dr. Noemi Quagliati (University Ca' Foscari, Venice), Dr. Fabienne Will (Deutsches Museum, Munich)

Reference:

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