

TAKE ME TO YOUR RIVER



DS71105A:
Design Transfocality (2022–23)
MA Design Expanded Practice

Goldsmiths
University of London

What do we do with rivers?

Rivers are recognised as natural resources, affording a sense of immersion in our surroundings. And rivers are wildlife habitats, which are being impacted by a range of environmental pressures. If we seek to deepen our own involvement with waterways, we perhaps become committed to their protection. For example, recent projects have enrolled members of the public as monitors of water quality. These citizen scientists use sensors to generate data, contributing to a base of evidence that enables informed interventions and new policies to support river health. Can we conceive of other tools for supporting our encounters with rivers, that lead to different sorts of association and outcomes?

Our relationship with rivers can also be characterised through inventive types of projects. The teaching project, *Take Me To Your River* is an invitation for designs that activate novel encounters and experiences with waterways for those that live near them. The responses of the six groups of Goldsmiths MA Design students captured in this publication, at times support playful encounters with water as a material. At other times, invented ceremonies emphasise the river as a symbolic force, conveying our wishes to the ocean. The industrial and maritime histories of the Thames also feature here, with obscured and often contested fragments of the past reassembled. As an alternative to citizen scientists, these projects reimagine river users as creative civics, forging inventive associations with rivers.

Tobie Kerridge and Sarah Pennington,
MADEP Goldsmiths University of London

SIDE

SKAM
JOBZ



Identifying Issues



We started the project in the water of Deptford Creek. On a cold January day, students and lecturers put on waders, took up walking sticks and set off down a pebbly ramp into the Ravensbourne River near its confluence with the Thames. We needed to put ourselves in the water to feel its cold move through our boots into our toes, hear its slowly lowering mass pass over silt and upended shopping trolleys, and smell the exposed moss and weeds on the Victorian brick walls that enclose its path. We needed to put ourselves into the water to inhabit the river in a way that would help us embody issues through action.



What are the issues of rivers? We had prepared a review of rivers to present to our students the stakeholders, the sites and the disputes. For us, the tutors, the compulsion for the brief had coalesced around a news article about volunteers 'fighting back against England's polluted rivers' (Horton, 2022)¹ with community groups monitoring the levels of pollution in their local rivers from discharged sewage. We learnt about CaSTCO, a national initiative to develop a framework for collaborative water quality data collection to drive environmental improvement (The Rivers Trust, 2023)². The initiative was managed through a number of river catchment projects, the Thames region composed of 21 catchments under the organisation of the Thames21, with the Ravensbourne being the catchment basin where our university Goldsmiths is situated.

We envisioned that these initiatives and their environmental concerns would provide a set of conceptual resources for the students to respond to through their projects. However, we wanted to reframe the methods and atmosphere of their responses, to pivot away from citizen science and the production of scientific data sets, and to instead encourage an approach where the imaginative and experiential capacities of the students emerged through observation and conversation with local communities, and by attending to the identities and interests of local organisations. We recognised that a participatory design approach such as this could be supported through existing initiatives of Goldsmiths, and the Civic Universities project in particular (Eades, 2023)³. Fortuitously, our successful application to the Civic Catalyst fund enabled the practical and intellectual framework that put flesh on our ambition for the student projects to engender a sort of creative civics.

Starting in Deptford Creek, students and tutors would follow a ten-week consideration of how these contexts can become applied through design practice. Given our ambition to generate novel experiences around the stewardship and care of rivers, what can design do with these issues?



References

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Inventing Capture

Following the briefing in Creekside, the first phase of the project asked the six student groups to concurrently locate a site in the Ravensbourne River catchment and investigate issues in that setting.

The sites the students chose were along the river in Ladywell Fields and Brookmill Park, which both lie in the London Borough of Lewisham, as well as locations where the Ravensbourne meets the Thames – the Pepys Community Library, and Limekiln Dock at Dunbar Wharf. We asked the students to participate in and observe the practices of humans and non-humans in these sites. They had two weeks to do this. The first week was spent inventing ways of recording, including using Go-Pro cameras and hydrophonic audio equipment, to make a short documentary film that captured impressions and activities in the field. The groups presented sound recordings of hidden rivers and untouchable water; footage from cameras mounted on water-bottle rafts and poles to observe the river from a different perspective; interviews with river enthusiasts, park volunteers, nature watchers and local residents using the river park spaces for dog walks and children's play. Tutors responses to these documentaries guided the second weeks activities. We discouraged a use of 'off-the-shelf' research methods such as questionnaires, and instead asked the students to invent material artefacts and activities in context, to explore and provoke issues in the various sites. String telephones were made across the riverbanks, inviting play; river water was not only tested for quality, but also tasted; park users were invited to draw river bird song. This phase of participant observation and inventing capture sparked proposals to be further developed.



Cameras Matter—!!!

by Liam Healy

Camera-phones are not the only kind of cameras. Cameras are designed objects, and you are designers. Like Troy Hurtubise,² think about the different design of cameras: from unsupervised CCTV cameras to large camera rigs involving a professional crew. Think about what it is that those configurations enable you to (not) see and (not) experience.

Design the ways cameras move,³ how they interact with a subject, the ways they setup certain scenarios, power imbalances, problems, issues, journeys, dialogues.

To paraphrase the documentary photographer Susan Meiselas,⁴ 'the camera is an excuse to be someplace you otherwise don't belong. It gives both a point of connection and a point of separation'.

Cameras are not neutral, but you are not asked to be!

Cassandra Hartblay⁵ urges us to, 'Consider your own fieldwork: what objects do you pack? Not only tools of the trade—recording devices and notebooks—but the mundane ephemera of personal fashioning: hairbands, shoulder bags, regionally appropriate cosmetics, a best ethnographer's dress? Perhaps you bring medications, toiletries, or running shoes. What vantage points, passages, and modes of observation do each of these technical enhancements of the body enable? Where does the tool end and the ethnographer's self begin?'

Perhaps you bring medications, toiletries, or running shoes. What vantage points, passages, and modes of observation do each of these technical enhancements of the body enable? Where does the tool end and the ethnographer's self begin?'

Think about when and where you turn the camera on and off, how you position it,⁶ or what happens when you leave it running. Werner Herzog⁷ leaves his cameras running. Sometimes revealing the unexpected. Is this ethical?

Battery runs out.⁸

Richard Mosse uses a weapons grade camera to document the refugee crisis.⁹ Is this ethical?

Listen! Agnes Varda¹⁰ urges us to slow down and give time to our subjects, so they can become at ease.

'I don't want to be a spy of the person I film, I want to be a friend. Maybe they don't like me enough, but I like them enough!'

Follow something around and attune yourselves to the social relations around them, as Salomé Jashi does beautifully in *Taming the Garden*.¹¹

Listen to rule number 2 of the Dogme¹² manifesto: THE SOUND MUST NEVER BE PRODUCED APART FROM THE IMAGES OR VICE VERSA. (MUSIC MUST NOT BE USED UNLESS IT OCCURS WHERE THE SCENE IS BEING SHOT.)

Films have two channels of information: AUDIO ————— VISUAL

Think about other ways of listening. Design listening devices and be attentive to them. Jez Riley French¹³ produces his own microphones to hear what non-human species hear that humans are unable to.

Remember to edit carefully. and left in. What is left out,

What else might your documentary become?¹⁴ Can you understand it speculatively? To tell stories you imagine but do not necessarily see?¹⁵

MAKE CAMERAS! MAKE SITUATIONS! LISTEN!

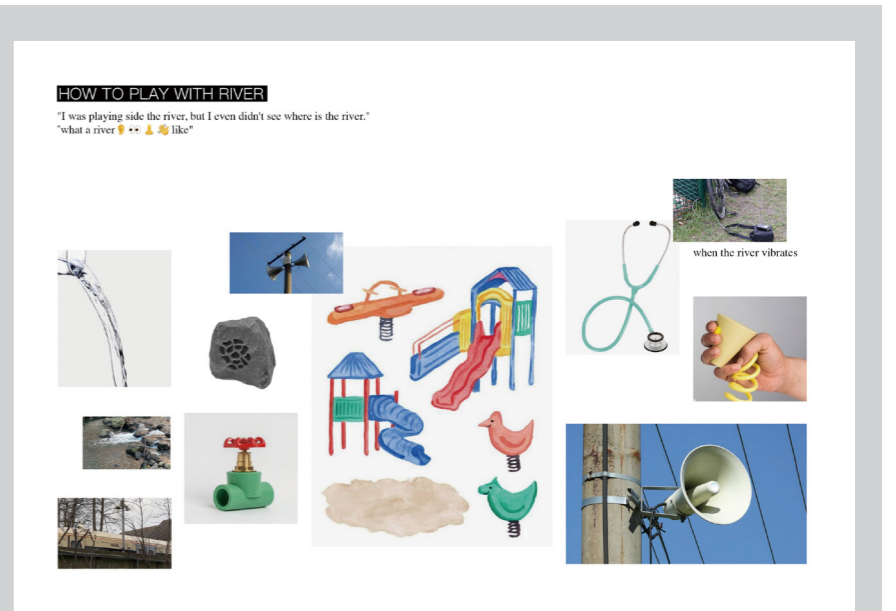
References:

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Generating Proposals

To draw on and develop material from the previous activities of identifying issues and inventing capture, the next phase saw the students spending time back in the studio, first developing ‘Design Workbooks’, then materialising and testing ideas using lo-fi cardboard prototyping.

Design Workbooks (Gaver, 2011)¹ were used as a technique for synthesizing fieldwork and expanding research into a territory for design proposals, and offered a slowing down to resist the inclination of quickly finding a final idea. As the students were working in groups, this approach enabled the development of proposals that reflected individual interests, but when collected into a workbook, became a tool for discussing design directions. Some workbook proposals are shown here. We then asked the students to mock-up an object, or aspect of their workbooks in one day, using cardboard and gaffer tape, needing no specialist skills or materials. It required the students to decide on which workbook proposals to materialise. This activity enabled different perspectives on the cardboard objects – for example, when one group presented their cardboard cut-outs of historical landmarks found along the trail of a hidden river, they realised the cut-outs catch a shadow on the studio walls. Narrating a found story of the hidden river with these cut-outs led to the idea of producing a shadow puppet performance. Another group scaled-up Chinese tea ceremony tools to create new forms of river cleaning equipment; and cardboard/tape boat launches, birds, and play equipment were quickly made and used between the groups.



2023 Birdwatch Competition Badge



Prototyping

by Cindy Strobach

In 2017, Unit Lab made the Domestic Sea Collection for an exhibition during the London Design Festival. The theme of the exhibition was 'Water', and we imagined a fictional story of a person that used to live at the sea but has moved to a city like London. We imagined different objects this person would own that remind them of the sea. We started off by doing very quick sketches and imagined objects that this person would have at home. We like to come up with a lot of ideas very quickly without judging their potential and feasibility. We make little sketches on a piece of paper to illustrate the idea. We do this for about 2 hours and try to come up with as many ideas as possible. In the end we look at all the sketches and select the best ones. We decided on 6 ideas that will all be part of the same collection.

The objects included a tide carpet – a carpet that rolls in and out like the tide, a sunrise alarm clock – an alarm clock that projects a small sunrise over the ocean every morning, and seashell headphones – headphones that let you listen to the sound of the ocean with two big cowrie shells. As the objects were very different to each other we decided to come up with a form and material language to tie the collection visually together. We wanted to work with natural materials such as horn and mix them with engineered materials such as nylon and aluminium. We chose geometric and round shapes, inspired by old-school spectacles made from horn. We also really liked Maywa Denki's² design approach of mixing humour with engineered seriousness. Choosing the materials early in the project also helped us make very quick decisions in the design process.

After deciding on the form and material language, we made prototypes for all our objects. The prototypes helped us solve mechanical challenges, but also gave us an idea of size and dimensions. We used a mix of cardboard, timber and mechanical parts such



as motors and bearings. The prototype for the sunrise alarm clock was mainly made from cardboard, but we used a real lens and the torch of a smartphone to test the projection of the sunrise.

The hardest object to make was the tide carpet. We had to make several prototypes for the mechanism. It was relatively easy to get the carpet to roll inwards but hard to move it outwards. We ended up using bearings, gears and bike sprockets. The first prototype was just a timber jig to mount the motor and the mechanism. The carpet prototype was all about getting it to work and less about the shape and design of it.

When making a prototype it is important to know why and who you are making the prototype for. Perhaps you want to make a 'looks-like' prototype to explore the design of your object, or maybe you're making a 'behaves-like' prototype to test it with real people. Sometimes you also need to make a 'works-like' prototype to figure out mechanical challenges as we did with the tide carpet. It is important to prototype with intent. This will inform the amount of time you spent on it, what materials you use, and which details you want to focus on.

Reference

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Situating Designs



The workbooks and cardboard prototyping had moved the students practice out of the river sites. In the next phase, the mock-ups were introduced into the river settings, to situate their design proposals in context and move into public space.

Tutors walked along the Ravensbourne in Ladywell Fields, to Brookmill Park, and on towards the Thames for in-situ tutorials. We tested remote-controlled cardboard ducks with cameras inside; stepped inside sensory boxes to try to play with the river; had a cup of tea on the riverbank; launched a boat from the riparian riverbank zone; looked at prototypes in a community library; and watched a puppet show about a hidden river. This phase enabled the students to understand how their lo-fi material practice has created new possibilities for more-than-human arrangements, that is, between humans, artefacts, animals, water, riverbanks, and so on, and how to develop and refine their proposals.



An invitation

by Louise Rondel

On the day of the *Take Me To Your River* presentations, I am midway through a research project for which I am struggling to recruit participants. As I watch the Design students' presentations whilst thinking of my unanswered emails and phone calls to which 'somebody will call you back' but nobody does, I am struck by the relatively short timeframe in which the groups have conceived of and developed their projects, built relationships with community members, and engaged participants. How quickly and successfully their projects seem to have arrived in place, drawn people in, and prompted dialogue about and with the rivers. I am also struck by how much fun everybody seems to be having.

In our sociological methods textbooks, before we embark on research projects, we are told about the importance of creating rapport with interviewees or other participants and cautioned that this takes time. We are instructed to slowly build relationships with gatekeepers and told that, on entering the 'field', we need to be prepared for a period of settling into the research. Notwithstanding the tens of unreturned emails and follow-up emails and phone calls by which I am currently preoccupied. Setting out on sociological projects and finding people to take part is a lengthy and, at times, frustrating process. What is more, interviewing people, or asking them to take a survey, or observing them going about their daily lives perhaps isn't that much fun (for them, at least).

It is then even more striking that the *Take Me To Your River* students have done all of this and created and staged their projects in less than 12 weeks.

By making an intervention into place and time, the *Take Me To Your River* projects disrupt the spatial and temporal routine of a walk by the river, a visit to the library, or taking the kids to

the park. By presenting something out of the ordinary and unexpected and so temporarily reconfiguring familiar places, the projects attract attention. Passersby stop to see what is going on; they linger, hoping to be asked to participate or shyly enquiring about what the students are doing and if they can have a go.

There is also something about the tactility of the projects – whether crafting tiles, tea drinking, a mallard cam, a water seesaw, riparian rituals, or a shadow puppet performance – that draws people in. And there is something about the materiality of the rivers themselves. Having walked along the river interviewing people for the *Sounding the River Quaggy* project, I know how rivers can stop us, how we can be mesmerised by their flow, or arrested by the sounds of the water and insect and bird life which dwell there.

But not only does water stop us, it calls us in. It invites us to step in, to play with and in it, to wonder about the reaches we cannot see from the bank, to make stuff from what is pulled out of it, or perhaps it even dares us to drink it. There is something compelling about water. By engaging the materiality of the rivers, the *Take Me To Your River* projects engage people. Through an invitation to explore the rivers together, people want to participate, community relationships are quickly built, the projects come to be temporarily embedded in place, and new questions are asked of familiar watery landscapes. And it looks fun!

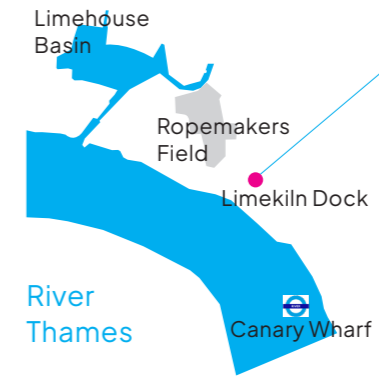


Making Things Public

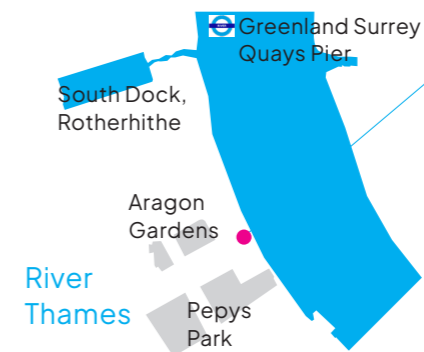
Civic engagement with waterways through designerly means was a key ambition of our brief. By the final phase, prototypes had been refined and made more robust, and all of the groups had made things public. As will become clear from the following pages, not only 'things' or objects had been put into river settings, but 'things' or assemblies (Ehn, 2011)¹ were made through the student activities, gathering participants around issues such as a decline in river bird species, water quality, and hidden rivers and their contested histories.

RIVER MAP

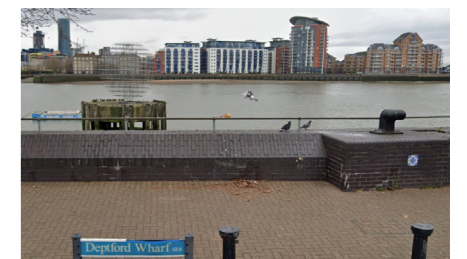
The six projects were originally sited in and along the River Ravensbourne and near its confluence with the River Thames, taking in Ladywell Fields, Brookmill Park, Peyps Community Library and Limekiln Dock. All the projects then featured in a showcase at Ladywell Fields as part of London rivers Week 2023. The following section takes each student group in turn and describes the civic engagement aspects of their project.



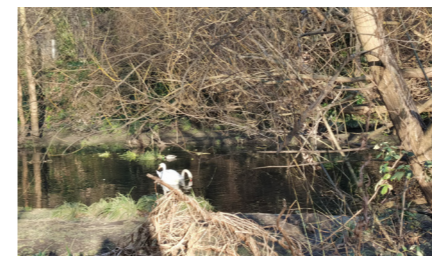
Lost Rivers Shadow



Broken Thames



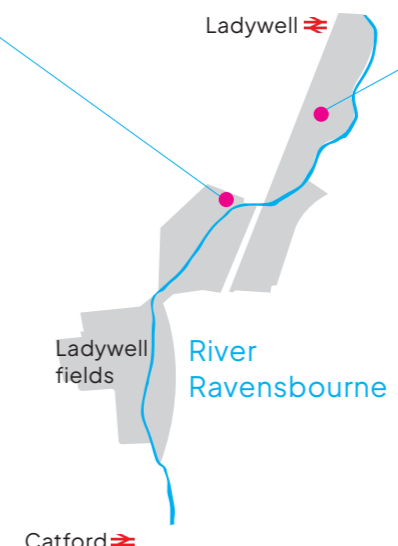
Drink Up The River



The Riparian



Big River Birdwatch



Play With The River



Civic Catalysts, Down by the River

by Michael Eades

In March 2023 I spent a morning down by the side of the River Ravensbourne in Lewisham. I was there to catch up on one of four projects funded through our Civic Catalysts research call, *Take Me To Your River*. Down by the side of the river on a cold March morning, groups of students were working enthusiastically on their projects. A series of cardboard observation stations sprang up, a 'duck cam' floating camera was launched, a group performed a specifically created 'Ceremony of the Riparian' by the side of the river. Downstream, another group experimented with a traditional Chinese tea ceremony that dared you, subtly, to drink river water. Wandering around these projects, chatting to the students and academics, I found myself thinking 'this is it'. Using creative methods and interventions to build deeper engagement with urban nature, this is exactly the type of work we'd hoped Civic Catalysts might initiate.

Launched in 2022, Civic Catalysts is a new initiative at Goldsmiths. At its core, it aims to provide a way of linking the university's research expertise to the needs of the diverse communities within the London Borough of Lewisham. The programme is designed

to support the Goldsmiths research community (including students) to use participatory methods to develop partnerships, pilot ideas, and undertake projects that will make a positive impact locally. When designing the funding call for this scheme, I was inspired by Louise Kempton (2021)² et al's recent book *Putting Universities in Their Place*. This book argues that 'local engagement can be taken further when universities use their home cities as "living laboratories" to trial experimental interventions in such areas as urban sustainability or public health' (36). This 'living laboratory' approach is exactly the type of work that Goldsmiths has a long history of developing, and which I hope that Civic Catalysts will help to further nurture and incentivise as part of the university's wider civic mission.

One of our priorities at Goldsmiths is to orient our research and knowledge exchange activity through projects that help to develop ecologically sustainable forms of living and work. It seems to me that '*Take Me To Your River*' offers one example of how we might do that. Many of these projects have an aspect of 'citizen science' to them, exploring how creative

methodologies can inspire and engage people in ecology and conservation. But the value of these projects is not just about collecting data and doing experiments. The activities offer ways to explore ecology, of course, but also to open up the history and folklore of our rivers, and of Lewisham itself.

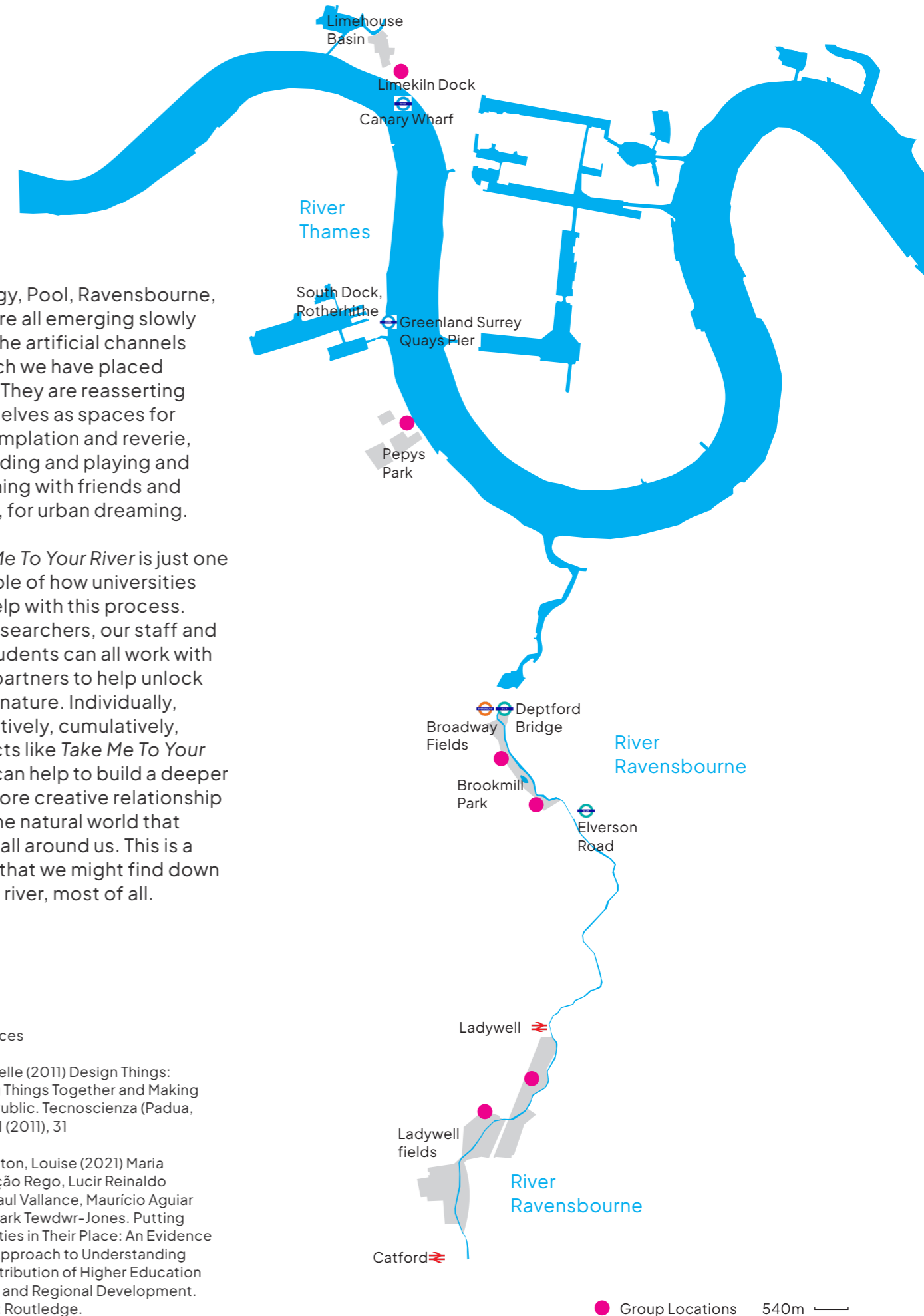
There is something special about Lewisham's rivers. The narrow, often culverted, waterways that flow through the borough are magical places. The little springs and trickles of water combine into a weaving flow that gives life to the landscape that it runs through. A channel of oxygen and nutrients flowing through suffocated and polluted parts of the city brings wildlife down to its banks to drink and feed and wash. So many birds flocking and swimming and darting around the Ravensbourne: Mandarin ducks, Rose-ringed parakeets, Robins, Blue tits and Mallards. In Brookmill Park, looking out over a concrete channel taking the Ravensbourne towards Deptford Bridge and the Thames, I saw the sudden blue flash of a Kingfisher darting by. Down by the river, down by the water, everyday situations are imbued with exoticism and beauty. The tangle of rivers across South London, the entwined tendrils of the

Quaggy, Pool, Ravensbourne, they are all emerging slowly from the artificial channels in which we have placed them. They are reasserting themselves as spaces for contemplation and reverie, for wading and playing and splashing with friends and family, for urban dreaming.

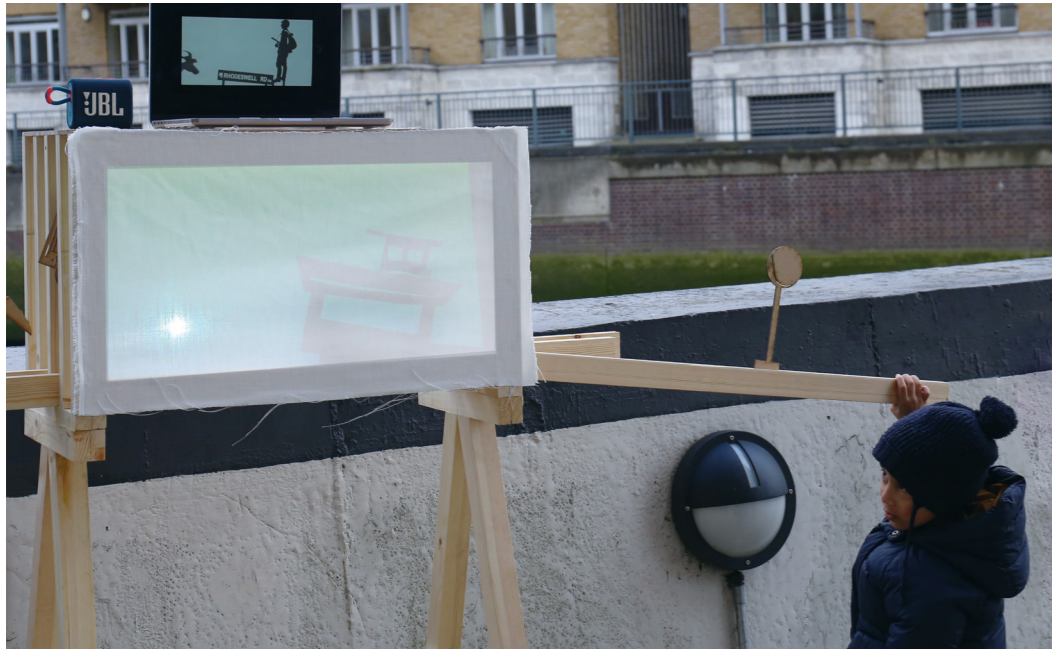
Take Me To Your River is just one example of how universities can help with this process. Our researchers, our staff and our students can all work with local partners to help unlock urban nature. Individually, collectively, cumulatively, projects like *Take Me To Your River* can help to build a deeper and more creative relationship with the natural world that exists all around us. This is a world that we might find down by the river, most of all.

References

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Lost River Shadows

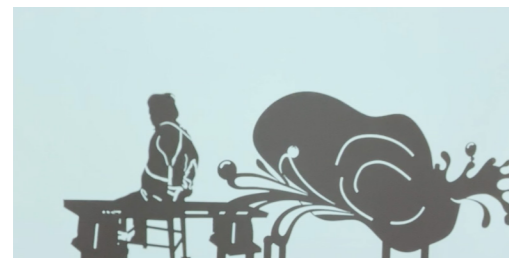
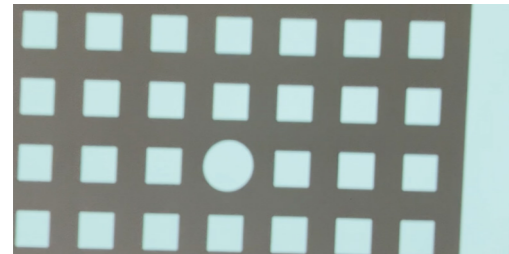


The project *Lost River Shadows* takes up the idea of hidden rivers and their overlooked histories, as an opportunity for generating narratives. London has many lost and hidden rivers, flowing beneath tarmac and concrete. The Black Ditch is one such river, that runs for three miles from Shoreditch to Dunbar Wharf at Limehouse. Its name conveys its use as a sewer. Where the Black Ditch joins the Thames is a beach – full of water at high tide, completely empty at low tide, the mud littered. The students likened the river to a scavenger. They collected and organised found debris and made an archive displayed at the site.

Residents and passers-by described the site as haunted. The group searched for traces of a time before the Black Ditch was swallowed up: in the rushing of water heard through metal grates; in the statue of a white horse on a pillar – the only surviving trace of a pub called The White Horse that stood for 300 years next to a pond fed by the Black Ditch. To follow these traces was like a journey back in time.

Using the archived debris and found traces as a reference point, the group crafted a narrative of the Black Ditch history using cardboard cut-outs depicting materials, sites and artefacts. The cut-out shapes led to a form of storytelling in the tradition of shadow play. The students designed and made a projection device, script, organised its narration by a river enthusiast, and performed this play on the beach at Dunbar Wharf, to the ‘theatre’ of resident’s flats surrounding it.





Drink Up The River



Would you drink a cup of tea using water from an urban river? Brookmill Park is a small public park and nature reserve in the London Borough of Lewisham. The Ravensbourne river runs through it. Rather than focussing on questions of the quality and ecology of rivers through water testing alone, the students in this group provoked these questions through the development of a Chinese tea ceremony, inviting guests, local volunteers and passers-by to dare to drink the water from the Ravensbourne.

The ceremony had three actions: first, cleaning the river with tools made from reclaimed materials found in the site. These tools took tea ceremony utensils as a reference, for example clips and spoons, but scaled up to pick litter out of the water. Second: a device was made to filter the river water, through stones, sand, activated carbon, filter papers, and then boiled. Third: on the riverbank, and using the filtered water, a Chinese tea ceremony professional performed the tea ceremony. Rubbish that had previously been collected in Brookmill Park was sorted and repurposed in the artefacts of the tea ceremony.

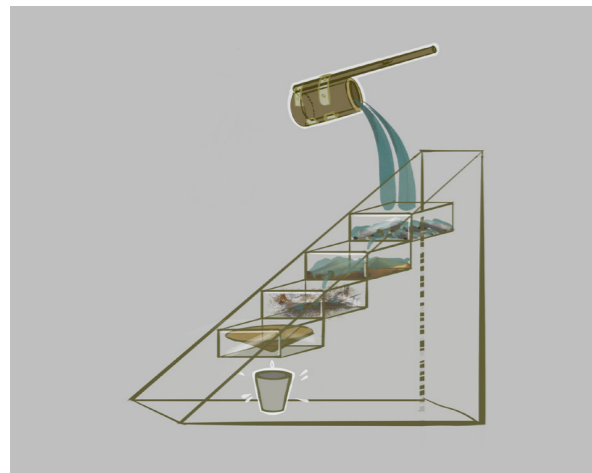
Many people joined. Almost everyone was willing to use the cleaning tools and filtering equipment. However, when we asked if they would like to taste tea made with water filtered from the river, most people declined and preferred to taste tea made with mineral water instead. One participant so far took the risk.





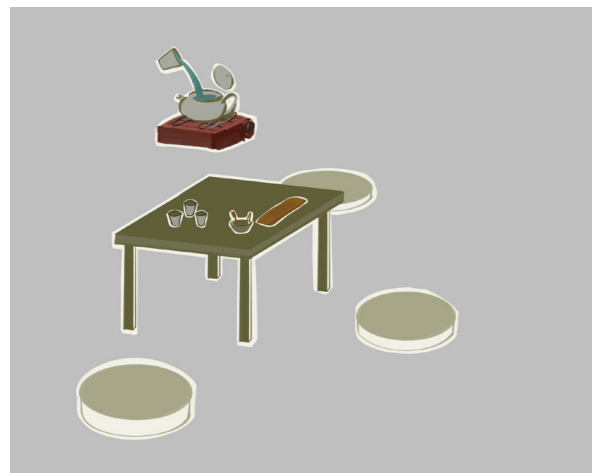
River Water
20% trust in water quality

The first step is to use the tool river trash.



Filter Devices
40% trust in water quality

The second step is to use the tool to pour the river water in the topmost box of the filter unit.



Boil Water
70% trust in water quality

The third step is to pour the filtered water into a kettle and bring it to the boil on the hob.



Big River Birdwatch



How can design invent ways for people to engage with river birds? *Big River Birdwatch* is a public event made to encourage children and their parents to observe, interact with and learn about birds that inhabit the Ravensbourne River in Ladywell Fields, Lewisham.

Over the last decade, this site has received investment to create new channels, pools, and animal habitats. The motivation for the event came from the Big Garden Birdwatch held in Ladywell Fields in 2012. The students found out that certain river birds identified on the 2012 birdwatch are currently on the amber list of UK Birds Conservation Concern, among them, the Kingfisher, and Mallard Duck that has seen a decline in breeding in the UK over the last 25 years.

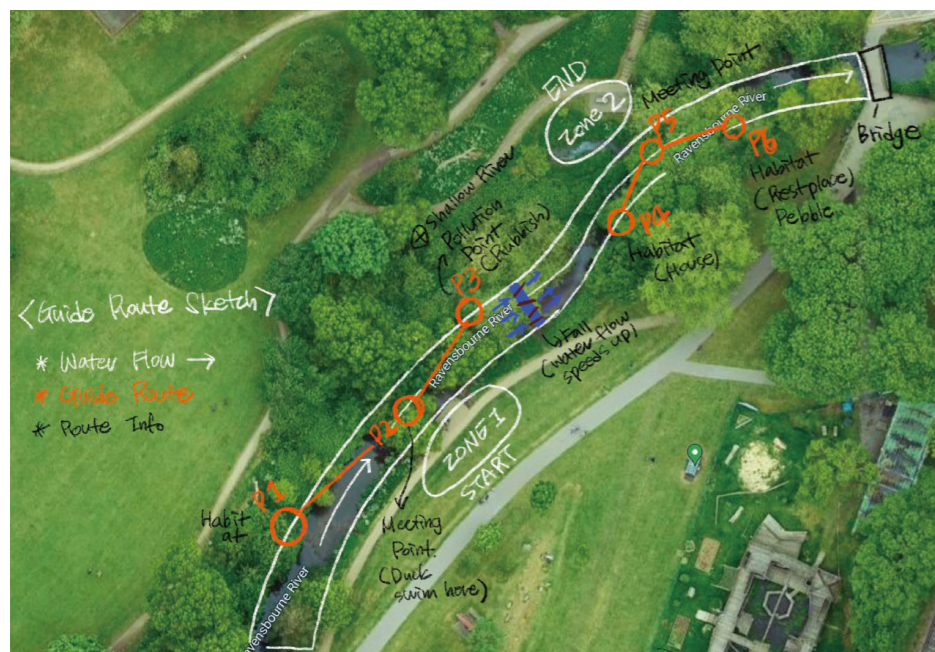
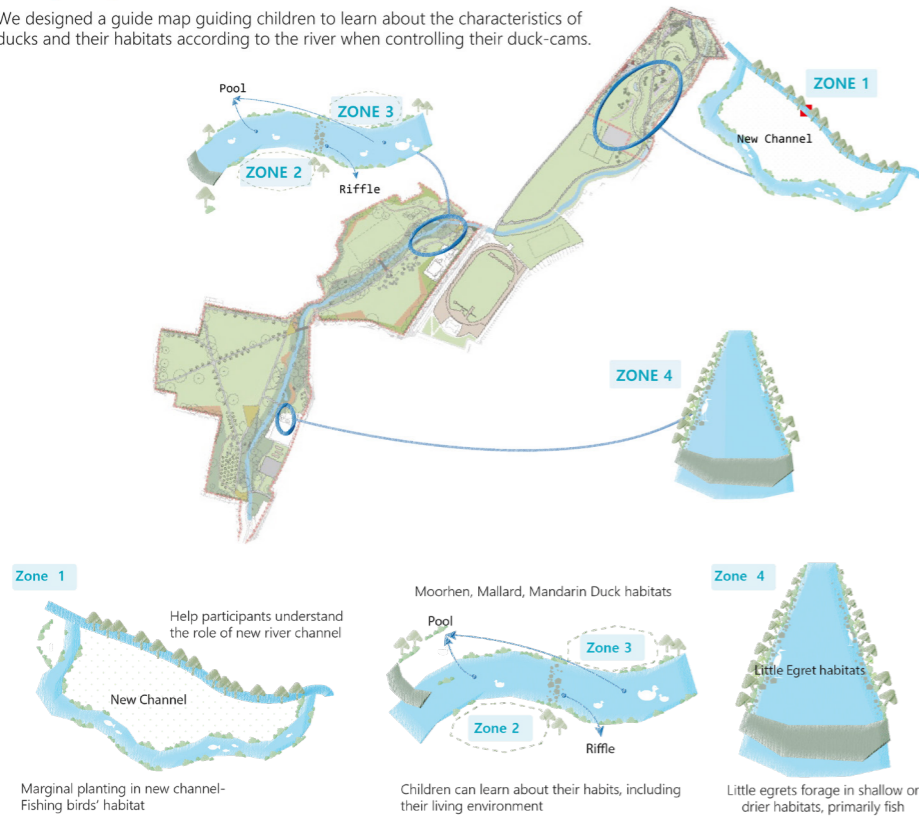
The event asked how children and their parents might learn about the characteristics of local river birds and their habitats through making their own 'duck-cam'. Fake ducks were made and sailed on various points along the river. This activity enabled the children to take a birds-eye view of the river and its banks and make footage that documents this perspective.



BIG RIVER BIRDWATCH

Designing a Guide Route

We designed a guide map guiding children to learn about the characteristics of ducks and their habitats according to the river when controlling their duck-cams.



The Riparian



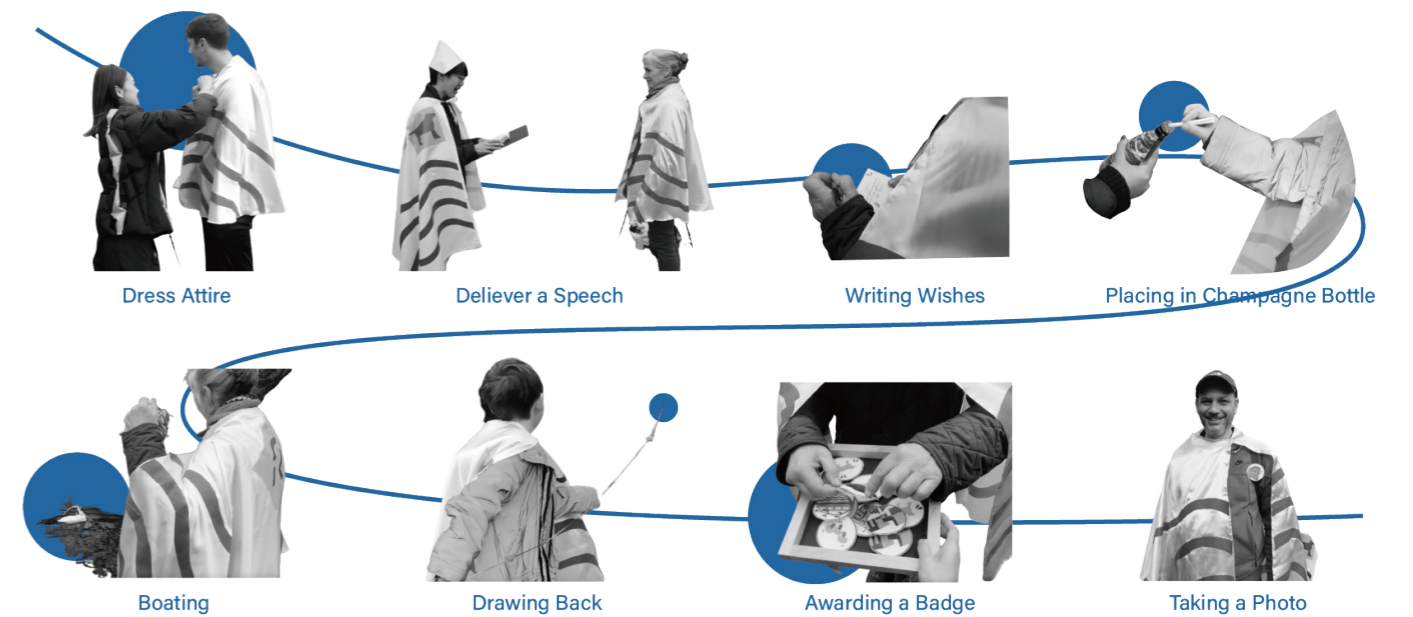
The Riparian is a carefully imagined, ceremonial blessing of the River Ravensbourne which invokes a connection between participants and the water. The word riparian designates the region that interfaces land and river, an interstitial area that provides a focus for the rite.

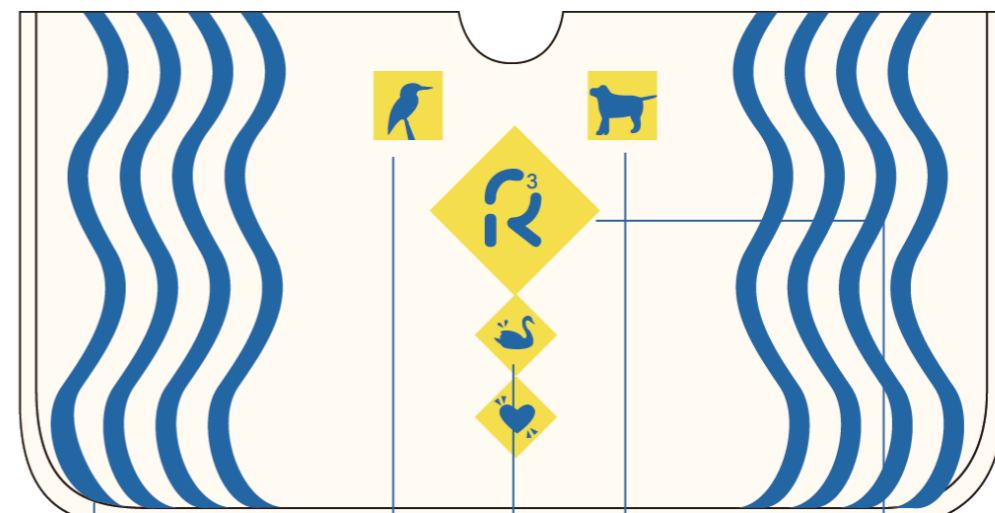
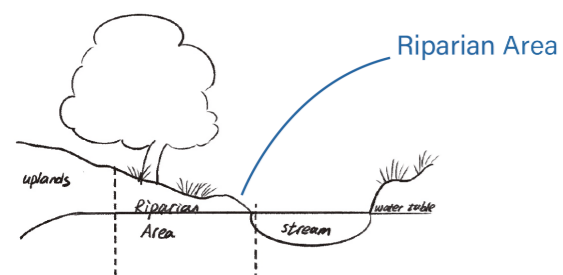
An initial exploration of Brookmill Park led to conversations with dog walkers and families. The recollections of the park users were translated by the group into a collaged map using a variety of natural materials collected from the environment, initiating a rich and detailed material response to the site that characterised subsequent work.

Observation of the activities of council workers and volunteers, including gardening, tree surgery and rubbish collection, provoked an interest in maintenance and care. In particular, The friends of Brookmill Park, a volunteer group engaged in the protecting the biodiversity of the park, demonstrated that practices of care engendered deep connections with natural space.

The ceremony is rich in natural and wild symbolism and is structured as a sequence of actions. The participant dresses in a robe and the minister conducts a speech which emphasises the environmental and spiritual value of the river. The participant writes a wish which is conveyed into the river in the form of a boat, then the boat is drawn back to the river bank and finally a badge is awarded.

Ceremony Flow





Waves of the river

Logo of The Ripi-ran

Different animals in the park



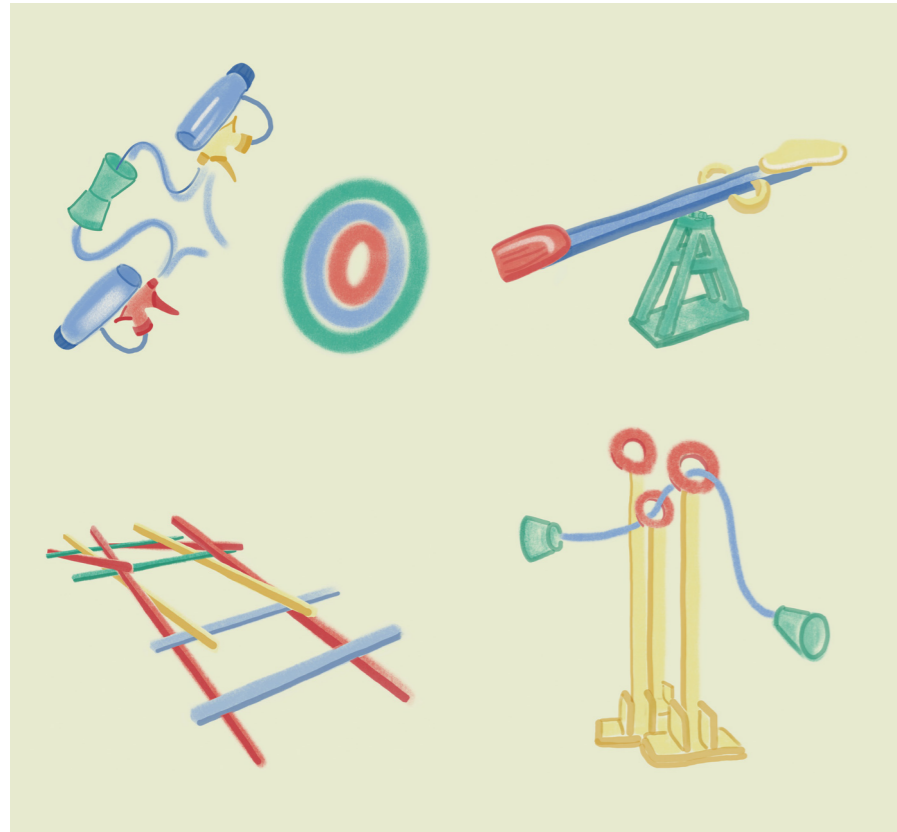
Play With The River



Play With the River emerged from an observation, grounded in secondary research, that because of urban overdevelopment, the relationship between people and the river has become distant. Through an engagement with Marjory Allen's ideas of risk and play, the river bank is reimagined as an adventure playground that reconnects children with water.

The path of the Ravensbourne River was taken as a research site, with a focus on Ladywell Fields and Deptford Bridge. Beautifully documented encounters with bridges, wildlife, dogs and playgrounds led to a set of initial interventions that prompted park goers to stop and look, listen and think. Behaviours that were provoked by these encounters were then materialised in models, forming apparatus that encouraged connections between people and wild elements.

The playground includes a water seesaw, self-build bridge, water pistol with target and river telephone. Children are encouraged to use their imagination to create unique ways of playing while taking some risks as they explore nature freely.



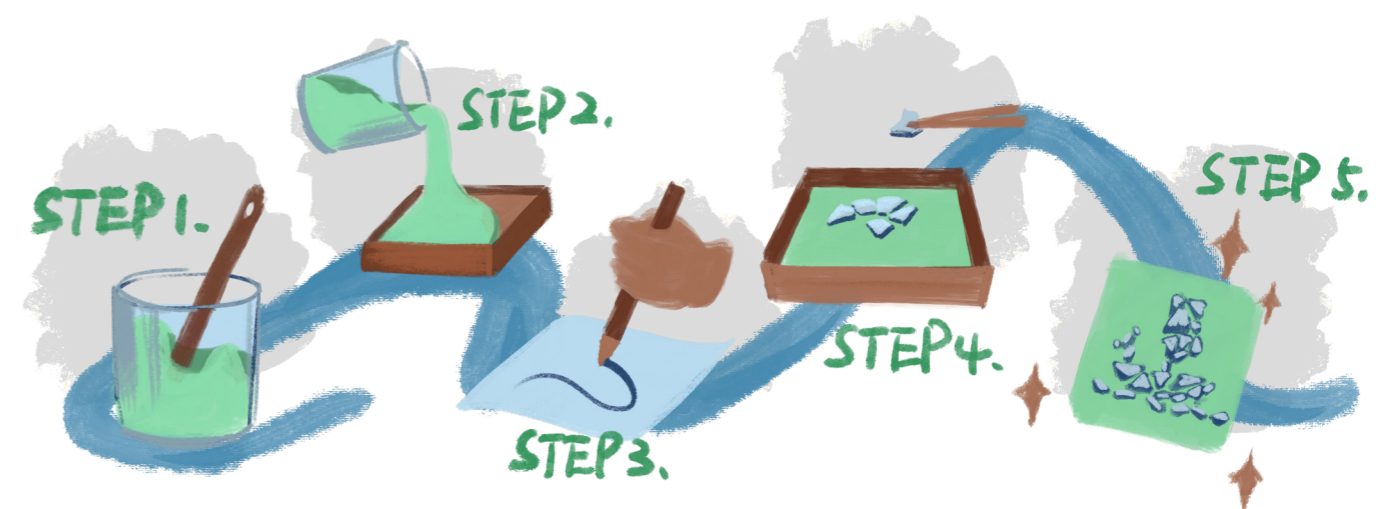
Broken Thimes

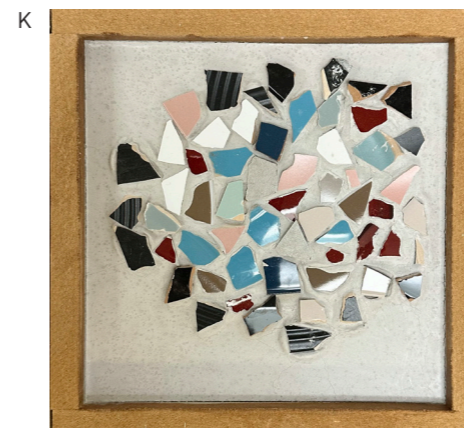


The title *Broken Thimes* is a concatenation of Thames and times, with the history of the river a vehicle for renewal through community storytelling. Using cement from the industries of riverside development and ceramic waste from residents as aggregates, the project takes tile making as a method for preserving and sharing memories of the Thames.

Pepys Community Library, standing on the south bank of the Thames near Surrey Keys, is committed to the provision of community initiatives including a food bank and educational programmes. Following continuous engagement with providers and users at Pepys, the group ran a series of workshops that supported the responsive and incremental development of a craft workshop, encouraging a process of reflection, drawing and mosaic making to render memories as tiles.

The Thames is variously depicted by those involved in the workshops, as the site of historic industries dependent on slavery, a focus of rapid redevelopment and change, a venue for rest and reflection, and a place of migration and settlement.





G. It's a huge crane that he uses to lift the ships and reminds me of the days when the shipyards once prospered here.

I. There are many ducks in the dock water here, and they make the water surface more alive. People who live here occasionally feed them some food.

K. I have drawn a colored circle. It symbolizes that cultures from different countries and different races make this community rich and colorful. People from Africa, Europe, and Asia live here.

H. There is a fox living here, and it often messes up the trash can in search of food. But I still think it is cute, and occasionally feed it bread secretly.

J. It's a black ship sailing in the water, with some red shards representing blood. It symbolizes the brutal history behind the prosperity of this stretch of river.

L. I have pictured a boat sailing in a river. The anchor sank, the sun shone, and the treasures buried at the bottom of the river rose up and sparkled.

Credits

Take Me To Your River was a Design brief undertaken by students from MA Design Expanded Practice at Goldsmiths. The projects were supported by the Civic Catalysts programme at Goldsmiths and showcased as part of London River Week 2023.

MA Design Expanded Practice is a radical post-disciplinary programme for practitioners who want to push the boundaries of what design can be and do, by challenging the role and norms of traditional design towards an emerging type of 'advanced design', unshackled from the history of specialisms and entrenched methods.

Civic Catalysts is a programme of activity designed to help link Goldsmiths research to the needs of the diverse communities within the London Borough of Lewisham. Linked to the Goldsmiths Civic University Agreement (CUA), the aim of this programme is to bring researchers together with local partners and support them in developing partnerships, piloting ideas, and undertaking projects that will make a positive impact locally.

Environmental charity Thames21 is helping to organise London Rivers Week 2023. From Oxford and London to Essex, Thames21 aims to rebuild the relationship between communities and their rivers, to understand, enjoy, advocate for and take care of their rivers over the long term, at the same time delivering powerful social impacts like improved wellbeing, community cohesion, and greater equality of access to good quality green-blue spaces for people to enjoy.

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