

What the water is up to
By Émeline Eude
Environmental aesthetics researcher

There are phenomenons, in this world, that spark our imagination and excite our dreams, a certain Gaston Bachelard wouldn't disagree. Meteors are of this category, these eruptions of aqueous, gaseous, electric, or optical matter nourish our contemplation of the skies with events that amaze us, that scare or perhaps trouble us. Rainbows, lightening, hail or simply lingering showers ripple through our lives, leaving sublime memories but also times of difficult harvest or challenged mobility. No wonder we spend so much time scanning the atmosphere.

Water seems to occupy an unequalled position. Omnipresent, it inhabits both the air and earth, not to mention how much space it occupies in our own bodies. Intangible form. In turn, blurry wave, vaporous cloud, element of life, water particles form and unite one second, only to disperse and re-assemble the next – body of matter.

What Elise Morin delicately orchestrates with her thousands of test-tubes, pointed towards the sky, is nothing less than the fragility of an element that generally seems quite straightforward. But water isn't that clear, and the fact that its future stands at the crossroads of conflicting relationships between states and regions is to fear.

In an international law article poetically entitled whom do clouds belong to?" Fabienne Quilleré-Mazjoub questions the legal status of clouds. One learns that, in drought-stricken environments, clouds are subject to research on water sowing and recuperation to trigger rain. Mocking the borders that nations have erected, the paths of clouds stem from winds, geological formations and now the blitz of silver iodide or hygroscopic salt-torches that are used to start rainfall and fog.

This diversion of the normal water cycle is far from being new, the aqueducts of the Roman Empire exist as proof. However what we must reflect on is the extent to which water management reveals geo-strategic stakes that intensify according to the evolution of technological means.

What is left of nature if even water and weather are being manipulated by us humans ?

Echoing the synthetic nature of the “man-made” Mlynský Náhon river in Kosice, heritage landmark of soviet urban planning, the fluorescein encapsulated in the test tubes reminds us of the complex relationships that humans have developed with their environment, whether it be urban or rural. Nature has never received as much attention from the scientific and political community as is it receiving today.

And what do the members of the community think? What role does the flow of the river play in the span of their lives? What stories are drawn from the circulation of water in the heart of the city, throughout the seasons, along with the showers and storms ?

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