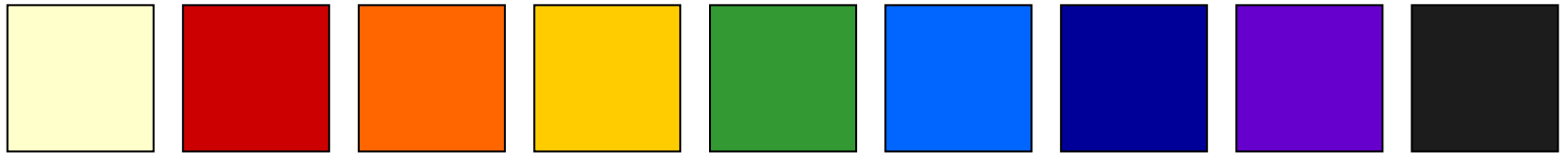


# Intercalating art and science in a cross-disciplinary landscape.



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A Teaching Innovation Project in which a practising artist was engaged to enhance module design and delivery in the Geography module “Inspirational Landscapes”.

## What am I going to talk about?

- The context and the problem.
- What we did in the project.
- Outcomes and evaluation.
- Prospects and applications.



Peter Knight



Daniel Allen



Peter Adey



Miriam Burke

Module GEG-30014

## **Inspirational Landscapes**

**A level-3 module for Geography, Human Geography and Physical Geography**



“In this module we look at landscape through geographers’ eyes, and through the eyes of artists, poets, explorers, novelists, composers, etc... We hope that you see landscape in new ways, and therefore start to see more.”

**Geography is all about exploring the world around us.**

T.S.Eliot:

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

**from: Little Gidding (1942)**

Marcel Proust:

The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes; in seeing the universe through the eyes of another, one hundred others - in seeing the hundred universes that each of them sees.

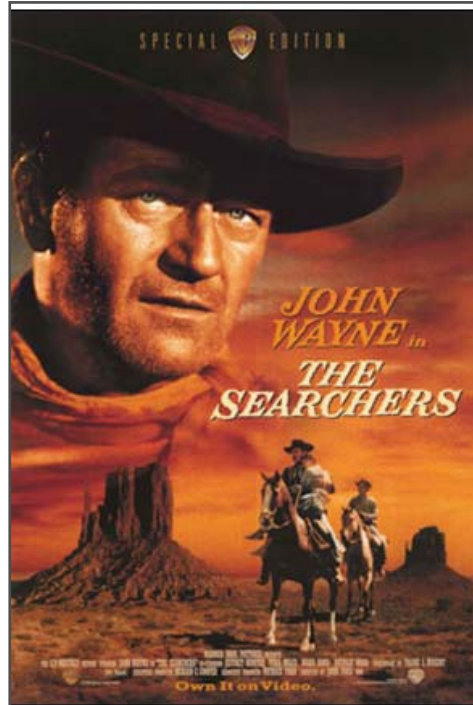
**from: In Search of Lost Time**

## **The fundamental problem:**

How can we help students to see  
landscape through new eyes...

...to expand their point(s) of view?

We can tell them stuff...



"...the burning sand,  
the oppressive sky, the  
fractured,  
shards of  
which litter  
terrain..."

P. French, 1977

"Recent writers... have heard the  
topographical characteristics of the  
wide morphologically  
elements of Elgar's  
Moore suggests that  
al melodic writing  
suggests the patterns  
Broadheath: gentle  
eld and hedgerow,  
fruit trees planted in  
orchard – the linked  
vern hills rising up  
the Severn valley –  
ugh all that landscape

## Sir Edward Elgar 1857-1935



## W.H. Auden 1907-1973

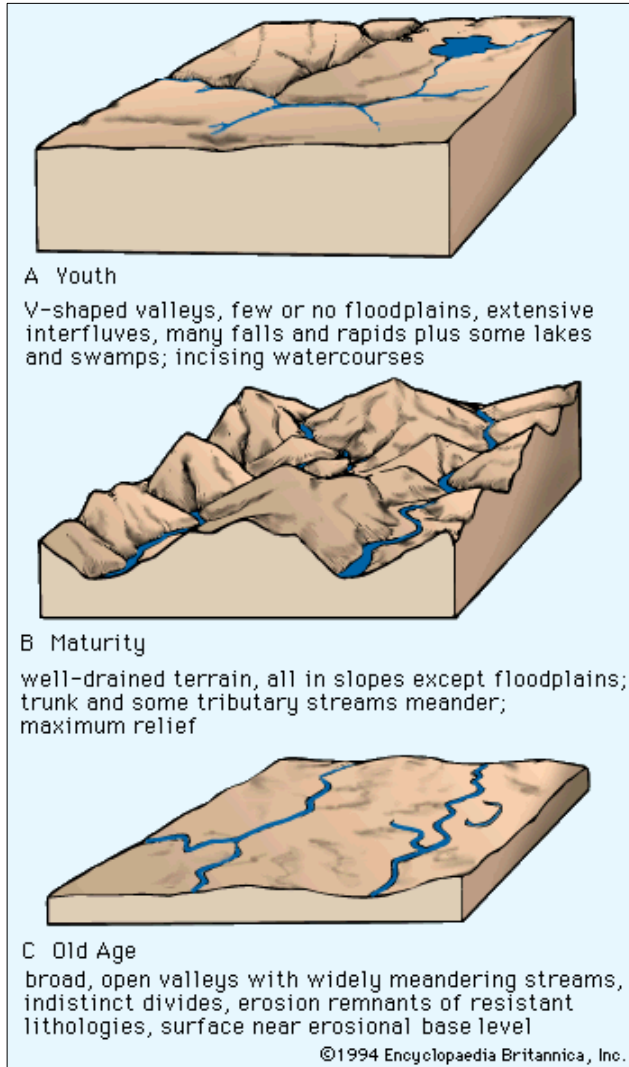
"Generally considered the greatest  
English poet of the twentieth  
century, his work has exerted a  
major influence on succeeding  
generations of poets on both sides  
of the Atlantic."

"His poetry frequently recounts,  
literally or metaphorically, a journey  
or quest, and his travels provided  
rich material for his verse."

Source: Academy of American Poets.  
<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/pmnPID/120>

image: <http://www.the-american-interest.com/>

## “River Profile” W.M.Davis



## “River Profile” W.H.Auden



Out of a bellicose fore-time, thundering  
head-on collisions of cloud and rock in an  
up-thrust, crevasse-and-avalanche, troll country,  
deadly to breathers,

it whelms into our picture below the melt-line,  
where tarns lie frore under frowning cirques, goat-bell,  
wind-breaker, fishing-rod, miner's-lamp country,  
already at ease with

the mien and gestures that become its kindness,  
in streams, still anonymous, still jumpable,  
flows as it should through any declining country  
in probing spirals...

We can ask them to look and think...



What can you see out of your own window?



*Monument Valley*

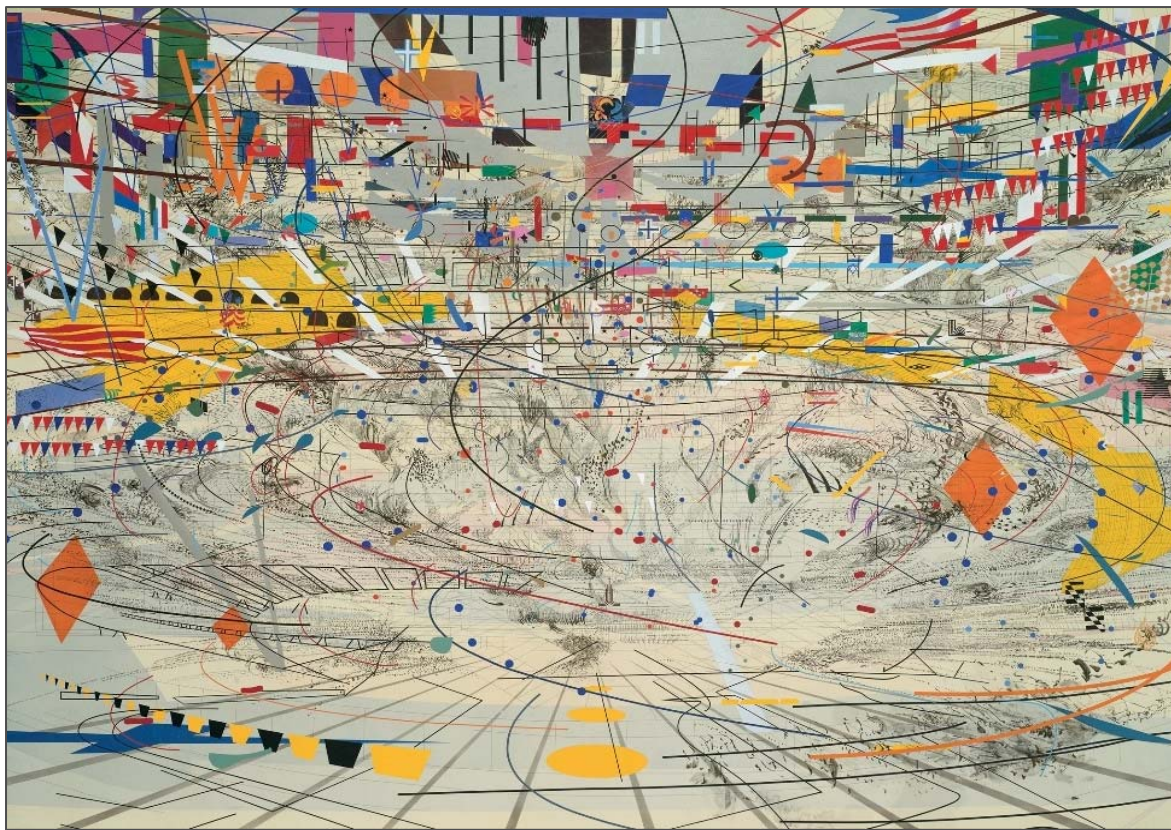
*Image: Wikimedia Commons*

Explore different places

See through different eyes

Apply what you learn to your original view through your own window

**How might students demonstrate in an assessment their expanded view of the world around them?**



**Julie Mehretu**

“Stadia II” (2004).

Ink & acrylic on canvas

3.65 x 2.74 m



“Mehretu constructs her spaces ...on the bottom-most layer some type of schematic, blueprint, or perspectival rendering of architectural elements, overhead plans of urban areas, or drawings of structures... After building a base of several layers of these structures, Mehretu maps out large swirling clouds. Much like the human population of a geographical area, these large areas of marks are comprised of individuals... These become tribes, nations, and entire cultures capable of growth, trade, movement, conflict or extinction. ... This produces an effect of moving palimpsestic space...

*Ljungberg, C. 2009, J.of Cartography 46 (4), and TheDetroitter.com*

**Problem:**

We provide just a Geographer's view of the artist's view of the world.  
This isn't enough: students are still seeing through *my* eyes.

**Solution:**

We need: an artist.

**Why does the project focus on art rather than poetry, film, etc?**

1. Geography and art are two related ways of knowing landscape. There is a long tradition of Geographers being interested in Art in connection with landscape.
2. We happened recently to have made contact with an interested artist.
3. This is just a starting point: try it with an artist and then see whether we want to develop this "template" to other viewpoints.

Two year project, £1,200.

London-based artist Miriam Burke: visits plus materials

- Module (re)design: establishing a role in the module
- Material development: making art for use in the module
- Teaching contributions (8 sessions over two years)
  
- Inter-year reflections and adaptation
- End-of-project debriefing/focus groups
  
- Public Exhibition
- Conference presentation and paper

## Involving the artist in class with students

### **Week 3.** (PGK, PA and MB)

Spaces, places, scales, boundaries, movements.

Including: Geographical theories and Artistic methodologies.

### **Week 5.** (PA, MB and PGK)

Created Landscapes and Cultural Landscapes

Including: Carl Sauer. Cultural landscapes. Ways of seeing the wilderness  
Long. Robert Smithson.

### **Week 7.** (PGK, PA and MB)

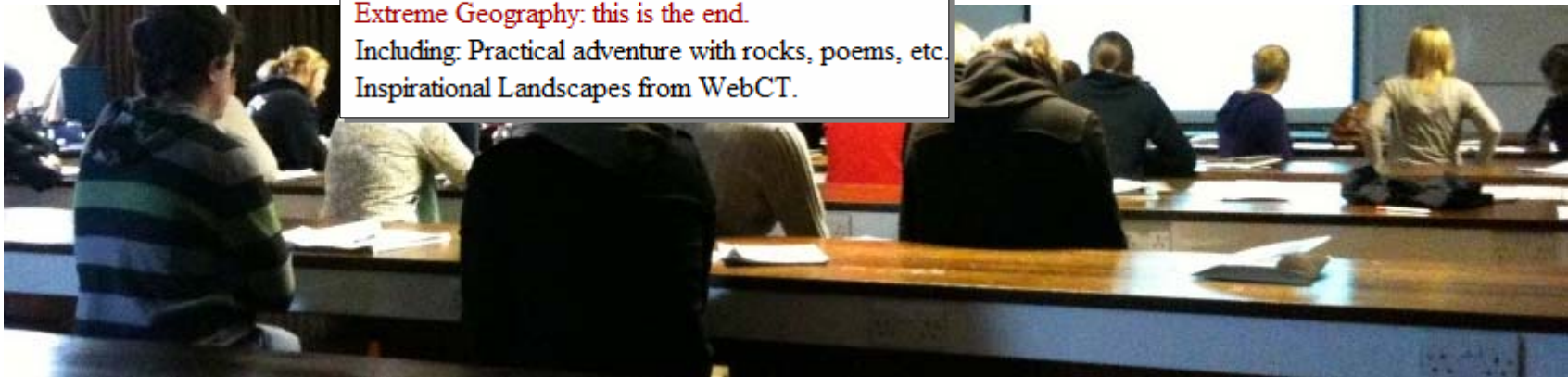
Sleep, Death and the Frozen Poles.

Including: People in the landscape. Responses to Landscape: Science and  
Cape Farewell. Sophie Calle. Rachael Whiteread "Embankment".

### **Week 10.** (PGK, MB and PA)

Extreme Geography: this is the end.

Including: Practical adventure with rocks, poems, etc.  
Inspirational Landscapes from WebCT.

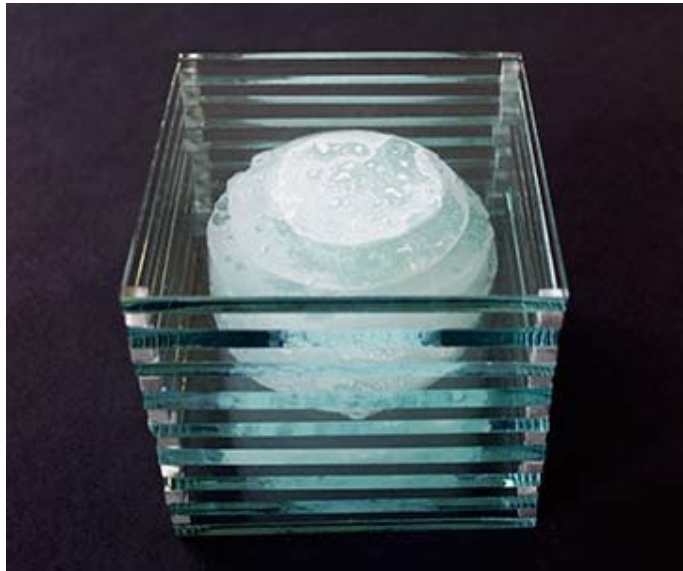




## Public gallery exhibition



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BOROUGH COUNCIL



## Outcomes include:

- Revised module design and content
- In-project artist contributions to teaching (student experience)
- Legacy artist contributions (activities, materials and resources)
- Experience (for staff) of working with artist
- Template/model for this kind of course development
- Potential for repeat/development with different contributors
- Public gallery exhibition and lecture
- Conference presentation to Institute of British Geographers
- Paper invited for journal “Cultural Geographies”
- Continuing collaboration with artist, external funding

## Evaluation

- Project team
- Public and external bodies (public, arts, geography)
- External examiners (3 externals over 2 years)
- Students (forms, focus group, Facebook, achievement)

## Student comments:

“Things I found interesting: Miriam’s perspective”

“The class was amazing, the way it was taught was different. Great Ideas – best class through the whole of Uni.”

“Made me more open minded about different aspects of ‘Geography’ and enabled a more creative approach to the subject.”

“Very fun lectures. Best module ever experienced.”

“Interesting how different people look at the same place.”

“Forcing me to ‘think outside the box’.”

“It's amazing how many different interpretations of a landscape there can be, that without the module you just wouldn't have considered.”

## What happens next?

Module continues in its improved form

Continuing collaboration with artist

Involvement of new collaborators (photographer, curator)

Addressing External Examiner comments: further action research and work at levels 1 and 2 within Geography programme

Papers for *Cultural Geographies* and *J. Geog in H.E.*

Opportunities for take-up of idea by other modules/courses.