

Cryptic presents...

BELOW THE BLANKET

Artistic Interpretations

Interpretation Stand 1

Deep Listening Soundscapes & Water Balance

Kathy Hinde

Look carefully: among the plants and flowers on either side of this path, strangely shaped speakers have sprung up, resembling the bogbean plants that grow in peat bogs. From them come **Kathy Hinde's Deep Listening Soundscapes**, compositions based around sounds recorded below the surface of the **Flow Country** by submerged microphones called hydrophones. The speakers form a path leading to **Water Balance**, a kinetic sound sculpture in a pond. Vessels fill with flowing water until they overturn and spill into gongs, generating a shimmering, living composition inspired by the waterlogged conditions necessary to sustain the peat bog.

Concept, design and build: Kathy Hinde

**Water Balance was developed at 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space
A Cryptic Commission**

kathyhinde.co.uk

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Interpretation Stand 2

Flow Country

Malcolm Lindsay

Composer **Malcolm Lindsay's Flow Country** is a new choral work for **Below the Blanket**. Lindsay, who grew up in Caithness, recalls stories of the **Flow Country** from his youth, and his score draws on the emotional resonance of this unique area. A four-part choral work sung by members of **Dunedin Consort**, Scotland's foremost baroque ensemble, **Flow Country** uses for its libretto the Latin names of plants, animals and birds found in the blanket bog. Individual voices sing these names, revealing their equivalents in English as they come together to harmonise in this ethereal hymn to a beautiful and strange place.

Close your eyes, listen, and be transported to the **Flow Country**.

Live performances of the work will take place beneath the giant cedar tree on Fri 26 July // Fri 2, 16 & 23 Aug

Composer and libretto: Malcolm Lindsay

The Dunedin Consort

Soprano: Claire Evans

Alto: Emily Hodkinson

Tenor: David Lee

Bass: Arthur Bruce

Commissioned by Cryptic and The Peatlands Partnership's Flows to the Future Project (with RSPB Scotland as lead partner).

malcolmlindsay.com

dunedin-consort.org.uk

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Interpretation Stand 3

The Moor Speaks

Karine Polwart & Pippa Murphy

In **The Moor Speaks**, singer-songwriter **Karine Polwart** – in collaboration with composer **Pippa Murphy** – takes on the voice of the **Flow Country**. Sung in English and Gaelic, this is the peatland's story of itself: its history, its wildlife, its people. Adapted in part from a Gaelic hymn by Alexander Carmichael, **The Moor Speaks** celebrates the uniqueness of the blanket bog and appeals to us to preserve its wonders.

From the album *A Pocket Of Wind Resistance*, the studio adaptation of Polwart's award-winning and critically acclaimed *Wind Resistance* show, which premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival 2016.

karinepolwart.com

pippamurphy.com

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Interpretation Stand 4

Data Flow

Matthew Olden

Throughout the year, water levels in the **Flow Country** rise and fall, and as the bog expands and contracts accordingly it can be said to be 'breathing'. Scientists and environmentalists studying this process have learned that different parts of the bog breathe differently, depending on the health of the peat. In **Data Flow Matthew Olden** turns their research into a soundtrack to let us hear how this 'breathing' varies across five areas of the bog, whether waterlogged and healthy, drained and damaged, or restored. His work, played through 96 speakers, gives us fresh insight into a hidden and vital natural process.

A Cryptic Commission

Thank you to: Dr. Andrew V. Bradley (Faculty of Engineering, University of Nottingham); Geomatic Ventures Ltd.; Dr. David J. Large (Faculty of Engineering, Nottingham Geospatial Institute); Dr Chris Marshall (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Nottingham); Natural Environment Research Council and Dr. Andrew Sowter.

matthewolden.co.uk

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Interpretation Stand 5

Fieldwork & Flow Country Sculpture Series

Hannah Imlach

Since spending 18 months on an artist's residency in the **Flow Country**, **Hannah Imlach** has created a series of sculptures whose form recalls the scientific flux towers that peatland researchers use to collect data on the area – structures made of sensors, meters, dials, solar panels. Each of her works responded differently to changes in the blanket bog environment – filling with rain, floating up on swelling groundwater, or revolving in high winds. A series of images documents these sculptures in their **Flow Country** setting, while the accompanying film **Fieldwork** records the environmental research Imlach carried out using these unique instruments.

Fieldwork was made with **Daniel Warren** (videography) and **Thomas Butler** (sound).

Thank you to: Dr. Roxane Andersen and PhD candidate Jasmijn Sybenga (Environmental Research Institute, University of the Highlands and Islands); Dr. Myroslava Khomik (Department of Geography and

Environmental Management, University of Waterloo); Dr. Lila Matsumoto (Poet & Researcher, School of English, University of Nottingham) and the staff and volunteers at the RSPB Scotland Forsinard Flows National Nature Reserve.

hannahimlach.com

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Interpretation Stand 6

Do Not Disturb | | **The Permanence of Fragility** **Heather Lander**

Below the covering of **Sphagnum moss** on the **Flow Country** lie layers upon layers of compacted vegetation, slowly being converted into peat, locking in carbon. **Heather Lander's** work takes inspiration from this secret, silent process and brings it into the daylight. Three cubes, made up of stacks of painted Perspex, reveal the structure of the moss in painterly 3-D cross-sections. The cubes' modular construction highlights the complexity and fragility of the blanket bog landscape, and invites us to consider the strata and processes occurring beneath an apparently inert surface.

A Cryptic Commission

Thank you to: Dr Neil Bell, Research Scientist (Bryology, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh) and Jack Wrigley

hrlander.com

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Interpretation Stand 7

Hold **Luci Holland**

Step through the archway to enter the immersive soundscape of **Luci Holland's Hold**. We increasingly understand that even moderate human activity can have major consequences on the environment, as it has in the **Flow Country**. In this work, too, small interventions generate an immediate response: as they explore, visitors trigger ultrasonic sensors that cause the soundscape – remixed and reworked from audio recordings made in the **Flow Country** – to drop in pitch. **Hold** lets us hear how it might feel to have our feet sunk into the peat bog, and reminds us that human activity affects our environment constantly and often invisibly.

A Cryptic Commission

Thank you to: Kathy Hinde; Dr Chris Marshall (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Nottingham); Matthew Olden; Yann Sezec and the Tinderbox Collective.

luciholland.com

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Interpretation Stand 8

Release **Luci Holland**

Throughout the **Flow Country**, parts of the vast peatland bog 'breathe' in different ways, depending on the rise and fall of water levels and the health of the moss and peat. Using data gathered over 18 months in the **Flow Country**, **Luci Holland's Release** lets us hear these variations over time as we make our way through the

maze. Each area studied has been interpreted as a different percussion track, whose rhythm alters according to the changes in water levels recorded there. These voices follow us through the maze, reminding us of the complex interplay of human and environmental factors that shape every natural landscape.

A Cryptic Commission

Thank you to: Dr Chris Marshall (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Nottingham).

luciholland.com

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Interpretation Stand 9

Chirp & Drift

Kathy Hinde

A flock of musical instruments perch in the arms of a paperbark maple tree in **Kathy Hinde's** kinetic sculpture **Chirp & Drift**. Hand-made from waterproof paper bellows and accordion reeds salvaged from broken musical instruments, these bird-like constructions transmit musical messages based on Morse code translations of the names of bird species found in the **Flow Country** – 'singing' a low note for a dash, a high one for a dot. Alongside, they emit fluting noises that imitate and recreate the calls of the area's wealth of bird life.

Concept, design and build: Kathy Hinde

Software: Matthew Olden

Fabrication assistance: Jasmine Butt

Commissioned by Lancaster Arts and Light Up Lancaster 2018

kathyhinde.co.uk

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Interpretation Stand 10

Skylark Walk

Take a meandering, intimate walk beneath a flock of sonic umbrellas playing back a composition inspired by the song of the skylark. On a residency in the **Flow Country**, artist **Kathy Hinde** made numerous field recordings of birdsong, and was especially drawn to the ever-present music of the skylark. Inspired by that complex, subtle and constant song, **Skylark Walk** brings together weather recordings, delicate piano notes, the sound of the Aeolian harp and other sonic textures into a musical composition evocative of the blanket bog habitat.

Concept: Cathie Boyd

Composition and design: Kathy Hinde

Fabrication: Jasmine Butt

A Cryptic Commission

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