



P1(t) = P1(0) + [P1(t) - P1(0)] t/t1 Brunt Ice Shelf, Antarctica 2009

INTRODUCTION

Since 2010 Jeni Walwin and Tammy Bedford have been responsible for curating and producing WOMAD's World of Art. Their brief is to present contemporary visual art of the highest quality, to reflect the festival commitment to celebrating a range of cultural influences, and to create a programme that will appeal to adults and children of all ages many of whom are not regular visitors to art galleries. Over the last 4 years the programme has focused on a series of artists' film installations, selected around a particular theme each year, and presented in shipping containers. Following the positive response from festival goers, the World of Art programme aims to build on this interest by commissioning a new work from artist Neville Gabie for 2014. Neville's brief is to develop a project that has two key ingredients – to create a strong visual or experiential presence within the festival and to invite some form of active participation from festival goers.

Each of Neville's many previous projects has operated on several levels – passers-by experience a fleeting encounter, while others engage with the work directly, by becoming active participants in its making. One such example is a project for the Olympic Delivery Authority, during the construction of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in East London. Neville noticed that one section of the Park's waterway correlated with the scene in Seurat's famous painting 'Bathers at Asnieres'. Inspired by this association, he invited a number of construction workers on the Olympic site to recreate the image for the twenty-first century. A dedicated website revealed personal stories about the workforce. The resulting large-scale photographic image was reproduced as a centre page spread in London's Metro newspaper, delivered free to millions of commuters across the capital each day.

It is Neville Gabie's ability to create multilayered works, offering spectators a variety of means by which to engage with contemporary art that made him such an appropriate choice for the first WOMAD World of Art commission. The three-part work for this Festival, 'Experiments in Black and White', encourages us to consider many aspects of the world in which we live: the chalk deposits beneath our feet in the hills of this part of England, the diminishing ice caps in remote lands, our continuing reliance on fossil fuels across the world, and the quality of the air we all breathe. The five films, one recently completed for this commission, all feature the artist as performer – an individual in an often hostile environment, grappling with simple, but demanding, physical tasks. Premiered at the festival, the live performance extends this celebration of fundamental material and manual labour, and a key route through the site becomes the canvas for a huge drawing. The collection of breath from over one thousand festival-goers, together with their proposals for the location of its release as a sound work, reminds us that the invisible atmosphere around us and its ability to maintain our health is as valuable as the very visible natural resources we consume. This project does not propose answers to the questions it broaches, but by a series of creative interventions we are encouraged to become more thoughtful, and by extension perhaps more pro-active, when considering the issues it raises.

Jeni Walwin, June 2014



Experiments in Black and White IX [chalk] – 2012



Experiments in Black and White IX [oil] – 2013

EXPERIMENTS IN BLACK AND WHITE

'Experiments in Black and White' is an exploration of four materials – ice, chalk, oil and air. These four elements are fundamental aspects of the natural world and are variously contested and debated as we look to the future of the planet. There are three aspects to the project.

OUTDOOR SCREENING OF SHORT FILMS

The five films feature the artist working with each of ice, chalk and oil, in arduous, physical performances which heighten our awareness of these vital natural elements. There are two sites for these screenings within the Arboretum. One large screen presents a loop of three different films each day between 10am and midnight. Two further films are shown on tall freestanding screens either side of an ancient oak. A swing suspended from the tree will enable festival goers to trigger the action of the monitors.

Films showing on the large screen:

$P_1(t) = P_1(0) + [P_1(t) - P_1(0)] t/t_1$, Brunt Ice Shelf, Antarctica, 2009, 48mins 52secs
 Experiments in Black and White VII, 2013, 33mins, 3secs
 Experiments in Black and White XIII / XV, Karoo, South Africa, 2014, 11mins

Films showing on the smaller screens:

Experiments in Black and White I [oil], 2012, 13mins 09 secs
 Experiments in Black and White IX [chalk], 2013, 7mins 30secs.

PERFORMANCE DRAWING

The artist will attach a large chalk boulder to a rope and for an hour each day of the festival will create a linear drawing along the tarmac road that runs through the Arboretum. The performance, which will be recorded on film, places the artist in direct physical proximity to many festival-goers as they make their way from the campsites to the main arena, and consequently the work itself will be marked and extended by their activity.

PARTICIPATORY PROJECT: COLLECTIVE BREATH

Visitors to the Collective Breath tent are invited to fill a bag with their own breath. The artist has created 1,111 opportunities to contribute to this project. Each participant will be asked to write their postal address and to suggest where this 'collective breath' might be released. Air collected from the bags will then be transferred to a pressurized container. Following the festival the artist will travel to one of the suggested locations, attach the pressurized vessel to a large, purpose-built sound instrument, release the air, and record the sound and action on film. Postcards with a photographic record of the event and a link to the website where the sound can be heard will then be posted to all contributors.

The artist has recently been in residence at the Cabot Institute, Bristol University where scientists are researching 'clean air'. A musician at a recent event there described playing a wind instrument as 'imagining a column of air that starts in the pit of your stomach and rises through your body to the tip of the instrument. The sound it makes is an extension of your being'. The relationship to breath is a fundamental part of musical expression and connects here to the main focus of the WOMAD festival on the music stages. Talks on this subject by musicians, scientists and the artist will be an integral element of the 'Collective Breath' project.

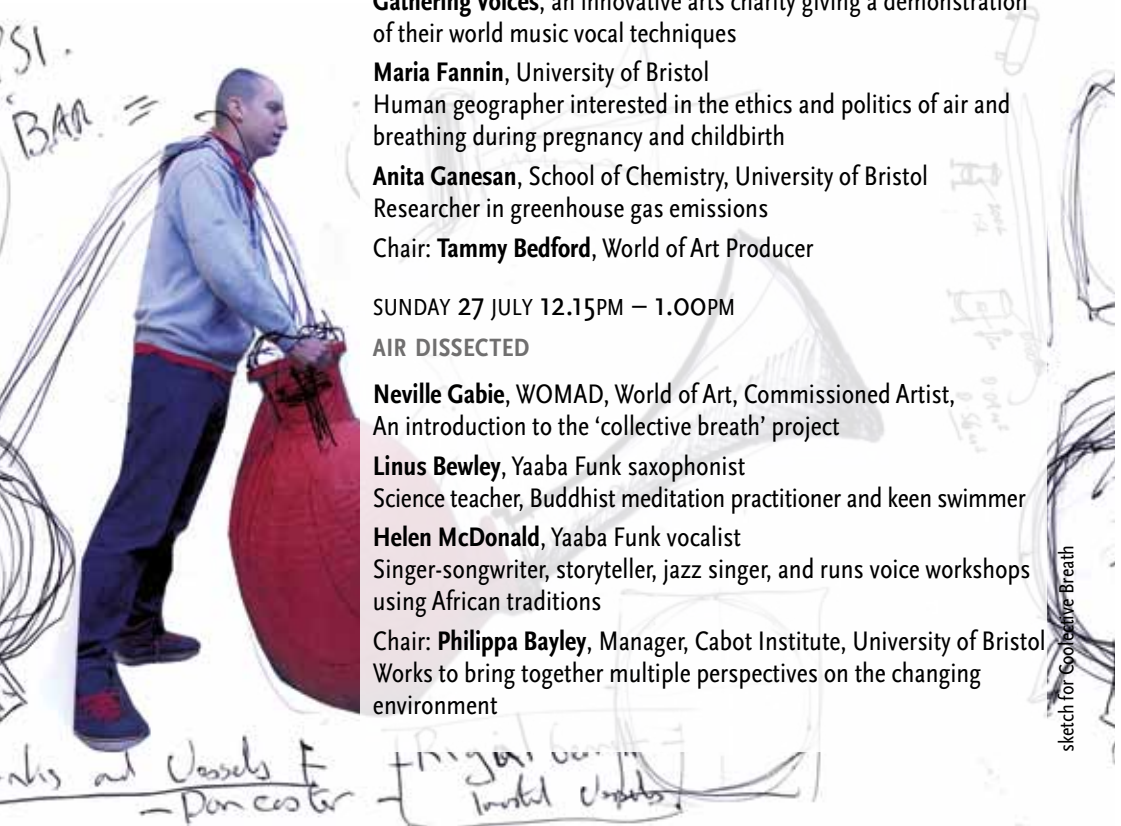


Experiments in Black and White XIII / XV Karoo, South Africa 2014

World of Art
Collective Breath Tent
Main Arena, South East Corner

Talks are free, but seats are limited, please take your places promptly.

As part of the **Collective Breath** project, this series of talks is programmed in conjunction with the University of Bristol Cabot Institute – a multidisciplinary research institute about living with environmental uncertainty. Each speaker has been asked to make a short presentation using an object to illustrate their talk. There will be time allocated at the end of each session to take questions and comments from the floor.



Sketch for Collective Breath

COLLECTIVE BREATH – TALKS

FRIDAY 25 JULY 12.15PM – 1.00PM

TUNING THE ATMOSPHERE

Neville Gabie, WOMAD, World of Art, Commissioned Artist,
An introduction to the 'collective breath' project

Matt Rigby, School of Chemistry, University of Bristol
Researcher in greenhouse gas emissions

Guy Blanch, Research Engineer developing technology and equipment in the agricultural and waste sectors

Ellen O'Gorman, University of Bristol
Classical and recorder player with Pink Noise Quintet and Bristowe Consort

Chair: **Jeni Walwin**, World of Art Curator

SATURDAY 26 JULY 12.15PM – 1.00PM

BODIES OF AIR

Neville Gabie, WOMAD, World of Art, Commissioned Artist,
An introduction to the 'collective breath' project

Gathering Voices, an innovative arts charity giving a demonstration of their world music vocal techniques

Maria Fannin, University of Bristol
Human geographer interested in the ethics and politics of air and breathing during pregnancy and childbirth

Anita Ganesan, School of Chemistry, University of Bristol
Researcher in greenhouse gas emissions

Chair: **Tammy Bedford**, World of Art Producer

SUNDAY 27 JULY 12.15PM – 1.00PM

AIR DISSECTED

Neville Gabie, WOMAD, World of Art, Commissioned Artist,
An introduction to the 'collective breath' project

Linus Bewley, Yaaba Funk saxophonist
Science teacher, Buddhist meditation practitioner and keen swimmer

Helen McDonald, Yaaba Funk vocalist
Singer-songwriter, storyteller, jazz singer, and runs voice workshops using African traditions

Chair: **Philippa Bayley**, Manager, Cabot Institute, University of Bristol
Works to bring together multiple perspectives on the changing environment



WOMAD FESTIVAL 2014
Charlton Park Wiltshire
24 – 27 July

Film screenings: 6 – 10pm Thursday evening
10 am – Midnight, Friday, Saturday and Sunday
Arboretum

Performance: 11am, Friday, Saturday and Sunday
Tarmac Road, Arboretum

Collective Breath, a participatory project:
6 – 10pm Thursday, 10am – 7pm Friday, Saturday, Sunday
Main Arena, South East Corner

Collective Breath, talks programme:
12.15 – 1pm, Friday, Saturday, Sunday (see left for details)
Main Arena, South East Corner

Entry free with WOMAD festival tickets

Curator: Jeni Walwin
Producer: Tammy Bedford
Screen installation and technical support: Fonix

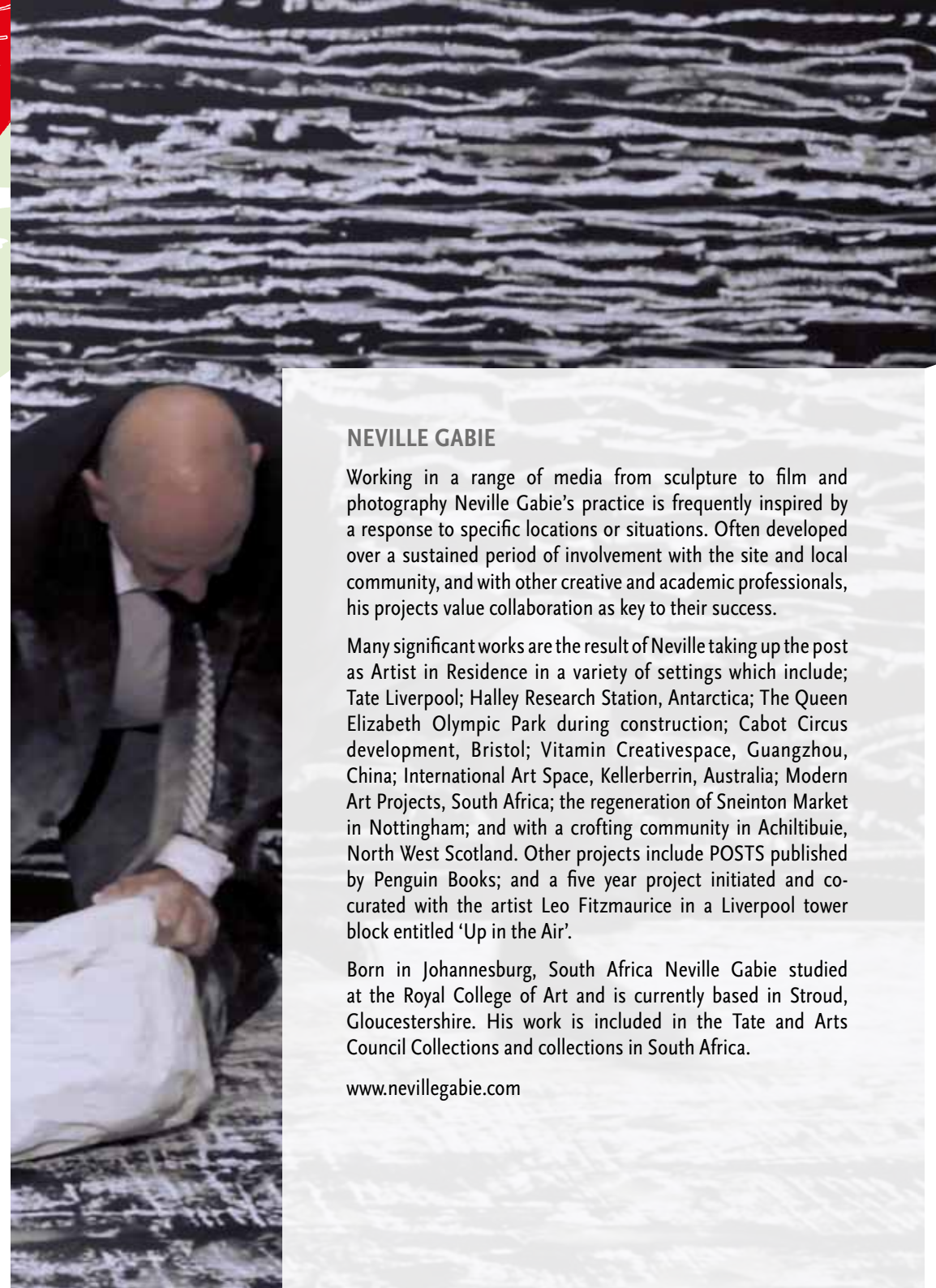
Engineer, pressurized air container: Guy Blanch
Leaflet design: axisgraphicdesign.co.uk

Talks advisor: Philippa Bayley
Project assistant: Tobias Gabie

Project stewards: MOULD



Experiments in Black and White VII [chalk drawing] – 2013



NEVILLE GABIE

Working in a range of media from sculpture to film and photography Neville Gabie's practice is frequently inspired by a response to specific locations or situations. Often developed over a sustained period of involvement with the site and local community, and with other creative and academic professionals, his projects value collaboration as key to their success.

Many significant works are the result of Neville taking up the post as Artist in Residence in a variety of settings which include; Tate Liverpool; Halley Research Station, Antarctica; The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park during construction; Cabot Circus development, Bristol; Vitamin Creativespace, Guangzhou, China; International Art Space, Kellerberrin, Australia; Modern Art Projects, South Africa; the regeneration of Sneinton Market in Nottingham; and with a crofting community in Achiltibuie, North West Scotland. Other projects include POSTS published by Penguin Books; and a five year project initiated and co-curated with the artist Leo Fitzmaurice in a Liverpool tower block entitled 'Up in the Air'.

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa Neville Gabie studied at the Royal College of Art and is currently based in Stroud, Gloucestershire. His work is included in the Tate and Arts Council Collections and collections in South Africa.

www.nevillegabie.com

Neville Gabie

EXPERIMENTS IN BLACK AND WHITE



A WOMAD Commission for the Festival at Charlton Park,
24 – 27 July 2014