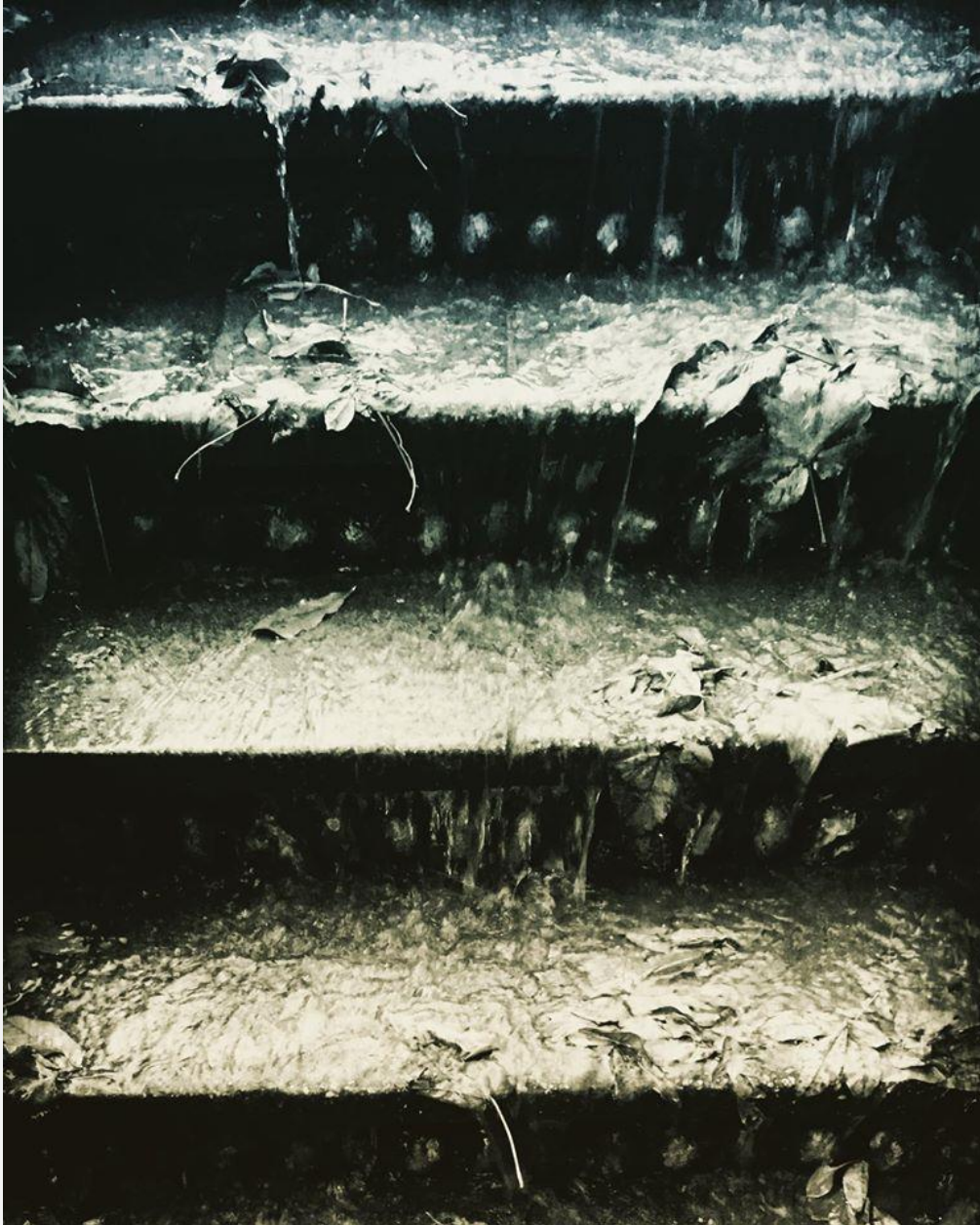


Viscid



Images ~ Nick Dormand / Words ~ Mike Ferguson

Collaborations from January 2016 – November 2019

Viscid

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Gazebo Gravy Press

Devon, UK



Low Tide

Stories written when the tide ebbs / sun-dialogue on its rise. Fullness that belies its depth on a shoreline. Prediction accurate as a witness. Memories of when *ebbflow* was its name, not quite the kenning in its dismissal of hyphenation, just like *low* is meaningless in a world of such deep dark. And tidal curves are graphed historically, truth arced with acceptance. Where coefficients are within their means of lapping. LAT. How I like the idea of harmonics in control. It took a turn of all those pages to arrive at *gravity* and *rotation*.



Sonnet Dancing

Levitating? Come on – strictly, it's dancing, not necessarily well, without much energy, yet it takes two to get anywhere these days, nail it as they say, and there is a sharing with that delicate apilado which will possibly please judges who are simply standing around

and do not object to oxymoron in a style. Should this pair lose, there is an escape route through the archway at the back, a corridor to other tangos in the snow where whiteouts will be complete as a natural part of the scenery.

Like here, these three steps out of the expected sync, self-aware, but gliding to the bitter end in a flourish of another kind of arch and bend.



Exotica

Behind a geolu
door, Persia's Les Persiennes
exhale sativa



Fear

This has-been, this washed-up gnarl of a tree-something is fake news – not being ancient or special, not travelled from thousands of years and miles away but probably further up this coast, the remains of some louts' beach party with beers and fireworks and drunken shouts of 'Brexit!' and those other random loud chantings.

It is the remains of this, and they wouldn't get that irony, imagining the creature clinging to its side as an alien from a Ridley Scott film, not knowing that's his name or how such features are metaphors for our fear and not the actual of absorption, torching the host but missing its tight holding on that rides the terror of their rantings.



When Blue Meets Green

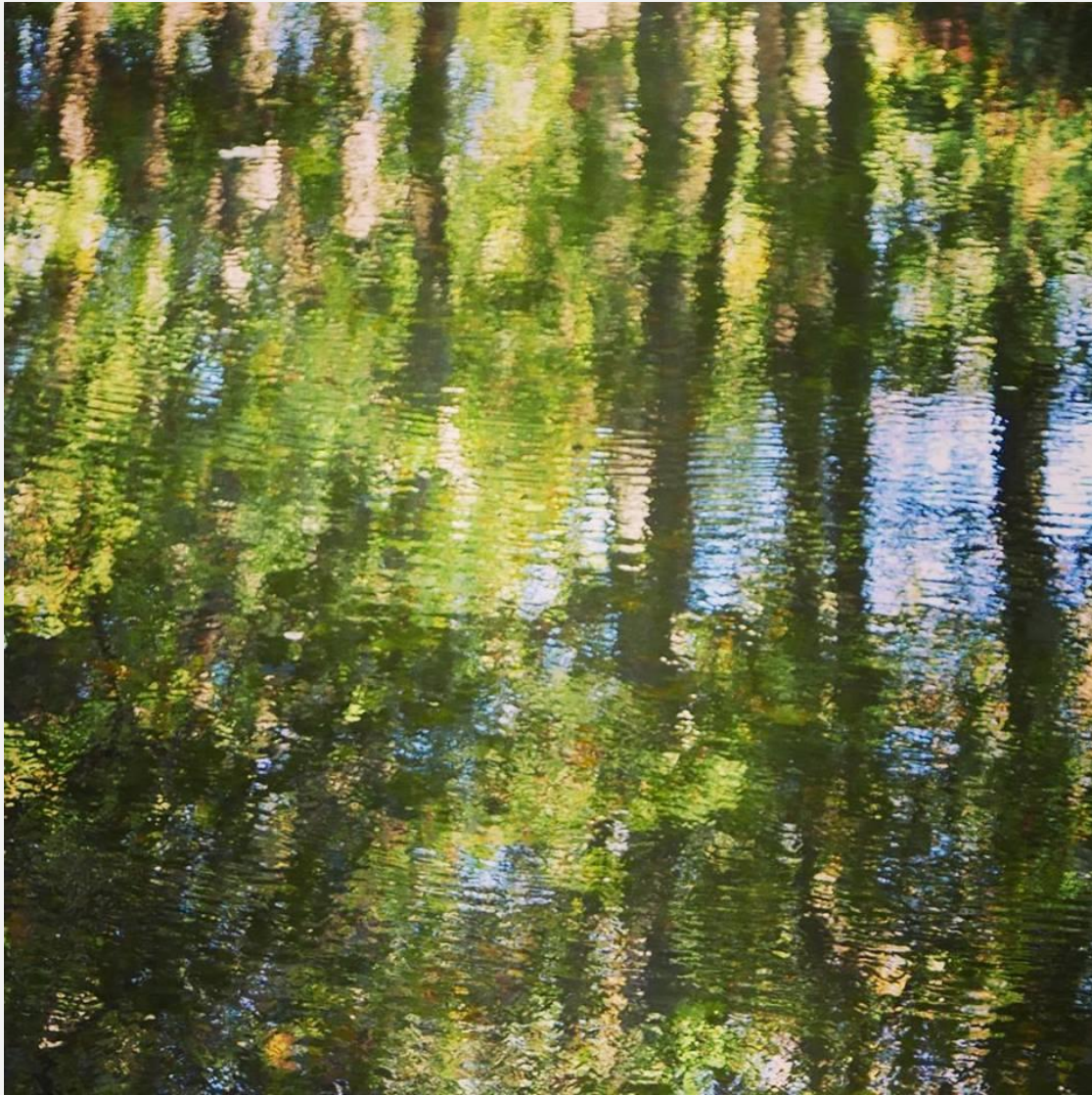
Choosing the wrong adverb is serious enough without muffins. Don't tell me *turquoise*. Environmentally it is a beautiful mix. Water related. #S430-4, but inverted. An infrastructure for the pastoral. From a box of crayons, there is the beginning of what children might colour before disappearing. Île de Ré floating in a wash of hue and wishing. I would not have expected an intersection between saving our planet and the working-class community, but there is such a certain calm in its shade that I am momentarily hopeful.



Seaside Osmosis

How the stone greys, cement sames, pebble hues, sand, sea seeps, oxidation, rust-bleed lines from former attachments long severed, and all the shades of shit dumped in the ocean over years and years have risen to pretty pastels along the beach-hut fronts, numbered doors noting who lives here and in the now of their paint-strokes.

How many have carved a name or obscenity at low tide – it *will* be washed away – as we know from scribes who have etched history in its otter sandstone along the low cliff faces [mercia mud too high unless it is falling on that longhand] over time? Questions of osmosis absorb in the moment; someone opens a baby-blue one to wave goodbye at another outside.



Autumn in its Water

In another part of the world – which I know well – it will be the fall into a river. To see this as a distortion caused by ripples is denying *differance*. Colours are the same, if in other places. Maintenance of a pond tends to consider shades of blue and green and those darkneses as intrusions rather than art. The element of water is mutable / what does not is not real, though this will be in any season. An autumnal beach carries stones applauding to the shore as before. Concentric curves act like gel in the amalgamating. When hearing the phrase *trees are dressed* you go back and delete most previous metaphors. Did someone mention a nip in the air, considering this the most significant signal among all those colours?



Sea's Interrogation

sunlights interrogate the sea
but it will not answer



Ophelia Coming

Somewhere in one of its many wars and perhaps fearing death – or worse, celebrating its creation – this floating terror had a skull tattooed on its blue middle, faded and seemingly bullet-holed now by years of travel and travail and then this beaching in its own cessation. It's a zooids' presage for today's looming storm, Hurricane Ophelia floating up from the south, misplaced like our Portuguese man and a false steward to threats we usually just imagine

anyway. We are so safe. Here in the stones, on the shore, on the pathways, and in our comfortable homes. In this case, we are the more deceived. There is no emblem but what we are sometimes pumped up to see, here in the substance of froth; our skulls of real bones.



Blues Seascape

A '57 Chevy Baby-Blue should rise from this, dolphins cresting tail-lights. That hotel lounge rebranded in hues of cushioned chit-chat and calm. Would the elderly really prefer it to the crimson red of velvet death? H₂O#89cffe. As if there are meanings. Deluxe palette. To find the perfect blue for you, swim or take a hit on suffering. As in diminutive / petite / childlike / wee / juvenile in this expanse of paradox? #BluesMatters. How the eyes have it. Linked to creativity, I'd like to think there is proof. Strong and steadfast: look where a variation got her.



Wave Thrown

If not blood from the wave-
thrown head, what story then?



Reflecting

Vincent's dropped ear hearing its ripples. Mottled and daubed. Triumvirate of the pond skater or the water strider or the Jesus bug in this unknowing. Is it a stream or an ocean deceiving? Hints of yellow where the primes meet to discuss. Venn of spreading circles. A sky so submerged, clouds diminish to mildew. Look at all the haunted faces soon staring back. Three – or is it more – black holes forming. Zoomed in, it is an entire continent.



Seeing the Light

Once upon a time
these tangents touched believing
but we should know now

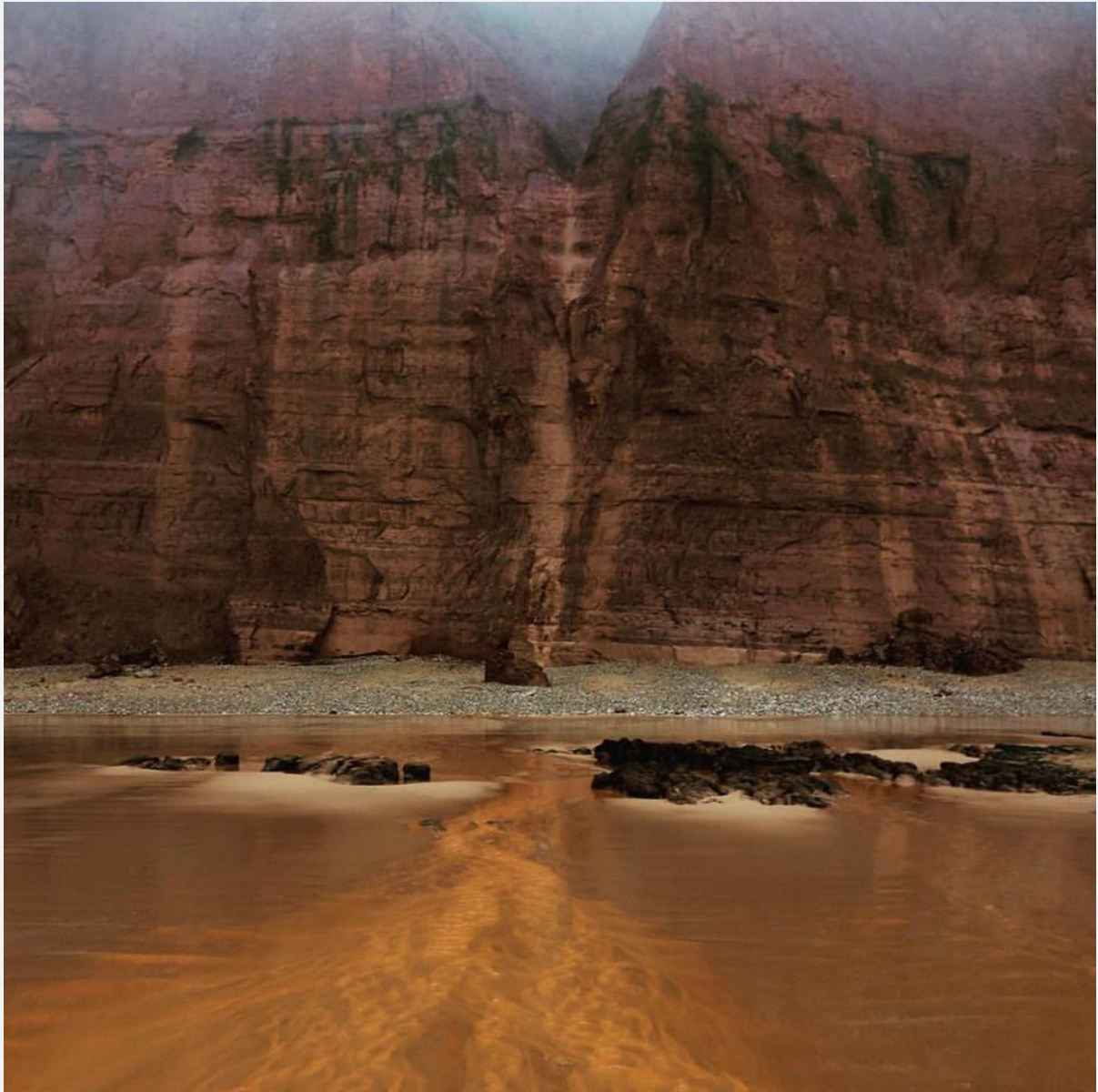


The Dread of Armeria Maritima

The sea thrift
that would be justified by

its roots' claws,
may all the same be fallen

from the clifftop face



The Prophet's Party Piece

Moses tries to shoot a snapshot – and gets one,
just – yet being unable to multi-task this isn't of

the parting of water best known for his sleight
[one assumes even prophets need both hands]

and instead he bifurcates a ripple of orange,
a ribbon of near-red dissipating in the foreground.

What's worse, god looks on from above, the
spectral stare of a mentor disappointed one more

time, ruminating on how expectations have
altered since those early days of total faith and

delivery. It is a ghost-look soon to wane
into the cliff-face, haunted by a demise of miracles.

Moses, left to think, knows what follows fame
is one big burden when the party piece fades.



In the Buttercups

The miser's ghost
leaves a trace, a shadow

of a familiar route through
the ranunculus, still searching

for that gold



not the arch of
an advancing wind

but a sky's weight
in the stilled arc

of its knowing



Stones on Steps at Jacob's Ladder

Stones are creeping up the steps but they'll never make it all the way – no tidal ducks and drakes can propel pebbles beyond the sand and water of their belonging. Even metaphors climb just so far before real hands and shovels come to scoop them back, not *like* but totally *as* the rock they are. It is the same in that way earth is never linked to a heaven no matter how people dream and however their babel tries to confuse and persuade. Take a stone and put it in your hand and feel the cold but rounded reality. After millions of years and the crashing of waves this will be the dust of the earth, stuff that comes and goes but is no more than a hope of a footprint on these stairs.



Viewing

not really not seeing woods for the trees
but hoping beyond what viewing believes



adam's rib mirrored
in the calming ripple and
beauty of its myth



ghost leaves rise to the
white sky and disappear in
to light like mute lies



a fiddler in the
pool of his dark jig and tune,
shadows from his bow



Snow Carcass

Lost, fallen and alone – this snow died.
Thinking no one would care, it became
a carcass, desiring the innate sympathies
people have for the death of an animal
even if their own kind can matter so much
less. Here is its shape of living, an outline
where the hollow look will elicit concern.

There is the other question of its last gasp –
was it running when it fell, exhausted and
somehow scared? This does not register in
the dead grass shooting through its side or
blood of the soil. Yet it is an animal, too big
for petting, but still clean and white and soft
and tugging at whatever strings will melt.



Teasing Pricks

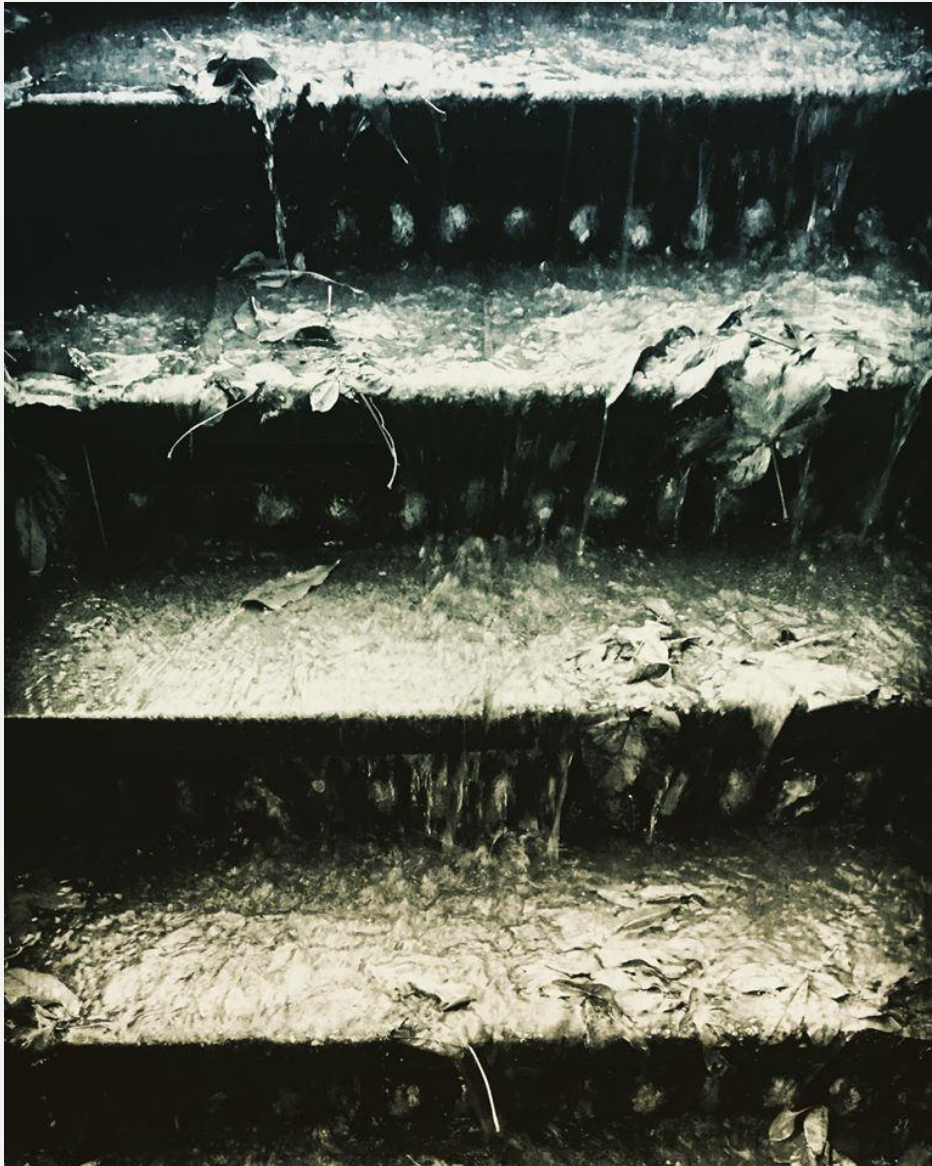
Teasels tease the foreground, yet ravenous for water you'd think they would be down below with roots in the blue sea on a clear November day. But there's the icy cold, then the salt – and a partiality for the treat of insects makes them land-bound carnivores. So what are they good for, apart from invading the USA where walls are still not built? The seeds feed birds in the winter, and for years the prickly pods were used to raise nap on wool – a cultivated comb to clean and align, not shape a hairstyle in the weave of a golden throw. This year too many pricks have been thrust forwards, their sharp barbs poisonous and self-serving rather than giving. There's no joshing with such mad dipsacus, snaring as they do all for themselves and nothing for us.



Head

There is the pick-axe head, but no skull, all pebbles cranial though too small to tease, and a beachcomber might at first think it has been carried by the tide over so many miles, but with that weight this is dubious, even considering the shifting of tons and tons up and down that coastline, especially in recent high waves. It will have been more menial – and less awful – a handle the only missing link with its past, rusted by sea-salt rather than blood stains, likely left after digging holes for balustrades.

Having said that, who knows what floated way off shore, shaft in a boat's dark hull.



Wet Steps

An innovation of slipperiness. Like bruising tumbling over itself. This loss of fluid more mess than less. When Eros wept. *Viscid* over *slippy*, as ass over tit, or accepting the superlative any day. Here is an environment as dark and dank as any hard cold uncaring result. Never redundant, and making a return before the extinction. From *wet* to *waterlogged* is more refined as development. I came across another image of a long flat surface merging into sea and everything was just the grey. It took a while to think of dancing. Operational versus environmental controls become the diametric as well as collaboration of health and safety when it rains. We'd have to say the unrecognisable woman sitting on these is an observational absurdity.