

Hybrid conference funded by
London Arts & Humanities Partnership

Liquid
Solid
& Gaseous

Remembering
Through and With Water

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KING'S COLLEGE LONDON

Organisers

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Call for Submissions

Throughout history and particularly in recent times, political, bellicious and genocidal endeavours have striated bodies of water. In the initial stages of drafting this abstract, the Global Sumud Flotilla set sail toward Gaza. By ‘crafting water-based actions of solidarity’, it urged people around the globe to create meaningful ‘spaces of appearance’ (see Arendt, 1990) in the vicinity and with the aid of bodies of water (Global Sumud Flotilla via Instagram, 2025). Water is not only a space to be freed but also an essential actor taking part in its own liberation. This conference has been conceived to align with this watery political consciousness, action and solidarity. Through this lens, it will interrogate the dynamics of memory unfolding within water and at the junctures between its different physical states.

In response to the recent emergence of the Hydrohumanities (De Wolff et al., 2021) and Blue Humanities fields (Mentz, 2023), as well as to the growing interest in the relationship between water and mnemonic processes, this conference welcomes proposals investigating the implications of remembering with and through water in its liquid, solid and gaseous states. While liquid bodies of water—i.e rivers, seas and oceans—have been widely explored in connection with local and transnational heritage, memory-making practices and memories of colonialism, the transitions between the different physical states of water remain somewhat neglected in Memory Studies. Taking inspiration from the water cycle’s production of a ‘nuanced watery memoryscape’ (Duncan, 2025, p. 414), candidates are invited to present submissions that approach artificial or natural water sources in their different physical states and degrees of salinity and/or contamination. This hybrid conference aims to identify forms of productive mnemonic and semantic exchange with bodies of water in their moments of transition. Moreover, submissions are encouraged to explore the wide range of water’s cultural and mnemonic potential, including but not limited to its material, methodological, metaphorical and archival manifestations.

Particularly in light of the climate emergency, water is rapidly transitioning between states: icebergs are melting at an accelerated rate and landlocked bodies of water are gradually evaporating (see, for example, the Mediterranean Sea, the Aral Sea, the Caspian Sea, and the Dead Sea). However, bodies of water have not only shifted from one state to another; they have also been contaminated and modified. To name a few, diversion dams have altered the course and temperature of rivers; rising sea levels have prompted the forced relocation of communities in the Pacific Islands; oil spills, ocean warming and acidification have provoked coral reef degradation; the Great Pacific Garbage Patch has formed a pile of plastics floating in the Pacific Ocean.

Considering the above, how do changes in the physical structure of water affect our processes of remembering? If we consider bodies of water as archives, what do the mutability and constant changes of water states imply? What will this mean for frameworks that encourage dialogue with water in its liquid form, such as hydro-poiesis (Ryan, 2022)? Furthermore, what reverberations will this have on hydrocentricism and the perceived binary between land and water? Finally, what is the language of water? How can it be represented? If a body of water remembers, what does it remember? How can water and its different states be translated into other materials—into textiles, into audiovisuals?

Key Themes for Consideration

The conference particularly welcomes contributions that engage with water as both medium and message of memory, drawing on diverse epistemological traditions. As Edouard Glissant reminds us, the sea is history—a repository of stories and transformations that continue to shape contemporary identities and imaginaries. How do we read these waterscapes, and what methodologies might allow us to engage with water’s mnemonic capacities across its various states?

This call for papers welcomes submissions relevant to, but not limited to:

- Remembering with and through water
- Hydrocentric imagination (Miller, 2018)
- How mnemonic processes are impacted by the different physical states of water and/or by salinity levels
- How mnemonic processes are impacted by artificial compared to natural water sources
- How can we “read” water or translate/represent water into other mediums?
- What memories can we access through water?
- Water as witness and/or archive
- Aquatic temporalities and memory
- Indigenous water knowledges and remembrance
- Waterscapes of displacement and migration

Submissions

We welcome proposals in a wide range of formats, including traditional academic papers and practice-based formats such as video essays, films and textiles, among others. Proposals may be submitted as 15-minute paper presentations or as creative works with an additional 10-minute presentation. For practice-based works in video, performance or sound format, the work itself should not exceed five minutes to allow sufficient time for discussion.

Requirements: Please submit a 300-word abstract along with a brief biographical note (100 words) and indicate if you would like to present online or in person to:

liquidsolidandgaseous@gmail.com **by 15 April 2026.**

Notification of acceptance: 22 April 2026.

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