

After the Flood



Stage (i) Broomhill Viewing Tower (2018)

Established in 1997 by Rinus and Aniet van de Sande, Broomhill lies in one of the most glorious valleys in N.Devon, UK. Surrounded by hundreds of acres of woodland and bound by its own stream, it houses one of the largest permanent collections of contemporary sculpture in the south west of England, and annually hosts the Broomhill National Sculpture Prize (NSP).

In Greenhouse Britain (2009), the Harrison's chart the future effect of global warming on the UK, describing a dark vision of rising waters, storm surges and retreating coastlines. On visiting the Broomhill Sculpture Park, we speculated upon what would happen when the river Biddeford properly bursts its banks for the last time, and instead of its previous tentative efforts of flooding which usually subside after a short period the landscape was altered permanently, turning the lower part of Broomhill into a lake. What might it be to spend time in this environment? How would one respond to this threatening forecast? How could we respond with creative proposals to this future scenario, and how might these enhance and influence the present and future lives and well-being of local communities? Ray & Webster devised the project for Broomhill as a way of responding to these questions. The aim was to construct a viewing tower, inspired by an existing life-guard hut, which would act as an imagined safe space, and as a prototype for the development of environmentally friendly shelters for the peoples who would be displaced as the waters overtook low-lying areas in the valley.

The shelter offers the audience a future vision, a safe but thought-provoking place to imagine the future Broomhill sculpture gardens and surrounding woodland, and how this can adapt to host an increasing number of tree based works and aquatic sculptures.

Stage (ii) Micro Residencies at Broomhill (2019-20)

For the next stage of the project Ray & Webster would like to invite artists to participate in short micro residencies. Using the viewing tower as a studio, for writing, drawing, rehearsing, as an expedition base, or a meditation and retreat space, the key aim is for the project to offer residents the opportunity to stay, work and study in the unique setting. Based at the tower Ray & Webster hope the residency will give artists time for contemplation and space to encourage a slower pace of life, resulting in increased exposure to nature, and the wider Broomhill community. The aim of the Broomhill micro-residencies is to inspire the participants to engage with contemporary thought and practice, to consider how we can develop creative practices in relation to climate change and sustainability in this unique, stimulating and contemplative environment.

The residency is envisaged as a time for thinking and acting differently and as such there is no

expectation for the participants to produce new work. The residency may be used simply to recharge, to step back from ones normal routines, and to use Broomhill as a stimulus for divergent and creative thinking. It may of course be used to produce a specific body of work. Ray & Webster hope that the participants of the residencies will contribute materials to be compiled as an artist bookwork to be published at the end of the programme. They will also be convening a series of one-day / weekend workshops which will explore how art, stories and spaces may relate to and shape an individual and collective reimagining of the near future. The workshops will focus on topics related to sustainability, resilience, and climate change and will include: How to build a fire; How to collect water; Foraging for Wild Food; How to build a toilet; How to build an outdoor shower, and Story-telling, poems and songs for the Anthropocene.