

# Flood

An Artistic Response



I DON'T BELIEVE IN  
GLOBAL WARMING

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GLOBAL WARMING

# Flood Myths from Around The World

A flood myth or a deluge myth is a myth in which a great flood, usually sent by a deity or deities, destroys civilization, often in an act of divine retribution.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bd6l1T9efNo>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qR7mUyES2aA>









MS 3036  
The Sumerian Flood story, Babylonia, 19th-18th c. BC

# Chinese Flood Myth

Like most cultures the Chinese have their flood myth. **The great flood was sent by the high god Tiandi (Sky-Earth) during the reign of Yao** (See Chinese Emperors). As is usually the case with such floods, the cause was the general wickedness of the human race.

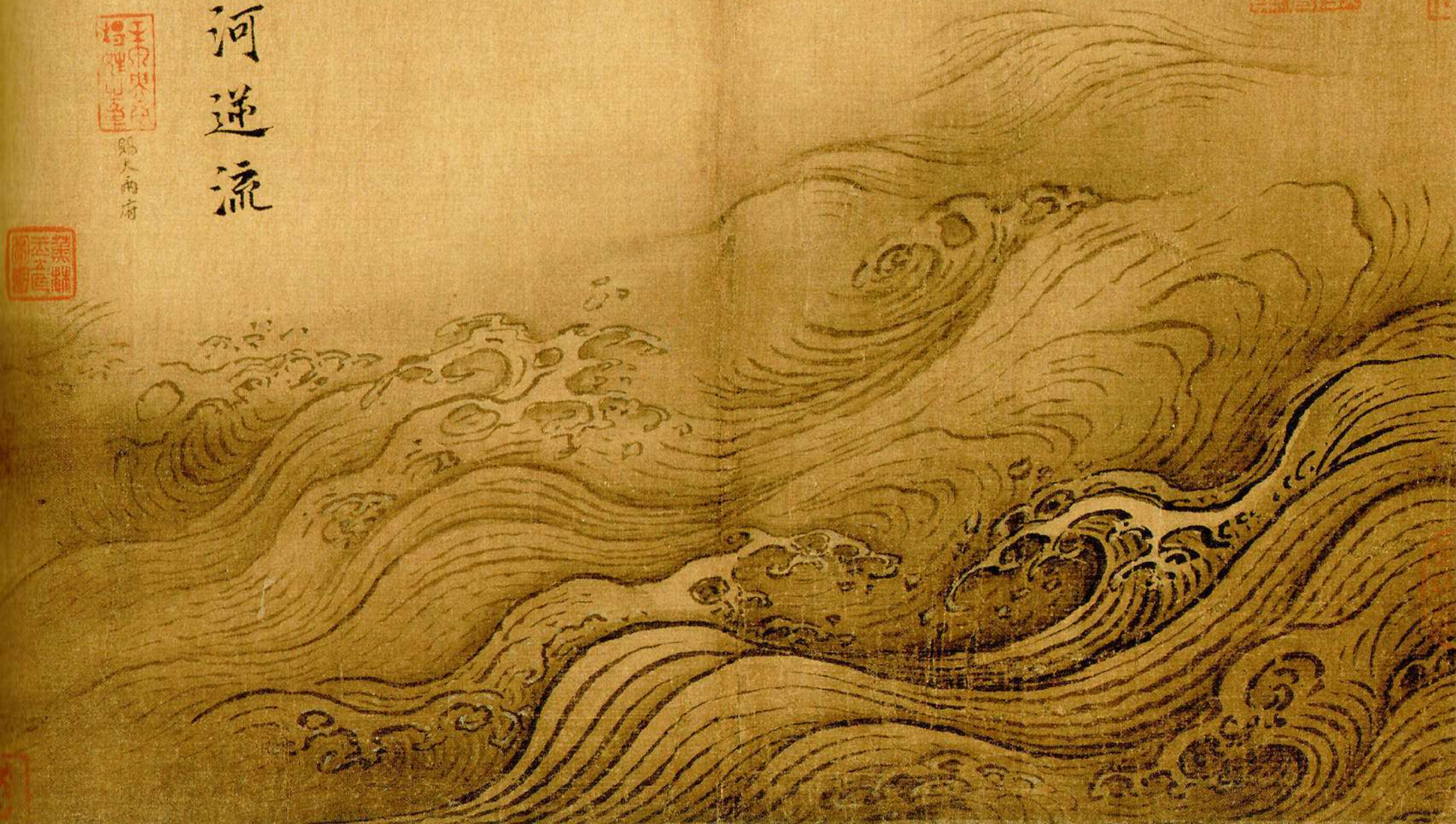
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXrfV\\_tDKFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXrfV_tDKFU)



黄河逆流



錫大兩府













大禹治水





# Hindu Flood Story

**The Shatapatha Brahmana recounts how he was warned by a fish, to whom he had done a kindness, that a flood would destroy the whole of humanity.** He therefore built a boat, as the fish advised. When the flood came, he tied this boat to the fish's horn and was safely steered to a resting place on a mountaintop.



# Leonard Da Vinci Deluge Drawings

A drawing of a dramatic flood in which the atmosphere above a wooded hill has materialised in a gigantic explosion, with jets of water shooting out from the centre. Square blocks of stone topple and fall from the sky. Above is a dark cloud from which jets of rain curl down. There are some notes written close to the upper edge.

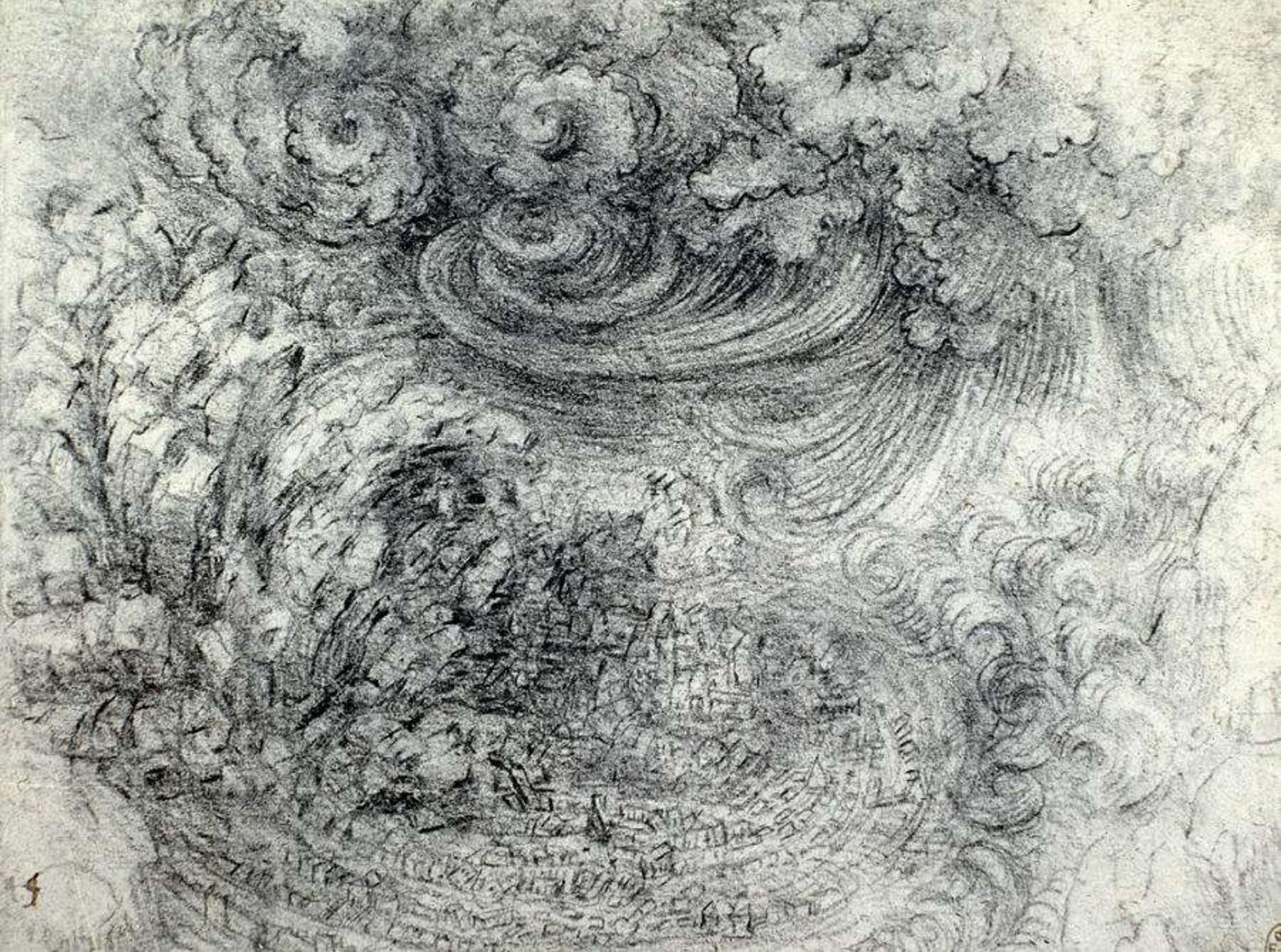
A cataclysmic storm was one of Leonardo's favourite subjects during the last decade of his life, in both his drawings and his writings. These were in principle studies towards his never-completed Treatise on Painting, but the obsessiveness with which he approached the subject reveals a deep-seated fascination with destruction. There exist several long passages in which he describes with relish a huge storm overwhelming a landscape, and the futile struggles of man and animal against the forces of nature:

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YKWO\\_LbLzs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YKWO_LbLzs)

















# Florence Flood Restoration

In November 1966, torrential rains in northwestern and central Italy caused massive flooding, including in the center of highly touristed Florence. As the waters rose, so did concerns about Florence's treasured masterpieces. The worst-case scenario became reality: 14,000 works of art and rare books were destroyed by water, mud, debris and oil.

Based on the book "When the World Answered: Florence, Women Artists and the 1966 Flood" by Linda Falcone and Jane Fortune, the documentary [\*When the World Answered\*](#) (directed by Kim Jacobs) looks back at the worldwide Herculean efforts to save and restore the artwork of Florence.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeGPMuxYHgA>





*Firenze - Alluvione 4 Novembre 1966*













# Thomas Hart Benton

Thomas Hart Benton was an American painter, muralist, and printmaker. Along with Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry, he was at the forefront of the Regionalist art movement. The fluid, sculpted figures in his paintings showed everyday people in scenes of life in the United States.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGrCF4UHIsY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwXTHN7AeV0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1YLogEztHM> (use this)

















# Helen Frankenthaler

In paintings such as *Flood*, Helen Frankenthaler used oil paint thinned to the consistency of watercolor to create large, curving expanses of variegated color through which the weave of the canvas remained visible. Like her contemporary Jackson Pollock, she placed her canvas directly on the floor and poured paint from above, largely without the aid of a brush. Frankenthaler utilized abstract forms as her painterly language, but she never entirely abandoned a commitment to representation. Although the reference is often subtle, her paintings consistently evoke natural scenes. The undulating forms in *Flood* relate to a simplified landscape, with layers of sky, cloud, mountain, forest, and water. The zones of oranges, pinks, green, and purple evoke different emotional states. Hue and shape become conveyors of place and feeling. In a statement she provided for the Whitney's records on *Flood*, Frankenthaler wrote: "I think of my pictures as explosive landscapes, worlds and distances, held on a flat surface."

<https://www.sfmoma.org/watch/helen-frankenthaler/>





# Alonzo Estrada -- Onion Creek Flood Mural

In a collaboration between artist Alonso Estrada, flood survivors and Caminos student interns, the Onion Creek Mural Project created a supportive space while commemorating the historic Onion Creek floods.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7KVSoLf3BA&t=6s>
- <https://www.pbs.org/video/artist-paints-memories-of-historic-onion-creek-flood-p9f9pa/>



















# Kevin Harman

Harmans recent series of glassworks - positioned somewhere between painting and sculpture - often appear to have some sort of reference to the places in art history where nature and abstraction collide, such as Turner's seascapes or Monet's Giverny, but their origin is in the much more urban environment of 21st century Glasgow. Harman splits apart the toughened glass panels of a salvaged double-glazing unit, and pours and layers reclaimed household paints onto both of the inside surfaces. The luminous and delicate forms that result belie the ordinariness of the materials and the physically demanding process of their making.

- <https://www.inglebygallery.com/video/8-kevin-harman-in-the-studio-2018/>
- <https://www.inglebygallery.com/video/32-film-kevin-harman-walks-through-his-exhibition/>













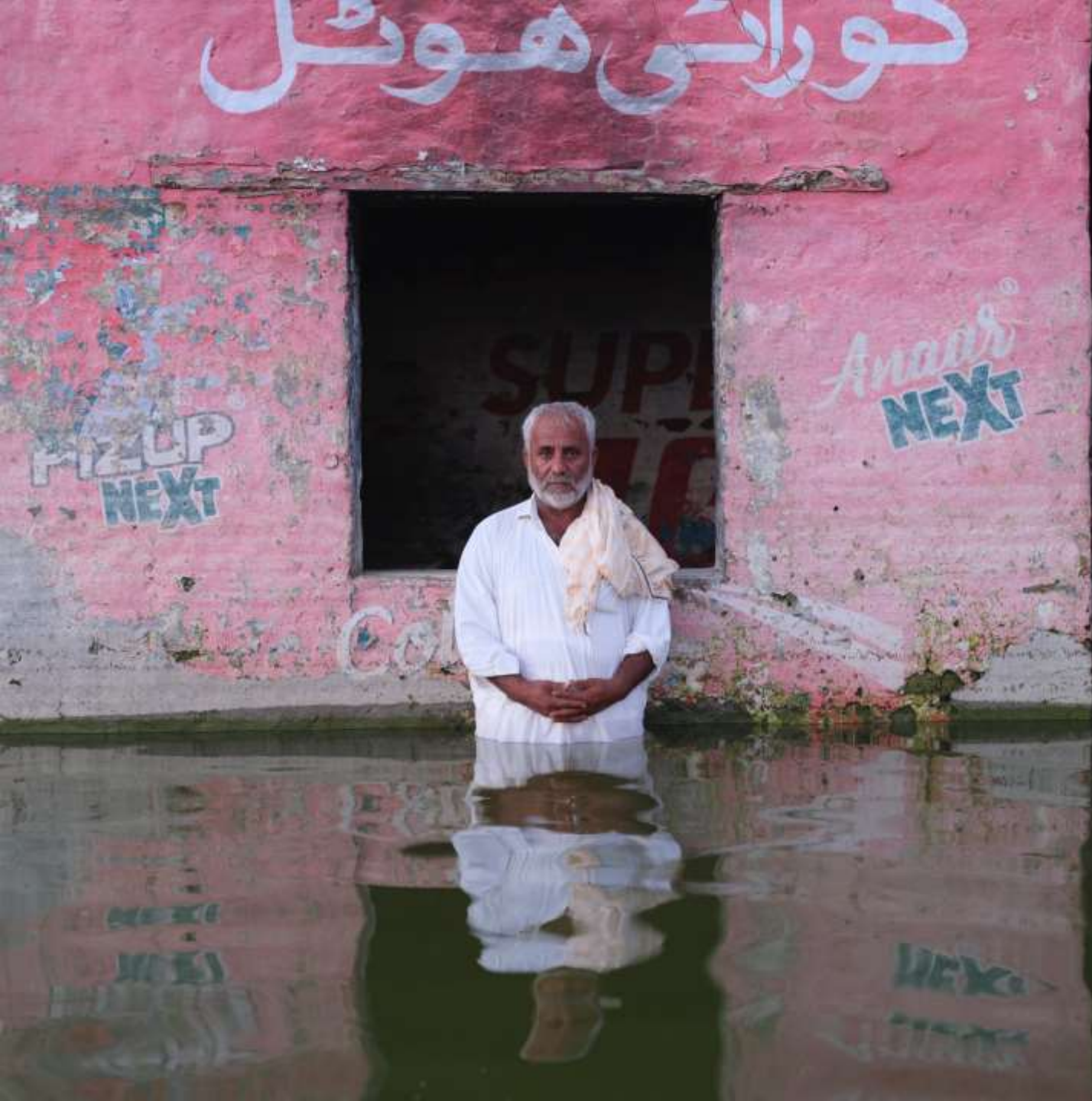


# Gideon Mendel

[Gideon Mendel](#), a South African photographer living in the U.K., has been taking this approach in his two companion series, *Drowning World* and *Burning World*. On view now at [The Photographers' Gallery](#) as part of *Fire / Flood*, Mendel's portraits are deeply personal, showing individuals and families in their homes and neighborhoods that have been destroyed by natural disasters. Taken in 15 countries since 2007, the collection insists on recognizing that although the regularity and intensity of wildfires, hurricanes, and other weather events are increasing, humanity has been feeling the effects of the crisis for decades.

Mendel began *Drowning World* first after floods overtook Doncaster, a small city in South Yorkshire. He started by photographing people partially submerged in what was left of their homes, a position that he recreated a few weeks later when visiting India. "When I got back, I put these pictures side by side, portraits from floods in the U.K. and India, and I felt like something quite strong was happening—a shared vulnerability, despite the huge differences in wealth, culture, and environment. That was the beginning of the journey for me," he told [LensCulture](#).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XVHhC5NWfw&t=3s>











# Yulia Iosilzon

The *Book of Genesis*, which is thought to have been written around the 5th century B.C.E. and influenced by much earlier Mesopotamian myths, contains four chapters that chronicle an earthshaking [deluge](#). The story goes that God destroyed what he saw as a world that had become violent and corrupt, singling out one man, Noah, and instructing him to build an ark. Bringing animals to safety and a new existence, the vessel protected the chosen few from masses of water that eliminated all other living creatures on Earth.

In flowing, otherworldly oil paintings, London-based artist [Yulia Iosilzon](#) steers from depictions of stormy skies, bearded men, or monumental vessels. She proposes thinking about the flood narrative as a form of renewal and regeneration rather than a tale of destruction.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bXNxAN0TkQ&t=14s>













# Debra Davis

Artist Debra Davis witnessed the flooding of streams in the Yakima Valley after winter snow melted. She created *Flood (with Regards to Hokusai)* to explore how nature and change can surprise and amaze us. The composition of this piece was inspired by the Japanese printmaker Hokusai, who was a 19th century master known for his stylistic depiction of water.

Northwest artist and naturalist Debra Davis creates paintings and sculptures that are strongly influenced by her summer job as a seasonal forestry technician with the U.S. Forest Service.





# Andreas Claussen—Flood Series

*In my painting series “FLOOD”, a lone astronaut roams a flooded earth, using all that he can find to stay alive. These paintings, steeped in symbolism, showcase humanities ability to adapt, and our innovative spirit, even in the face of Climate Change.*

*With bold colors, playful textures, and humorous ideas, I take off some weight from this somber topic and remind the viewer, that hope is not lost, and that a positive future awaits, if we have the courage to create it.*

*The “FLOOD” paintings are a great companion and commentator for the crazy times we live through right now. Like all great art, these works are wonderful tools to stay balanced in a world that often weighs so heavily on our shoulders and where constant change is quite normal.*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMtdy8GJ2nI>



















# Baptiste Debombourg

“I am interested in individual repeated attempts, which sometimes lead to failure,” says [Baptiste Debombourg](#). “The impression of impotence generated by such situations, and by the individuals themselves, simply highlights the fragile and endearing nature of the human being.”

The French artist is known for large-scale installations that repurpose utilitarian objects like [cafe chairs](#), [staples](#), and windshields into elaborate, immersive artworks. Enormous sheets of glass cascade from the windows of an abbey or slosh around inside of a courtyard, often using many tons of the fragile planes to accomplish a sense of undulating motion.

Debombourg’s most recent work, “Black tide,” combines black lacquer with broken glass, silicone, and other materials to flood a Quebec gallery. A powerful gush buries everything in its wake like a tidal wave, landslide, magma flow, or oil spill. Furniture is half-submerged and strewn throughout the deluge, referencing environmental disasters that humans both cause and experience.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=486748044857662>

<https://www.arte.tv/fr/videos/049923-000-A/baptiste-debombourg/> (français)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJee66jQ70Y> (aussi)















# Nathalie Miebach

Artist Nathalie Miebach takes weather data from massive storms and turns it into complex sculptures that embody the forces of nature and time. These sculptures then become musical scores for a string quartet to play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUtbOmCp1HI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iq6nyk6v7G4>

[https://www.ted.com/talks/nathalie\\_miebach\\_art\\_made\\_of\\_storms?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/nathalie_miebach_art_made_of_storms?language=en)

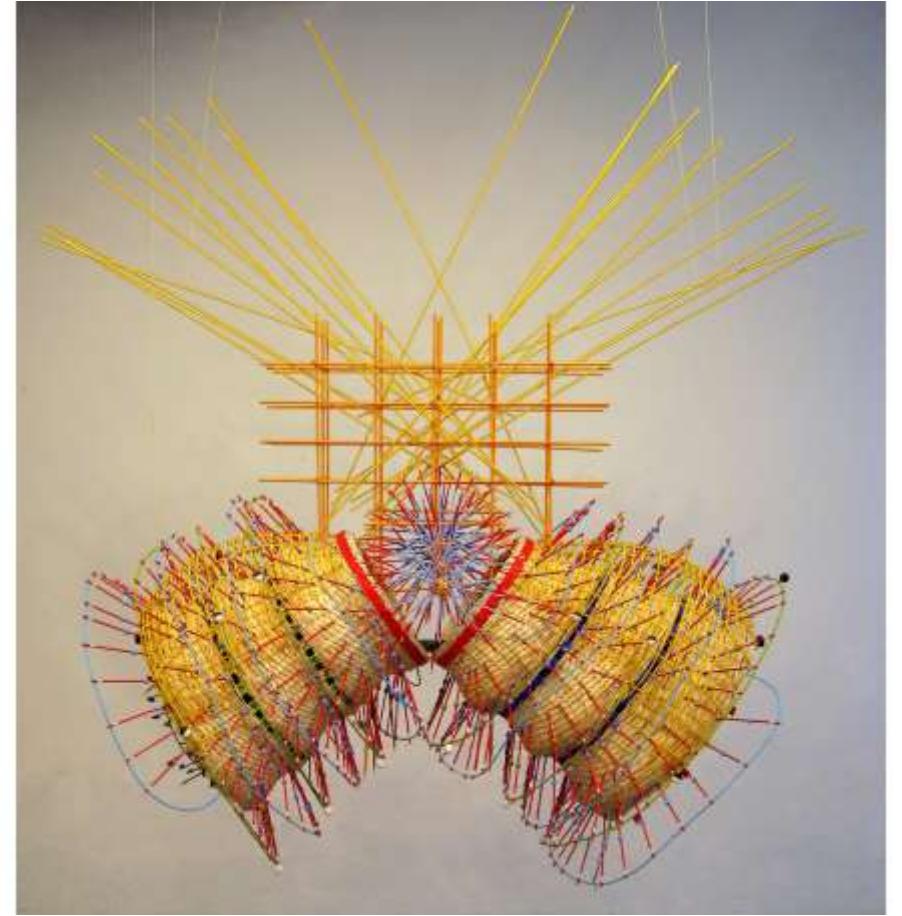




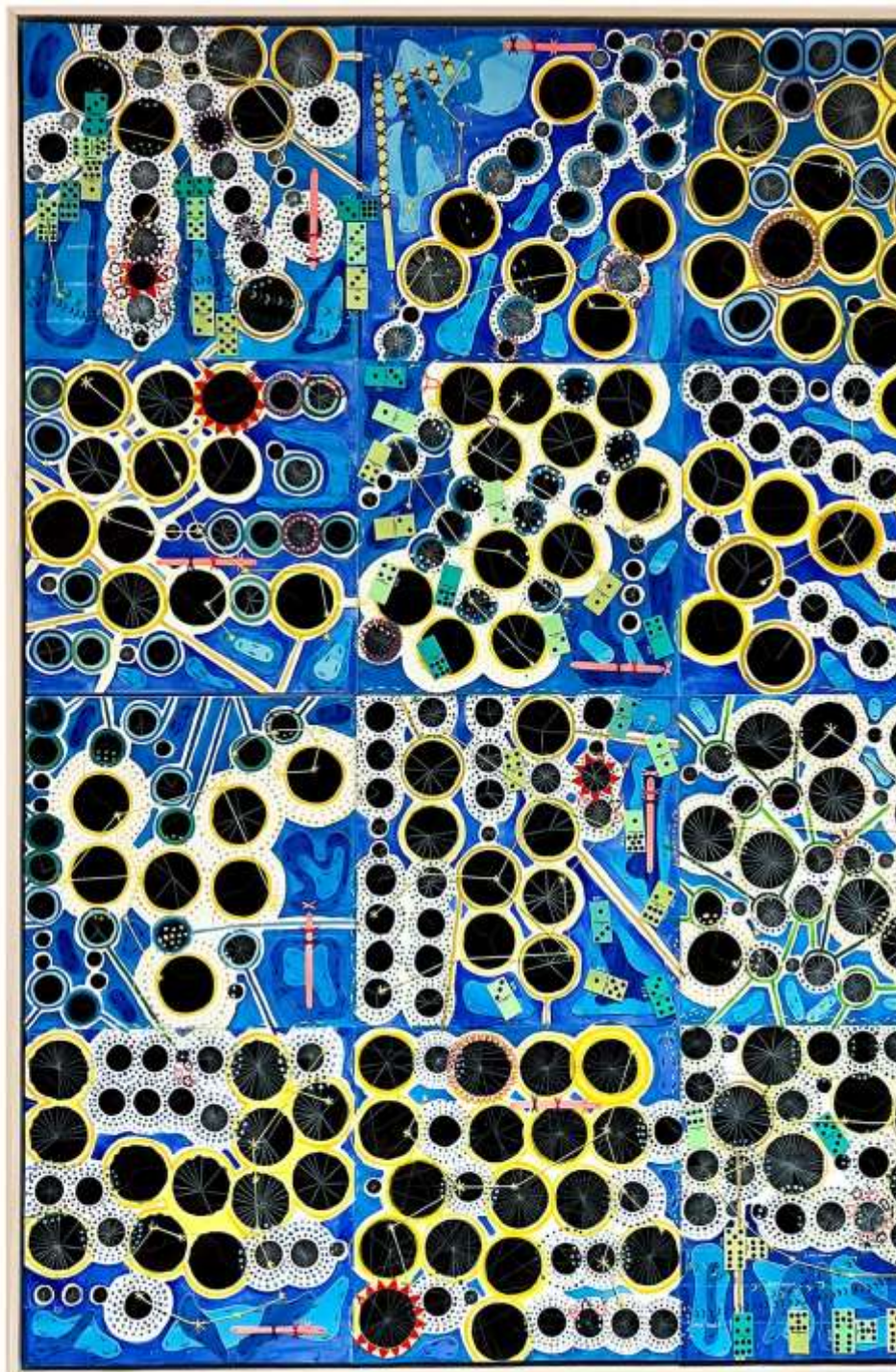




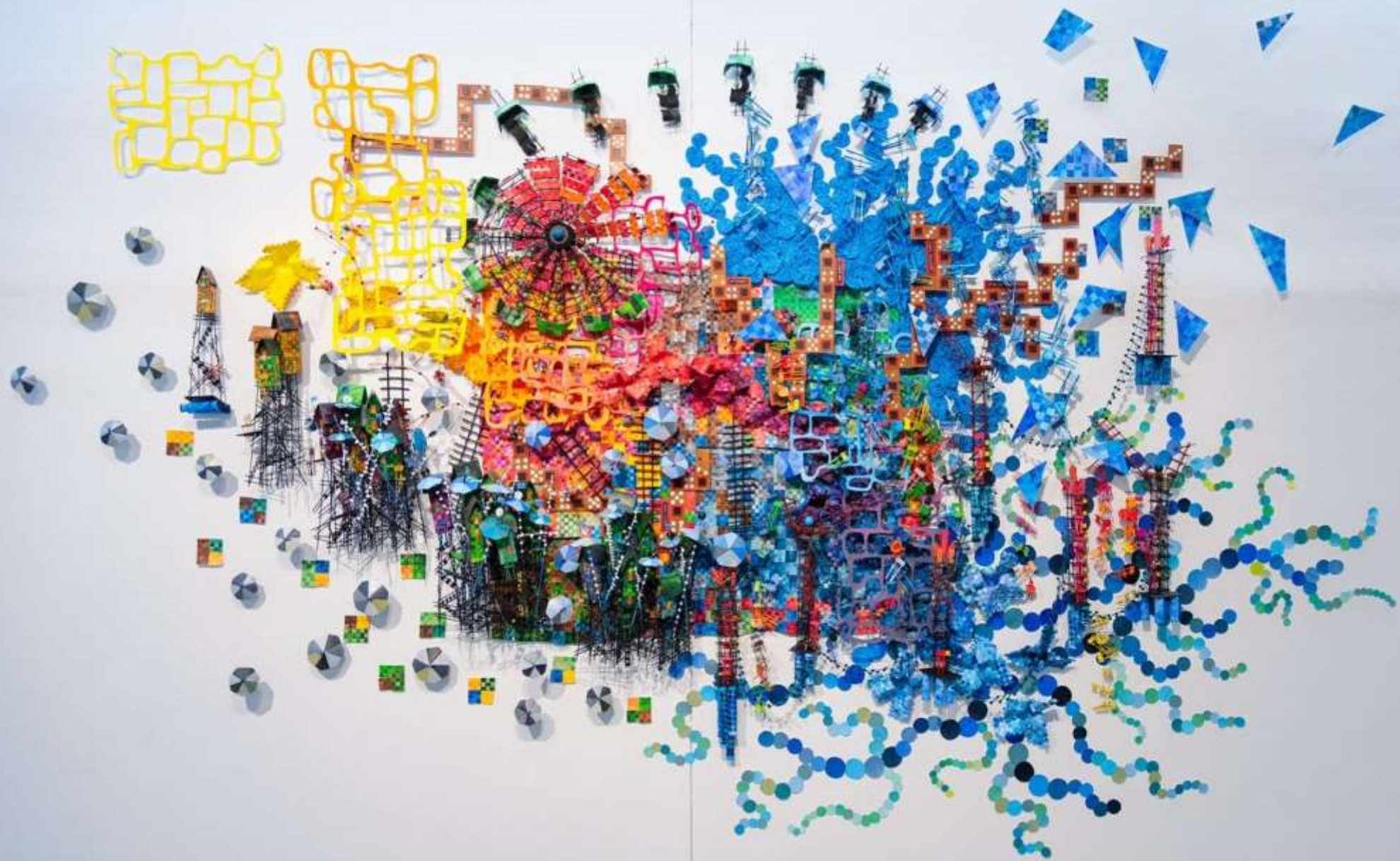














# Community Forms--Denver

Part rainwater drainage system, part recreational space, *Community Forms* by Black Cube Artist Fellow Matt Barton is an outdoor site-specific art installation designed for a mixed-use community space within Denver's Globeville neighborhood. Located adjacent to Colorado's South Platte River, Barton's sculptural intervention features abstract curvilinear forms that provide a social space for gathering and creative play and also channel stormwater. Barton drew inspiration from the existing site and innovative developments in urban design and landscape architecture to create sculptures that guide the natural waterflow into nearby bioswales—vegetated ditches that aid in the collection, conveyance, and filtration of stormwater. Composed of concrete, formed earth, and landscaping materials, the artwork visually references skateparks and disciplines such as Land and Earth art. *Community Forms* encourages non-prescriptive, freeform, exploratory interaction through dynamic visitor-centric sculptures that collectively generate a welcoming public space and a novel solution to flood mitigation.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8cU7OrDCIM&t=2s>



















# Nanhai Art Center

An undulating canopy will soon float over a new arts center in [the world's most populated urban area](#) when it begins construction this year.

Known for its low weight, durability, and light transmissivity, the center's ETFE canopy will allow sunlight through for plants and photovoltaic systems while still providing shelter from rain and capturing rainwater. Curving walkways between outdoor patios through and on top of the canopy will provide elevated views and help connect the buildings together.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3qd01V0te8>















# The Whitney and Floods

Imagine huge pieces of mechanical equipment bobbing like corks in floodwater. That was the grim reality that the Whitney Museum of American Art faced after Superstorm Sandy ripped through lower Manhattan in 2012. The storm flooded the construction site of the museum's new location right on the river. We'll take you behind the scenes of the efforts to rethink the entire site, and ultimately, build a fortress-like new building, one of the most flood-resilient structures in New York. In "Artful Solutions," you'll see the museum team unfurl in less than 10 hours a 16 ½ foot wall around the museum that can be deployed during a storm event... and watch as they operate a massive flood door that can withstand the force of a semi-truck floating (or flung) across the West Side Highway. The stakes are high: millions of dollars of priceless art.

- <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/peril-and-promise/video/nyc-rising-artful-solutions/>















# Eve Mosher

HighWaterLine was a public artwork on the New York city waterfront that created an immediate visual and local understanding of the affects of climate change. I marked the 10-feet above sea level line by drawing a blue chalk line and installing illuminated beacons in parks. The line marks the extent of increased flooding brought on by stronger and more frequent storms as a result of climate change.

During the summer of 2007, I walked, chalked and marked almost 70 miles of coastline. As I was out in the public creating the work, I had a chance to engage in conversations about climate change and its potential impacts.

- <https://vimeo.com/18799070>











# Annie Hejny

Artist Annie Hejny ceremoniously collects river water and damp sediment. Back in the studio, she pours these materials with acrylic paint over a flat canvas to emulate the natural erosion and flow of the environment. Thin layers of color are then brushed over the dried texture to express organic landscapes, water patterns and surface reflections. Fully saturated with elements of the river itself, Hejny's art embodies its materiality, its story and its spirit.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UX0OPubQ1Ms>
- <https://www.anniehejny.com/water>















# Matthew Ritchie—A Garden in the Flood

Renowned New York-based interdisciplinary artist Matthew Ritchie (born 1964) seeks to visualize thought, connecting such fields as philosophy and mythology, epic poetry and science fiction, and history and physics, through installations of paintings, wall drawings, light boxes, games, sculpture, films and performance works. His works challenge social fragmentation by suggesting a unified theory of everything.

Published for an exhibition at the Frist Art Museum, *A Garden in the Flood* examines a selection of his paintings, architectural structures, elaborate diagrams and hallucinatory video animations (which notably include a collaboration with the Grammy Award-winning Fisk Jubilee Singers).

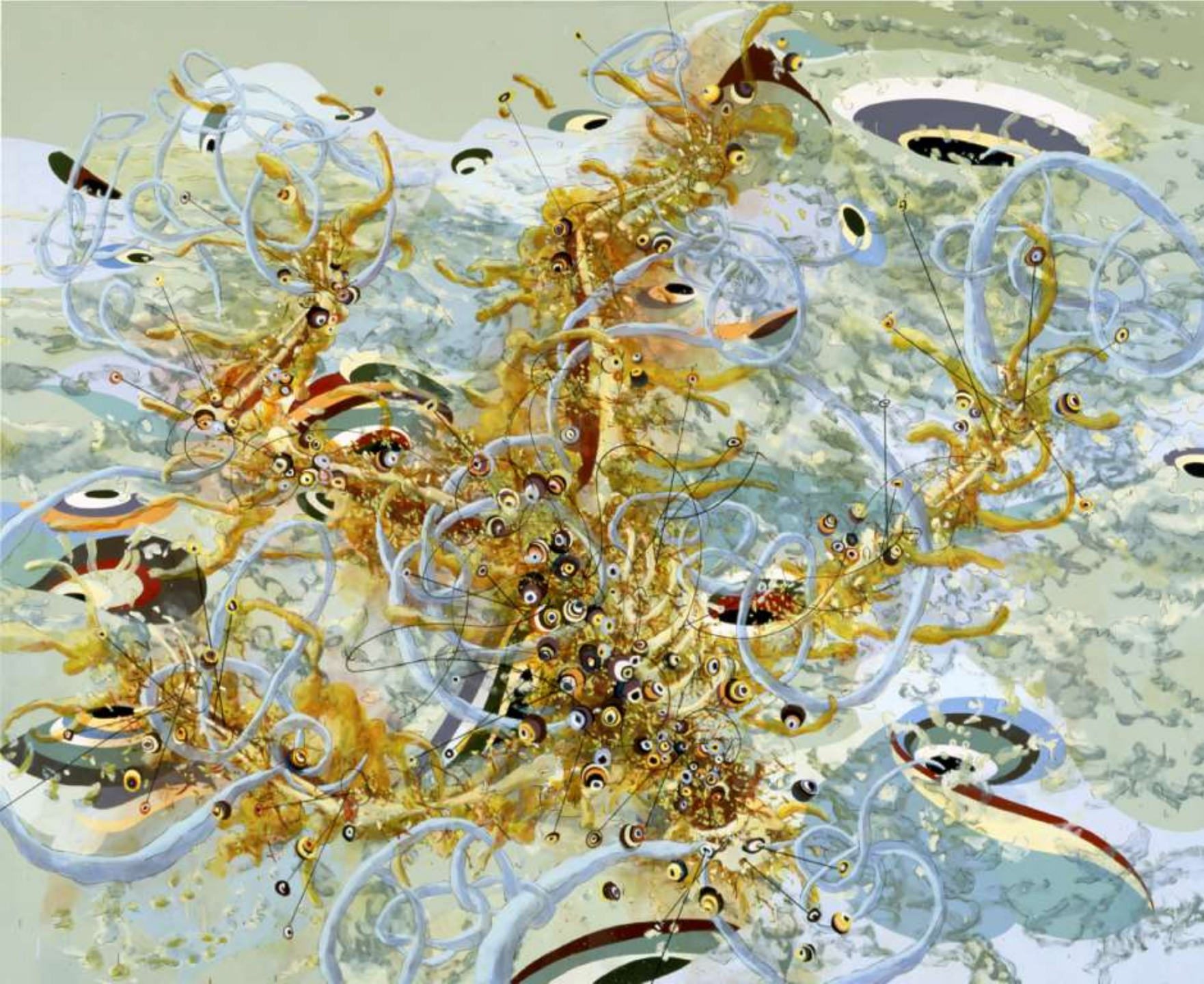
Employing "garden" and "flood" as metaphors for growth and destruction, transformation and renewal, Ritchie encourages readers to "reimagine the role art could play in whatever form of society may emerge next."

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVWT\\_0ww8es&t=5s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVWT_0ww8es&t=5s)











MATTHEW RITCHIE

A GARDEN  
IN THE FLOOD







And then,



# Anastasia Samoylova FloodZone

*FloodZone* is Miami-based Russian photographer Anastasia Samoylova's (born 1984) account of life on the knife-edge of the Southern United States: in Florida, where sea levels are rising and hurricanes threaten. But this book is not a visualization of disaster or catastrophe. These beautifully subtle and often unsettling images capture the mood of waiting, of knowing the climate is changing, of living with it. The color palette is tropical: lush greens, azure blues, pastel pinks. But the mood is pensive and melancholy. As new luxury high-rises soar, their foundations are in water. Crumbling walls carry images of tourist paradise. Manatees appear in odd places, sensitive to environmental change. Water is everywhere and water is the problem. Mixing lyric documentary, gently staged photos and epic aerial vistas, *FloodZone* crosses boundaries to express the deep contradictions of the place. The carefully paced sequence of photographs, arranged as interlocking chapters, make no judgment: they simply show.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Dz0KCZ7Blg&t=24s>



















# Barnaby Furnas

Drawing from myriad art historical, religious, and pop cultural references, Barnaby Furnas's explosive paintings harness color as spectacle and convey concepts such as fear, war, love, and death. *Flood* is a monumental tableau from a series of works in which Furnas sought to evoke Biblical prophecies through tsunami-like swaths of crimson paint. The color red, which can suggest fear, passion, and violence, almost always appears in the artist's work, but here it takes center stage, overtaking a bright blue sky. The vigor with which Furnas applies his medium evokes 1950s Action Painting, specifically the radical energy of Japan's Gutai group. The artist created works such as this by spritzing, flinging, splattering, dripping, and pouring a mixture of pure pigment and urethane alongside sweeping brushstrokes. Many of the artist's Flood paintings, including this work, also have a faint line at the top of the canvas, functioning not unlike a flash of sun. This motif is a deliberate reference to the "zips" of the Abstract Expressionist painter Barnett Newman (American, 1905–1970), who was a significant influence on Furnas's desire to encapsulate sublime emotion in primal forms, urgent color, and simple gestures. Exuberant and expressive, Furnas's apocalyptic beauty suggests that with destruction can also come regeneration—a redemptive vision of human society.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCrc2k6LBRA&t=14s>























# Water Atrocities

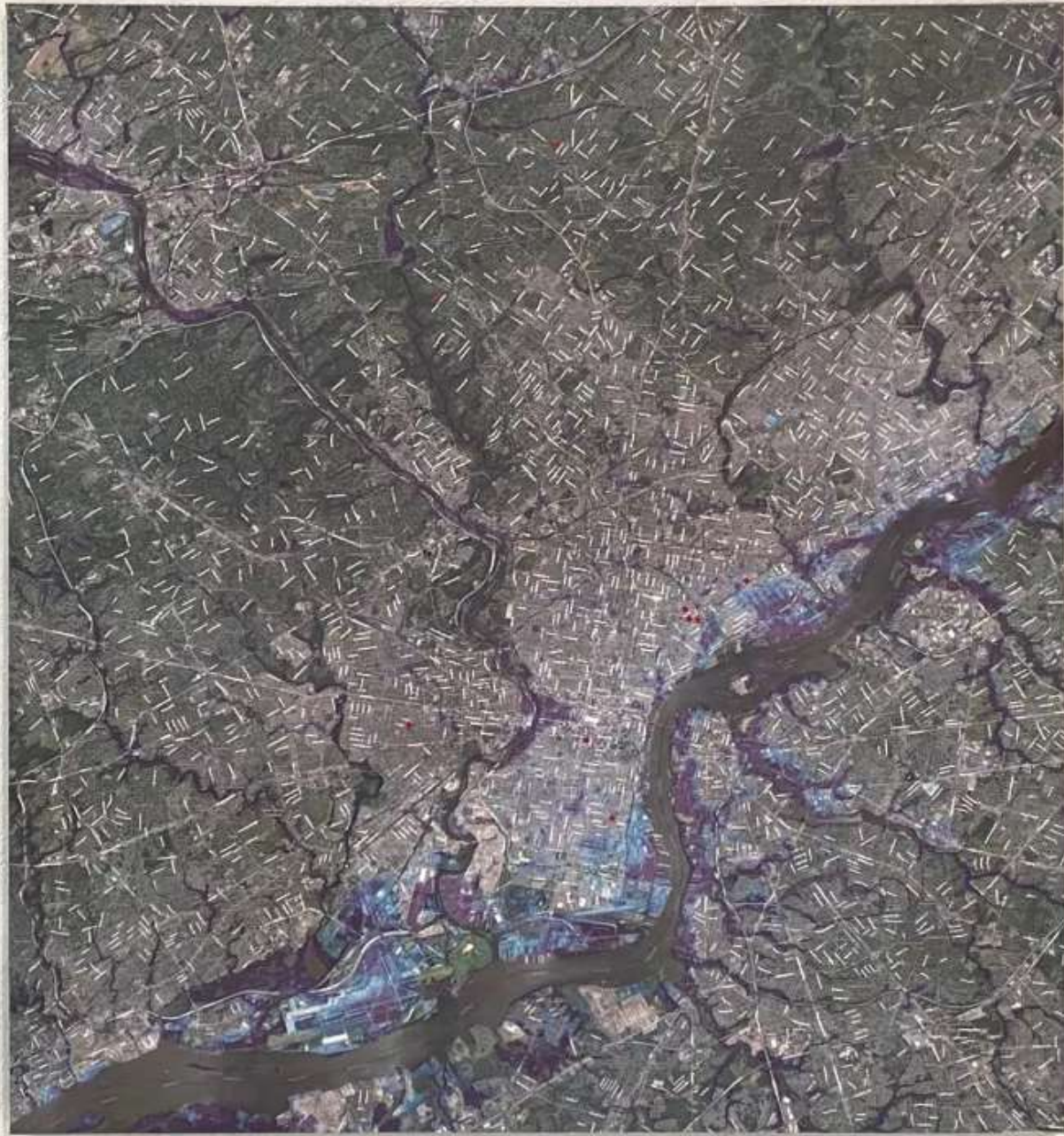
Multi-disciplinary artist [Jeff Carpenter](#) is passionate about creating a radically new dialogue on the climate crisis. Towards that end, he conceived and curated the exhibition, [FEMA: Fear Environmental Mayhem Ahead](#), which ran from October 31 through November 8, 2020, at the [Icebox Project Space](#) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. *FEMA* was developed in just six weeks from start to finish so that it could serve as a space for open dialogue before the pivotal U.S. presidential election on November 4.

- <https://artistsandclimatechange.com/2020/12/28/water-atrocities/>









100%







# Anna Maria Heranando

Fueled with a sense of rebellion, yards of colorful tulle cascade from windows and down staircases in site-specific installations by [Ana María Hernando](#). The soft, pliable material breaches existing architecture and entwines trees in swaths of mesh, creating works that are both visually striking and subversive.

Evocative of ballgowns and garments that are traditionally worn by women, the tulle explodes into a flood of fabric as a way to break with social constructions surrounding femininity. “As a Latina, I explore how the feminine comes forward in strength and flexibility, in beauty and in (an) unstoppable abundance of generosity,” the Argentinian artist says.

Though she’s worked with a range of materials, Hernando shares that she always incorporates a textile element, which seems “to be an expansive conduit for my work” and references her childhood in Buenos Aires, where she observed the women in her family sewing, crocheting, and embroidering together every day.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7kIGI6\\_ZEk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7kIGI6_ZEk)















# Danilo Dunga—Cherry Blossom Flood

Every spring, photographer [Danilo Dunga](#) spends time at [Inokashira Park](#) in Tokyo, famous for its abundance of blooming cherry trees. The photographer has become a master at capturing the event from all angles, especially with aerial shots that show the pink flowers covering the nearby lake. Seen here are a handful of shots from the last two years, but you can explore much more on his [NatGeo Your Shot page](#).















# Assignment Suggestions...

- Flood a canvas or sheet of paper with water and drop pigment into it
- Create an artwork with a lot of swirling or rampaging movement