

Emotion: Water in Motion

An Open Dialogue on Our Connection to Water

Background

As water is the basis of all life, the failing water supply system is linked to all the underlying symptoms of climate and humanitarian crises. Despite a growing number of globalised water partnerships and organizations, including UN-Water, the Global Water Partnership, the Global Water Research Coalition, and the International Water Association, the urgency of water issues is not yet embedded in the consciousness of every citizen (Gawlik et al., 2018). This is partly due to the complex nature of the subject, but more obviously results from a traditional separation between science and emotion.

Water is considered a sacred element in all aspects of human culture and history, by contrast, our over-rationalized modern culture had simplified water into a homogeneous resource with no intrinsic values. Although there is ample evidence that human conditions, well-being, and community prosperity are interconnected with water, the cultural and emotional aspects of water are often overlooked in the discourse on water issues.

In recognizing the role of emotions in political decision-making (Saab, 2021), we propose to create a safe space for those who dedicate their lives to Water and Sanitation at the OHCHR Social Forum to share their emotional experiences related to water. Moderated by artistic practitioners, we also hope to facilitate an example of how art-making can act as a catalyst to help process and resolve fears and doubts in facing the uncertain climate future and to create new dreams as a collective.

Proposed Activity

One hour of dialogue which is composed of an introduction by Mukta Dhere's [poems](#) leads to 30 minutes of dialogue between Mukta and artist Charlotte Qin whose primary mission is to rebuild the relationship with water through her art. The last 20 minutes will be an open conversation with the audience.

During the 30-minute conversation, Mukta and Charlotte will be exploring the following three subjects:

What does water mean to you?

How do we use water as a metaphor in the context of your art?

How can we, together, build a more sustainable, just, and equitable Blue Future?

The discourse around these questions will be accompanied by a visual presentation of Charlotte's paintings and art performances in the background screen, as well as selected readings from Mukta's poems.



"Meet the Oceans" public performance directed by Charlotte Qin on June 9, 2022

The conversation between the facilitator is meant to create emotional resonance in the audience and encourage the audience engagement for the second part of the open conversation, what their stories related to water and how they were brought to where they are today at the Social Forum. The outcome of the proposal of the dialogue is meant to leave an emotional remark in the audience without a structured format or an expected outcome.

References

Gawlik et al.(2018) The scientist, the politician, the artist and the citizen: how water united them. Environmental Sciences Europe <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12302-018-0141-5>

Saab (2021) Emotions and International Law. ESIL Reflections 10:3

Facilitators

Mukta Dhere is a poet, communicator and storyteller- passionate, content-obsessed and people-driven. She has a Master's degree from the Graduate Institute in Geneva in International Affairs where she specialized in Sustainability and Environment. Her academic research focuses on the role of water as a social catalyst in fragile and war-ridden contexts. Through her poetry, she seeks to communicate the hydro-social interconnectedness and archetypes of water in different forms.



Her work, personal and professional, is anchored in the attempt of building communities by creating spaces of exchange, and dialogue and spark conversations that can drive sustainable change.



Charlotte Qin is an artist based in Geneva, Switzerland. She is the founder of [QinTheory Studio](#), a creative hybrid enterprise at the intersection of art, science and environmental policy. Born and raised in China and Canada, Charlotte's artistic journey has been meandering like water, the personal mythology sparking her curiosity to understand nature since childhood. She studied physics at McGill University in Montreal, Canada and also obtained a double master's degree in Design Innovation and Engineering Royal College of Art and Imperial College London, UK.

Embodying her Chinese heritage and Western scientific training, Charlotte's work subtly blends science, nature and mysticism and takes on forms such as painting, performance art and scientific visualization. scientific visualization.