

## *THE WATERS ARE COMING*

THE GRANARY SQUARE FOUNTAINS

18<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023

A work by Phil Barton Artist

Animated by ordnajelA zenitraM

*You can see more work by Phil Barton in **The Greenhouse** at [The Lethaby Gallery](#) off Granary Square at the eastern end of Central Saint Martins, close to The Lighterman, from 25<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> April.*

### Context

There is no doubt that sea levels are rising in response to global warming<sup>1</sup> and melting of land-based ice<sup>2</sup>. But predictions of future rises are challenging. The first Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prediction in 2001 was a rise of 2mm per annum or 20cms over 100 years<sup>3</sup>. In 2007 IPCC was predicting a rise of between 22 and 44 cms by the 2090s<sup>4</sup>. By 2013, their range had increased to between 26 and 82 cms<sup>5</sup> and by 2019 to between 30 and 110 cms<sup>6</sup>. The trend is clear, not only are sea levels rising, but so are the best scientific predictions for future rises.

Many scientists believe that the IPCC has consistently underestimated the rate of ice melt from the Greenland and Antarctic land masses, and evidence continues to mount that these ice sheets are melting

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1087932> (accessed 4th March 2023)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/07/melting-arctic-sea-ice-summer-report> (accessed 4th March 2023)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/ipcc-predictions-then-versus-now-15340>

<sup>4</sup> See IPCC (2007) Climate Change Working Group 1 available at [https://archive.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/wg1/en/faq-5-1.html](https://archive.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg1/en/faq-5-1.html) (accessed 28th February 2020)

<sup>5</sup> See a Carbon Brief's summary of The Draft 2013 IPCC report available at: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/what-the-new-ipcc-report-says-about-sea-level-rise> (accessed 28th February 2020)

<sup>6</sup> See IPCC (2019) Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/> and the associated press notice at:

[file:///C:/Users/Helena%20Kettleborough/Downloads/SROCC\\_PressRelease\\_EN\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Helena%20Kettleborough/Downloads/SROCC_PressRelease_EN(1).pdf) (both accessed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020).

much faster than previously predicted<sup>7</sup> and credible studies put the potential sea level rise if serious action is not taken at 200 cms or more within a hundred years. Peter Glas, Head of Holland's Delta Programme<sup>8</sup> was reported as telling a conference that *"...the rise in the level of the North Sea may accelerate sharply from 2050, potentially reaching 2 meters by 2010"* (Sunday Times, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2020, p7).

It is entirely credible that sea levels may rise by 2 meters within the next hundred years, with low lying land being submerged millions of people being displaced in coastal areas.

*"[We need to] grapple with the political and psychological trauma of losing entire cities and coastlines... We've seen floods and storms, but this is nothing like what's to come. Even if it happens fast, it will seem to happen slowly."* (Goodall, 2017, p295/6)

Yet few people are aware of the risks. The Waters Are Coming<sup>9</sup>.

### Installation: The Waters Are Coming

Originally planned for my MA Art & Science Degree Show at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London in 2020 which never took place because of the Covid-19 lockdown, an installation will be operating with 2m sea level rise physically present in Granary Square during the week of 18<sup>th</sup> April, and including Earth Day on 24<sup>th</sup> April.

The four arrays of fountains in Granary Square, will be programmed by the artist to echo tides around the world, both now (with blue lights in the outside two rows and columns of jets in each array and in a hundred

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, for Greenland National Snow and Ice Data Centre (2019) Greenland Ice Sheet Today available at: <https://nsidc.org/greenland-today/> or, for the Antarctic an account of two reports published in Nature in The Guardian (2018) available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/jun/13/antarctic-ice-melting-faster-than-ever-studies-show> (both accessed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020) and also the 2022 State of the Cryosphere Report in footnote 2

<sup>8</sup> The Delta Programme is responsible to the Dutch Government for the planning and oversight of flood defences and water flows in a land much of which is already below sea level. Details at: <https://english.deltacommissaris.nl/> (accessed 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020)

<sup>9</sup> The title of this work acknowledges the work of campaigning journalist Jeff Goodell whose books include "The Water Will Come" (2018, Black Inc, Australia)

year's-time in the central area of each array. The high tides now will be 40 centimetres high, and in 2123, 200 centimetres.

The tides will progress around the world on each pair of arrays, regularly moving from low to high tide and back again as the tide moves around the world.

Thus, 2m tides will engulf twenty of the most vulnerable cities and countries in the World<sup>10</sup>, starting in the Pacific to the east and work its way westwards until it reaches Los Angeles in the west.

Marked by red lights and markers on the Square surface, the cities and countries from East to West are:

Fiji	Tuvalu	Tokyo	Shanghai	Manila	Jakarta	Bangkok	Dhaka	Mumbai
Maldives	Maputo	Cairo	Copenhagen	London	Lagos	Buenos Aires	New York	Florida
Santiago	Los Angeles							

A plan is on the following page. The tides will move down arrays from East to West so that the tides move in a sinuous wave around the eastern and western hemispheres, echoing the two tides a day experienced at any coastal point on the Earth's surface.

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<sup>10</sup> Adapted from World Meteorological Organization (February 2023) *Global Sea-Level Rise & Implications: Key facts and figures* see: [file:///C:/Users/Phil/Downloads/WMO\\_Global\\_Sea\\_Level\\_Rise\\_Fact\\_sheet\\_15\\_Feb\\_Final\\_1\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Phil/Downloads/WMO_Global_Sea_Level_Rise_Fact_sheet_15_Feb_Final_1(1).pdf) (accessed 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023) and Dow & Dowling (2011) *The Atlas of Climate Change*, Earthscan, Abingdon.

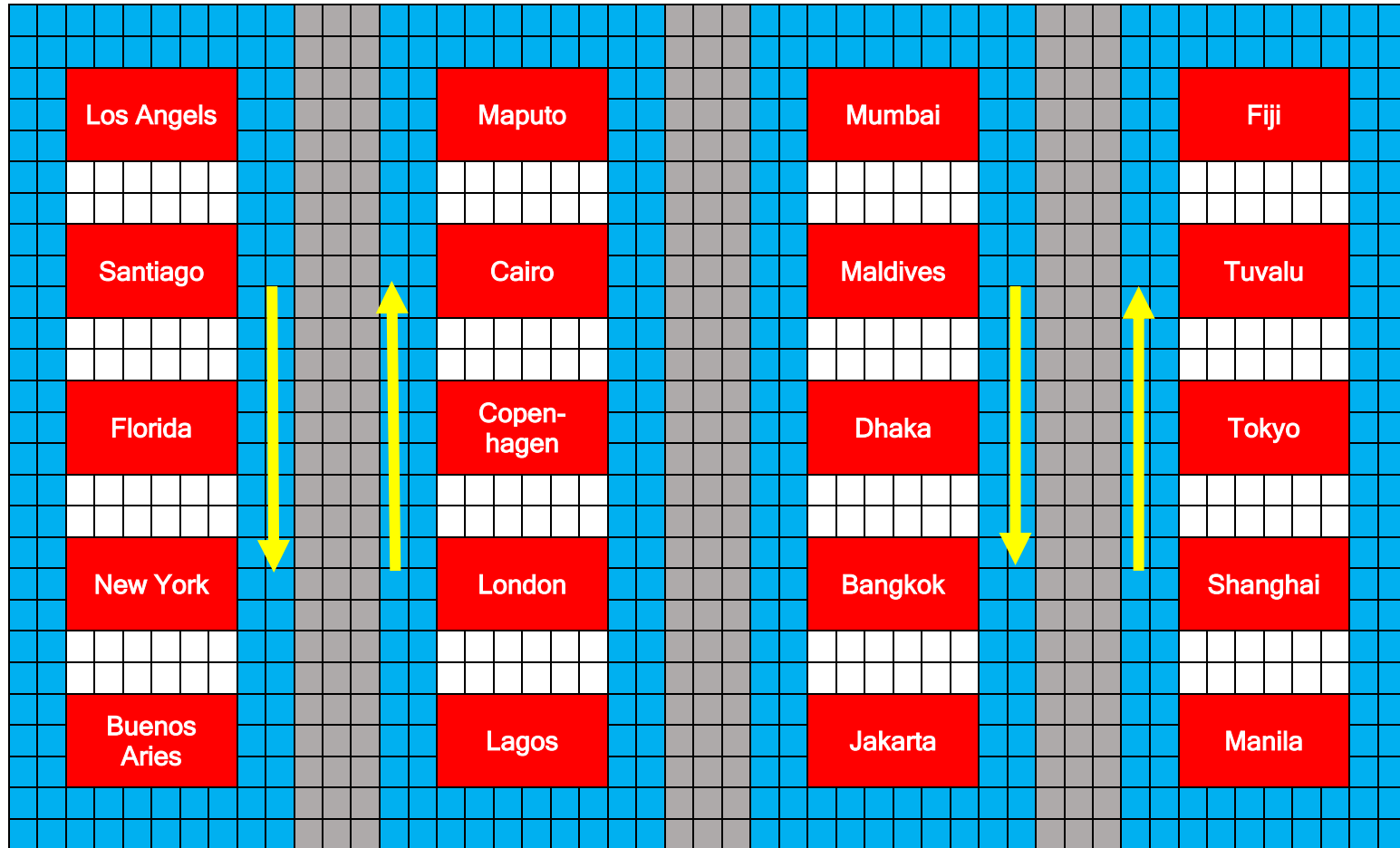
East to West

CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS

The Greenhouse, Lethaby Gallery

West

East



REGENT'S CANAL

Two companion installations will be on show in adjacent [Lethaby Gallery](#) as part of the free **Greenhouse** show from 24th - 29th April coinciding with the fountains installation in Granary Square:

**Wetter: The Waters Are Coming** - Visitors will pump water into 2m high tubes in an interactive performance in which they join. By putting the actual extent of a 2m rise into the gallery, my intention is that visitors will better understand what it will really mean - a rise that is higher than each of those visitors is tall - and will cause them to reflect and possibly take action. This is the companion piece to the Granary Square installation intended for my 2020 Degree Show which Covid 10 cancelled.

**The Second Elizabethan Age: All That Glitters Is Not Gold** - The Second Elizabethan Age has just drawn to a close in the UK. Elizabeth II's 70-year reign coincided with unprecedented growth in prosperity (even if increasingly unequal), but this has come at a cost - a sustained rise in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere from 310ppm in 1953 to 419ppm in August 2022. And still the carbon burns, the world warms and the sea levels rise. This work makes this cost visible as a starting point for wider discussion and action.]

### The Artist

Phil's practice is rooted in a lifelong commitment to working with the natural and built environment by bringing together communities and organisations from all walks of life to take practical action. Using print, lens-based media, installation and scientific evidence, he works as an eco-

artist to foreground the assault both on our natural life support systems - trees, climate, ecosystems - and on the other-than-human who share this precious planet with us.

He builds his creative practice on a 35 year career as a social entrepreneur in local environmental regeneration during which he established and built a number of not for profit organisations including [Keep Britain Tidy](#), [Groundwork](#), the [Mersey Basin Campaign](#), the National Centre for Business and Ecology and the Community Technical Aid Centre in Manchester.

He holds a MA in Art & Science awarded by UAL (2020) and is currently undertaking an [AA2A Residency](#) at ArtLab, University of Central Lancashire in Preston. His current project is focused on a former raised peat bog near Manchester Airport, Lindow Moss, where he is working with local organisations including Transition Wilmslow and The Wilmslow Guild to raise awareness of the importance of healthy peatlands as carbon sinks and the significance of the restoration which has commenced on Lindow Moss in the run up to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of Lindow Man in August 1984.

Instagram: @PhilBxyz

Web: <https://philbartonartist.c4cp.net>

### The Animator

ordnajela zenitram (Alejandro Martínez) is a visual artist, traditional animator and climate activist. His aim is to create art with a transformative effect in the world, using it as a tool for change.

Instagram: @ordnajela\_zenitram

*THE WATERS ARE COMING*  
PROPOSAL TO PROGRAMME THE GRANARY SQUARE FOUNTAINS

Supported by:



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