



Panneels, Inge (2018) Mapping the Borders: charting change.  
MapLines, Spring.

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# Mapping the Borders: charting change

Final Draft for *Maplines*  
Spring edition 2018  
The British Cartographic Society

## ***Mapping The Borders: charting change***

*Mapping The Borders* was a week-long programme of cultural events which brought together contemporary art projects with maps chosen by the artists from the National Library of Scotland (NLS). The map collection was thus used as a lens through which to bring together diverse interpretations of the Borders' culture. *Mapping the Borders* was a partnership between the University of Sunderland, the NLS and local partners as part of the 2017 nationwide Being Human Festival<sup>1</sup>.

*Mapping the Borders* brought together the work of ten artists, using different media to interrogate the notion of 'borders' and in particular the Anglo-Scottish border. It is a region defined by its geographical location, of rolling hills and river valleys but steeped in contested history where tradition forms an important part of the cultural identity of its people. The actuality of this border gained particular significance in the 2014 Scottish Referendum debate, and it is no coincidence that several works in this show originated during this period. The two years leading up to Referendum was a significant time for a collective examination of the Scottish national identity, and by implication of the English nature of Britishness. The Brexit referendum has arguably brought this cultural identity crisis to the fore once more, but with broader geographical and political ramifications which will have long term implications on the concept of 'border' in the whole of Britain, as the current Irish border question is already making manifest. It is within this broader political and cultural background that this project should be considered.



Image Left: Exhibition shot showcasing *The Debatable Lands* book by Zoe Childerley. Image by Kevin Greenfield, 2017  
Image Right: Pecha Kucha talk by Mike Collier, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November, MacArts, Galashiels  
Image by Kevin Greenfield, 2017

An afternoon of Pecha Kucha talks at MacArts in Galashiels on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> of November launched the week-long *Mapping the Borders*<sup>2</sup> event. The map curator of the NLS and the artists gave a succinct visual overview of the diverse maps and art practices presented. The

talks were framed by the *Lawes of the Marches* (2013) film by Katie Davies, which explored the common riding traditions of the Borders, bounding the borders on horseback to this day<sup>3</sup>. The talks launched the exhibition that brought together the work of seven artists at Creative Coathanger in Venue 50 in Galashiels. Artist John Wallace used the Ecosystems Services Modelling Framework as a guide, exploring human connections to the ecosystems of the two border-marking rivers in his epic cinematic experience *Tweed Sark Cinema* (2013). Zoe Childerley walked the length of the Anglo-Scottish border and recorded her encounters in *The Debatable Lands* (2016), in photographs and a hand drawn map collated in a concertina book which was stretched out in the exhibition like a meandering river. The *Riverways* (2013) map by Kate Foster, devoid of any place names or geographical data, observed that the catchment drawing 'moves you from the predominant perception of the Scottish Borders as a series of discrete small towns, towards seeing it as a region connected by the dense network of tributaries of the Tweed'. Similar in style to the hand-drawn map of Foster, if not in scale, was the *Upper Teviot Watershed* map (2017) by Alec Finlay and Gill Russell, displayed alongside the *Phylogenetic diagram of the Upper Teviot* river, representing the flow of water, emphasising the arboreal nature of rivers as a prompt to plant more trees in upland areas to potentially mitigate further flooding<sup>4</sup>. Engineered flood protection schemes are currently changing the townscapes of Selkirk and Hawick. Change was also the theme of *Ab-Sense* (2013), an installation by Inge Panneels of the four Border abbeys' floorplans embedded in glass and placed on a loosely drawn meandering river, chalked on an old plan chest. Their prominence in the landscape, nestled along the main river networks, are visible reminders of a turbulent past. but perhaps more importantly, their agricultural innovation changed the Borders landscape and land use forever. Clare Money's *Maplines* (2017) also reflected on absence in her works, notably the disappearance of the 98 mile Waverley Route between Carlisle, Hawick and Edinburgh in the Beeching cuts in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, which affected the rural Borders town. This disappearance is made visible by the erasure of the Riccarton Junction off the old OS map and the altered colouring of the landscape, now cloaked in regulation pine.

Image below left: Exhibition shot showcasing *Ab-Sense* installation by Inge Panneels with Ortelius map just in view in the drawer on the right-hand and maps by Alec Finlay on the wall. Image by Kevin Greenfield, 2017



Image above, right: Exhibition shot showcasing *Tweed Sark Cinema* by John Wallace. Image by Kevin Greenfield, 2017

Prof Mike Collier's work *Boundaries Are Well Observed by Crossing Them* (2013-18) was also explored in two walks on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> of November in Jedburgh, organised through W.A.L.K from the University of Sunderland<sup>5</sup>, in collaboration with long term collaborator naturalist Keith Bowey. The walks raised the question as to whether ecological systems might be 'helped', not harmed, by incoming flora and fauna and thus asks whether conservationists might sometimes, unwittingly, promote a set of ideas that are tantamount to 'green xenophobia'? Bowey and Collier argued that borders visualised on maps are political and social constructs made substantial on the ground, and - and in our heads. Although

borders may indeed sometimes be real in geographical terms, as physical barriers (mountain ranges or river valley systems for example), in ecological terms, the line on a map matters not to a nesting bird who chooses a habitat that will support its survival, and is thus not defined by geographical locality or human political identities, but by mortality. It was fitting then, that the final walk took in the town cemetery, where borders though present in temporal terms, are ephemeral. The walk ended at the Hutton Unconformity, at Inchbonny, just outside the town centre. James Hutton sensed that the earth was many millions of years older than previously thought and came to realise *'That before the present land was made, there had subsisted a world composed of sea and land, in which were tides and currents, with such operations at the bottom of the sea as now take place'*<sup>6</sup>. It is this movement that artist Claire Pencak observed in her chosen NLS map by Ptolemy: 'the vigorous way the sea is depicted suggesting a dynamic inter-relationship between the ocean and the land. You can sense the ebb and flow of the tide and hear the sound of waves on rock'. Pencak explored this sense of movement in *Entr'actes: Alternative Arrangements*, a durational performance in collaboration with Felicity Bristow which took place at The Bakery Studio in Jedburgh in the ten hours from the dark before dawn to the dark after dusk. This experimental work, only glimpsed in fractions by its audience, explored accumulation and dis-accumulation, erosion and deposition, change of state, reset and rearrangement and the near, far and infinite through movement and materials to Hutton's Unconformity.



Walking The Line and Crossing Boundaries, two walks on 19<sup>th</sup> November, Jedburgh  
With Mike Collier (left) and Keith Bowey (centre)  
Image by Kevin Greenfield, 2017

*Mapping the Borders* thus drew together ten diverse interpretations of the Anglo/Scottish border region, guided by historical maps to provide context to a contemporary interpretation of change. The timeframes of geological movement, the changing boundaries observed of non-human species because of climate change or the loss of human infrastructure, and language... all allude to change. The Borders' expression; 'It's aye bin', which roughly translates as 'it has thus ever been' may refer to fondness of tradition and the slow pace of change, but as both the historical maps and the contemporary art works attest, change it ever was.

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A short film about the exhibition can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/x9UfBqn2wvE>

A short film about the walk can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/KngbPqoy3Ro>

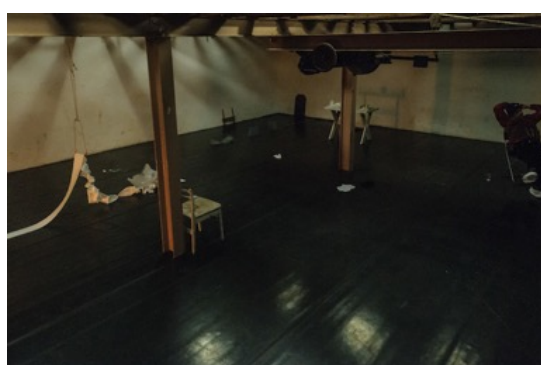
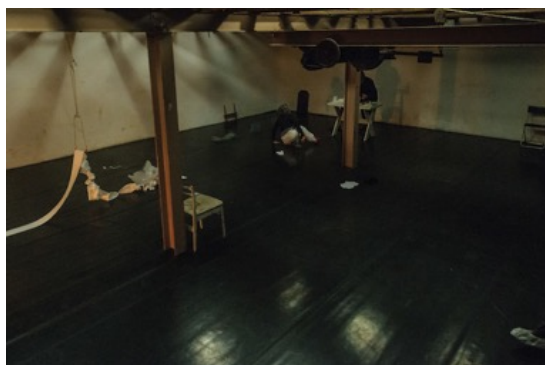
The artists talks can be seen online here:

<https://www.pechakucha.org/cities/galashiels/events/59f0e7c93c70ef911c0003dc>



*Inge Panneels is an artist and academic. For the last decade, her research has focussed on the use of maps in creative practices, including her own practice. She lectures at the National Glass Centre at the University of Sunderland where she teaches place making and mapping practices in a creative curriculum. She is also currently undertaking an AHRC funded PhD research project at Northumbria University looking at how artists are charting change in the Anthropocene in the New North.*





Entr'Actes: alternative arrangements, durational performance Claire Pencak and Felicity Bristow  
All images by Kevin Greenfield

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> The Being Human Festival aims to engage the public with research taking place in the humanities, and is organised by the School of Advanced Study at University London in partnership with AHRC and the British Academy and delivered by HE institutions and their cultural partners across the UK: <https://beinghumanfestival.org>

<sup>2</sup> Pecha Kucha talks, is a format of twenty slides shown for twenty seconds each which has been used worldwide to present in a succinct and visual manner. The Mapping The Borders talks can be found online at the Pecha Kucha website: <https://www.pechakucha.org/cities/galashiels/events/59f0e7c93c70ef911c0003dc>

<sup>3</sup> *The Lawes of the Marches* was produced during the Berwick Visual Arts Residency for the 10<sup>th</sup> Berwick Film and Media Arts Festival and funded by Arts Council England in 2014. You can see *Lawes of the Marches* film at Katie Davies' website: <http://www.katiedavies.com/lawes.html>

<sup>4</sup> Finlay worked collaboratively with Gill Russell and Kate McAllan to map the Upper Teviot. You can read more about this project on Alec Finlay's blog: <http://alecfinlayblog.blogspot.co.uk/2017/10/upper-teviot-notes-on-place-names.html>

<sup>5</sup> W.A.L.K: Walking Artist Landskip Knowledge is a research centre based at the University of Sunderland exploring how we might creatively engage with the world as we walk through it: <http://walk.uk.net>

<sup>6</sup> James Hutton from an abstract of his dissertation *Concerning the System of the Earth, its Duration and Stability*, 1785 presented to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Reference made in notes made by Keith Bowey reflecting on the walk of 19<sup>th</sup> November.