Let's Talk About Water

Film and Water Event

DELTFT 2016

the Netherlands

www.LetsTalkAboutWater.nl
Welcome to the fourth installment of the film and water event *Let’s Talk About Water*, where water scientists and engineers, students and the general public meet and the power of cinema is used to inform, spark dialogue and electrify discussion. This year’s theme is inspired by ‘*Design with Nature*’ (1969), the book by Scottish landscape architect Ian McHarg, who pioneered the concept of ecological planning and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

Humanity frequently subjected the environment to radical changes and blunt interventions, usually at the expense of nature, water and landscape. To engineer and build differently, the dynamics of nature and landscape need to be known, honored and used in the design process, balanced with dynamics in other ‘layers’ like economy, urbanization, technology, culture etc. This is where GIS and mapping as research and design tools come into play. For the designer the challenge remains what balance to create: to have collaboration or collision. Based on the values that we deem important we choose our solutions. Mitigate problems, increase resilience, adapt or let go.

We open our festival on **Tuesday** at the **Student Night** in **Filmhuis Lumen**, with a magical film set outside the levees of the Mississippi Delta. In *Beasts of the Southern Wild* the delta is both paradise and nightmare and water a blessing and a curse. A strongly united community has been knocked down so often, that they truly know what’s important and what it takes to stay in the place they love.

On **Wednesday** at **UNESCO-IHE**, young architect **Isaac Stein** from New York is our guest. He will present his visionary plan to save **Miami Beach**, just above sea level. On **Thursday**, architect and writer **Joep Janssen** will talk about his fascination with Vietnam and the challenges that climate change poses for this country. His views on **the Mekong** includes history, culture and anthropology.
Thursday night director Digna Sinke will visit the screening of her documentary *Wistful Wilderness* (2010). This ode to a tiny Dutch river island shows the slow transition over many years from agricultural land to new nature. Are the results what policy makers were hoping for?

The Faculty of Architecture will host a Master Class on Friday afternoon, where graduate students will present their designs for delta areas, scrutinized by mapping expert Steffen Nijhuis (Landscape Architecture TU-Delft) and Fresh Water expert Esther Blom (WWF).

Friday evening the documentary *Lost Rivers* (2012) will show us the waters that in the nineteenth century became conduits for disease and pollution and were buried underground, out of sight and out of our memory. Spread all over the world, they are being rediscovered and brought to the surface, back into the public consciousness.

We conclude this year’s festival on Saturday with *DamNation* (2014), a cinematic manifesto that criticizes the 75,000 dams that rob most rivers in the US of their natural course. Beautiful images illustrate what has been lost and what could be recovered. In the US, removing dams is no longer taboo.

A film and picture researcher for 40 years, specializing in science and history, Linda Lilienfeld (director of *Let’s Talk About Water*) believes in the power of an image to tell a story and move people. It can electrify our conversation and help us understand our world in new ways. And we need to, because with climate change and human activity affecting the world, the lives of many people are at risk – and water knits it all together.

More at [www.letstalkaboutwater.com](http://www.letstalkaboutwater.com)

This festival is organized in collaboration with UNESCO-IHE, Deltares, TU-Delft and WWF-the Netherlands.
Beasts of the Southern Wild – Beauty in the Bayou

Join us for the kickoff of Let’s Talk About Water at the weekly Student Night in Filmhuis Lumen for a film that is a dream in progress. It started as an independent underdog movie with a lot of character, shot on location, featuring non-actors from the area and a stunning six-year-old actress in the leading role (Quvenzhané Wallis). One year later this little epic had pleased audiences around the world and grabbed all the big film awards – and rightly so. In the spellbinding adventure, set just beyond the known limits of the American Bayou (outside the levees), a girl named Hushpuppy takes on rising waters, a sinking village, changing times, an army of prehistoric creatures and an unraveling universe that she bravely tries to stitch back together through the sheer force of her spirit and resilience. Inspired by real (and strongly united) Southern Louisiana communities.

Water is everywhere, a blessing and a curse, and deltas are both paradise and nightmare. • If you really want to stay in the place you love, adapting won’t seem so difficult.

Benh Zeitlin
USA 2012, 93min

guest: architect Isaac Stein (West8)

admission €5
students/staff €3

Filmhuis Lumen
Doelenplein 5 Delft
Miami Beach is the seaside dream city famous for its Art-Deco buildings. But also a city in crisis that needs massively ambitious measures to survive global warming. Young architect Isaac Stein works at the New York office of West8 and he tackled this subject in a radical way. Miami (with a population of more than 4 million) has a very high risk of coastal flooding. So finding out how to increase its resilience to sea level rise and storm surges is essential. Steins unusual approach might just be the answer. Instead of relying on yet-unrealized engineering solutions, why not adapt to the effect of rising waters and use it as a design opportunity, rather than a problem. His visionary plan could help Miami Beach to preserve the city in new ways, among other things by bringing back trams and reintroducing the swamps it was built on. Isaac will explain…

This Miami of the future could show other cities the way. But are drastic interventions like these also achievable in less wealthy countries? And if not, what feasible alternatives do they have?

architect Isaac Stein, urban-design and landscape architecture firm West8
extra guest: Victor Beumer, Urban Water and Soil Management, Deltares

students/staff only
TU/Deltares/UNESCO-IHE

UNESCO-IHE Auditorium
Westvest 7 Delft
Fascinated by Vietnam, architect and publicist Joep Janssen quit his job in 2009 to travel to the country most threatened by climate change in the world, because of its two huge deltas and lengthy coastline. His book ‘Living with the Mekong’ deals with climate change and urban development in Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta. One thing he noticed is that scientists, engineers and policy makers meet and develop new ideas, but never with the farmers and citizens who use their own knowledge in coping with the whims of water in everyday life. How are they – and can they – adapt to urbanization and slowly rising water levels? Joep Janssen will illustrate the theme of water (in the Mekong delta) not with the eyes of a Western engineer, but from a cultural, historical and anthropological perspective, and from his own experience.

Would scientists and engineers benefit from incorporating local history and culture in their working methods? • What can we learn from Vietnam and could ‘Dutch water solutions’ solve non-Dutch problems?

architect/publicist Joep Janssen (1977), author of ‘Living with the Mekong’

THURSDAY 18 FEB 12h45-13h30

Joep Janssen

Science and everyday practice: coping with rising water levels in the Mekong Delta

students/staff only
TU/Deltares/UNESCO-IHE

UNESCO-IHE Auditorium
Westvest 7 Delft
Director **Digna Sinke** will attend this screening of her documentary *Wistful Wilderness*. In 1993 the decision was made to transform grazing land on the tiny river island of Tienegemeten, in the Dutch Rhine/Meuse delta, into nature. Sinke captured this slow process on film during fourteen long years. Agriculture made way for nature development, albeit designed on the drawing board. Farmers, planners and ecologists collided with each other and with the excessive Dutch passion for regulation. Technical details seemed to get lives of their own. In time Sinke started to get personally engaged – she was raised on a similar island herself – and her account of creating new nature turned into an impressive meditation on change and mortality, without getting sentimental. In celebrating the new, is there also room to mourn what gets lost? A poetic film about filmmaking, landscape and life.
Dr. Steffen Nijhuis and WWF fresh water expert Esther Blom will discuss designs for delta areas made by graduate students of the Faculty of Architecture (Delta Intervention and Landscape Studio).

12:30- 13:00 Coffee/tea
13:00- 13:20 Introduction by Linda Lilienfeld, Let’s Talk About Water
13:20- 13:40 Esther Blom: why nature matters and how to work with it
13:40- 14:00 Steffen Nijhuis: mapping as a research and design tool
14:00- 14:15 – break –
14:15- 15:30 Student pitches + reflection: Emma Ottenvanger (LA), Jiayi Huang (ARCH), Filippo LaFleur (URB)
15:30- 15:45 – break –
15:45- 16:30 Student pitches + reflection: Shan Shao (LA), Yijia Li (ARCH)
16:30- 17:00 Group discussion/conclusion

TU-Delft/ Architecture: Berlage Room
Julianalaan 134 Delft

Let’s Talk About Water

FRIDAY 19 FEB 12h30-17h00*

Deltascapes
How the design process can use and honor natural dynamics in delta landscapes

Steffen Nijhuis, TU-Delft Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture
Esther Blom, leader of the fresh water programme WWF-the Netherlands

Drinks

* students/staff only
TU/Deltasres/UNESCO-IHE

master class
Almost every dwelling has been built where water flows. Rivers were at the heart of life in every town, for drinking, fishing, washing, manufacturing, trade, energy and disposal. During the industrial revolution and the rapid growth of cities around the world, rivers became the stinking conduits of pollution and disease. Natural water systems were covered, paved over and unhealthily merged with the sewers, and consequently got lost in our memory. Though in some towns they make great tourist attractions, this inspiring documentary mainly traces ‘daylighting’ projects around the world. People fight to bring their rivers back to the surface, thus bringing back nature to their community, for aesthetic appeal, for health and in some cases for flood resilience. At the same time these new rivers are a link to the city’s history and a reminder to city dwellers that nature still exists.

Clean air and water are necessities, but in bringing back nature, being surrounded by beauty seems equally important for our lives.

Esther Blom, fresh water programme
WWF-the Netherlands

Ken Irvine, Professor of Aquatic Ecosystems, UNESCO-IHE

Lost Rivers
‘Daylighting’ forgotten waters, deprecated long ago, brings new life to the city.

Caroline Bâcle
CA 2012, 72min
This documentary is definitely a manifesto. It targets the abundance of 75,000 dams that rob most rivers in the US of their natural course. We closely follow the daring adventures of activists, marvel at the natural beauty of unencumbered rivers captured with visual splendor, and condemn the hulking man-made obstacles that dams represent to nature's free will. Until recently we highly valued them as a multipurpose fix for hydro-power, irrigation, drinking water and flood protection. We admired engineering wonders and the conquest of the natural world. Now we know the unintended consequences to the ecosystem and aquatic life, the lack of a free streaming zone, sedimentation and nutrients, or harm to local and native cultures and economies. DamNation wants to promote new values: embrace nature – we are all part of it – and get rid of those damn dams!

In the US the decommissioning of dams is no longer taboo. Should we foster activism and education?
- Many countries are in dire need of (new) dams.
- Is there a way out?
- And what about the Netherlands? Should the Dutch rethink their barriers?

**Filmhuis Lumen**
Doelenplein 5 Delft

**Admission** €5
**Students/staff** €3

**Bart Geenen, Senior Freshwater expert at WWF-the Netherlands**

**Kees Sloff, Deltares expert on fluvial river engineering and fluvial morphology**
Our guests this year

Steffen Nijhuis • TU Delft Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture.

Isaac Stein • West 8 Designer at the New York office of West 8 urban design + landscape architecture.

Esther Blom • WWF-the Netherlands Fresh Water Expert

Bart Geenen • WWF-the Netherlands Fresh Water Expert

Digna Sinke – Dutch film director, producer and screenwriter

Kees Sloff • Deltares Expert on fluvial river engineering and fluvial morphology

Joep Janssen – Architect and author of 'Living with the Mekong' about climate change and urban development in Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta.

Victor Beumer • Deltares Urban Water and Soil Management

Ken Irvine, Professor of Aquatic Ecosystems, UNESCO-IHE

Thanks

This fourth installment of Let’s Talk About Water is organized by Linda Lilienfeld and Jérôme van Dam in cooperation with UNESCO-IHE, TU-Delft, Deltares and WWF-the Netherlands. For their help, patience and great commitment we thank Ewoud Kok and Ruth Webber (UNESCO-IHE), Roeli Suiker and Bert Jagers (Deltares), Prof. Han Meyer, Ass. Prof. Steffen Nijhuis and Prof. Nick van de Giesen (TU-Delft) and Esther Blom (WWF-the Netherlands).

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Program 2016

Design With Nature
COLLISION OR COLLABORATION?

Let's Talk About Water

All film screenings are open to the general public. Admission €5.
Students and staff pay only €3.

Sessions with this label are for students and staff only.
(TU-Delft/Deltares/UNESCO-IHE)

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