



The Source: Rethinking Water Through Contemporary Art

About the Publication

This substantial publication was co-published by Rodman Hall Art Centre/Brock University, St. Catharines, and Art Lab, Western University, London. The book features texts by curator Stuart Reid, Patrick Mahon and renowned water specialist Robert Sandford. The book also includes conversations between participating artists around several topics related to the theme of water. The book was designed by Rob Gray of Designworks Studios in Toronto, and beautifully documents the major exhibition project that was mounted in St. Catharines during summer 2014.

Contemporary art can raise awareness of pertinent issues. Although access to fresh water is an essential human right, the resource has become a valuable global commodity. Our era, marked by rapid climate change, destructive hydro-climatic weather events, loss of polar ice and rising global sea levels, is witness to shifting shorelines, borders, migration patterns and lines of economic and cultural exchange. In the book called *The Source: Rethinking Water Through Contemporary Art*, writers and artists consider changing concepts of water and associated cultural, political and aesthetic implications.

The Artists Involved in the Project

Nadine Bariteau, Raymond Boisjoly, Elizabeth Chitty, Soheila Esfahani, Gautam Garoo, Patrick Mahon, Colin Miner, Lucy & Jorge Orta, and Gu Xiong. Water, of course, defines the boundaries between nations and peoples, but in the greater scheme of things, erases differences. By bringing together Canadian artists representing Indigenous and settling cultures, both French- and English-speaking, alongside international artists with roots in countries around the globe, *The Source* contemplates water from a nationless, borderless perspective.

The Source, in part, reunited the participants from Immersion Emergencies and Possible Worlds, an artist research group that investigated water as culture and resource during two intensive residencies beginning in Niagara in May 2012, concluding at a two-week residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in May 2013. It was the goal of the Immersion Emergencies project to bring together Canadian and international artists and researchers from multiple backgrounds to highlight a multitude of the linked concerns of those individuals and their work addressing this element. Immersion Emergencies set out to juxtapose competing perspectives and to encourage opposing opinions and values surrounding water. From Niagara Falls on the Great Lakes to the Columbia Icefield in the Canadian Rockies, the project explored the power of water as an energy source and economic commodity, shaping the physical world, defining boundaries; but also as a sublime spiritual entity that can inspire and humble.

The Source: Rethinking Water Through Contemporary Art is available for sale at a cost of \$25 by emailing pmahon@uwo.ca

