



Gorffennol Digidol Digital Past - 2020

MAPPING THE VOID:

How new digital technologies can be used to explore narratives of absence

Adam Clarke and Victoria Bennett: Digital Creative Producer Writer,
[The Common People](#)

Orkney is a landscape of narratives, both natural and human-made, constantly changing, shaped and reshaped by time and nature, extending far back into history, threatened by constant erosion of edges. Climate change is impacting not only the future of Orkney but also our shared human narrative of the past.



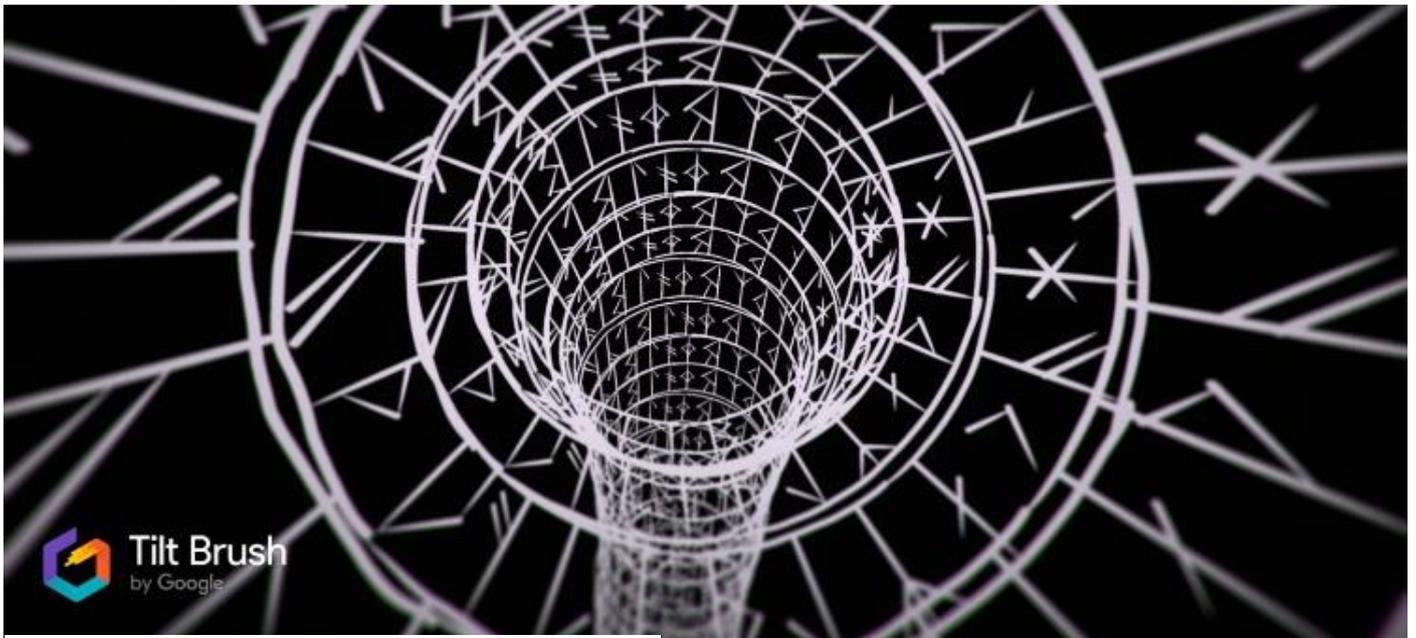
1. Birsay AR sketch (2018)

About half of Orkney's 3,000 sites are under threat from those changes. Some are already being washed away. Since 1970, Orkney beaches have eroded twice as fast as in the previous century. Others that had been stable are now shrinking. Rains, falling heavier and

more often, are dissolving the crusts of soil and sand packs that protect remnants of civilisations. In 2018, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) issued red warnings for nearly a fifth of its sites and put amber, high-risk warnings against another 70%, and in 2019, Orkney became the first cultural World Heritage site to undergo CVI (Climate Change Vulnerability Index) assessment.

Mapping The Void seeks to find a way of engaging with the ecological grief or ‘solastalgia’ that is experienced in the face of a rapidly changing planet. As we experience a state of continual unfolding ecological loss, we ask: how do we face up to these changes? How do we overcome the feelings of loss, anger, hopelessness, powerlessness, despair and distress? How do we find a way to respond in a meaningful, purposeful way?

Using VR-AR and creative writing, Mapping the Void seeks to explore how our narrative and personal landscapes are shaped by the ‘enigmatic traces of others’, asking -- what is the trace we leave behind; how we capture what is no longer present — the traces of those who have gone before us — and how we find ways to let go - both of the past, and of our future imagined narrative?



3. Runic VR gravity well (2018)

Biography

Victoria Bennett is a poet concerned, primarily, with how personal narratives solidify around an emotional landscape. Adam Clarke is an artist who creates stories in a very visual yet abstract way. He is attracted to new and unexplored visual mark-making and loves to explore the narrative possibilities of new technologies. In 2018, they undertook a self-directed residency in Orkney, entitled trace, supported by the a-n 2018 Bursary Scheme. They are long-term creative collaborators on a number of ground-breaking digital heritage projects. They also happen to be married.