



A PROJECT OF MEETING OF WATERS

*Fourth State of Water,
Women.*

ARTISTS

CHARLOTTE QIN

TESSEL VAN DER PUTTE

CURATOR

FRÉDÉRIC ELKAÏM

PRESS KIT

EXPOSITION : 7 – 20 JULY 2026

VERNISSAGE : TUESDAY 7 JULY 2026, 18H

ESPACE RUINE — RUE DES VOLLANDES 15
1207 GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



Water has always been the constant thread running through my practice — as subject, medium, and driving force. My work moves between painting, sculpture, performance, and public engagement, always returning to water as both a physical reality and a cultural foundation: something planetary and intimate at once. “Fourth State of Water, Women.” grows from this same urgency — but turns inward, toward a more poetic and embodied inquiry. It is an invitation to slow down, to sense, and to think with water rather than simply about it.

Charlotte Qin



Water is always in transition. It takes the form of whichever vessel contains it, and in doing so, reveals something about that vessel: its boundaries, its pressure points, its hidden depths. I work from this sensation, from the way water refuses fixity, refuses to be fully held. My paintings explore the body as a permeable landscape in its own right: a place where the boundary between self and environment is not a wall but a shoreline, constantly redrawn by tide.

Tessel van der Putte

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Fourth State of Water, Women. takes its name from a scientific discovery: the existence of a fourth state of water — a semi-crystalline phase found at the interface where water meets living surfaces. For Charlotte Qin and Tessel van der Putte, this state becomes language, metaphor, and memory.

For decades, climate narratives have been dominated by carbon metrics, relegating water to the margins — just as dominant thinking has too often dismissed the fluidity, care, and embodied wisdom coded as feminine. This project proposes a reversal: a return to the liquid, not as sentiment but as method — an ethics of attention and a politics of relationship.

At the centre is the proposition that the state of water is manifested in the states of women — a poetic and critical framework for thinking about what remains uncontainable: desire, fertility, devotion, rage, protection, collapse, and renewal.

THREE STATES

I. Interior waters

the pregnant body, meditation, virginity, the angelic and the sacred: a field of receptivity where power is quiet, concentrated, and luminous.

II. Tidal waters

desire and being desired, intimacy, making love: a fluid intelligence that exceeds language, where the body becomes river, rhythm, exchange.

III. Storm waters

vomit, danger, rage, protection: the threshold where care becomes shield, where the body defends itself, where the feminine is not “soft” but ferociously alive.

INSTALLATION : MEMBRANE

At the heart of the exhibition is a hydromorphic installation. Hand-formed porcelain sculptures descend from the ceiling on near-invisible threads, while others rest on mirror fragments on the floor like aquatic creatures risen from a lake bed. These two presences — aerial and earth-bound — are the same organism seen in two states of flotation. The mirrors do not reflect the room: they reflect the porcelain canopy above, creating the illusion of depth beneath the floor, as if the ground were a water surface.

PIÈCES DE L'EXPOSITION



Auto-fragment #1

oil on canvas
20 x 20 cm

Charlotte Qin



Auto-fragment #2

oil on canvas
20 x 20 cm

Charlotte Qin



Auto-fragment #3

oil on canvas
20 x 20 cm

Charlotte Qin



Infra-rouge

oil on canvas
15 x 15 cm

Charlotte Qin



Tidal Changes

acrylic on canvas
90 x 120 cm

Tessel van der Putte



Three Streams

acrylic on canvas
100 x 120 cm

Tessel van der Putte



Meditations IV
(rotating artwork)

acrylic on canvas and wood
80 cm

Tessel van der Putte



Meditations I
(rotating artwork)

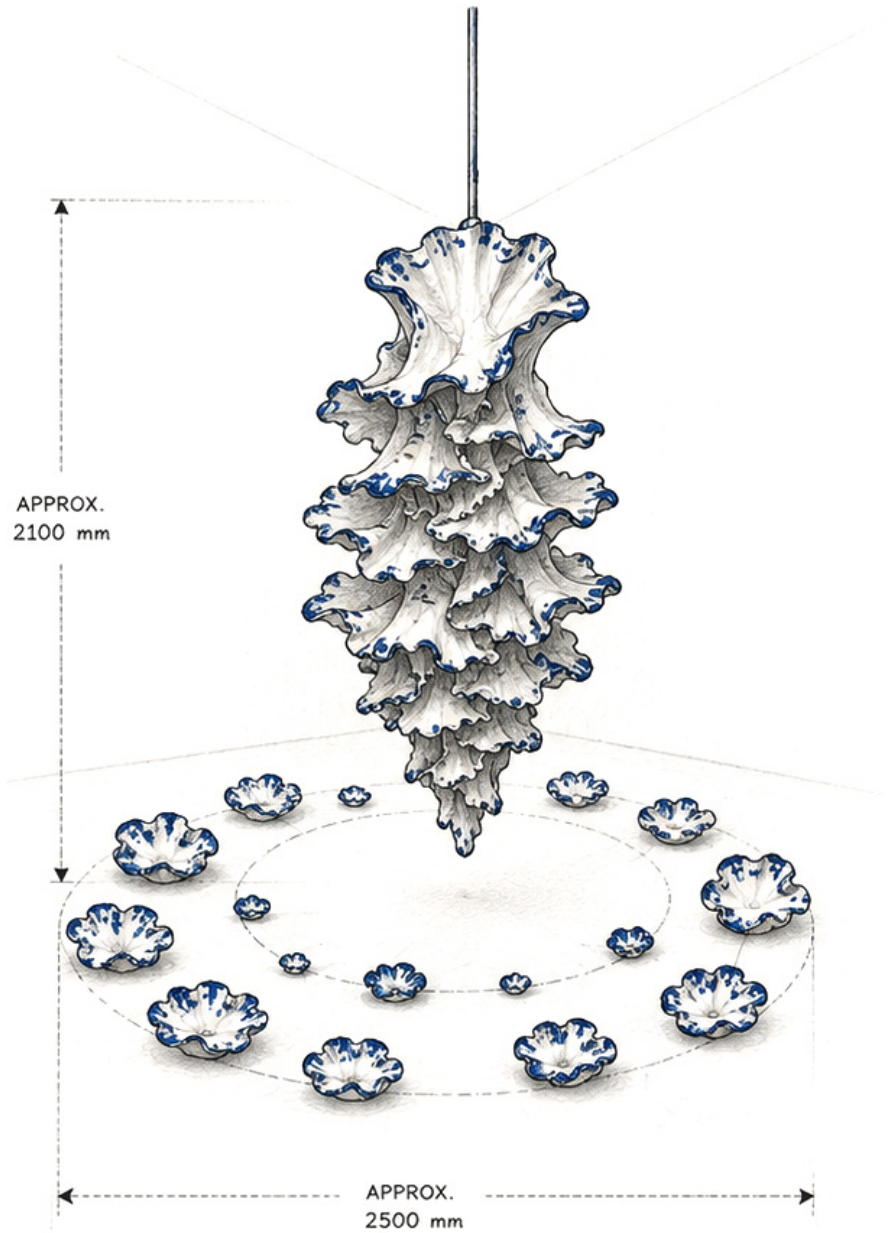
acrylic on canvas and wood
80 cm

Tessel van der Putte

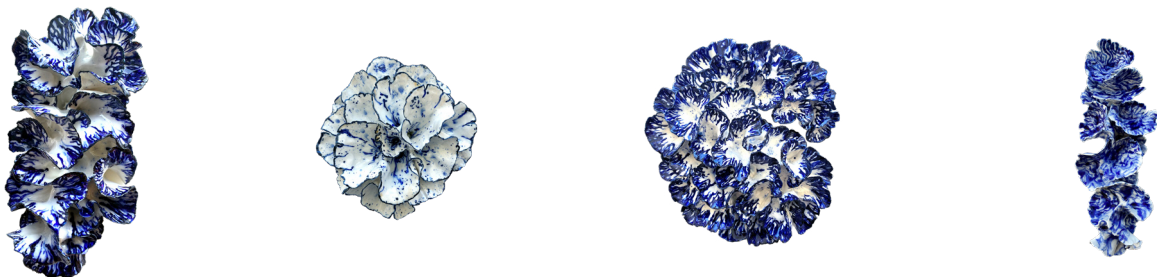
INSTALLATION

At the heart of the exhibition, the installation brings together hand-formed porcelain pieces whose organic shapes evoke the movement of corals and underwater blooms. The central piece creates a sensation of weightlessness—that of the maternal womb and the deep ocean, two spaces where the body exists before gravity, before the boundary.

White and blue are not an arbitrary aesthetic choice: they evoke a shared beauty, that of porcelain which transcends civilizations—China, Persia, the Arab world, Europe, the Netherlands—carried along the Silk Road like a common language of clay and fire. In this dialogue between cultures and bodies, water is everywhere: in the material, in the form, in the collective memory that blue and white porcelain has carried within it for centuries.



PORCELAIN VARIATION



COLOUR : WHITE / BLUE / GOLD

PERFORMANCE

The opening performance extends a practice that Charlotte Qin has been developing alongside the founding of *Meeting of Waters*—in public and political spaces dedicated to water and climate governance, from the United Nations Water Conference (New York, 2023) to COP28, 29, and 30 (Dubai, Baku, Belém), and including World Water Day 2026 in Skopje, Macedonia.

For this second edition of “The Fourth State of Water,” she reflects within the gallery space: where “The Fourth State of Water (2025)” depicted the different states of water as so many feminine temperaments—storm, gentleness, the beauty of chaos—the 2026 performance goes further, exploring what makes these states possible.

“ Perhaps the second edition of *The Fourth State of Water* is about love. Because love softens the heart, love teaches us to give and to receive—all change begins with love. This year, the performance will be something else...”

Charlotte Qin



CURATOR



Frédéric Elkaim (Geneva) is a curator of contemporary practices that articulate visual language with social and existential questions. Vice-President of *Meeting of Waters*, he contributes to the initiative's curatorial vision by forging links between artistic practice, ecological commitment, and cultural diplomacy. For this project, his approach highlights the exhibition space as a threshold—where aesthetics, thought, and collective experience converge.

ARTISTES



Charlotte Qin (Geneva) is a Chinese-Canadian artist. Trained in physics and design engineering, she worked at CERN before developing a practice rooted in embodied research and affective diplomacy. Founder of *Meeting of Waters*, she contributes to international climate processes, including UN water conferences and COPs. Her work is included in the collections of the Swiss Embassy in China and the World Water Library, Reichenau-Tamins, Switzerland.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2026: World Water Day, Skopje, Macedonia (Performance)
2026: Guest Exhibition, Villars Palace, Villars-sur-Ollon, Switzerland
2025: COP30, Belém, Brazil (Performance)
2025: Hydrophilia (Solo Show), Majid Foundation, Ascona, Switzerland
2025: The Fourth State of Water (Solo Show), Art Now Projects Gallery, Carouge, Switzerland
2024: COP29, Baku, Azerbaijan (Performance)
2024: 42 Gong Fang Museum (Group Show), Beijing, China
2023: COP28, Dubai, United Arab Emirates (Performance and Group Show)
2023: Swiss Water, Chinese Ink (Solo Show), XVIII World Water Congress, Beijing, China
2023: Atelier Mondial (Group show), Basel, Switzerland.
2023: Sacred Water (Solo show), Centre des Arts, Geneva, Switzerland.
2022: ALT.AR Residency, Jaipur, India.
2022: Narva Art Residency, Narva, Estonia.
2022: Invited Exhibition, World Water Week, Stockholm, Sweden.
2022: Design Research Society, Bilbao, Spain.
2022: Invited Exhibition, World Water Forum, Dakar, Senegal.
2021 : *L'eau, une histoire* (Solo show), Espace Candice, Ferney-Voltaire, France.
2020 : Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven, Pays-Bas.
2017 : MainLine Gallery (Group show), Montreal, Canada.

PUBLICATIONS

2026 : Hydrophilia — Geneva Agape Foundation (ISBN 9783907891049).
2020 : HeartBees: Visualizing Crowd Affects — IEEE VISAP
2020 : Having a Heart Time? A Wearable-based Biofeedback System — MobileHCI
2017 : Development and characterisation of a gas system for an ATLAS small-strip thin gap chamber testing facility — Journal of Instrumentation (JINST), IOP Publishing



Tessel van der Putte (The Hague, Netherlands) is a visual artist and researcher with a background in human rights and nature conservation initiatives. Before dedicating herself fully to her practice, she worked at the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) in Geneva in humanitarian communication and policy advocacy. Her work reveals a multitude of female perspectives, the beauty of vulnerability, and the power of care. She is a recognized member of Stroom Den Haag and a board member of the NGO Green Seed Geneva.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2026 : BIG ART Art Fair (upcoming).
2026 : Terra Stories Eco-retreat Residency, Lago Maggiore, Italie.
2026 : Son Blanc Residency, Minorque, Espagne.
2026 : RedCorner Nomadic Residency, Oulan-Bator & Steppe, Mongolie.
2025 : (Re)Turning Cycles (Solo show), Seelab, La Haye, Pays-Bas.
2024 : Root to Rise (Solo show), The Westergas, Amsterdam, Pays-Bas.
2024 : Body Currents (Solo show), GÆA Studio, Rotterdam, Pays-Bas.
2022–2023 : Empowered (Solo show), A'DAM Tower, Amsterdam, Pays-Bas.

PUBLICATIONS

2025 : Environmental displacement and human migration in the most vulnerable nations in Pathways To Sustainable Development, Edward Elgar Publishing
2021 : Small Islands and Climate Change in Fulfilling The Sustainable Development Goals, Taylor & Francis
2018 : Contributor — Homage to Humanity, Jimmy Nelson

“My background in human rights and climate research brought me into close contact with communities whose existence is shaped by rising seas and shifting coastlines - people for whom the border between land and water is no longer abstract, but existential. That work changed how I see bodies, both human and more-than-human, and deepened the parallels I draw between the water body and the female body... In many legal, political, and cultural systems, female bodies and water bodies have been similarly managed, contained, and undervalued. And similarly resistant.”

PUBLIC PROGRAM

TUESDAY 7 JULY 2026, 18H

Vernissage

Opening of the exhibition with both artists present. Performance by Charlotte Qin. Remarks by curator Frédéric Elkaïm, followed by cocktail.

SATURDAY 11 JULY 2026, 17H

Workshop #1 : Interior Waters (RSVP)

A workshop combining embodiment practice and artistic creation (ink, paint, gesture) with both artists. An invitation to explore the notion of "inner water": breath, movement, perception, then creation.

THURSDAY 16 JULY 2026, 18H30

Table ronde : Femmes, eau et gouvernance

Round table facilitated by Frédéric Elkaïm, bringing together:

- **Nicole Gallina**, Director of CIPEL (International Commission for the Protection of Lake Geneva)
- **Sepideh Nayemi**, Awareness and Promotion, PPeau / International Cooperation of OCEau (Geneva Canton Office of Water)
- **Charlotte Qin & Tessel van der Putte**, artists

SUNDAY 19 JULY 2026, 17H

Workshop #2 / Finissage

Second artistic workshop session, followed by the closing of the exhibition with artists and curator. Closing cocktail.

ADDRESS

Espace Ruine — Rue des Vollandes 15, 1207 Genève, Suisse

Free entry

CONTACTS

PRODUCTION

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CURATION

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VENUE

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