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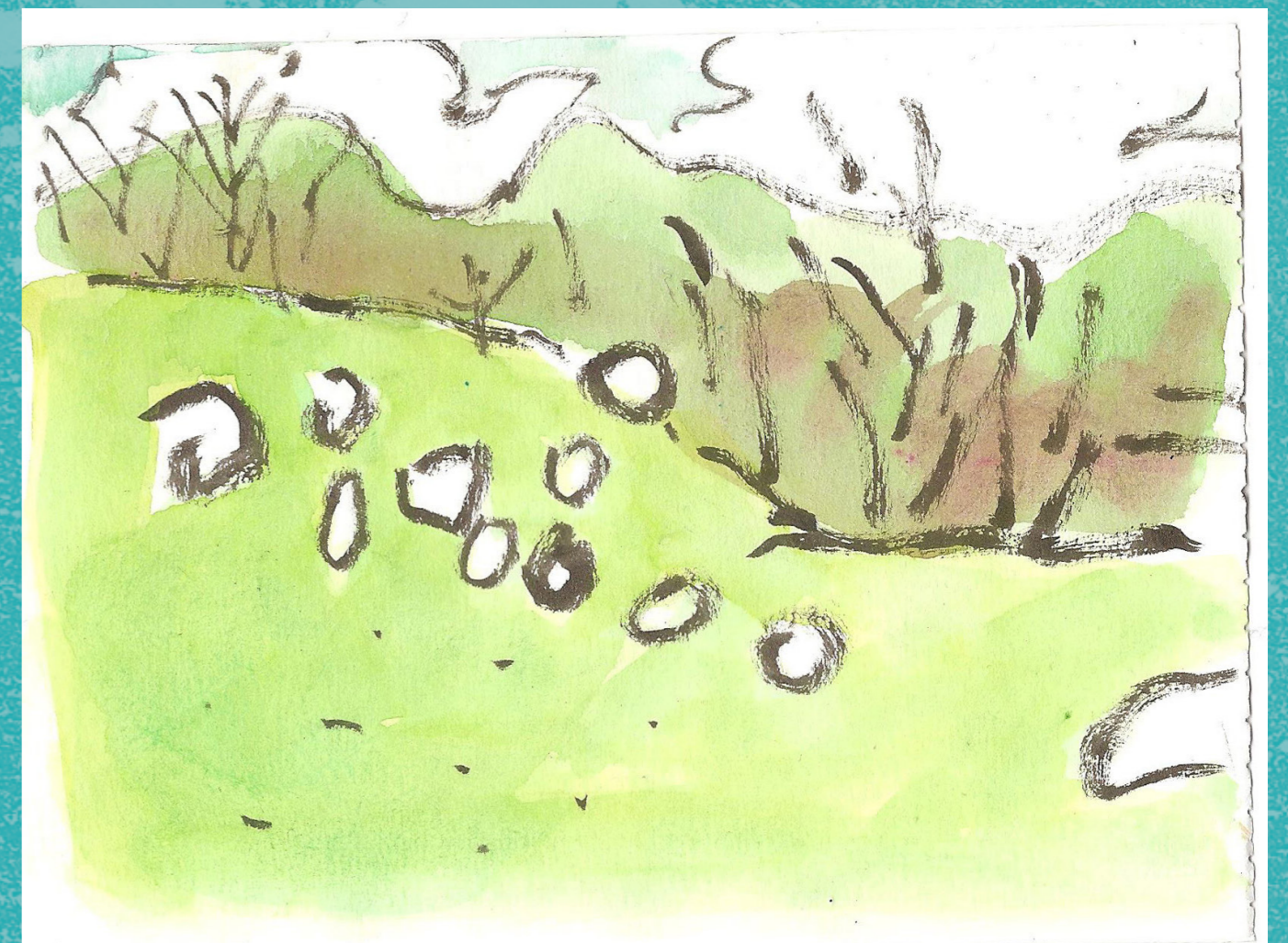
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Sketches of the River Severn, March 2024

Illustrating human relationships to landscape: reinterpreting folklore of the river severn

Dr. Katie Forrester, Senior Lecturer in illustration

My current research explores visual storytelling as a method of documenting and reinterpreting the folklore of landscapes - in particular the River Severn. I am interested in the intersections of visual storytelling, story-making, and landscape to bring attention to our relationships with nature.

The folklore of the River Severn is a mesh of Indo-European, Saxon, Norse, Celtic and Roman myth, among others. Roman myth is evident in the form of the goddess Sabrina, who the river is named after, and reflected in the Celtic goddess of rebirth, Ceridwen. The stories of the Severn are examples of how folklore illuminates a place - and shows us that others have been there before, evidencing a legacy of diversity and belonging. Such layered stories recognise a consistent ebb and flow in our geographies and histories, connecting us intimately to the land, while offering us respite from the transient and intangible digital world.

Ultimately, the folklore of the River Severn presents a way to understand human and ecological histories, natural phenomena, and to question our mediated lifestyles that tend to limit imaginations, possibilities for play, and self-actualisation. By combining ecocriticism with folklorist theory, I aim to reinterpret folktales in the context of climate change through visual storytelling. The aim of this project is to share these themes and folktales through illustrations, prints, and installations.



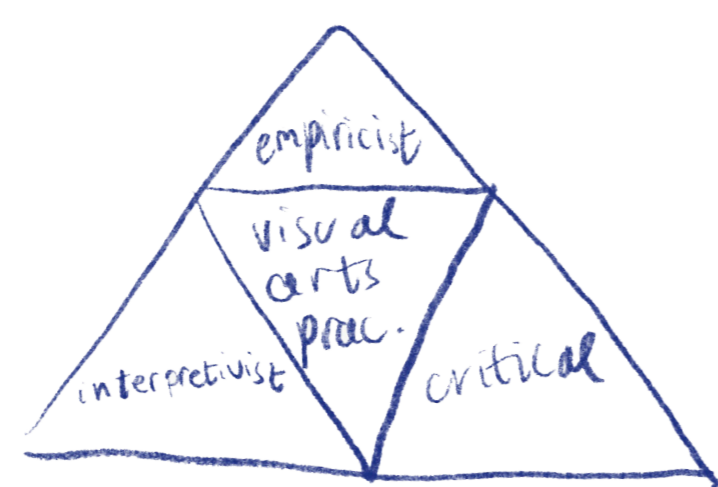
'Pay attention,' Susan Sontag once advised a young audience; she was speaking of the creative process, but also of living. 'It's all about paying attention... Attention is vitality. It connects you with others...' ... the difference between looking and seeing, between hearing and listening, between accepting what the world presents and noticing what matters to you' (in Walker 2019).



Details of drawing on Lithographic Stones, February - August 2024



Sabrina character (2024)



The methodology draws on Graeme Sullivan's framework which describes 'that visual arts research is a simple and complex liquid structure with powerful generative potential for change...' and terms this metaphor 'the braid' with an 'infurling and unfolding form that disengages and reconnects with core themes while continually moving into new spaces...' (Sullivan, 2010 p.122).

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The lithographic process involves drawing directly onto limestone and uses an oil/water resist process that necessitates interaction with natural materials and their physical qualities. This project explores nature, folklore and fantasy, in part, through this alchemical printmaking technique.



'In museums, libraries and the landscape, a memory remains of the wilderness of unquiet graves, riddling marshes and storm beaten-cliffs.'

Amy Jeffs

AUTHOR INFO

I am an illustrator and printmaker based in Gloucester. My illustration work draws on narrative theory, nature, folk- and fairy-tale. I currently work as a Senior Lecturer in Illustration and Course Lead for MA Illustration at University of Gloucestershire. If you are interested in these themes. I would love to hear from you:
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