

ABSTRACT

When I Cry Into My Icosahedral Mermaid Womb, The Sea Cradles Me: Creating Imaginary Water Worlds For Suicidal Depression and Healing Through Multisensory Environments

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Imagine a future where technology is liquid, where the human senses are entirely wet, foggy, mushy, and gooey. Where everything and everywhere is liquefied and watery. Where humans evolve into pluviophile (love of rain) and hydrophile species. Imagine what state our depressed and suicidal bodies would react to and sustain in this hyper-watery world. This thesis set out to reimagine and recreate my personal experiences with depression, anxiety, and suicidal behaviours through a wet, watery, emotional, and hyper-futuristic narrative. The project aimed to design and create a series of immersive multi-sensory environments that provide therapeutic and healing spaces for mental health and well-being. Thus I have been informed by my personal story through imaginary water worlds and speculative fiction writing as a method of inquiry. These immersive multi-sensory works explore various emerging creative technologies to help realise my thesis project, such as using sound, interactive installation, digital, and extended reality (XR) technologies. I have used my own body, bodily experience, and personal feelings as a storytelling tool and primary material for my master's project. Water plays a significant role in my creative research and practice. Also, it hugely influences my writing, providing therapeutic and healing qualities. The approach to my research has drawn from methodological perspectives, including autophenomenography, first-person narrative, sensory ethnography, and speculative fiction through creative practice. I am using 'water' as a metaphorical guideline for methodological approaches to tie together as one, connecting these bodies of watery perspectives into an oceanic methodology. The significance of the research is the engagement and immersion of the multi-sensory environments through creating imaginary water worlds that offer a space for others to swim, dive, and acknowledge these critical issues relating to mental health by sharing personal stories and connections to their own experiences.