

Dancing from Sculpture: Beyond the Waves by Chris Pavia

Activity notes



About Beyond the Waves

Beyond The Waves is a collaboration between choreographer Chris Pavia, Watts Gallery Trust and DAiSY (Disability Arts in Surrey) with mentoring support and dance artists from Stopgap Dance Company. As Artist in Residence at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village, Chris explored the dynamics of energy and movement seen in the full and partial sculptures by G F Watts displayed at Watts Gallery.

Stimulated by the powerful nature and impressive energy of these sculptures, Chris began looking at elemental forces in the natural world, drawing from film and photographic references of vivid waterfalls, turbulent seas, fast running currents and the dynamism of galloping horses.

Beyond the Waves brings three solo dances together through film, with filming and live performance taking place in 2021.



About Chris Pavia

Chris Pavia is an international touring dance artist and choreographer.

He is a member of Stopgap Dance Company and works in his own right as an independent artist. Chris received Unlimited funding in 2019 to create duet 'The Journey Between', which toured in the UK and to The Hague in The Netherlands.

About Watts Gallery – Artists' Village

Founded in 1904 as the only gallery in the UK devoted to a single artist, Watts Gallery – Artists' Village offers a unique insight into the life and work of 'England's Michelangelo' G F Watts and his wife, the designer and artist Mary Watts. The Artists' Village carries on their legacy of 'Art for All' with historic and contemporary galleries, Artists in Residence, conservation studios and an extensive learning programme.

At the heart of the work of G F and Mary Watts was the belief that art could transform lives, and they campaigned to widen access to art for people in society with the least access to it. Their ethos continues to be at the heart of all we do.



Images: Left to right: G F Watts, Study of a Hand for 'Time, Death and Judgement', Watts Gallery Trust. Detail of the Interior of Watts Chapel. G F Watts, Sir Henry Taylor, 1865-1870, Watts Gallery Trust.

How to use these activity notes

These activity notes have been created to support you and the groups you work with to explore sculpture through dance. You are invited to step inside and explore Chris Pavia's residency at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village, by taking part in a series of activities, all devised by Chris, which draw from his process and methods of creating Beyond the Waves, both remotely and in the studio, researching and collaborating with others.

- ◆ Watch Beyond the Waves in the classroom or studio
- ◆ Book a sculpture research trip to Watts Gallery – Artists' Village
- ◆ Create your own dance, performance, sound and video work in response
- ◆ Share your work with us to showcase in our online schools gallery



Physical Water

Imagine that you are travelling through water whilst moving from one side of the room to the other. How does this change the way your body moves?

This can create a stream of movement across the room; the movement does not need to be set, it is just about exploring and travelling through space.

Use these key words to inspire your travelling movements:

- ◆ Flowing water and streams
- ◆ Push, Pull
- ◆ Skimming across surfaces
- ◆ Pouring
- ◆ Heavy waves
- ◆ Spiralling

For a large group, with more time:

Using a large piece of lycra, the participants can hold a side piece of the material. Then start to create waves and ripples in the material. After exploring the movement of the material, everyone can lift their arms up when holding on.

A few people at once can travel below the material as if they were traveling through water.

For a smaller group, with less time:

Using a water bottle to tip, swirl and see the water inside splashing and how a volume of water moves. This will help them visualise as they travel across the room.



Images: Left to right: G F Watts, Study of Orpheus for 'Orpheus and Eurydice', Watts Gallery Trust. G F Watts, Study of a Male Nude for 'Orpheus and Eurydice', Watts Gallery Trust.

Beyond the Sounds

Using a list of key words, like those below, recreate their sounds using everyday objects. You could record the sounds to make a quick sound score or just play with making the sounds and explore what objects can make different noises.

- ◆ Stormy weather
- ◆ Strong wind
- ◆ Shattering
- ◆ Cracking of ice
- ◆ Water thrashing
- ◆ Shakes from below



Creating sound ideas:

- ◆ Using pasta inside a bottle when shaken sounds like ice shattering
- ◆ Using a piece of paper to flap to create the sound of strong wind
- ◆ Using a metal straw to blow bubbles into a cup of water for water thrashing
- ◆ Circling or tickling fingernails on a cushion, to make deep shakes from below

Additional layer for this task:

Use the sounds that have been created, the students can move in response to them. For example, a few people could make the sounds, whilst the rest of the group move and respond.

Waterfall Statues

Inspiration from: the **Physical Energy Sculpture** from the **Watts Gallery** and **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**.
(When there are frozen statues outside the castle)

Using both of these ideas as inspiration, create **3-5 still positions** (i.e. statues). Once these statues have been set, find a way to flow from one to the other. You can use the idea of dragon wings to create this transitional movement. This should create a short phrase. The movement can flow through each statue or these positions can be used for short pauses within the sequence.

Words and Movement

Chris wrote a poem during the creation process of *Beyond the Waves*, inspired by his own dancers and film scenes from his mood board. This was then read out during rehearsals. As the dancers presented some of the movement, he would read his poem at the same time.

This task is to create a poem or a short creative piece of text. Inspired by clips from films, similarly to Chris. Whilst watching the clips use this as a chance to brainstorm ideas, gather images/movement/sounds that can be described in a poem.

Clips from films that Chris has referenced throughout process:

Percy Jackson : Sea of Monsters – It's a Hippocampus
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKTmUzIspQo>

Narnia – Voyage of the Dawn Treader
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGV9-jqDTzc>
in this scene, Narnia pours out of the painting

The Lord of The Rings, Fellowship of the Ring – Flight to the Ford
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6e7qhhLbAok>

Narnia – Wolves and the river melting scene
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-z8FX7h87w>



You could use this phrase to inspire your statues:

Dragon wings:
expansive, powerful
and majestic.

Image: G F Watts, *Physical Energy*, 1884-1904, Watts Gallery Trust.



You could also read aloud Chris's poem on the next page of this pack and write down words it makes you feel

Image: A page from Chris Pavia's planning book for *Beyond the Waves*.

Untitled

While water flows through heavy storms and waves the stronger it gets feels like something has pulled me under as I come up for air the water fills the whole room around me like I can see something that emerges from the deep blue clear sea as I am drenched in water I feel like everything pulls me down like heavy thick ice that drops below my feet and it pulls me into a Giant powerful wave that pulls me down stream

Chris Pavia – 9 September 2020





In collaboration with DAISY
(Disability Arts in Surrey)



Mentoring support and dance artists
from Stopgap Dance Company



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