



**May 31<sup>st</sup>, 3-6pm, Main Theatre, Stage@Leeds**

*This work-in-progress showing is part of the River Dialogues Symposium, funded by Ignite (Cultural Institute) and Language Acts and Worldmaking (Kings College)*

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*Phragma* (Greek for 'Dam', or 'partition') is an immersive sound performance created by Nicolas Salazar Sutil and Stuart Mellor. The piece is conceived as a sonic biography of the mythic River Acheloos. The Acheloos is the second largest river in Greece, and it flows from the Lakmos Mountain to the Ionian Sea.

In Ancient Greece, this river was personified as the God Acheloos, Son of Oceanos and Father of all Rivers. The God was variously represented as a man with a watery beard, a raging bull, a green serpent with a human head, or a transvestite. These multiple personas evoke the various qualities of the river: destructive, vibrant, serpentine, and feminine. In the ancient myth, Hercules fought Acheloos in the form of a bull, broke off one of his horns— the famous cornucopia— and ravished the river's most beautiful water nymph.

Hercules's plundering of the river's bounties and the raping of its beauty may be an ancient myth, but it is not lost in a contemporary context. An international battle is under way to deviate the waters of the mythic river. The Greek government has sought to tunnel the river and deviate it to the Aegean Sea in order to irrigate the fertile plains of Thessaly, especially Greece's mass sprawl of industrial cotton farming. The River Acheloos Deviation Project is the longest land and water management case in European legal history. The Greek government first proposed the deviation of the river in 1928, and the latest decree (against deviation) was announced by the European High Court of Justice in 2018.

This performance focuses on the fragmentation of the river through dams, canals, tunnels and aqueducts, evoking the timeless human battle to subdue wild waters. Even though the only actor in this performance is the river, conveyed through 3D sound, our work also voices local cultural expressions of love for Acheloos, through echoes of community song, dance and storytelling, where the spirit of this river can be heard running through.

The work is conceived as an immersive 3D sound installation, recorded in situ using binaural technology. *Phragma* is a durational piece featuring a 4-speaker and dual projection system.

## Team

Conceived by **Nicolas Salazar Sutil** and **Stuart Mellor**

Sound: **Stuart Mellor**

Video: **Nicolas Salazar Sutil**

Drone footage: **Andreas Tyrologou**

Photography: **George Karagiannis**

Music by **Christos Karakitsios**

Words by **Ioannes Nikolaus** and **Giorgos Patras**



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