

Community, Culture, and Belonging: A Multimedia Zine
<https://herring-pumpkin-tekf.squarespace.com/zine>

Community, culture, and belonging are key pieces of humanity often set upon the back burner of technological development – normalizing technologies destructive to people and the planet. This digital zine investigates these themes through the lenses of environmental justice and technology. Below, we present 10 multi-media creative works and three honorable mentions from our community that explore these ideas. We hope you enjoy this zine as much as we have enjoyed compiling it!

Roxane Permar (She/Her)

I am an artist living and working in the Shetland Islands since 2000. Shetland is the most northerly archipelago in the UK, with a population of just over 22,000 situated in the North Sea, at 60° North, a similar latitude as cities such as Anchorage (61° N), Oslo (59°), Helsinki (59°) and St Petersburg, Russia (60°).

My submission is a body of work called Landscape in Pain, which includes an ongoing series of digital drawings, films and a web site which represent my response to the on-going construction of the Viking Energy Wind Farm on Shetland's Mainland. While the drawings and film have made impact through exhibitions, the web site has gained importance because it has become a means to extend awareness, share new knowledge and reach a wider audience both in Shetland and further afield.

The Viking Energy Wind Farm is industrial scale and will become one of the largest onshore wind farms in Europe. Construction commenced in September 2020, after many years of public debate and local dissent. Construction is due to be complete in 2024. This wind farm has severely divided the Shetland community and is a cause for collective pain. Some equate it to the impact caused by the Scottish Clearances, calling the Viking Energy Wind Farm the 21st century Clearances.

There are several activist groups that have formed in response to the wind farm development. The first, Sustainable Shetland, was formed in 2008 in response to plans to build the wind farm and remains active despite losing its long fight against it. In Scotland the decisions for wind farm development are taken at national rather than local level, a cause for widespread complaint across Scotland. Many in the Shetland community feel aggrieved because we were never able to democratically register our opinion.

Sustainable Shetland, of which I have been a member since its earliest days, is not against renewable energy as such, but advocates for environmental justice in relation to decision making and consideration of issues such as disproportionate scale, environmental issues, and human impact.

The impact of noise and infrasound on health from the Viking Energy Wind Farm is of huge concern. More than 70 of the 103 wind turbines are being built within the recommended minimum distance (2 km) from people's homes, some of which will be near multiple turbines. Environmental issues include ongoing questions about landslides, contamination from micro plastics due to erosion of the wind turbine blades, danger to wildlife and the true carbon benefit when building on blanket peat. In Shetland the wind farm is being built on pristine peat up to at least 3 metres deep. Two sections of the web site (the Blog and Research) enable me to engage in a process of self-education for myself and a wider community.

Some of the research findings I include are in step with articles in local press written by members of our community as well as debate in opinion columns and social media concerning contamination from micro plastics due to erosion of wind turbine blades, peat landslides and the question of Solastalgia, the distress caused by environmental change. I was contacted about Solastalgia as it wasn't known to some in the Shetland community, who in turn published an article in one of our local papers about individual

Shetlanders' feelings in relation to the environmental destruction caused by construction of the wind farm. The interest generated by these topics has encouraged discussion about ways to bring the wider community together to talk about the issues raised by the wind farm development and, more widely, related to the transition to net zero in Shetland.

We are organising a series of public talks this autumn (2022) and winter (2023) which can be attended in person or by video conference. Initial topics will reflect themes raised in local media about the wind farm, and which I explore on the web site, including ecological grief; erosion from wind turbines and micro plastic contamination; peat landslides; impact on health from noise, infrasound and micro plastics; the net carbon benefit of wind turbines; ownership models; the social dimension of energy transition, etc. I now think about the Viking Energy Wind Farm development in terms of external exploitation of Shetland's natural wind resource, akin to old-fashioned forms of colonial ownership, with the related network of its sub-companies as the colonisers.

It has truly opened the door to expanded colonisation of Shetland as an offshore energy plant for populations, and corporate owners, very far away, with numerous proposals for developments related to the energy transition being tabled. We must ask if these are just and find ways to not only raise awareness but to effectively use our collective voice to ensure fair development. How can we achieve sustainability in our lives and leverage renewable energies without causing undue harm to marginalised communities such as Shetland?

<https://herring-pumpkin-tekf.squarespace.com/zine/landscape-in-pain>

Link to submission: <https://www.landscapeinpain.uk/>