

CHARLES BENEKE ARTIST

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Artist's Statement *Slack Water*

slack water ('slak 'wo-tər, 'wä-)

n. : the period at the turn of the tide when there is little or no horizontal motion of tidal water

refraction (ri-'frak-shən)

n. 1: deflection from a straight path undergone by a light ray or energy wave in passing obliquely from one medium (as air) into another (as glass) in which its velocity is different 2: the change in the apparent position of a celestial body due to bending of the light rays emanating from it as they pass through the atmosphere; also : the correction to be applied to the apparent position of a body because of this bending 3: the action of distorting an image by viewing through a medium; also: an instance of this.

ebb ('eb)

n. : the movement of the tide out to sea

There are moments when we as individuals, and a world, are flooded with life-changing experiences from which we resurface transformed in the ebb tide. We are left for a moment in the slack water, with little movement, to pause and reflect upon what has happened and consider how we have changed, who we have become through these life experiences.

The works exhibited in *Slack Water* will include a series of photogravure/etchings titled *Refraction*, a multimedia projection titled *Ebb*, and two large-scale paintings. In these interrelated, multidisciplinary works the altering effects of water and the archetypical idea of the flood serve as allegories for the evolution of individual memory and its role in the construction of personal identity.

In his book *The Visual Elements of Landscape* John Jackle states "a memory is what is left behind when something happens and does not completely unhappen." John Berger stated in his BBC series *Ways of Seeing* that, "an image is a sight which has been recreated and reproduced. It is an appearance, or a set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved—for a few moments or a few centuries. Every image embodies a way of seeing."

I see my works as records of memories of that have been detached from the place and time where they existed and are preserved in a visual format. My works evolve from the things that I have encountered that have not completely unhappened and become things that reappear on paper, panel, canvas, and in the observations of my viewer. My works tell stories whose truths lie not in what happened or how these things were experienced, but in what these experiences have become through the process of living with their effects and the transformative properties of thought and memory.

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