



OUR DISAPPEARING DARKNESS AND RECREATING TRUE NIGHT : MJ SHARP



#esiStateOfTheArt

[MJ Sharp](#), Fulbright Scholar 2021/2022 and resident artist, is our State of the Art speaker for February 2022.

This event is in collaboration with Global teams from the College of Humanities and the College of Life and Environmental Sciences.

MJ will be giving the ESI State of the Art talk on **Monday 28 February 3 – 4pm (GMT):**

Our Disappearing Darkness and Recreating True Night

A vanishingly small percentage of our evolutionary time as human beings has been spent in artificial light. For a large percentage of the world's population, the experience of night is quickly becoming a boutique and privileged one. When we are robbed of night—from seeing the night sky that fueled the world's mythologies to experiencing our own creaturely human adaptation to the dark— what are we missing?

Archeological evidence from some prehistoric megaliths in Cornwall suggests that people were visiting these sites in liminal light or at night. Could an artistic recreation of that experience help us better understand what we're missing when we live our lives awash in light pollution—light pollution that isn't even limited to earth at this point, but includes a truly staggering number of satellites already in orbit or slated to be in orbit in the unregulated space above earth.

Cornwall is remarkable both for its concentration of prehistoric sites and for its dark skies. Two of the seven designated Dark Sky Parks in the UK are in Cornwall—West Penwith recently joined Bodmin Moor with that status. I'm in Cornwall on a 2021/2022 Fulbright Scholar Award to explore our loss of darkness with Professor Kevin Gaston of the Environment and Sustainability Institute at the University of Exeter, Penryn Campus. The Environment and Sustainability Institute had the collaboration of artists and scientists in its very founding in the form of the Creative Exchange Programme, led by Professor Caitlin DeSilvey.

I will be talking about my artistic journey to recreate prehistoric darkness—from the germ of the idea to its current state, which has been immeasurably deepened by the input and insights of many generous artists, researchers, and scholars.

Join the Zoom Meeting

<https://Universityofexeter.zoom.us/j/96057590241?pwd=QU9vRG1Tck03VzYwdVBCcjJVN3E0dz09>

Meeting ID: 960 5759 0241

Password: 603286

Or join the Live Stream on the [ESI Facebook page](#) on the day.