

WATERSHED MOMENTS

connecting source to sea on the Columbia River

2 0 1 9 P R O J E C T P L A N

hello@clairedibble.com | 250.290.0201



FOREWARD

There was a time when I spent all day every day outside. Nights too. Working as a raft guide at first, then as a teacher at New River Academy, a traveling high school for teen kayakers. My tent was my home, my gigantic dry bag was my closet (and desk). Each day was different, and yet the activities that developed on the road and on the river became a familiar routine.

Now I have a 'life'. I own a home with my husband, I run my own business, I grow a garden. I spend way more time in front of my computer screen than outdoors these days, and the angst I feel around this fact helped hatch a plan. A plan that will have me back on the water and outside in rain and sun for nearly four months starting July 2019. Paddling every day, from source to sea on the Columbia River.

ABOUT

WATERSHED MOMENTS

connecting source to sea on the Columbia River

Watershed Moments is a solo paddling expedition and social-engagement art project that will cover all 2000 kilometers (1243 miles) of the Columbia River between the source near my home in Golden, British Columbia to the sea beyond Astoria, Oregon. Start date of July 1, 2019.

At the core of this pursuit is the intention to connect people to one another despite apparent differences, to connect viewers of the final work to the land and watershed, and to raise awareness of the very real issues related to this river in the midst of the renegotiations of the Columbia River Treaty.

I'm not using this project to champion a single issue, though there are many I could choose. Rather, I plan to engage and connect with communities and landscapes as I travel, allowing my artistic works to form an inclusive portrait of the river and its people in 2019.

THE TRIP

2000 kilometers.

14 hydro dams.

4 months.

1 kayak.

In July 2019, I'll start paddling on Columbia Lake, following the winding braids of the Columbia River as they sprawl into broad reservoirs. I'll encounter more headwinds than whitewater and I'll portage around dams instead of waterfalls. First through eastern BC, then Washington, then along the Oregon border to the sea.

I'll be paddling an average of 20 km (12.5 miles) per day, a pace that will allow time to engage with people along the way. I'll be stopping at scheduled times for artist talks, school engagements in the second half, and for coordinated and pre-planned community paddle days in a handful of riverside towns.





PROJECT DETAILS

exhibiting while paddling

I'll be creating and presenting a growing series of images in two art galleries along the river as I travel; the Kootenay Gallery in Castlegar, BC and Columbia Art Gallery in Hood River, OR. Each week I'll upload a new batch of 10 photographs to be printed and shipped directly to the galleries. There are other art components to the trip, described in the coming pages.

the kayak

The vessel I've chosen for this journey is a 14' skin-on-frame kayak, the F1 design from Cape Falcon Kayak. The Western Red Cedar was sourced from the upper Columbia Basin, and the White Oak comes from the lower Basin.

My father visited me for a week of framing in November, and the kayak is still in progress.



ABOUT CLAIRE

Claire Dibble. That's me.

I'm a photographer, artist, and writer. Prior to embracing these labels, I defined myself primarily as a kayaker.

Fuelled by a love of the outdoors and an adventurous spirit, I spend as much time exploring as possible. In my photographic work, I strive to highlight the ways we all are connected, to one another and to the planet at large.

I'm fascinated by the invisible threads that link people across boundaries, real or imagined. My intent is to increase a sense of community on a local and global scale through environmental portraits, sincere listening, and collecting stories that humanize and show shared experiences.

I'm originally from the broken coastline of Maine and I'm now based in the Canadian Rockies, close to the headwaters of the Columbia River.

As of 2014, I'm a dual citizen (US and Canada) and feel very grateful for such a privilege.

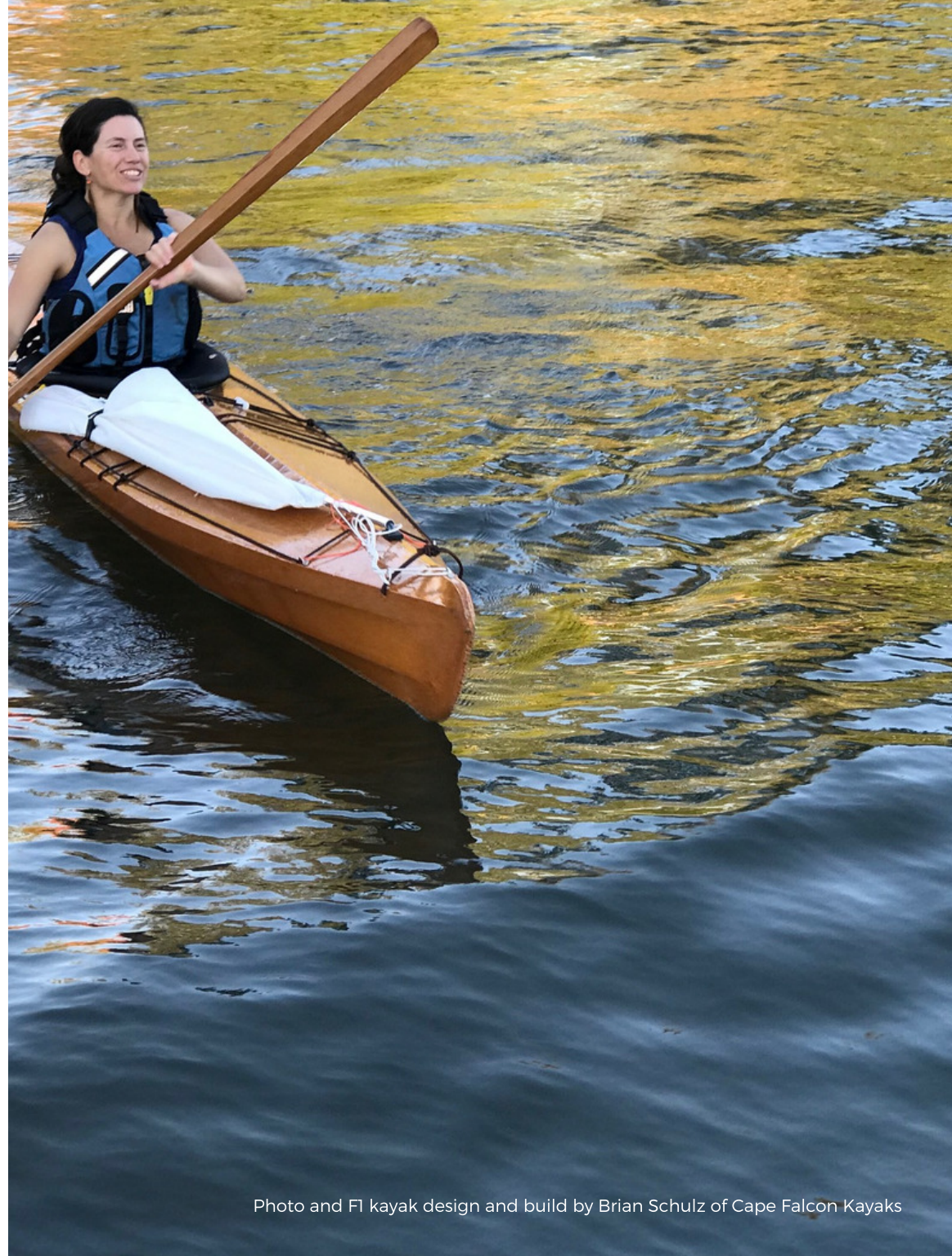
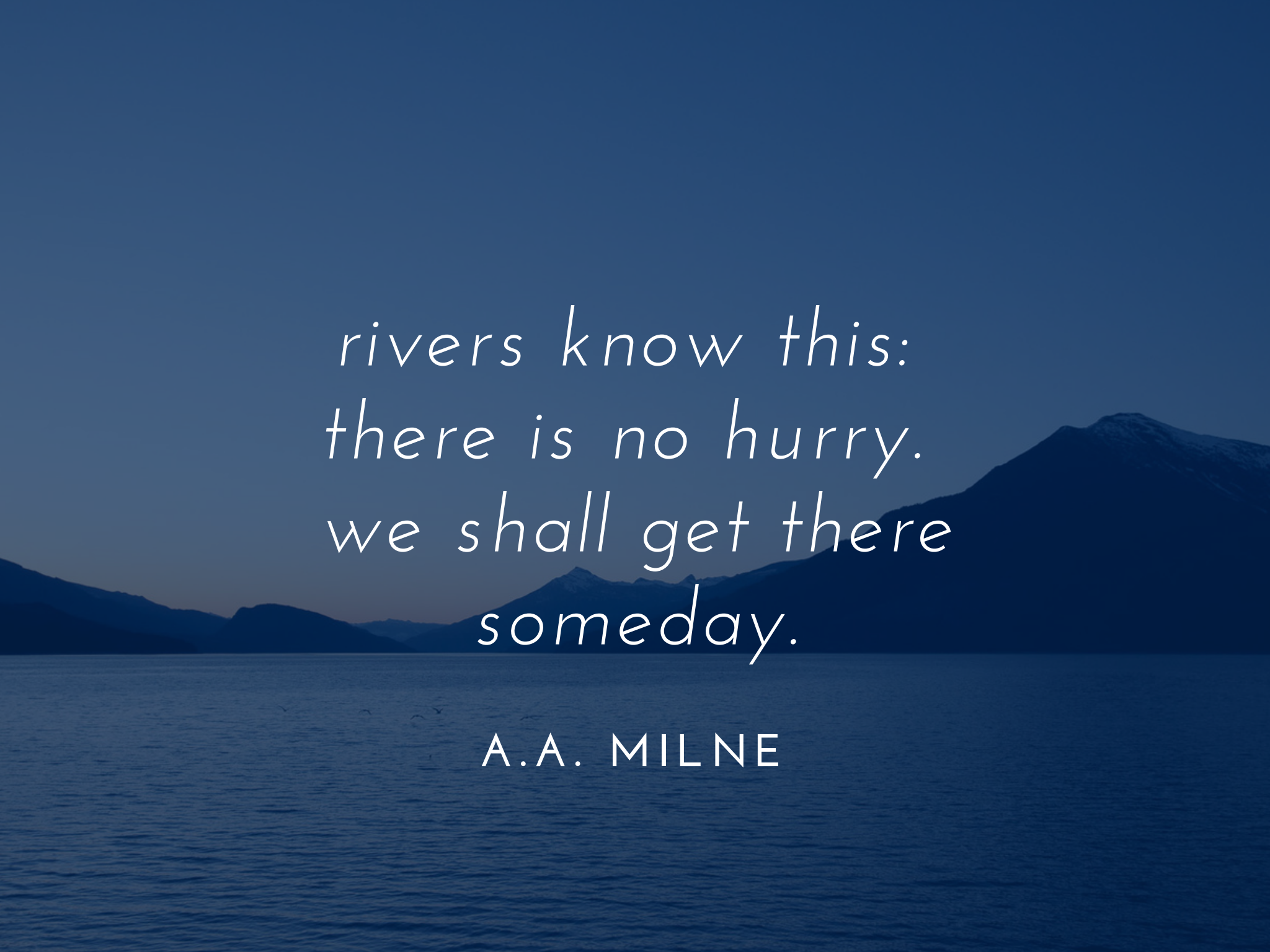


Photo and FI kayak design and build by Brian Schulz of Cape Falcon Kayaks



*rivers know this:
there is no hurry.
we shall get there
someday.*

A.A. MILNE

THE ART

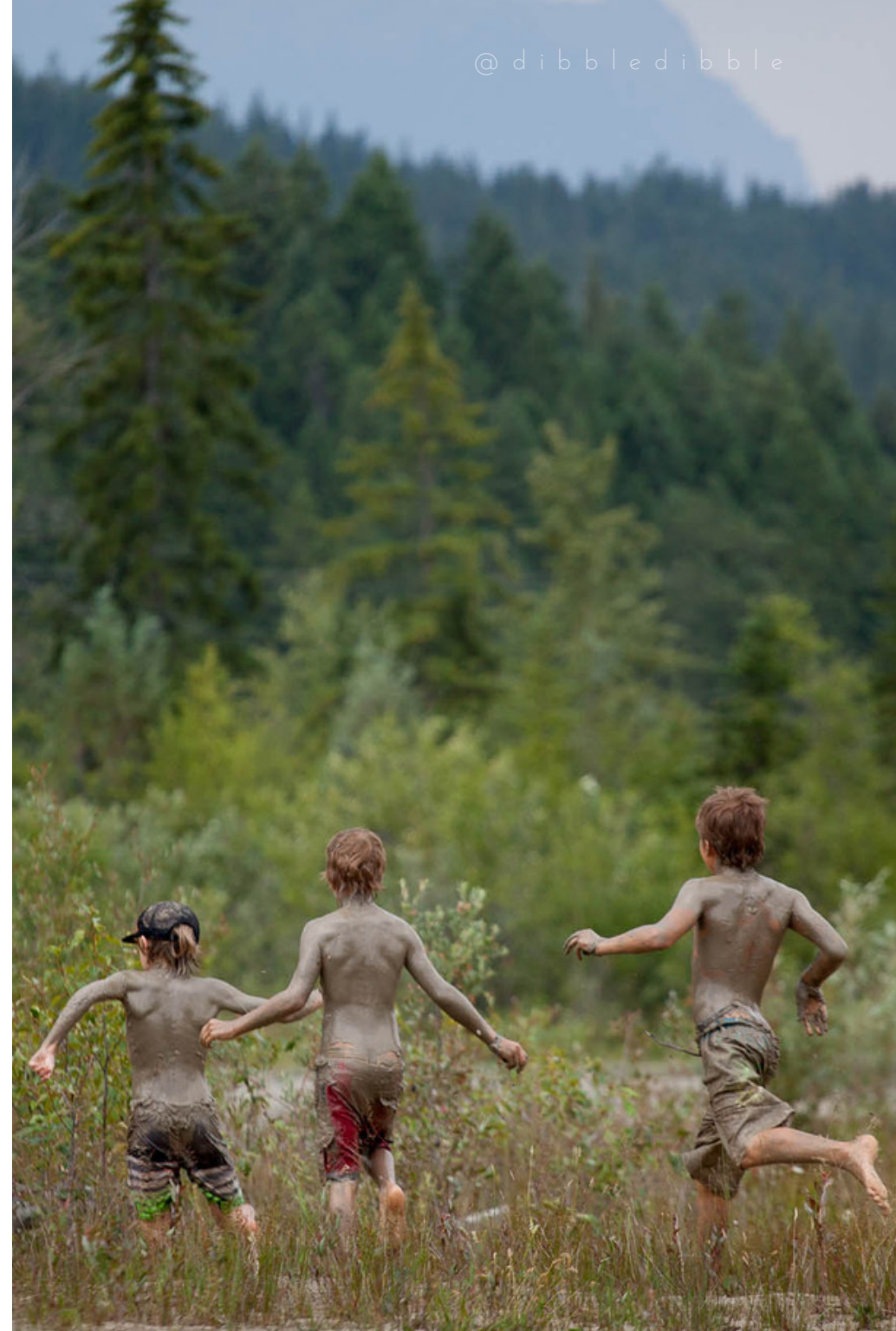
Rather than creating art based solely on my opinions of the river, I'll allow my process to be shaped by the concerns of people I meet. These concerns may relate to flood control, energy production, fisheries and migration, ecosystems, agriculture and food security, navigation, economic stability and growth, loss of sacred sites, displaced communities, and changes in climate and hydrology.

I'll be inviting people along the way to contribute to a collaborative trip log by sharing their words, art, and other contributions relating to the river. I see myself literally carrying the weight of these collected stories downstream, packing the trip log into my kayak and shouldering it as I portage around dams.

I imagine that every interaction with local river residents along my journey will shape the way I view each new section I paddle, creating a kaleidoscope of experience as I travel. The overall goal is to highlight both the diversity of people living along the Columbia, and the commonalities we all share.

A final exhibition will show the handcrafted kayak I'm building for the journey, photographic prints, and the collaborative trip log. This will encourage viewers to contemplate their connection to the natural environment, while also allowing people with differing views to see one another through a lens of compassion and interest.

@dibbledibble





A person is seen from behind, rowing a boat on a wide river. The water is dark and reflects the sky. In the background, a dense line of evergreen trees stretches across the horizon under a hazy, overcast sky. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

*the river is immense, and it
has the capacity to receive,
embrace, and transform.*

*if our hearts are big,
we can be like the river.*

THICH NHAT HANH



GET ON BOARD

Interested in being part of this project?

Want to join me on the water,
figuratively or literally?

I'd love to hear from you, by phone or email.

+1 250 290 0201

hello@clairedibble.com

You can also follow along by signing up for
monthly email updates here: eepurl.com/dCPzHj

And via Instagram, @dibbledibble

