

A Blue Art History (Marseille, 23–24 May 24)

Endoume Marine Station and Mucem, Marseille, May 23–24, 2024

Juliette Bessette, Sorbonne Université

A Blue Art History. Artistic Creation, Biodiversity and Oceanic Environment (19th-21st Centuries).
Une histoire de l'art bleue. Création artistique, biodiversité et environnement océanique (XIXe-XXIe siècles).
International symposium.

This interdisciplinary symposium brings together researchers from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, as well as artists and museum professionals, to analyze ocean-related art. "The ocean comprises the largest object on our planet" is how literary scholar Steve Mentz describes it, as he works to bring together different forms of knowledge about this elusive entity. Mentz coined the term "blue humanities" to bring together interdisciplinary methodologies that focuses on the ocean. This conference aims to enrich this field through the arts. Open to the public, it seeks to encourage exchange and discussion.

PROGRAM

Thursday, May 23

Endoume Marine Station, Endoume Marine Station conference room

Centre d'Océanologie de Marseille, Chemin de la Batterie des Lions, 13007 Marseille

1:40pm: Welcome

1:50pm: Welcoming remarks, Isabelle Renaudet (TELEMMé) and Thierry Perez (IMBE, OSU Institut Pythéas, GDR OMER)

2pm: Introduction: Arts et blue humanities, bilan et perspectives

Juliette Bessette (Aix-Marseille Université)

Panel 1 - Immerse Yourself

Moderator: Aurélie Darbouret (PRESHUMER CNRS / CNE - MIO/ EHESS)

2:10pm: Representing the Mediterranean in 3 dimensions: from a space of connectivity to a volumetric and interdependent environment

Lino Camprubí (Université de Séville / DEEPMED)

2:30pm: La connexion à la nature sous-marine à travers l'art, une approche à la croisée de l'écologie et de la psychologie environnementale

Anne-Sophie Tribot (Aix-Marseille Université)

2:50pm: Discussion

Panel 2 - Harbors and fishing

Moderator: Hugo Vermeren (CNRS)

3:05pm: Sens de ports: corporalités des marines contemporaines

Gabriel N. Gee (Franklin University, TETI Group)

3:25pm: La madrague comme sujet artistique et scientifique

Ambra Zambenardi (Université de Turin)

3:45 pm: Panel Discussion

[4-4:15: Break]

Panel 3 - Underwater art

Moderator: Christina Heflin (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

4:15pm: Que signifie être un musée sous l'eau ? Étude du Musée subaquatique de Marseille

Lisa Cubaynes (Aix-Marseille Université)

4:35pm: Vie et mort d'une bactérie lumineuse: bilan d'une proposition d'art multi-espèce

Jérémy Brugidou (artiste-chercheur / IMÉRA)

4:55pm: Panel Discussion

Round-table 1- Jellyfish and ctenophores

Moderator: Juliette Bessette (Aix-Marseille Université)

5:10pm: Méduses et cténaïres, êtres biologiques et figurations plastiques

Chloé Pretesacque (Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3), Guillaume Marchessaux (Université de Palerme), Shanta Rao (artist)

5:40pm: discussion

[5:55-6pm: Break]

Keynote

6pm: How can the study of the ocean take us beyond the two cultures?

Margaret Cohen (Stanford University)

[6:30pm: End of first day]

Friday, May 24

Mucem, Salle Meltem, MucemLab

Access entrée Vieux-Port, Fort Saint-Jean Esplanade, 13002 Marseille

9am: Welcome

9:10am: Welcoming remarks, Aude Fanlo (Mucem)

Panel 4 - Underwater aesthetic visions

Moderator: Daniel Faget (Aix-Marseille Université)

9:20am: Milieu et paysages photographiques sous-marins à Banyuls-sur-mer

Guillaume Le Gall (Sorbonne Université)

9:40am: Voir au-delà des vagues: une histoire des techniques de la peinture sous-marine à partir du XIXe siècle

Marine Bally (EPHE-PSL)

10am: Panel Discussion

Round-table 2 - Sponges

Moderator: Juliette Bessette (Aix-Marseille Université)

10:15am : Éponges de bain, observations et traversées sensibles

Daniel Faget (Aix-Marseille Université), Thierry Perez (CNRS), Camille Pradon (artist)

10:40am: discussion

[10:50 -11:15am: Break]

Panel 5 - Behind the images of marine biodiversity

Moderator: Anne-Sophie Tribot (Aix-Marseille Université)

11:15am: Naer het leven: les liens entre natures mortes et imagerie scientifique dans les Pays-Bas modernes à travers l'exemple des animaux marins

Clara Langer (Université Lumière Lyon 2)

11:35am: Eileen Agar, Jean Painlevé et le merveilleux sous-marin

Christina Heflin (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

11:55am: ~ Les Eaux composées ~ Projet de recherche, résidences artistiques à la Station de biologie de Roscoff: enjeux des représentations et perspectives artistiques

Benjamin Rivière (artiste plasticien - EESAB Quimper)

12:15pm: Panel Discussion

[12:30-2pm: Lunch Break]

Panel 6 - The presence of marine animal remains in collections

Moderator: Christina Heflin (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

2pm: L'océan dans une vitrine. L'évolution de la mise en exposition des animaux marins dans les muséums, des cabinets de curiosité au diorama

Amandine Péquignot (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle)

2:20pm: Éthique de la patrimonialisation des artificialia contenant des éléments d'origine marine au Mucem

Françoise Dallemagne (Mucem)

2:40pm: L'utilisation d'animaux marins dans des œuvres d'art contemporain: congrès et anguilles chez Toni Grand

Maud Marron-Wojewodzki (Musée Fabre)

3pm: Panel Discussion

[3:30-3:45pm: Break]

Book launch

3:45pm: Book launch, *Merveilles aquatiques. L'art de représenter le vivant* (dir. Thomas Changeux, Daniel Faget and Anne-Sophie Tribot)

Performance

4pm: Blue Crab Blues

Matthieu Duperrex (ENSA•Marseille) & Gabriel Dutrait (Feu Feu Feu Collective)

Conclusion and closing of the event

4:30pm: Closing comments

Thierry Perez (CNRS)

[5pm: End of the conference]

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PRESENTATION TEXT

"The ocean comprises the largest object on our planet" (Mentz, 2020), as described by literary scholar Steve Mentz, who works to bring together different forms of knowledge about this elusive entity. Mentz coined the term "blue humanities" to federate work with interdisciplinary methodologies that take the ocean as their subject. This work reflects a gradual change in the relationship between humans and the ocean and has helped to highlight a potential oceanic turning point in the history of sensibilities (DeLoughrey, 2013).

Throughout history, the arts have accompanied this turning point, proposing original aesthetic and conceptual frameworks by embracing the characteristics of the oceanic environment through the prism of the sensorial. The ocean, a place of fluidity, movement and migration, also catalyzes human attraction to the unknown and the limits of our knowledge or physical access- visions of the underwater world being dependent on technical devices (Cohen, 2022). Artists have made it the model for a different kind of sensory experience, freed from terrestrial, temporal and spatial reference points. It's also an environment where decentralization takes effect, leading to exceptional attention to non-humans. In the context of the Anthropocene, it is increasingly viewed from the angle of the biodiversity it hosts, its ecosystemic uniqueness and its role as a climate regulator on a planetary scale.

This interdisciplinary conference, open to the public, focuses on the analysis of the arts and their representational capacities in the service of constituting and transmitting knowledge of various kinds about the ocean. It also addresses their power to explore the social issues associated with this knowledge. Researchers in marine science, history, anthropology, ecology, the history and philosophy of science, literature, aesthetics and museology, among others, use works of art to enrich their work with an analysis of the sensitive. Art history is, of course, at the forefront of these observations, as are artists who formulate discourses on their own practice. This conference brings them into discussion through thematic panels and interdisciplinary roundtables.

Particular attention is also paid to the materiality of the artistic productions studied: what does it mean to work with marine life in art, and what does this say about the history of the human relationship with marine biodiversity? What place should they occupy in today's museums of art, science and society? How can reflections from blue humanities be materialized in the museums in the current environmental context? Discussions will provide an opportunity to share analytical tools and federate common perspectives on environmental humanities - and more specifically

blue humanities - through the arts.

Works cited:

Margaret Cohen, *The Underwater Eye: How the Movie Camera Opened the Depths and Unleashed New Realms of Fantasy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2022.

Steve Mentz, *Ocean*, New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "The Oceanic Turn. Submarine Futures of the Anthropocene", dans Joni Adamson, Michael Davis (ed.), *Humanities for the Environment*, London, Routledge, 2016, p. 256-272.

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<<https://arthist.net/archive/41633>>.