

TBA21–Academy

The Current II, Expedition #3

Life for Beginners
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Online Programme at Ocean-Archive.org
Led by Chus Martínez

TBA21–Academy presents the last voyage led by Chus Martínez as Leader of her three-year fellowship *The Current II*. Spanning from March to December 2020, this voyage takes the form of an online programme featuring the podcast series *Corona Under the Ocean* and new film commissions.

TBA21–Academy has organized annual learning voyages with scientists, artists, and activists for nearly a decade now—not only to enhance the knowledge of the Ocean, but also to give individuals the opportunity to form kinships; become friends. Based on these friendships, new forms of collaboration would appear. Over the past three years, TBA21–Academy and the Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel have been collaborating closely through the latter’s director, Chus Martínez, who was appointed as Leader of the second cycle of *The Current* fellowship programme, defining a series of three voyages and Convenings which she entitled *Spheric Ocean*. Due to the current global health situation, the third voyage, meant to happen around Easter, needed to take a different form. Martínez also gave names to her voyages: the first was called *To Find the Vegan Lion*—as in, to find a world without a trace of violence; the second carried the title *The Solomon Exercises*—attempting to learn how to transform our behaviour so that we alter the course of our relation with the Ocean in a positive manner; and the third and final one is called *Life for Beginners*—quoting Rilke, who had written: “there are no classes in life for beginners; right away you are always asked to deal with what is most difficult”. We are dealing with the most difficult now, and this is to care for artists and sustain a world where their practice is seen as a crucial contribution to a future of greater coexistence with nature.

And so, you need to imagine two friends holding hands—TBA21–Academy and the Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel—commissioning a series of conversations on the Ocean, on colonialism, on climate transformation, on the exercise we are undergoing both socially and scientifically, and a series of films dealing with the same issues in different ways. The NEW PODCAST SERIES appears under the title *Corona Under the Ocean*. You can stream it from the [Ocean Archive](#), the [Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel](#) website or platforms such as [iTunes](#) and [SoundCloud](#). The NEW COMMISSIONS take the form of films, however, they are not video art per se, since they reflect on the body, on how, in the absence of the Ocean, we need to learn to move like the waves, to become water, to breathe like fish, to feel like nature. You will be able to watch periodical releases of new works by Temitope Ajose-Cutting, Stephanie Comilang, Taloi Havini, Petrit Halilaj and Alvaro Urbano and Ingela Ihrmann on the [Ocean Archive](#), as well as a special microsite called [Corona KINO](#), created by the Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel.

Film Commission



Wed. May 6, 2020

**Temitope Ajose-Cutting
and Quinn Latimer**
*How to Move Like the
Ocean (Liquefaction,
Lubrication
& Expansion
in Twelve Easy Steps),
2020*

HD VIDEO, COLOUR,
SOUND, 11:56 MIN

**HOW TO MOVE
LIKE THE OCEAN**

In times of isolation in one's interior, what is our fervent interest in instruction, in so many "easy steps" to instantly acquire some new and necessary education? What do we lack? How do we learn? What is a body, and what is a body of water? *In How to Move Like the Ocean (Liquefaction, Lubrication & Expansion in Twelve Easy Steps)* (2020), the dancer and choreographer Temitope Ajose-Cutting passes through the rooms of her London apartment and then out into the seemingly emptied world, moving to (and against) spectral instructions that offer her the chance to become liquid, become ocean, become, that is, everything. Those instructions, written and read by the writer Quinn Latimer, offer some salty pedagogical drift, equal parts lesson and poetry, political current and personal query, as they sequence loss, levity, desire, kinship, kelp beds, and some tantalizing blue drink. Wet with the genres of both realism and speculative fiction, *How to Move Like the Ocean* reveals the depths that the imaginary of the body, ever slippery, can go.

PERFORMANCE AND RECORDING:

Temitope Ajose-Cutting

SCRIPT AND VOICEOVER:

Quinn Latimer

EDITING:

Iris Touliatou

Temitope Ajose-Cutting Bonnie Bird Choreography Award winner (2005), has created and staged works for venues such as Royal Opera House and ROH2. She has been commissioned by The Place Prize Bloomberg, and exciting dance producer Eckhard Thiemann at Woking Dance. Her works have been performed at DanceXchange, RichMix, Dance base in Edinburgh, Swindon Dance and the Soho Joyce (New York).

Quinn Latimer is a California-born poet, critic, and editor whose work often explores feminist economies of writing, reading, and moving-image production. Latimer was editor-in-chief of publications for documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel. She is a lecturer in the master's program of the Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel.

Wed. May 13, 2020

Stephanie Comilang
Diaspora Ad Astra, 2020

HD VIDEO, COLOR,
SOUND, 5:25 MIN



DIASPORA AD ASTRA

Diaspora Ad Astra is a fictional, short video told from the perspective of a Filipino seafarer.

There are 400,000 seamen from the Philippines, working in a profession that helps move 90 percent of global trade. Under brutal conditions, these men can make ten times more than they earn at home. They sign contracts for seven to ten months, leaving behind their families, with whom these migrant laborers struggle to maintain a connection due to the scarcity and unreliability of internet connectivity onboard. While making this video, stories of ships not allowed to dock in their home ports due to fears of the spread of coronavirus proliferated in the news. What is it like to see your home in front of you but be unable to return to it?

Stephanie Comilang is an artist living and working between Toronto and Berlin. Her documentary based works create narratives that look at how our understandings of mobility, capital and labour on a global scale are shaped through various cultural and social factors.

Wed. May 27, 2020

**Petrit Halilaj
and Alvaro Urbano**
Un Sogno, Un Pesce, 2020

HD VIDEO, COLOR,
SOUND, 4:08 MIN



Alvaro Urbano and Petrit Halilaj collaborate on *Un Sogno un Pesce*, a short film in which inhabitable terrains are crossed through a leap into the dream and the impossible. In a shadowy realm, the dream of a fish curious towards a terrestrial world comes to life.

DIRECTION:

Petrit Halilaj and Alvaro Urbano

MUSIC:

Juan Carlos Blancas

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:

Yao Liao

EDITION:

Monica Martins Nunes

Petrit Halilaj (1986, Kostërrc, Skenderaj-Kosovo, XK) and **Alvaro Urbano** (1983, Madrid, SP) are two visual artists based in Berlin. Both also working individually, their ongoing research together reflects on the dichotomy between built environment and nature, and on the possibilities of negotiation between these two realities: in that regard, the inhabitants that occupy these liminal spaces generates a particular interest for the two artists.

Wed. June 17, 2020

Rossella Biscotti
Disorientation Notes, 2020

HD VIDEO, COLOR,
SOUND, 7:32 MIN.



Within a subtle weaving of video and sound, a voice is taking us through technical ways to reorient ourselves and balance instability while in movement. Referring to distant, unstable landmarks, as well as mapping and GPS technologies, we constantly look for ways to position ourselves in relation to an environment that changes, second by second.

Navigating the high sea.

The images are shot inside a mud house at Çatalhöyük, a Neolithic-era archaeological site in Turkey. One of the ancient proto-cities known to date. The camera rotates mechanically over the walls and the floor. It's July 16, 2016, the day after the attempted military coup in Turkey, and the site's consequent closure.

Rossella Biscotti with Roberto Casati, director,
department of cognitive studies, Institut Jean Nicod,
EHESS, CNRS, Paris, France

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND CAMERA
(2016):

Meryem Yavuz

VIDEO AND SOUND EDITING:

Massimo Mosca

SOUND RECORDING AND POSTPRODUCTION:

Attila Faravelli

Rossella Biscotti's (b. 1978, Italy/Netherlands/Belgium) cross-media practice cuts across sculpture, performance, sound works, and filmmaking. Stemming from extended research processes, conceptual excavations, personal encounters, and interdisciplinary collaborations, her works encapsulate meticulous stratifications of materials and meanings.

Wed. September 23, 2020

**Taloi Havini and
Michael Toisuta**
Hyena lullaby, 2020

HD VIDEO, COLOR,
STEREO SOUND, 3:21 MIN.



Coral bleaching has become a common sight along reefs throughout the Pacific ocean as we witness the decline in the health of our coastal habitat environments from rising sea levels, unpredictable weather patterns and in our reliance on taking sustenance from the reef. Yet in all of this devastation, nature continually shows us signs of regeneration in a night-time ritual of mass coral-spawning - widely celebrated along the coastal regions of Bougainville and Buka Islands. The synchronised movements between the moon coinciding with the coral releasing new life, rising to the surface and floating along only to fall down into forming new corals along the reef, is an annual ritual that has been witnessed and celebrated with great excitement by Havini's Nakas ancestors since time immemorial. With sound design by Michael Toisuta, vocals by Sana Balai, filmed by Taloi Havini and edited with Miriana Marusic, this video collaboration explores these non-linear textures and the cycles of life and death in an underwater phenomenon the Nakas people call Hyena.

Commissioned by TBA21–Academy with the support of Institut Kunst HGK FHNW in Basel.

Taloi Havini is an artist from Bougainville Island, in the Pacific. She currently lives and works in Sydney. From the Nakas clan, Hakö people, Havini was raised in the Autonomous Region of Arawa. Working with ceramics, photography, print, video, and mixed-media installations, Havini's considered approach to art-making responds to the tensions and aftermath of the German plantations, Australian colonial mining pressures, and the deadly Bougainville conflict around indigenous land rights and independence of the 1990s. The youngest child of activist parents, Havini emigrated at the height of the war. Following her family's political exile to Australia in 1990, Havini began to document her journeys home to the north of Buka Island, in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Michael Toisuta grew up in Central Java, Indonesia. Since moving to Australia he has worked as a composer and sound designer for theatre, dance, film and video art installations. He has sound designed video art installations Habitat 2018 (Asia Pacific Triennial 2018) and Habitat (The National 2017); and short films Woodlands (Barcelona International Film Festival), Jyoti (Short Film Corner at Cannes Film Festival), Dance Diaries (Parramasala 2018) and Double Landscape (Bundanon Trust Siteworks 2016). His theatre credits include The Sugar House and Windmill Baby (Belvoir), Australian Graffiti (Sydney Theatre Company), The Man with the Iron Neck and My Bicycle Loves You (Legs on the Wall), White Pearl and Flight Paths (National Theatre

of Parramatta), Made in America (TerryandTheCuz),
Richard 3 (Bell Shakespeare) and Masquerade
(Griffin & STCSA).

Podcast Series



Corona Under the Ocean is a podcast series exploring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis on ocean research, as well as its effect on the ocean itself. Using the practice of storytelling, the ten chapters present conversations between writer and curator Sonia Fernández Pan and guests from various disciplines. The series offers a transoceanic perspective emerging from the fields of marine science, postcolonial studies, speculative histories, and political imagination.

01

Oceanizing History W/ Greg Dvorak

Tuesday, 5 May

The first episode is dedicated to Oceania. Did you know that the Pacific Ocean was named so by Ferdinand Magellan, referring to his feeling that the sea was dull over there? In this conversation Greg Dvorak, Professor of International Cultural Studies at Waseda University in Tokyo, reflects on how the colonizer's view has affected the region and, on how the word indigenous needs to gain even more political meaning.

02

We Are Ocean Life W/ Marah J. Hardt

Tuesday, 26 May

The second episode, featuring marine biologist Marah J. Hardt, is dedicated to the vitalism and resilience of the ocean. Outlining her personal journey as a researcher, Marah provides a propositional critique of our relationship with the maritime environment, present but not always visible

on a global scale. Understanding ocean research as a necessarily interdisciplinary practice, her scientific practice highlights the importance of storytelling as a tool for dissemination of ideas. In “We are Ocean Life,” Marah Hardt not only reminds us that all forms of life, including human life, come from the ocean, but also brings us closer to the amazing and exciting sexuality of fish.

03

Sea Nomads: The Orang Suku Laut W/ Cynthia Chou

Tuesday, 16 June

The third episode, featuring anthropology professor Cynthia Chou, is dedicated to the Orang Suku Laut, a nomadic community from the Malay world sea in Southeast Asia. Thanks to more than three decades of research, Cynthia Chou’s work brings us closer to the worldview and life practices of the Orang Suku Laut, for whom humans are just another element among the many creatures that inhabit oceans and land. Continually moved by the tides, their ancestral relationship with the environment not only puts many aspects of modern societies into question, but shows that another kind of relationship with the environment is possible, one that is reciprocal, cordial and without a hierarchy between the human and the nonhuman.

04

Water has Memory W/ Tabita Rezaire

Tuesday, 7 July

The fourth episode, with agent of healing and artist Tabita Rezaire, is dedicated to the memory of water and its existence in flow within bodies. This podcast is the result of an intimate, personal, and mostly unscripted conversation between Tabita Rezaire and Sonia Fernandez Pan. It even includes environmental elements, such as rain, showing how words, feelings, and ideas are also part of the flow of life that circulates through bodies. The great connecting element of this conversation is water, understood beyond its usual contexts to think through connections and interactions including the internet, colonialism, various healing strategies, spiritual states, and forms of meaning beyond words.

05

Thinking with Water W/ Astrida Neimanis

Tuesday, 28 July

The fifth episode, featuring feminist philosopher

Astrida Neimanis, puts into practice one of the author's methodologies: "thinking with water." As a material, water not only enables a relational ontology when thinking about the reality that bodies inhabit and produce, but also allows for an understanding of feminism that transcends the human and incorporates a planetary and intersectional scale where race, class, and gender are in constant intra-action. This podcast is the result of a conversation between Astrida Neimanis and Sonia Fernández Pan, where the Covid-19 pandemic was also a constant, an atmospheric condition that is, in turn, political and ideological.

06

Underwater Projections W/ Filipa Ramos

Tuesday, 25 August

The sixth episode, with writer, lecturer, and curator Filipa Ramos is an approach to cinema from the ocean and to the ocean from cinema. Beyond the production of underwater images, there is a political relationship between cinema and the underwater world. As vision devices, the projection room and the tank or aquarium are related in their production of the fiction of a safe environment for the human being. Moreover, there are aquatic creatures

capable of producing cinematic images, allowing an expansion of the concept of cinema beyond its own history and human history. This podcast is the result of a conversation between Filipa Ramos and Sonia Fernández Pan, in which the coronavirus was introduced from an animist perspective and proposes a criticism of the system in which it involuntarily operates.

07

The Sea Undoes The Land W/ Camila Marambio

Tuesday, 15 September

The seventh episode, with curator Camila Marambio is an approach to Tierra del Fuego from her personal experience with a part of the world with which she has a strong emotional connection. As she states, Tierra del Fuego, “despite its remoteness, is the center of the world”. Karokynka is the name by which this area of the world is known by the native Selk’nam people, a culture that still survives in its descendants despite its official death by the modern state of Chile. The fact of proclaiming as dead, a culture that is still very much alive, is part of the colonial project, transformed into white melancholy and colonizing mourning. This podcast is the result of a conversation between Camila Marambio and

Sonia Fernández Pan, during an inspiring encounter in which they were also accompanied by many other voices and forms of tidal storytelling.

08

The colonial conditions of Western knowledge W/ Elizabeth A. Povinelli

Tuesday, 6 October

The eighth episode, with professor and anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli, begins with her idea of axioms of existence, which put in crisis the abstract and universalist condition of Western philosophy. The ocean is not far from Western epistemologies and ontologies. In fact, it is totally entangled in them thanks to their intimate – and strategically invisible – relationship with colonial history and violence. The notion of geontopower, coined by Povinelli, critically revises the Foucauldian notion of biopower. The fictional but real frontier between life and non-life is a political frontier in continuous expansion, even beyond Earth. This podcast is the result of a conversation between Elizabeth Povinelli and Sonia Fernández Pan, in which the coronavirus was also present along with the idea of the virus as a rhetorical figure.

09

Political Action, Political Imagination W/ Carola Rackete

Tuesday, 27 October

The ninth episode, with ship captain and sea rescue activist Carola Rackete, begins with her early research in the Arctic and Antarctic, and how she was able to sensibly feel the melting of the poles, without the need for scientific data. That was also when she decided to engage in political action in order to have a real impact on the multiple forms of violence the capitalist system perpetrates, both human and environmental, both individual and structural. This podcast is the result of a conversation between Carola Rackete and Sonia Fernández Pan, in which the Covid-19 pandemic was present from the viewpoint of maritime life and in vessels as working environments, as well as in the reinforcement of borders and the human abuses carried out under the pretense of pandemic response.

10

Viewing from the Inside W/ Su Yu Hsin

Tuesday, 17 November

The tenth episode, with artist and filmmaker Su Yu Hsin, began with one of her many memories related to water, and how the appearance of light on water is indispensable for her when thinking with water. Su Yu Hsin's homeland, Taiwan, is an island where water has a strong presence due to typhoons and the island's atmospheric condition. In her artistic practice, she approaches ecology in its close relationship with technology, also investigating the ideology inherent to map-making throughout history and to this day. This podcast is the result of a conversation between Su Yu Hsin and Sonia Fernández Pan, in which they discuss how Covid-19 relates to the experience of the SARS crisis in Taiwan in the early 2000s and the collective learning that this experience meant for Taiwanese society.

Chus Martínez is head of the Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel. She is also the expedition leader of *The Current*, a project initiated by TBA21–Academy (2018–2020). *The Current* is also the inspiration behind Art is Ocean, a series of seminars and conferences held at the Art Institute which examines the role of artists in the conception of a new experience of nature. She is currently leading a research project at the Art Institute, supported by Instituto Susch, on the role of education enhancing women’s equality in the arts.

TBA21–Academy’s *The Current* is concerned with the state of the ocean and the discourse around it and seeks to provide a platform for the cultivation of interdisciplinary thought, the exchange of ideas and new knowledge production. Organised in three-year cycles, the programme centres around annual expeditions at sea and land-based Convenings linked to the exploratory theme of each ocean encounter. Each cycle of *The Current* is led by one or more Expedition Leaders selected by the Academy, who in turn nominate Fellows—artists, curators, scientists, and other cultural actors—to join a collective research project unfolding over the three years. The Spanish curator Chus Martínez and Danish artist collective SUPERFLEX have been appointed by TBA21–Academy as Expedition Leaders of the second three-year cycle of *The Current*. Their projects will run in parallel from 2018 to 2020.

TBA21–Academy leads artists, scientists, and thought-leaders on expeditions of collaborative discovery. The Academy is dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of the ocean through the lens of art and to engendering creative solutions to its most pressing issues. TBA21–Academy commissions interdisciplinary research that catalyses engagement, stimulates new knowledge, and inspires artistic production. Established in 2011, the nonprofit’s programme is informed by a belief in the power of exchange between disciplines and in the ability of the arts as a vessel for communication, change, and action. Since its inception TBA21–Academy has launched groundbreaking projects combining artistic, sociopolitical, scientific, economic and especially environmental concerns.

Ocean Archive is a digital platform for collaborative research. Designed to be a pedagogical, research, and storytelling tool for a broad audience, the platform aims to translate current knowledge about the ocean into a common ground to enable us to make better decisions for urgently needed policies. Ocean Archive is created to stimulate action and policy change through collaboration and education, and to make visible, discoverable, and understandable a range of perspectives, supporting synergy among art, science, and policy. The ethics of Ocean Archive follow the mission of TBA21–Academy: to establish a community of equal participation, care, and support towards its human and non-human collaborators and users.

The Art Institute HGK FHNW in Basel is an institution dedicated to visual arts education. We are a public institution with a hundred students divided in a three-year bachelor's program and a two-year master's program. At the core of our curricula is the embrace of nature and social justice. Therefore we have several programs, from international symposia, a series of discursive events entitled *Art Taaalkssss* and an art commission program open to the public. We understand the mission of art and artists as an essential contribution to imagine and experience freedom and the possible futures of the social. Working in friendship with foundations such as TBA21–Academy allows us to enhance our aims and learn from activists and scientist ways of understanding the oceans.

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