



Are We Human?

Design of the Seabed

**Participatory conference organized
by TBA21-Academy during
the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial 2016
November 5 – 6, 2016**

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conference organized
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during the 3rd Istanbul
Design Biennial 2016**

**curated by
Stefanie Hessler and
Markus Reymann**

Dates

Saturday
November 5, 2016
2 – 8 pm

Sunday
November 6, 2016
1 – 7 pm

Venue

3rd Istanbul Design
Biennial, *Are We
Human?*, curated
by Beatriz Colomina
and Mark Wigley

Alt Art Space

Tarihi Bomonti Bira
Fabrikası Birahane
Sokak no: 1 Şişli
34384 Istanbul,
Turkey

Participants

Nabil Ahmed
Artist, writer, and
researcher

Georg Eder
Project manager,
TBA21-Academy

Stefanie Hessler
Curator,
TBA21-Academy

Zafer Kizilkaya
President,
Mediterranean
Conservation Society

Margarida Mendes
Curator, educator,
and activist

Sandor Mulsow
Head of the Office
of Resources and
Environmental
Monitoring,
International
Seabed Authority

Nilüfer Oral
Deputy director,
Istanbul Bilgi
University Marine Law
Research Center

Lisa Rave
Artist and filmmaker

Markus Reymann
Director,
TBA21-Academy

and remote
interventions from a
variety of experts



Ophiidid in the deep sea

Program

Saturday, November 5

2 pm

Stefanie Hessler and Markus Reymann introduce TBA21-Academy and the conference “Are We Human? Design of the Seabed”

2.45 pm

Film screening,
Europium by Lisa Rave

3.30 pm

Nilüfer Oral in conversation with Sandor Mulsow on deep-sea mining, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and policy

4.30 pm

Break

4.45 pm

Zafer Kizilkaya on marine management and conservation

5.30 pm

Margarida Mendes on curating and anti-extractivist activism in Portugal

6.15 pm

Break

6.30 pm

Nabil Ahmed on the Inter-Pacific Ring Tribunal (Interprt)

7.30 pm

Wrap-up

8 pm

Biennial closes

Sunday, November 6

1 pm

Georg Eder summarizes the previous day

1.30 pm

Discussion and working plan

2–6 pm

Public workshops

6 pm

Discussion and commitments

7 pm

Biennial closes

The Conference

TBA21-Academy proposes an investigation: Could the future of the planet depend on our response to the mining operations about to be unleashed in the depths of the oceans?

During the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial, *Are We Human?*, curated by Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley, TBA21-Academy is presenting the participatory conference “Design of the Seabed.” The conference embarks from the hypothesis that deep sea mining is an anthropogenic intervention that will profoundly change the planet’s design. It will deeply affect our futures, which are closely entangled with the oceans.

Seabed mining targets polymetallic nodules that are used in the production of batteries and alloys, and it may well be the next gold rush. Its effects will most likely be long-term and invasive, impacting ecosystems from the microbial level to the structural constitution of the seabed in a way that we are not remotely able to anticipate.

Commercial exploitation of the seafloor is currently being evaluated from various positions, from multinational companies active in Papua New Guinea to a pilot test program in the Azores funded by the European Commission. The potential risks – including pollution, sediment plumes, and toxicity – have been assessed only marginally.

The conference puts these hypotheses and questions to the test with invited experts from the fields of science, technology, law, policy, the rights of nature, ecology, community, and art. With contributions in the form of talks, screenings, and remote interventions, these specialists will cast light on this highly topical and critical subject.

We invite the audience to actively take part in this discussion to consider the impacts of seabed mining and develop a position by the end of the conference.

About Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21)

Founded in 2002 by Francesca von Habsburg in Vienna, Austria, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21) represents the fourth generation of the Thyssen family's commitment to the arts. After more than 14 years of collecting, commissioning projects, and engaged exhibition practice, TBA21 has established a highly respected collection of more than 700 contemporary artworks, including film, sound, mixed-media installations, sculpture, painting, photography, and performance. The foundation sustains a far-reaching regional and international orientation through collaborations with other cultural partners around the world and explores modes of presentation that are intended to provoke and broaden the way viewers perceive and experience art. In 2015 von Habsburg decided that the foundation should be an agent of change and dedicated its ongoing program to the complexities and urgencies of the Anthropocene, including the pressing challenges posed by climate change, with a special focus on marine ecosystems.

TBA21-Academy was created in 2011 as an itinerant site of cultural production and interdisciplinary exchange, a fellowship organization bringing together artists, scientists, and thinkers aboard the research vessel *Dardanella*. TBA21-Academy was present during the 5th Deep Sea Mining Summit in London in April 2016 and recently gained United Nations observer status at the International Seabed Authority Assembly, becoming the first arts organization to become an observer at this UN body – an important testament to the foundation's commitment to the oceans.



Peniagone leander in the deep sea

Colophon

Chairwoman

Francesca von Habsburg

Trustees

Udo Kittelmann
Istvan Nagy

TBA21–Academy

Markus Reymann
Director

Stefanie Hessler
Curator

Georg Eder
Project Manager

Programming

Daniela Zyman
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Boris Ondreička
Curator

Cory Scozzari
Assistant Curator

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Assistant Curator

Eva Ebersberger
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Elizabeth Stevens
Registrar Collection &
Exhibitions

Andrea Hofinger
Registrar Collection &
Loans

Media and Communications

Sophie Bayerlein
Head of Media

Elodie Grethen
Project Manager

All photos by:
Dr. Daniel Jones, National Oceanography Center,
Natural Environment Research Council, Southampton.
Clarion-Clipperton Zone, April 2015



Typhlonus nasus, found in 5,000 meter depth