

T B A Thyssen-Bornemisza  
Art Contemporary  
Academy

# TBA21 – Academy

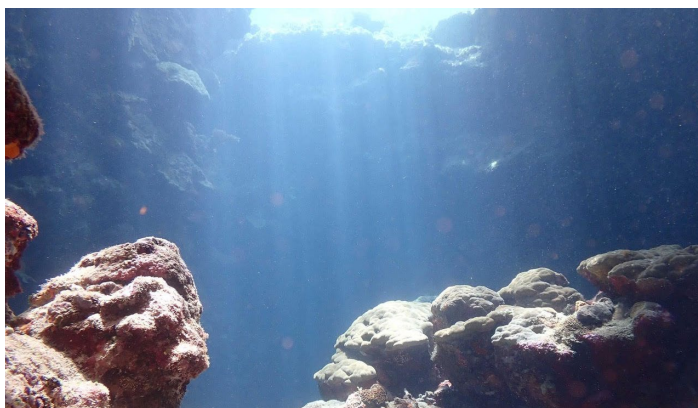
Research, exhibitions, and  
projects on deep-sea mining

## TBA21–Academy

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Since its establishment in 2011, TBA21–Academy as a transdisciplinary art organisation with a focus on Ocean from the lens of art has been building capacity in artistic, advocacy and scientific initiatives and collaborations.

A specific focus is being devoted to matters related to **deep sea mining** and indigenous systems, rights and knowledge in the form of content (programmes and exhibitions) for civil society engagement and with TBA21–Academy's participation in international policy forums.



### [THE CURRENT](#)

Transdisciplinary Expedition Programme

### [OCEAN FELLOWS PROGRAMME](#)

Funded fellowships to individuals for collaborative research

### [OCEAN ARCHIVE](#)

Digital Platform for research collaboration

### [OCEAN SPACE](#)

Exhibition space in Venice

### [OCEAN UNI](#)

Educational programme in partnerships with universities

A detailed description of works related to **deep sea mining** and strengthening of indigenous knowledge & practices from the arts is presented below.

## Research commissions, artworks, exhibitions

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### ***Taloi Havini – The Soul Expanding Ocean #1***

Commission by TBA21–Academy and co-produced with Schmidt Ocean Institute; exhibition curated by Chus Martínez

May 03–October 17, 2021 | Open Space, Venice

Artist Taloi Havini, born in the South West Pacific Ocean and currently based in Australia, has her work taken in many forms, including sculpture, film, photography, and immersive audio-visual installations. Her practice perpetuates the desires for Indigenous Knowledge Systems to undermine the persistent colonial structures that aimed to annihilate them. For the commission, under covid-19 restrictions, her work *Answer to the Call* (2021) [[further details on the website](#)] is a twenty-two-channel sound piece, it uses an ancient compositional technique that produces a dialogue between these different ways of knowing through a method of a call and response. Through the inclusion of her own Hakö language and instruments that conjure her navigational ancestors, Havini moves through space and distance for a cyclic understanding of the ocean, space and time. The track evolves to include archival sources, such as hydrophone recordings of sonar mapping taken on the R/V Falkor, ocean traveling chants, and an instrumental piece composed by renowned Bougainville musician Ben Hakalitz. For the exhibition, a central focus is on audience participation and engagement.

### ***Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation***

Research commission by TBA21–Academy; exhibition curated by Daniela Zyman on Ocean-Archive.org and at Ocean Space, Venice

August 27–November 29, 2020 and May 3–August 29, 2021

*Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation* synthesizes three years of intersectional research, commissioned by TBA21–Academy that investigates the transformation of the world oceans as a result of reckless and exploitative human activities. Assessing the latest scientific knowledge, the project reiterates the critical role of the oceans in respect to planetary survival. TBA21–Academy and Territorial Agency have collaborated with a network of researchers and institutions to give exposure to new forms of visibility and understanding of the ocean brought

by science, culture, and art.

[\[Further Details on Website\]](#) [\[Visit the online exhibition on Ocean-Archive.org\]](#)

[Oceans in Transformation was awarded the Grand Prize for Artistic Exploration, STARTS Prize, 2021, [Further Details on Website](#)]

#### RELATED TO DEEP-SEA MINING

- Documentation: talk by Sandor Mulsow (marine geologist and lecturer) on Deep Sea Mining, part of the symposium "[Messy Studio: So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish—the Humboldt Current](#)", *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*, 2020, Ocean-Archive.org
- Article: *Muddying the Waters*, by Margarida Mendes and João Martins, on deep sea mining in the Azores. Part of the e-flux architecture series on *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*, eds. Territorial Agency, Nick Axel, Nikolaus Hirsch, Markus Reymann, Daniela Zyman [[Further Reading](#)]
- Publication: *Oceans Rising – A companion to Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*, ed. Daniela Zyman, Sternberg Press, 2021. [[Further Details on Website](#)]
- Research: [Unfoldings. A Research Dossier on Seven Trajectories of Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation](#), includes chapters on deep sea mining that expand on the research of Territorial Agency in this field

#### **Superflex**

##### **DeepSea Minding**

3 year transdisciplinary research project commissioned by TBA21–Academy, 2018

*Deep Sea Minding* was a three-year transdisciplinary research project conceived by the Danish artist group SUPERFLEX and commissioned by TBA21–Academy. SUPERFLEX were the Expedition Leaders of the second cycle—spanning 2018–20—of TBA21–Academy's three-year fellowship programme *The Current*. The first expedition—*Deep Sea Minding*—aboard the M/Y Dardanella research vessel, brings a series of exploratory experiments to the uninhabited island of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, in the South Pacific. The island of Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai emerged recently in the South Pacific, challenging the prevailing tendency of a world which is slowly sinking. The perfect location to explore the thin and ever-changing frontier between land and sea. A frontier which will be soon diluted by a vertical migration:

bringing fish to occupy our homes and humans to mind the deep sea.

[\[Further Details on Website\]](#)

[\[Further Details on BBC Website\]](#)

SUPERFLEX initiated the first of three expeditions to the South Pacific to test marine life responses to the nature of these designed structures. Documentation of the progress of this research is accessible online and interaction with the project possible through the land-based annual Convenings.

[\[Further Details of Film HUNGA TONGA\]](#) as part of research project *Deep Sea Minding*

#### **INTERPRT**

Spatial investigation of environmental crimes by Nabil Ahmed, 2019

Commissioned by TBA21–Academy

[\[Further Details on Website\]](#)

Artist and Senior Lecturer at NTNU, Nabil Ahmed, since 2013, has been investigating the impact of mining, land grabs, and self-determination in West Papua. He is the founder of Inter-Pacific Ring Tribunal (INTERPRT), a long-term project on ecocide in Oceania and the Pacific region, commissioned by TBA21–Academy.

"INTERPRT's long-term work gathers evidence on three situations of ecocide: EXTRACTION – environmental destruction and human rights violations related to mining, oil palm plantations and other forms of extraction; CLIMATE – the long chains of agency linking big oil to the impacts of global warming and NUCLEAR – the legacy of nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific."  
[\[Further Details on Website\]](#)

INTERPRT is a long-term interdisciplinary project on environmental justice in Oceania at the intersection of spatial practice, international law and artistic research. The Pacific ring—a geological force field rising from the ocean floor—reorganises a fluid, geological imaginary of the region as a global commons. At this mineral frontier, environmental violence is spatially diffused and temporally protracted, requiring new methods of detection and reconstruction.

INTERPRT produces visualisations, remote sensing analysis, maps and video evidence for investigating environmental crimes. Its fact-finding is focused not only on documenting underreported situations but on gathering environmental forensic evidence to help

establish individual criminal responsibility. It also undertakes case study research on the visual culture and legal history at the intersection of environmental protection and IHL towards exploring new legal forums. While its work is aimed at expanding environmental protection, it is committed to providing assistance to civil society groups under existing national and international laws.



### **Armin Linke – Prospecting Ocean**

Research commission by TBA21–Academy; exhibition curated by Stefanie Hessler

CNR-ISMAR, Venice, May 23–September 30, 2018

Prospecting Ocean, curated by Stefanie Hessler, is TBA21–Academy's first major research commission, conceived and realized over three years by the artist and fellow of *The Current* [*The Current* is a programme which leads artistic and scientific expeditions in the South Pacific using varied methodologies - [further details on website](#)]

Armin Linke. In the investigative exhibition *Prospecting Ocean*, which was developed in collaboration with the Istituto di Scienze Marine (CNR-ISMAR), Armin Linke explores contemporary challenges facing our oceans. Drawing upon rare footage of the deep-sea and interviews with leading scientists, policymakers, legal experts, and activists, the project scrutinizes the aesthetics of technoscientific apparatuses and grapples with the tension between ecological protection of our oceans and political and economic exploitation.

Linke exposes submarine and terrestrial sites that are commonly invisible and accesses the meetings of decision makers [the International Seabed Authority] that are usually closed off to the public. Scrutinizing the infrastructural apparatuses administrating the seabed, Linke deconstructs the idea of a marine-based blue

economy and policy commonly supported by governments. [[Further Reading](#)]

Publication: *Prospecting Ocean*, ed. Stefanie Hessler, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and The MIT Press (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England), 2019 [[Further Details on Website](#)]

### **Inhabitants with Margarida Mendes *What is Deep Sea Mining?***

Webseries, 2018

Commissioned by TBA21–Academy

*What is Deep Sea Mining?*, commissioned by TBA21–Academy, is a webseries dedicated to the topic of deep sea mining, a new frontier of resource extraction at the bottom of the ocean, set to begin in the next few years. Deep sea mining will occur mainly in areas rich in polymetallic nodules, in seamounts, and in hydrothermal vents. Mining companies are already leasing areas in national and international waters in order to extract minerals and metals such as manganese, cobalt, gold, copper, iron, and other rare earth elements from the seabed. Main sites targeted for future exploration are the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and the Clarion Clipperton Zone (Pacific Ocean) in international waters, as well as the islands of Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand, Japan, and the Portuguese Azores archipelago. Yet, potential impacts on deep sea ecosystems are yet to be assessed by the scientific community, and local communities are not being consulted.

The prospects of this new, experimental form of mining are re-actualizing a colonial, frontier mentality and redefining extractivist economies for the twenty-first century. This webseries addresses different issues related to this process, from resource politics to ocean governance by international bodies, prompting today's shift towards a "blue economy" but also efforts to defend sustained ocean literacy when the deep ocean, its species, and resources remain largely unmapped and unstudied.

[[Further video and reading Details on Website - Ocean Archive](#)]

Episodes:

- What is Deep Sea Mining? Episode 1: Tools for Ocean Literacy, (Mariana Silva and Pedro Neves Marques) with Margarida Mendes
- What is Deep Sea Mining? Episode 2: Deep Frontiers, Inhabitants (Mariana Silva and Pedro Neves Marques) with Margarida Mendes and

Stefan Helmreich

- What is Deep Sea Mining? Episode 3: The Azores Case, Inhabitants (Mariana Silva and Pedro Neves Marques) with Margarida Mendes
- What is Deep Sea Mining? Episode 4: A Deep Sea Mining Glossary, Inhabitants (Mariana Silva and Pedro Neves Marques) with Margarida Mendes



**Lisa Rave**  
***Europium*, 2014**

[\[Further Details on Website\]](#)

Single-channel video installation, color, sound

18 min 40 sec

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary  
Collection

In *Europium* (2014), Lisa Rave interweaves various layers of imagery and text, analyzing history's repeating patterns in the complex interplay of culture, economy, and ecology. The video is titled after a rare earth mineral that will soon be mined from the ocean floor. Rave comments on past and current exploitation of "resources," with a particular view to the colonial history in the Pacific and its ongoing reverberations. Poignantly, the first deep-sea mining intervention is likely to take place in the Bismarck Sea, in Papua New Guinea, a place colonized by Australia, Germany, and Great Britain, among others. The revenues will go mostly to Western companies and cause environmental damage affecting ecosystems and local communities.

## Educational initiatives

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### OCEAN / UNI

#### ***How to wade through water? Storytelling as a Method* – Fall semester 2021**

The program for the **Fall semester 2021**, ***How to wade through water? Storytelling as a Method***, draws on the works of artist Taloi Havini, resulting in the *The Soul Expanding Ocean #1* exhibition, as well as on performance artist Isabel Lewis' upcoming show *The Soul Expanding Ocean #2*, both on display at Ocean Space and curated by Chus Martínez as part of the program *The Current II*. The semester will unfold six different methodologies, conceived as acts through which looking at ways of knowing from an oceanic perspective, integrating artistic positions and scientific understandings around bodies of water, with a center on indigeneous, decolonial, and feminist perspectives.

### OCEAN / UNI

#### ***Session 4: Deep Sea Mining: The Future of Greenwashing*, Spring semester 2021**

On March 10, 2021, in collaboration with NTNU Trondheim

As part of the educational initiatives, this session is dedicated to the emerging scientific consensus on deep sea mining (DSM) which points to how its future impacts would be extensive and severe, persisting for generations and causing irreversible species loss and ecosystem degradation. Yet, industry proponents continue to make unsubstantiated claims regarding benefits of the capacity of DSM to supply the metals required for decarbonizing the economy, while downplaying its impacts on the marine environment and communities. [\[Further Details on Website - Ocean Archive\]](#)

Ocean / Uni is the first articulation of a pedagogic project in which thinking with the oceans aims to complement and enhance land-based understanding of the Earth. [\[Further Details on Website\]](#)

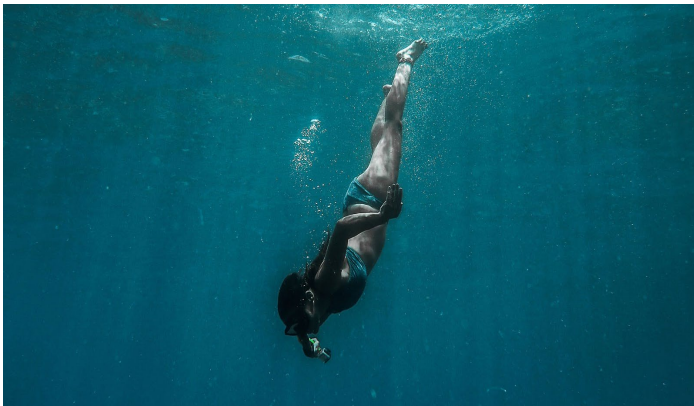
## Interventions in international forums

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### The PEW Charitable Trusts Event for deep sea mining in Washington D.C., March 2020

#### ***Mission Starfish 2030, European Commission Advocacy***

Based on TBA21—Academy's advocacy input to the [Mission Starfish 2030](#) (i.e., Mission Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters) from the European Commission, 300mn was awarded for arts and cultural sectors in Europe for ocean protection, advocacy and conservation for independent arts and cultural institutions to work on blue topics, to empower artists with their visions to conceive independent projects and to enhance communication strategy from the arts and cultural sectors for public awareness campaigns and civil society engagement.



#### ***International Seabed Authority Observer Status***

Observer Status of TBA21—Academy to the Assembly of International Seabed Authority (ISA) since 2016 during the 22nd Annual Session of the ISA.

[\[Further Details for Application of Observer Status of TBA21—Academy to the ISA\]](#)

[\[Further Details on comments and recommendations submitted by TBA21—Academy to the ISA\]](#)

### 5th Annual Deep-Sea Mining Summit in London, 2016

#### **The Ocean as Treasure Trove: Deep-sea mining—the next gold rush?**

Panel discussion with Nabil Ahmed, Ute Meta Bauer, Georg Eder, Amar Kanwar, Charles Lim, Markus Reymann, and Davor Vidas. As part of the symposium for The Current Convening #2, December 2016, Fort Kochi

The talk was part of The Current Convening #2 led by Ute Meta Bauer and organized at Fort Kochi, India. A group of artists, filmmakers, poets, researchers, and environmental activists came together to explore the oceanic space in its poetic, artistic, scientific, geopolitical, and ecological ramifications. Our aim was not only to delve into the liquid dimensions of the waters, but to understand how the oceans affect land-dwelling humans as much as aquatic creatures, coastal communities as much as city life, those migrating by sea as much as those who stay at home, and every being inhabiting this planet.

[\[Further Details on Website\]](#)

#### **Are We Human? Design of the Seabed**

Participatory conference organised by TBA21—Academy during the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial, November 5-6, 2016

During the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial “Are We Human?”, curated by Beatriz Colomina and Mark Wigley, TBA21-Academy organises 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 and 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.

[\[Further Details on Website\]](#)



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