

CURRICULUM

OCEAN / UNI

"IMAGINE THE OCEAN DRY AS LAVENDER"

~ SECOND CYCLE ~

THE MEDITERRANEANS BEYOND ARIDITY

February 1– April 12, 2023

7 biweekly public sessions

4 small-scale activations

A collaborative learning initiative by TBA21–Academy

Online via Zoom and on [Ocean-Archive.org](https://ocean-archive.org)

OCEAN / UNI is an art–activism–law–science learning initiative, online, tuition free, and open to the general public. The curriculum invites fluid thinking with the Ocean as a way to move towards more amphibious actions, beyond the binaries of land and sea. Aiming to complement and enhance land-based understanding of the Earth, it covers a wide range of ecological, political, aesthetic, ethical, and scientific topics around the realities and futures of the Ocean.

The Spring semester of **OCEAN / UNI 2023** is curated and developed by **Barbara Casavecchia**, Writer, Independent Curator and Educator, Leader of [The Current III "Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs' \(after Etel Adnan\)"](#); **Chiara Cartuccia**, Independent Curator and Researcher, founder of [EX NUNC](#); **Pietro Consolandi**, OCEAN / UNI Research Lead, Artist and Writer; alongside **Aleksandra Czerniak**, Digital Project & Transformation Manager; **Michal Kučerák**, Head of Digital Research; **Petra Linhartová**, Director of Digital & Innovation; **Fiona Middleton**, Research & Community; and **Markus Reymann**, Director of TBA21. Graphic design: **Lana Jerichová, bruno**.

Produced with care by the TBA21–Academy team.



"IMAGINE THE OCEAN DRY AS LAVENDER"

~ SECOND CYCLE ~

THE MEDITERRANEANS BEYOND ARIDITY

// SPRING SEMESTER 2023

The second cycle of "Imagine the Ocean Dry as Lavender"¹ brings OCEAN / UNI back to the Mediterraneans and their warming seas as hotspots for highly interconnected climate risks. The program is developed by TBA21–Academy in collaboration with research-based curatorial platform [EX NUNC](#). In its first iteration, "[Imagine the Ocean Dry as Lavender](#)" focused on the topic of aridity in relation to the Mediterranean Sea and, in extension, to other parts of the world undergoing processes of aridification and "mediterraneization", so to imagine possible planetary scenarios in a rapidly heating climate. During this second cycle we wish to deepen an enquiry into the connections between climate politics and the ever-renewing processes and modes of coloniality in the Mediterraneans.

In 2022, millions of inhabitants along Mediterranean shores experienced one of the driest and hottest years in centuries. In its Sixth Assessment Report released in April 2022, for the first time the IPCC² framed the Mediterranean Basin as a single area with common characteristics and facing a shared emergency, instead of splitting it among different continents. The Report states: "During the 21st century, climate change is projected to intensify throughout the region. Air and sea temperature and their extremes (notably heat waves) are likely to continue to increase more than the global average [...] Precipitation will likely decrease in most areas by 4–22%, depending on the emission scenario. Rainfall extremes will likely increase in the northern part of the region. Droughts will become more prevalent in many areas. [...] Mediterranean Sea level is projected to rise further during the coming decades and centuries (high confidence), likely reaching 0.15–0.33 m in 2050 [...]. Higher values cannot be excluded and the process is irreversible at the scale of centuries to millennia. [...] The adaptive capacity of ecosystems and human systems is expected to encounter hard limits due to the interacting, cumulative and cascading effects of droughts, heat waves, sea level rise, ocean warming and acidification."³

Desertification keeps on expanding, above and below water. From these amphibious perspectives, we see how the Ocean and the hydrosphere figure a continuum of constant interaction with dry lands, rather than a dichotomy. This understanding invites us to reshape and adapt our narratives, to think with the desert as a place of resilience and adaptation that responds to its ebbing reserves of freshwater, instead of a barren space, devoid of life and inhabitants, that needs to be forcibly regreened, repopulated, and made "productive"? Scholar Samia Henni calls for a fight against the so-called "regime of emptiness,"⁴ the Eurocentric imagination of desert as inherently deprived, of life and knowledge alike. The empty desert trope responded to the needs of the historical colonial project, which continues to mutate its choreographies of exploitation, extraction, and erasure in contemporary times.⁵ Can an analysis of Mediterranean cases help us to recognize the impacts of geoengineering, and to identify neo-colonial continuities in the theory and practice of ecological modernization, while looking for nature-based solutions and micro-refuges?

"Desert and desertification are two key concepts that cut across the fields of philosophy, literature, ecology, politics, and the arts. Their identities are unstable, dynamic, unfixed, and sometimes contradictory, although they are major contemporary figures haunting our imaginaries and defining current politics in relation to ecology," write Ida Soulard, Abinadi Meza and Bassam El Baroni in their book *Manual for a Future Desert* (2022).⁶ With the help of artists, scholars, scientists, activists, and thinkers, this semester keeps on exploring the interconnections between wet ontologies and dry spaces, trying to frame a vision that fits both the desert and the Ocean, projecting this key relationship into a collective space of research. We aim to bring specific visions – both highly localized and planetary – onto shared ground, where aridity is felt as a space of possibility for our common futures.

¹ The title is borrowed from the incipit of a poem by Andrée Chedid, Egyptian-French poet and novelist who lived between 1920 and 2011. See: Andrée Chedid, "Imagine", 1968, in *Textes pour un poème*, Flammarion, 2014, p. 259. Translated into English by Kamal Boullata in *Women of the Fertile Crescent: An Anthology of Modern Poetry by Arab Women*, Kamal Boullata (ed.), Three Continents Press, 1978, p. 7.

² The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a body of the United Nations created in 1988, aims to advance scientific knowledge about climate change caused by human activities. It coordinates global research efforts and informs governments about the possible natural, economic, and social impacts and risks of climate change, also covering possible response options. Between 1990 and 2022, the IPCC has published six comprehensive assessment reports (AR), the last of which (AR6) will be completed in the Spring of 2023 with the publication of the synthesis report.

³ For the full in-depth report on the Mediterranean region see: IPCC, AR6, WG2, Cross-chapter 4 "Mediterranean Region" (pp. 2235 - 2256). Accessible online [HERE](#).

⁴ Samia Henni (ed.), *Deserts are not Empty*, New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2022

⁵ On these topics, see: Diana K. Davis, *Of Deserts and Decolonization: Dispelling Myths About Drylands*, The MIT Press Reader, 2020 Accessible online [HERE](#).

⁶ Ida Soulard, Abinadi Meza and Bassam El Baroni (ed.), *Manual for a Future Desert*, Nantes: Mousse Publishing, 2021. The introduction is accessible online [HERE](#).

// PROGRAM

» Wednesday, February 1, 6 pm CET

Session 1: **Prologue: For Future Deserts (and Seas)**

» Wednesday, February 8, 6 pm CET

Session 2: **Building Utopia: Geoengineering, Megastructures, and Colonialities in the Mediterraneans**

February 15: 1st ACTIVATION

QANAT with Yara Dowani

March 1: 2nd ACTIVATION

QANAT with Maria Howard

» Wednesday, March 8, 6 pm CET

Session 3: **Meeting a Wetland: Flows of Water and Communities in and around the Mar Menor**

» Wednesday, March 15, 6 pm CET

Session 4: **Dismantling Mythologies of Emptiness: Against Politics of Erasure and Extinction**

» Wednesday, March 22, 6 pm CET

Session 5: **New Populations at Sea: Interspecies Communities and Extractivism in the Adriatic**

March 29: 3rd ACTIVATION

QANAT with Maya Al Khaldi

» Wednesday, April 5, 6 pm CET

Session 6: **Imagining Mediterranean Futures: Beyond the Wet / Dry Divide**

» Wednesday, April 12, 6 pm CET

Session 7: **Hadean Breath: Healing, Toxicity and Geothermalism in Turkey's Aegean Region**

April 19: 4th ACTIVATION

Guests are present live on Zoom. All times in CET.

// SESSION 1: "PROLOGUE: FOR FUTURE DESERTS (AND SEAS)"

Wednesday, February 1, 6–7.30 pm CET

Moderator: **Barbara Casavecchia**

Keynote speaker: **Bassam El Baroni**, Curator and Researcher, Aalto University

The Prologue to this semester looks into deserts and desertification as speculative tools for imagining and shaping possible futures around the Mediterraneans and beyond. What oceans and deserts have in common is the fact of being – still – too often described as empty, devoid of existence, and hence in need of, or open to colonization. What can we do to unlearn colonial misconceptions of aridity and desertification as the end of nature and humanity, and try instead to reshape our environmental ideologies? What is the lesson we could then learn from drylands ecosystems and their highly biodiverse inhabitants, in order to adapt to the planetary expansion of heat and drought?

Our keynote speaker is curator, scholar, and professor at Aalto University, Bassam El Baroni; together with Ida Soulard and Abinadi Meza, he recently edited *Manual for A Future Desert* (2022), a book that emerges from years of experimental pedagogies and artistic practices, and engages with "the ecological, cultural, philosophical, technological, mythological, and political dimensions of the desert". From this Prologue, OCEAN / UNI aims to set the landscape and the core questions for the following five sessions, adopting a choral perspective that does not use art only as a means of communication. Rather, we aim to blend seemingly faraway disciplines, shaping a unified modality of researching and enquiring into complex matters from which, perhaps, new paradigms can emerge.

// SESSION 2: "BUILDING UTOPIA: GEOENGINEERING, MEGASTRUCTURES, AND COLONIALITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEANS"

Wednesday, February 8, 6–7.30 pm CET

Moderator: **Pietro Consolandi**

Speakers: **Design Earth**, research practice founded by Rania Ghosn and El Hadi Jazairy; **Second speaker TBA**

The opaque term "geoengineering" might sound at once familiar and puzzling: a vague buzzword with a sci-fi element, broadly understood as any building practice that entails the large-scale manipulation of a process central to Earth's climate, for a certain benefit.

The Mediterraneans, neighboring radically different biomes – the Sahara and central Europe, the Atlantic and the Black Sea – have been the object of many speculations on their radical transformation to meet specific desires. One particularly famous example is that of German architect Herman Sörgel, *Atlantropa*: a colonial project consisting of several hydroelectric dams positioned at key points of the Mediterranean Sea, such as the Strait of Gibraltar and the Bosphorus, to lower sea level and thus create

new land to settle. More contemporary projects see the Mediterraneans' sun-soaked lands, labeled as "empty" and "unproductive", as a free space to be filled by an enormous sun farm, to satisfy the thirsty electric markets surrounding the Mediterranean basin.

In this session, we look at possible futures in which geoengineering might soar to a planetary scale, questioning its possible neocolonial roles and – on the other hand – possibilities for the virtuous use of technology, one that also account for localized knowledges and practices.

// SESSION 3: MEETING A WETLAND: FLOWS OF WATER AND COMMUNITIES IN AND AROUND THE MAR MENOR

Wednesday, March 8, 6-7:30 pm CET

Moderator: **Pietro Consolandi**

Speakers: **Lorenzo Sandoval**, Visual Artist; **Pedro Luengo Michel**, Biologist and representative of *Ecologistas en Acción* in Murcia

This session inquires the complex relationships between the communities around the salted lagoon of Mar Menor - the first ecosystem in Europe to receive legal personhood - and the many ways in which water influences their lives, together with those of animals, plants, and entire waterlands. It includes a conversation between Pedro Luengo Michel (biologist and activist, *Ecologistas en Acción*) and artist Lorenzo Sandoval, whose film *Aquel Verano del '22. Las leyes* (That Summer of '22. The Laws) poetically traces the ecological degradation in the Mar Menor, and in the adjacent region of Campo de Cartagena, in the coast of Murcia, Southeast Spain.

From contamination to extraction, human activities can fundamentally alter the natural flows of water. In this process, the claim that "water belongs to all" is often appropriated by political parties and specific interest groups, but access to water is arbitrarily decided following logics that often disregard the livelihoods of more-than-humans and the health of entire ecosystems. Droughts are exasperated by deliberate productive choices, and so is the quality of air and waters. Departing from the case study of the Mar Menor, what tools are being developed to re-imagine the relationship between humans and water itself? And how can human communities form relations between places afflicted by similar problems, to develop common strategies?

// SESSION 4: "DISMANTLING MYTHOLOGIES OF EMPTINESS: AGAINST POLITICS OF ERASURE AND EXTINCTION"

Wednesday, March 15, 6–7.30 pm CET

Moderator: **Barbara Casavecchia**

Speakers: **Jumana Manna**, Visual Artist; **Samia Henni**, Historian, Instructor and Exhibition Maker, Cornell University's College of Architecture, Art and Planning

Labeling given spaces and territories as deserts, even when clearly populated by humans and more-than-humans, entails the prospect of their occupation and the exploitation of their resources in more "productive" ways. The normative, colonial model of the evergreen landscape – so powerful that, as Diana K. Davis suggests, *arborocentrism* has colonized science and even ecology – needs to be radically reconsidered. If two-thirds of the planet are Ocean, and one third of its terrestrial portion consists of drylands, on which models and narrations are norms being established?

In her book *Deserts Are Not Empty* (2022), historian and curator Samia Henni "questions colonial tendencies and remaps the representations, theories, histories, and stories of arid lands", while in her upcoming *Colonial Toxicity: French Nuclear Architecture and Wastes in the Sahara* (2024) she investigates France's nuclear weapons program and its aftermath in the Sahara. Jumana Manna's latest film *Foragers* (2022) focuses on the conflicts revolving around the practice of foraging for wild edible plants (such as *za'atar* (thyme) and the artichoke-like *'akkoub*, widely used in Arab cooking) in Palestine/Israel. As the artist writes: "By reframing the terms and constraints of preservation, the film raises questions around the politics of extinction, namely who determines what is made extinct and what gets to live on."

// SESSION 5: "NEW POPULATIONS AT SEA: INTERSPECIES COMMUNITIES AND EXTRACTIVISM IN THE ADRIATIC"

Wednesday, March 22, 6–7.30 pm CET

Moderator: **Pietro Consolandi**

Speakers: **Isabelle Carbonell**, sci-fi documentary Filmmaker and assistant professor of film at the American University of Paris; **Tjaša Kogovšek**, Marine Ecologist, Ruđer Bošković Institute, Center for Marine Research

The Sea has been portrayed as the most fixed and untouched landscape, with its perfectly horizontal form leaving poets of all times inspired. Yet, the reality is very different and highly dynamic, famously under the line of the water, but increasingly so even above it. Human interventions are rapidly changing these under- and above-water landscapes, and creating new interactions that radically shift non-human existences and their relations.

Ships line up to enter the world's busiest ports, and discharge ballast waters that bring alien species. Canals are dug, funneling waters and creatures, moving them and creating new situations in which alien species mingle with indigenous underwater populations. Just a few kilometers from populated coasts, energy infrastructure occupies marine spaces from the skies to the benthos (from Ancient Greek βένθος, 'the depths of the sea'). Oil and gas installations have been in place for decades, many of which are now being decommissioned as wind farms grow their own footprint. It is what Nancy Couling and Carola Hein have defined the *Urbanisation of the Sea*, in their book with

the same title (2020).

In this fifth session, we learn from human and coral perspectives in the Adriatic Sea, where the extractive landscape continuously creates new communities. The legs of oil and gas platforms are becoming stepping stones for certain species – as in Isabelle Carbonell's film *Polyps are a Pluriverse* (2020) – to traverse and occupy the seabed, growing into reefs that host unexpected forms of life and coexistence.

// SESSION 6: "IMAGINING MEDITERRANEAN FUTURES: BEYOND THE WET / DRY DIVIDE"

Wednesday, April 5, 6–7.30 pm CET

Moderator: **Chiara Cartuccia**

Speakers: **Zeina Moneer**, PhD in Environmental Politics at Freiburg University; **Bochra Taboubi**, Visual Artist; **Islam Shabana**, Visual Artist

The sixth session takes the reflections developed over the semester into a space of speculation, accessing intertwining imaginations of desired and/or dreaded futurities. If, during the season, we pursued into a dissection of the historical, political, and economic reasons underlying the climatic biases that consider aridity a condition of negation, here we attempt to foresee Mediterranean tomorrows that evade the wet/dry divide.

The transcontinental geographies of the Mediterraneans are traversed and manipulated by exploitative national and extra-national agendas, their ecosystems compromised by the abuses of accelerated capitalism, their lands and seas shaken by the effects of anthropogenic climate transformation. By thinking through socio-ecological arguments and artistic elaborations, which cross over the concreteness of contemporary geo- and eco-politics, while employing the morphing lexicons of techno-mythology, we seek to frame Mediterraneans as testbeds for future conditions of existence.

The frail terraqueous qualities of today's Mediterraneans offer a unique opportunity to navigate across different possibilities of ecological transition, but also to fantasize on the aftermath of ecological catastrophe. Counter to current systems of belief, this might bring us to envisage unexpected modes of survival and adaptation.

// SESSION 7: "HADEAN BREATH: HEALING, TOXICITY AND GEOTHERMALISM IN TURKEY'S AEGEAN REGION"

Wednesday, April 12, 6–7.30 pm CET

Moderator: **Chiara Cartuccia**

Speakers: **Aslı Uludağ**, Visual Artist, PhD candidate at Goldsmiths, University of London; **Mehmet Cihat Alçiçek**, Geologist, Pamukkale University

The last session moves inland, along the grabens that meet

the sea on the Aegean coast of Turkey.

Through the research experiences of artist and researcher Aslı Uludağ and geologist Mehmet Cihat Alçiçek, the conversation engages with the eventfulness of the ground and the potentials it introduces to this eastern Mediterranean region. The encounter unfolds across a scientific contextualisation of the specificities of the area, to focus on the environmental violence enacted through the production of geothermal energy, a sustainable energy resource, in Aydın, Denizli and Manisa.

The region's "geothermalism" is explored through its geology and via local practices – ancient and contemporary – that engage with the deep subsurface, to problematize the demarcation of a sustainable resource. The session descends into the complexities of the storied ground, to think with its indeterminacy.

// ACTIVATIONS

The stork arrived alone one day...

This series of workshops begins with the journey of a fatigued stork across a troubled Mediterranean.

Drawing on the learnings shared throughout the semester, QANAT invites participants to recall the wisdom of gharasu fa akalna, naghrus fa ya'kulun - they sowed seeds so we ate, we sowed so they would eat. By keeping this call for intergenerational care close to our hearts and mind, *The stork arrived alone one day...* is a proposal rooted in giving back, an exercise in speculative fabulation offered to Earth's future inhabitants - human and non-human.

With our invited guests, throughout four sessions, we will explore how to regenerate soil and design the food forest where our stork could nest and where our fabulations for the future can root, carried by stories we will write, songs we will compose and worlds we will illustrate.

[QANAT](#) is a collective platform that explores the politics and poetics of water to reflect and act (up)on the multiple contextual understandings and forms of (re)production of the commons in Morocco and beyond. Drawing from various forms of knowledge and acts of resistance and solidarity to dominant environmental narratives and injustices, QANAT aims to create spaces through which we can speculate upon new collective imaginaries to design new spatial and epistemological configurations for our cities. The collective develops archives of resonant reflections and actions that knit together local struggles into transnational patterns for nourishing debates across dispersed localities. QANAT was initiated at LE 18, Marrakech

// WHO CAN PARTICIPATE & REGISTRATION

The program is intended for anyone eager to deepen their relations with the ecological, political, aesthetic, ethical, and scientific knowledges around the realities and futures of the Ocean. Lectures will be held in English, so a good listening and speaking level is recommended to ensure meaningful exchange.

Participants are required to register for their attendance to the program online via Zoom. Due to limited capacity applicants will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis. You are welcome to register in advance for more than one session. If you attend five sessions or more, you will receive an official certificate of attendance.

REGISTRATION FORM [HERE](#)

Access to the detailed program, session recordings, and additional study materials are provided through the ocean comm/uni/ty platform. These can be found in the OCEAN / UNI area.

JOIN OCEAN COMM/UNI/TY [HERE](#)

// OCEAN / UNI

The Academy's metabolism of researching, digesting, producing, and sharing knowledges is disseminated through **OCEAN / UNI, an art–activism–law–science learning initiative**, online, tuition-free, and open to the general public. The program's curriculum invites fluid thinking with the Ocean as a way to move toward more amphibious actions, beyond the binaries of land and sea. Aiming to complement and enhance land-based understanding of the Earth, it covers a wide range of ecological, political, aesthetic, ethical, and scientific topics around the realities and futures of the Ocean.

Through critical conversations with artists, activists, scientists, scholars, and storytellers, each semester unfolds different themes and viewpoints around the potentials and perils of oceanic transformation. The lessons are supported by research clusters and shared forms of inquiry set to guide curiosity, foster transdisciplinary exchange, and inform methodologies of radical sensitivity and regenerative culture. Aiming to activate critical ocean literacy, OCEAN / UNI and its collaborating partners in international educational institutions seek to formulate propositions that bring together various formats of engagement with the Ocean, its communities and its other-than-human inhabitants.

OCEAN / UNI's **Curriculum** provides students, researchers, and the public with wide-ranging and accessible explorations through regular live sessions, reading groups, small-scale workshops or activations, collective visual notebooks, an online archive of gathered knowledge and materials, as well as through **ocean comm/uni/ty** – a user-friendly platform that functions as a digital access point to ongoing and past programs of OCEAN / UNI. **ocean comm/uni/ty** harbors collaboration and offers a space for researchers, practitioners, and ocean lovers of all stripes to exchange knowledge and seek inspiration; to share and promote their work; to spark and maintain

collaborations. In concert with OCEAN / UNI and Ocean-Archive.org, ocean comm/uni/ty forms an immersive three-pronged ecosystem for learning, discovering, and gathering.

As we continue to make sense of our relationship to the environment, the transformations of the Ocean become central sites of learning and research. It is urgent to find possibilities for the Ocean to become a space of knowledge exchange that bridges differences and offers modes of learning from each other. OCEAN / UNI explores not only new educational formats, but also ways of connecting thinkers, artists, researchers, and activist groups.

OCEAN / UNI is a space:

- » to create a **different temporality, to give continuity to some of our conversations and relationships.**
- » for creating **trans-disciplinary conversations**, connecting the work of different research groups in different institutions and locations, facilitating new collaborations.
- » for **doing things together**, through collective readings, study sessions, or collaboration, where we can become more granular and specific in smaller working groups.
- » for connecting with other **educational platforms, approaches, pedagogies, and methodologies.**

The Curriculum aims to provide students, researchers, and the public with wide-ranging and accessible explorations through regular live sessions, reading groups, small-scale workshops or activations, collective visual notebooks, an online archive of gathered knowledge and materials, and through the ocean comm/uni/ty.

ocean comm/uni/ty is a feature of the Ocean-Archive.org, a user-friendly meeting place for diving deep and crossing disciplines. In concert with OCEAN / UNI and Ocean-Archive.org, ocean comm/uni/ty forms an immersive three-pronged ecosystem for learning, discovering, and gathering. As the online portal to access the ongoing and past programs of OCEAN / UNI, ocean comm/uni/ty harbors collaboration and offers a space for researchers, practitioners, and Ocean lovers of all stripes to exchange knowledge and seek inspiration; to share and promote their work; to spark and maintain collaborations.

Upcoming live modules:

- » Deep Sea (Fall 2023)
- » Deep Sea Mining (Spring 2024)

Modules available:

- » [Studies in Blue Agency: Six global tales against eco-anxiety](#) (Fall 2022)
- » ["Imagine the Ocean Dry as Lavender" – first cycle – Mediterraneans as Hotspot for Climate Change and Adaptation](#) (Spring 2022)
- » [How to Wade Through Water? Storytelling as a Method](#) (Fall 2021)

» [Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the Common Oceans](#) (Spring 2021)

» [7 Seas, Oceans in Transformation](#) (Fall 2020)

// OCEAN / UNI SPRING 2023 CURATORIAL TEAM

Barbara Casavecchia is a writer, independent curator, and educator based in Venice and Milan, where she teaches at the Department of Visual Cultures and Curatorial Practices of the Brera Academy since 2011. She also teaches in the Art & Ecology master at NABA, Milan. Contributing editor of Frieze magazine, her articles and essays have been published in art-agenda, ArtReview, La Repubblica, Flash Art, Mousse, Nero, South, and Spike, amongst others, as well as in several artist books and catalogues. In 2018, she curated the solo exhibition "Susan Hiller, Social Facts" at OGR, Turin. In 2020, she acted as Mentor of the Ocean Fellowship Program offered by TBA21–Academy at Ocean Space in Venice. In 2021–2023, Barbara is leading the first stream of The Current III cycle.

Chiara Cartuccia is an independent curator and researcher based out of London. She is currently engaged in long-term research on the Mediterranean as imagined/imaginative geography, focusing on the ramifications of practical Mediterraneanism(s) in the working and thinking of art institutions operating within Euro-Mediterranean contexts. Since 2016, she is co-founder and director of the curatorial and editorial platform EX NUNC, where she curates the ongoing online exhibitions programme EXN Lagoon and the hybrid publication project EXN Journal-On Mediterranean. Chiara held curatorial positions at SAVVY Contemporary, and Manifesta Biennial, and she is Visiting Research Curator at UNIDEE Residency Programs, Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto, for the season 2022/24.

Pietro Consolandi is a researcher and artist based in Venice, he is OCEAN / UNI Research Lead at TBA21–Academy and co-founder of the Barena Bianca collective. His research and artistic practice departs from the Lagoon of Venice and other vulnerable wetlands and bodies of water to investigate the interconnection between human beings, their more-than-human neighbours and the ecosystems they belong to, from a political, ecological and sentimental point of view.

// RELATED OCEAN SPACE EXHIBITION

April - November 2023

» [The Current III - Mediterraneans: Thus waves come in pairs \(after Etel Adnan\)](#) – Upcoming exhibition at Ocean Space, curated by Barbara Casavecchia

// 2020–2023 ACADEMIC PARTNERS

- » AA Architectural Association School of Architecture, London
- » Brera Academy, Milan, Italy
- » Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy
- » Columbia University, NY, USA
- » GEO—DESIGN, Design Academy Eindhoven, The Netherlands
- » Hochschule Mainz: University of Applied Sciences, Germany
- » Lancaster University
- » Institut Kunst, FHNW Academy of Art and Design, Basel, Switzerland
- » NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway
- » Salon Swiss / Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

// CRITICAL OCEAN LITERACY

The methodologies of OCEAN / UNI aim to create spaces of collaborative work, coalitional thinking,⁷ and solidarity to generate new pedagogies and ways of researching that go beyond words, grown from feeling. This sensitivity to the oceanic elaborates a critical ocean literacy that extends a factual comprehension of the mutual influence between us and the Ocean, moving deeper into thinking through the Ocean.

Performed individually and collectively, such acts can blend in different kinds of knowledge and release us from coded connections to wander through the ocean's rhythms, poetry, and biology; through these fluid processes of hybridization we might come to grasp and communicate our ecological crisis.

Learning through sensing, familiarity, and the body can ignite joy and healing, can grow affinity with otherness. Telling stories—and coming together to listen—can access cosmic timescales, can weave motives and planetary movements into the spaces between data points. How do the ways in which we talk to each other, gather, listen, and learn matter and create kinship? By welcoming worldviews originating in different densities and humidities, latitudes and altitudes, perhaps a new critical perspective could arise, one that can tell the story of the fragile interconnectedness of our biosphere, empowering humans and nonhumans to wade toward a space of balanced coexistence.

⁷ Eva S. Hayward and Adela C. Licona, "Trans~Waters~ Coalitional Thinking on Art + Environment!" terrain.org, 2014. Online [HERE](#).

"Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs' (after Etel Adnan)," the first stream of *The Current III* cycle is led by Barbara Casavecchia. "Thinking of, and with, the historical and cultural formation of the Mediterranean, trying to define and configure it, we are struck by the necessity to overcome not only disciplinary and national borders (and here the challenge of cultural and postcolonial studies come forcibly into play), but also to disorient and reorient the epistemological coordinates that we are used to applying," write Iain Chambers and Marta Cariello in their recent essay "The Mediterranean Question." How to rethink the divisions between land and water, wet and dry, solid and volatile by listening to the different languages and stories narrating them across time and space? Collaborative processes of care can co-construct future visions of the Mediterranean and its incessant flows of people, energy, resources, interactions, and currents, as well as support regenerative actions to manifest them. *The Current III "Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs'"*, is a Decade Action part of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030.

TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary—based in Madrid, with situated projects in Venice and Cordoba—is a leading international art and advocacy foundation created in 2002 by the philanthropist and collector Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza. All activity of the foundation is fundamentally driven by artists and the belief in art and culture as a carrier of social and environmental transformation and change. TBA21 is continually extending its advocacy work by sparking new collaborations across the arts, humanities and sciences, partnering with other research and educational organizations, and municipalities and communities around the world.

In 2011, TBA21 established the research center **TBA21–Academy**, a cultural ecosystem fostering a deeper relationship to the Ocean and other bodies of water through the lens of art to inspire care and action. For a decade, the Academy has been an incubator for collaborative research, artistic production, and new forms of knowledge by combining art and science. In 2019, TBA21–Academy inaugurated [Ocean Space in Venice](#), a planetary center for exhibitions, research, and public programs catalyzing critical ocean literacy through the arts, and [Ocean-Archive.org](#), a digital organism for a living ocean; a platform in the making, an archive and framework for collaborative research.

Ocean-Archive.org is an online platform that investigates the potential of storytelling and transdisciplinary collaboration within and beyond archival practices. It strives to expand critical ocean literacy in a time of great necessity and catalyzes collective action for a living Ocean. The aim of Ocean-Archive.org is to bring together the multitude of voices and [Stories](#) around the Ocean and connect those striving to nurture and protect it. With [ocean comm/uni/ty](#), the platform aligns conversations around the Ocean so that the members can find each other, connect, and join forces. Designed as a storytelling and pedagogical tool, Ocean-Archive.org translates current knowledge into a shared language that fosters synergy among art, science, policy, and conservation and enables us to make better decisions for urgently needed policies.