

// OPEN CALL // OCEAN / UNI

Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the common oceans

January 20 – May 12, 2021, biweekly sessions

**A tuition-free and collaborative pedagogical initiative
developed by TBA21–Academy in the context of
*Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation***

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

Academic Partners:

AA Architectural Association School of Architecture, London

Brera Academy of Fine Arts, Milan

Environmental Humanities at Ca' Foscari University of Venice

GEO—DESIGN at the Design Academy Eindhoven

Trondheim Academy of Fine Art at NTNU, the Norwegian
University of Science and Technology

// OCEAN / UNI: Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the common oceans // CURRICULUM

Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the common oceans inaugurates the second cycle of TBA21–Academy's *Ocean / Uni* in 2021. This art–science educational initiative, open to the general public, offers 8 biweekly online sessions to delve further into investigations at the core of the research exhibition *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*, commissioned by TBA21–Academy, to re-open at Ocean Space in March 2021.

Latched to the launch of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), *Ocean / Uni* invites exchange and debate to garner knowledges and stake out new perspectives on the oceans and their intractable destabilizations. *Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the common oceans* draws on a community of scholars, artists, practitioners, and ocean enthusiasts to think with the politics of the commons and the world of communal relations from within critical ocean studies and activist practices. To defend and reclaim the commons touches upon ethics of care and the threading of mutual bonds. This call is harnessed by people on the most divergent and intersecting fronts, to counter the sorcery of capital and commodification. But it also alerts us to the disturbing realization that while the commons may be figured as owned by all, this comes with the risk of being cared for by none.

What is defined as common to humankind is undergoing legal reformulation in different international fora, from the UN's instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), to the Mining Code, and WTO negotiations on fisheries. At the same time, the International Labour Organisation has ruled on the failure of governments worldwide to protect seafarers during the pandemic, by neglecting their duty of care under international law. Such ideological and regulatory narratives are currently creating enclosures, and infringing on the ideals of communing through the privatization of spaces of freedom and their wealth of resources.

Bringing into view the many discordances and ruptures in the handling of the thalassic commons reveals a fractious and insidious assault on reciprocity, mutuality, and care. Urgently undoing these narratives, and exploring the inclusion of non-human others in the discourse, offers the chance to reshape the ways in which we live together and attend to new forms of sociality. It is not the enchantment with an archaic dream that guides this investigation, but the upholding of an urgent political project in defense of the largest and most vital commons on this planet.

The accumulation and availability of data resulting from what Jennifer Gabrys calls the "becoming environmental of computation" bring about potentialities for a new mode of dealing with ecological transformation at a planetary scale. However, asymmetries in access to this data persist and reinforce specific relations of domination, exploitation, and depletion of the commons, as well as denying contributions from actors outside the arenas of

academia and governance. Which acts of communing and care can be imagined for contribution to a new episteme of togetherness and mutuality on a damaged planet?

The spring semester program *Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the common oceans* offers broad exposure to ecocritical voices that speak to non land-based worldviews, and bring into focus situated struggles, forms of resistance, indigenous knowledges, legislative imagination, and forms of care. The program consists of expert presentations, discussions, and close readings (see: Arpentage sessions) to build grounds for forms of thinking and practices that exceed mere notions of repair and reparation.



// OCEAN / UNI

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. The aim of the **Curriculum** is to provide students, researchers, and the public with wide-ranging and accessible explorations of the changes taking place throughout the oceans at a high level of expertise.

As humankind continues to make sense of its relationship to the environment, the transformations, perceptions, values, and ecologies of the oceans become focal points of learning and research. While the living waters of the oceans all interconnect to form one "ocean", the aquatic "body" of our planet has been fragmented by the various forms of knowledges and practices that engage with it. It is urgent to figure possibilities for the oceans to become a space of engagement, that bridges difference and offers channels for modes of witnessing and transacting, of call and response, and of learning from each other. A dedicated oceanic initiative has important implications for a pedagogic practice: it needs to address post-materialist and post-humanist concerns while engaging with questions of social justice and technological innovation. It must apply knowledge of Earth system sciences to understand deep marine and maritime histories and futures. And it must acknowledge the many ways in which people who live coastally, on islands, in ice landscapes, and with the seas possess standing rights and forms of deep knowledges – thus raising the ethical and political stakes in the face of environmental degradation.

// ARPENTAGE READING SESSIONS

To expand on the questions and topics addressed within each *Ocean / Uni* session, 4 extra online sessions of so-called "Arpentage" reading circles are offered as an experiment in collective learning, to deepen knowledge and activate the debate around specific ecocritical positions.

These reading circles are conceived as ways to engage the students in a more horizontal, non-hierarchical manner by using the methodology of the "arpentage", which has its roots in working-class culture (workers' circle), as an alternative pedagogy.

// BIWEEKLY PROGRAM

Starting on Jan 20 // then following a biweekly rhythm

Lecturers will be present live via Zoom or in a pre-recorded session.

Session 1: Ocean justice: People vs. Arctic oil*

Wednesday, 20 January, 2pm - 4pm

Session 2: Ocean care - Caring for the commons

Wednesday, 3 Feb, 4pm - 6pm

Reading session: Arpentage

Wednesday, 10 February, 4pm - 6pm

Session 3: Ocean Labor

Wednesday, 17 February, 4pm - 6pm

Reading session: Arpentage

Wednesday, 24 February, 4pm - 6pm

Session 4: Deep sea mining: The future of greenwashing*

Wednesday, 10 March, 4pm - 6pm

Session 5: Fluid territories

Wednesday, 24 March, 4pm - 6pm

Reading session: Arpentage

Wednesday, 31 March, 4pm - 6pm

Session 6: Sounding borderless entanglements

Wednesday, 14 April, 4pm - 6pm

Session 7: Mediterranean enclosures

Wednesday, 28 April, 4pm - 6pm

This session is organised in collaboration with Ca' Foscari University, Venice

Reading session: Arpentage

Wednesday, May 5, 4pm - 6pm

Session 8: Ocean as a method

Wednesday, 12 May, 4pm - 6pm

**This session is part of a series of talks in the context of the course 'Ocean Justice' hosted by the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art at NTNU, the Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

// WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

The program is intended for adults from any background and eager to engage in ecological, political, aesthetic, ethical, and scientific conversations around the futures of the oceans. Lectures will be held exclusively in English, so a good listening and speaking level is recommended to ensure a meaningful learning experience.

The curriculum is open to anyone with an interest in deepening their knowledge, understanding, and experience of the research topics unfolded in the exhibition *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*.



// REGISTRATION

Participants are required to register for their attendance to the seminar online in a webinar format. Find hereunder registration form link. 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](#)

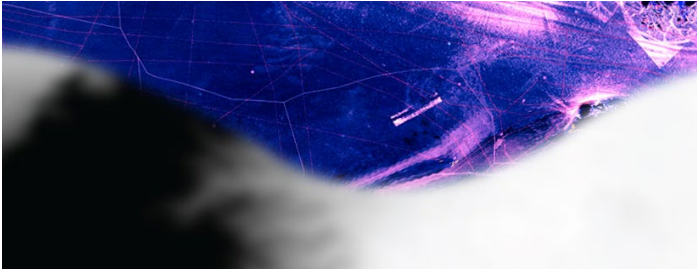
// TERRITORIAL AGENCY: OCEANS IN TRANSFORMATION

Curated by Daniela Zyman

Commissioned by TBA21–Academy and co-produced with Luma Foundation

Ocean Space, August 27 – November 29, 2020 and March 20 - August 29, 2021, Chiesa di San Lorenzo, Venice

Digital Presentation, www.ocean-archive.org, since May 20, 2020



Oceans in Transformation is a research exhibition developed in collaboration with TBA21–Academy by Territorial Agency, an independent organization that combines architecture, research, and advocacy. The exhibition, curated by Daniela Zyman, explores new ways of connecting research groups that address the oceans in transformation, linking science, arts, and politics by way of shared images, datasets, and narratives. The research project has unfolded over several years through interactions with hundreds of scientists, research institutions, intergovernmental organizations, scholars, activists, policy makers, and artists. It has brought together a group of Ocean Fellows, who during the first months of the Covid-19 lockdowns have further developed the work and its outreach with a wealth of online activities that can be accessed at www.ocean-archive.org.

The project combines Earth Sciences and remote sensing datasets in complex dynamic compositions. These compositions are produced with data from satellites, floating buoys, GPS, artificial intelligence, sonar scans, and climate models of the interactions between sea, sky, and land. Multi-temporal and multi-scalar, they form an image of the oceans as unframed, asynchronous, and discontinuous.

This image of the Anthropocene is organized along seven trajectories stretching across the contemporary oceans and presented on large screens. The trajectories indicate the complex interrelations between forms of the Earth System and forms of human cohabitation. As they span the planet, they reveal the magnitude of the impact of human activity on the oceans. They offer a momentary glimpse into humans' relation to a multiplicity of oceans in transformation, and a premonition about the future of these relationships. They indicate how fragmented and incoherent the knowledge of the oceans still is and form an invitation to collaborate and think together how to safeguard the future of the oceans and their cohabitants.

(Excerpt from the exhibition text by Territorial Agency)

Ocean-Archive.org is an online platform in the making; a digital twin for TBA21–Academy's decentralized collaborative dialogue and research, devised as an oceanic network for art and cultural discourse within the contexts of science, policy, and conservation.

As such, Ocean Archive operates as a tool for online and remote learning. The current global pandemic has made the vulnerabilities in educational practices around the world more evident than ever – it is clear that we need flexible and resilient educational systems as we face unpredictable futures. University members and teaching staff can benefit from digital tools that enhance and support student learning. Digital tools such as the Archive facilitate discussion and common learning between geographically distanced study groups and enhance the integration of augmented education by accommodating physical and virtual learning and meeting.

Located in the Church of San Lorenzo in Venice, **Ocean Space** opened in March of 2019 as a new planetary center for catalyzing ocean literacy, research, and advocacy through the arts. Established and led by TBA21–Academy and building on its expansive work over the past nine years, this new embassy for the oceans fosters engagement and collective action on the most pressing issues facing the oceans today. Conceived as a platform for collaboration and exchange, Ocean Space provides flexible facilities for installations, performances, workshops, archives, and research, overseen by TBA21–Academy and its network of partners, including universities, NGOs, museums, government agencies, and research institutes from around the world. In 2019, Ocean Space exhibited Joan Jonas's *Moving Off the Land II* and will reopen in 2020 following a period of refurbishment with *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*.

TBA21–Academy is a cultural organization investigating environmental injustice against the ocean through the lens of art. The Academy instigates intersectional and collaborative research, artistic production, and new forms of knowledge, resulting in commissions, exhibitions and pedagogic programs. Commissioning and producing research-led projects for nearly a decade, TBA21–Academy has grown an extensive network of ocean practitioners and experts from the fields of science, policy, law, big data, feminist, and indigenous scholarship.