

# OCEAN / UNI

"IMAGINE THE OCEAN DRY AS LAVENDER"

MEDITERRANEANS AS HOTSPOT FOR  
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

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## OPEN CALL

February 9 - May 11, 2022, biweekly sessions and activations

*A collaborative educational project by TBA21–Academy*

*Online events held in various venues / Zoom, [Ocean-Archive.org](https://ocean-archive.org)  
and on [ocean comm/unity](https://oceancommunity.com)*

### ACADEMIC PARTNERS

#### 2021/2022

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

Columbia University, New York, USA

GEO—DESIGN, Design Academy Eindhoven, The Netherlands

Hochschule Mainz: University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Institut Kunst, FHNW Academy of Art and Design, Basel, Switzerland

Salon Swiss / Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland

NABA (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti), Milan, Italy

## IMAGINE THE OCEAN DRY AS LAVENDER

### MEDITERRANEANS AS HOTSPOT FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION

February 9 - May 11, 2022

With a title inspired by the evocative verses of Egyptian-Lebanese-French poet Andrée Chédid (*Imagine / La mer, / Sèche comme lavande*)<sup>1</sup>, the Spring semester of OCEAN / UNI 2022 focuses on the Mediterranean basin as an Anthropocenic hotspot and on building critical approaches to thinking about and engaging with the region.

There are as many Mediterraneans as there are demarcations of the complex geographies, histories, ecologies and geopolitical conflicts composing this neuralgic region, constantly resisting homogenization<sup>2</sup>. While the Mediterranean Sea is now described as a "solid" space whose liquid borders are enclosed, fenced and surveilled by the EU to stop the free circulation of migrant bodies<sup>3</sup>, the Mediterranean climate - above and below the water surface - is mutating at such a tumultuous pace<sup>4</sup> that its expanding perimeter is blurry and increasingly difficult to draw. This expanding area is warming up 20% faster than the global average<sup>5</sup>; distant shores are now connected by heat waves, aridity lines and seasonal droughts, the rich marine biodiversity is being eroded, and the rapid decline of oxygen, nutrients and biomasses in the water is described as a process of 'desertification'. What is then to be unlearned and relearned by situating our observations within an aquatic Mediterranean perspective?

Considering "the Mediterraneans" as a plural, transnational region in transformation, relying on watery networks composed of basins, rivers, coastlines and wetlands, helps us realise that they function as a constellation of distinct, yet interconnected ecosystems. Such systems, "multispecies webs" and "uneven landscapes", as Anna Tsing points out<sup>6</sup>, need to be understood in their specificity, before being translated on a planetary scale.

The seven sessions adopt a transdisciplinary and decolonising<sup>7</sup> approach, inviting Mediterranean scientists, activists, artists and practitioners to share their knowledges and perspectives. By connecting accelerating anomalies in the water cycles, specific case studies and situated actions, OCEAN / UNI departs from the present to reflect on possible adaptations and imaginable futures. To look at the Mediterraneans as a paradigm, while non-localizing their shifting condition, means to look at many other middle seas and ecosystems of the globe.

The spring semester of **OCEAN / UNI 2021-2022** is curated and developed by **Barbara Casavecchia**, Leader of *The Current III* - "Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs' (after Etel Adnan)"; **Pietro Consolandi**; **Justine Daquin** and **Zoé Le Voyer (Calypso 36°21)**, former Ocean Fellows; and **Beatrice Forchini**, Assistant Curator, TBA21; alongside **Petra Linhartova**, Head of Digital & Development, **Michal Kučerák**, Digital Content Manager; and **Markus Reymann**, Director of TBA21–Academy. Graphic design: **Lana Jerichova, bruno**. Produced with care by the TBA21–Academy team.

### // FOR A CRITICAL OCEAN LITERACY

The methodologies of OCEAN / UNI aim to create spaces of collaborative work, coalitional thinking<sup>8</sup>, and solidarity to generate new pedagogies and ways of researching that go beyond words, grown from feeling. This sensitivity to the oceanic aims to expand Ocean Literacy, elaborating a Critical Ocean Literacy that extends a factual comprehension of the mutual influence between us and watery spaces. Focusing on the Mediterranean Sea as a space of plurality and looking communally at its role in shaping the lives and relationships of the interdependent – both human and more-than-human – inhabitants of its basin also means understanding it as a part of one, big Ocean, with many voices. As the community white paper *The Mediterranean Sea We Want* (2021) states:

*While Ocean Literacy has been recognized as a key enabler of virtuous engagement, (...) a consistent effort should be devoted to connecting experiences, exchanging practices, and supporting collaboration among the actors working on science communication and outreach, harmonized among the riparian countries. In this way, reaching an "inspiring and engaging Mediterranean Sea" will become possible<sup>9</sup>.*

Performed individually and collectively, such exchanges can blend different knowledges 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 the ecological crisis we are part of. How do the ways in which we talk to each other, gather, listen, and learn matter? How can they create kinship? By welcoming worldviews originating from different densities and humidities, latitudes and altitudes, perhaps a new critical perspective could arise. With this, we might learn about the fragile interconnectedness of our biosphere, empowering humans and nonhumans to wade toward a space of balanced coexistence.

<sup>1</sup> From: Andrée Chédid, *Imagine*, 1968, in *Textes pour un poème*, Flammarion, 2014, p. 259. Translated into English in: *Women of the Fertile Crescent: An Anthology of Modern Poetry by Arab Women*, edited and translated by Kamal Boullata, Three Continents Press, 1978, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Multiplicity, *Solid Sea*, 2002. Commissioned by Documenta 11. Founding members Stefano Boeri, Maddalena Bregani, Francisca Insulza, Francesco Iodice, Giovanni La Varra and John Palmesino.

<sup>4</sup> IPCC, *Regional Fact Sheet: Europe in Sixth Assessment Report, Working Group I - The Physical Science Basis*, 2021 [LINK](#)

<sup>5</sup> UN Environment Programme, Information and Communication Regional Activity Center, 2020, *The Mediterranean is a Climate Change Hotspot*, [LINK](#)

<sup>6</sup> Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, Andrew S. Mathews and Nils Bubandt, *Patchy Anthropocene: Landscape Structure, Multispecies History and the Retooling of Anthropology*, [LINK](#)

<sup>7</sup> Gabriele Proglia (ed. by), *Decolonising the Mediterranean. European Colonial Heritages in North Africa and the Middle East*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Eva S. Hayward and Adela C. Licona, "Trans~Waters~ Coalitional Thinking on Art + Environment," terrain.org, 2014, [LINK](#)

<sup>9</sup> VV. AA., "The Mediterranean Sea we want", in: *Ocean and Coastal Research*, 2021, vol. 69. Available online [HERE](#).

## // OCEAN / UNI

Initiated by Daniela Zyman, OCEAN / UNI is a collaborative project developed by TBA21–Academy for higher education institutions, independent researchers, practitioners, and Ocean enthusiasts that encourages building a far reaching network and developing a transdisciplinary methodology. Established in fall 2020 as part of the activations around the exhibition *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*, OCEAN / UNI is conceived as a pedagogic space that invites thinking with the oceans as a way to move towards more amphibious formulations, beyond land-sea binaries.



**Module 2021/2022** was developed in the context of *Taloi Havini: The Soul Expanding Ocean #1* and *Isabel Lewis: The Soul Expanding Ocean #2*, curated by Chus Martínez at Ocean Space, Venice, and [The Current III "Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs' \(after Etel Adnan\)"](#) led by Barbara Casavecchia.

**Spring semester, "Imagine the Ocean Dry as Lavender".  
Mediterraneans as hotspot for climate change and adaptation**  
February 9 – May 11, 2022

**Fall semester, How to wade through water? Storytelling as a Method**

October 6 – December 15, 2021

[Follow](#) the program via [ocean comm/uni/ty](#)

\*you need to sign up/in to see the content

**Module 2020/2021** was developed in the context of *Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation*, curated by Daniela Zyman at Ocean Space, Venice.

**Spring Semester: Ocean Commons – Reclaiming the common oceans**

January – May 2021

[Watch the trailer](#), or visit the semester [materials on Ocean-Archive.org](#)

**Fall Semester: Sensing the Ocean**

September – December 2020

[Watch the trailer](#) or visit the semester [materials on Ocean-Archive.org](#)

## // PROGRAM

The proposed format of study revolves around seven biweekly sessions, open to a group of pre-registered public participants, university groups, guests, and moderators connected via Zoom, the [ocean comm/uni/ty](#), and [Ocean-Archive.org](#). The program is further enriched by accompanying Activations that have a format of small-scale workshops/reading groups, and are open to a limited number of pre-registered participants.

Main sessions begin on Wednesday, February 9, 2022 and follow a biweekly rhythm.

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

"IMAGINE THE OCEAN DRY AS LAVENDER"

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**Wednesday, February 9, 6–7.30 pm CET**

First session

**Prologue: On transformative narratives for climate justice**

**Wednesday, February 23, 6–7.30 pm CET**

Second session

**Coastal ecosystems: mutations and solutions**  
March 2: I ACTIVATION

**Wednesday, March 9, 6–7.30 pm CET**

Third session

**Aridity, politics and poetics of Mediterranean water cycles**  
March 16: II ACTIVATION

**Wednesday, March 23, 6–7.30 pm CET**

Fourth session

**A breathless sea. The intricacies of water pollution**  
March 30: III ACTIVATION

**Wednesday, April 6, 6–7.30 pm CET**

Fifth session

**Rights to more-than-humans! The legal case for the Mar Menor lagoon**  
April 13: IV ACTIVATION

**Wednesday, April 27, 6–7.30 pm CET**

Sixth session

**Against nature? Challenging norms, redefining rights**  
May 4: V ACTIVATION

**Wednesday, May 11, 6–7.30 pm CET**

Seventh session

**On Mediterraneanization: different latitudes, same issues**  
May 18: VI ACTIVATION

## // 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 curatorial fellowship program [The Current III "Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs' \(after Etel Adnan\)"](#). The first stream of *The Current III* cycle is led by Barbara Casavecchia as a transdisciplinary and transregional exercise in sensing and learning with by supporting situated projects, collective pedagogies, and voices along the Mediterranean shores across art, culture, science, conservation, and activism.

## // REGISTRATION

Participants are required to register for their attendance to the program online in a webinar format. 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 sessions and additional materials along with a wide network of ocean scholars can be found on the ocean comm/uni/ty platform. Join ocean comm/uni/ty. [HERE](#)

### **The Current III**

"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](#).

[Ocean-Archive.org](#) is a digital organism for a living ocean; a platform in the making, an archive and framework for collaborative research. It brings together the multitude of voices and stories around the Ocean and connects those striving to nurture and protect it. Designed as a storytelling and pedagogical tool, the Ocean-Archive.org translates

current knowledge about the Ocean into a shared language that enables us to make better decisions for urgently needed policies. Created to stimulate action and systemic change, Ocean-Archive.org fosters synergy among art, science, policy, and conservation to make a range of perspectives visible, discoverable, and understandable.

[ocean comm/uni/ty](#) is a new feature of the Ocean-Archive.org, a 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.

[TBA21–Academy](#) is a contemporary art organization and cultural ecosystem fostering a deeper relationship to the Ocean through the lens of art to inspire care and action. For a decade, we have been an incubator for collaborative research, artistic production, and new forms of understanding by combining art, science, and other knowledge systems, intertwining imagination and possibility in regenerative relationships, resulting in exhibitions, research, and policy interventions.

Located in the Church of San Lorenzo in Venice, [Ocean Space](#) opened in March of 2019 as a new planetary center for catalyzing critical 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 Ocean 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.

## // OCEAN SPACE EXHIBITIONS

**April 9 2022 — October 2, 2022**

[The Soul Expanding Ocean #3: Dineo Seshee Bopape. Ocean! What if no change is your desperate mission?](#) and [The Soul Expanding Ocean #4: Diana Policarpo, Ciguatera](#), curated by Chus Martínez.

**2021**

[The Soul Expanding Ocean #1: Taloi Havini. Answer to the Call](#) and [The Soul Expanding Ocean #2 Isabel Lewis. O.C.E.A.N.I.C.A.](#), curated by Chus Martínez.

Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation, curated by Daniela Zyman.

**2020**

Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation, curated by Daniela Zyman.

**2019**

[Joan Jonas. Moving Off the Land II](#), curated by Stefanie Hessler.

## // ACADEMIC PARTNERS

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Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

Columbia University, New York, USA

GEO—DESIGN, Design Academy Eindhoven,  
The Netherlands

Hochschule Mainz: University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Institut Kunst, FHNW Academy of Art and Design, Basel,  
Switzerland

Salon Swiss / Bern University of Applied Sciences,  
Switzerland

NABA (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti), Milan, Italy

**2020/2021**

AA Architectural Association School of Architecture, London

Brera Academy, Milan, Italy

Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy

GEO—DESIGN, Design Academy Eindhoven,  
The Netherlands

NTNU Norwegian University of Science and Technology,  
Norway

## // CREDITS

The spring semester of **OCEAN / UNI 2021-2022** is curated and developed by **Barbara Casavecchia**, Leader of *The Current III* - "Mediterraneans: 'Thus waves come in pairs' (after Etel Adnan)"; **Pietro Consolandi**; **Justine Daquin** and **Zoé Le Voyer (Calypso 36°21)**, former Ocean Fellows; and **Beatrice Forchini**, Assistant Curator, TBA21; alongside **Petra Linhartova**, Head of Digital & Development, **Michal Kučerák**, Digital Content Manager; and **Markus Reymann**, Director of TBA21–Academy. Graphic design: **Lana Jerichova, bruno.**

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