

Prospecting Ocean, 2018/2023

Armin Linke, in collaboration with Giulia Bruno and Giuseppe Ielasi

Main Film: single-channel video installation, color, sound, 62 min, English

Prospecting Ocean was commissioned and produced by TBA21–Academy. The single channel version of the video installation has been developed and produced in collaboration with the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen for the exhibition *Into the deep. Minen der Zukunft*.

Courtesy of the artist

Camera: Armin Linke, Giulia Bruno
Sound recording: Renato Rinaldi, Armin Linke
Editing: Giulia Bruno, Giuseppe Ielasi
Color grading: Giulia Bruno
Sound Design: Giuseppe Ielasi
Typography animation: Mevis & van Deursen, with Daria Kiseleva and Giulia Bruno

Special thanks to Stefan Helmreich, Patrick Nason, Maureen Penjueli

**The artistic contribution to the exhibition is generously supported by
TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary**

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**See also Armin Linke's work
Photoessay Prospecting Ocean, 2018
at Villa Arson Nice:**

***Becoming Ocean: A Social Conversation about the Ocean*
May 8 to August 24, 2025**

Becoming Ocean is an exhibition coproduced by TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Foundation, Tara Ocean Foundation and Villa Arson, with the collaboration of Schmidt Ocean Institute. This major exhibition invites visitors to engage in an open, social dialogue on the critical challenges facing our oceans. Through diverse artistic approaches, it encourages us to rethink our relationship with the ocean and consider new ways of acting for its preservation.

Armin Linke's film *Prospecting Ocean* (2018) is the culmination of a three-year research project commissioned by TBA21–Academy. In the film, Linke weaves an intricate network of connections between scientific research and legal frameworks, between international conferences on the future of the oceans and local activist groups in the Pacific. The film calls into question the intentions behind the creation of technologized images and shows how information is shaped by the technocratic apparatus that surrounds the world's hydrosphere.

Researchers introduce basic legal concepts such as exclusive economic zones, the continental shelf, and the sea baseline, all of which are key notions in geopolitical agendas and conflicts over marine resources and territory. Interviews with scientists illustrate research methods and representations of, for instance, bathymetric data. Scientific models remain, however, approximations of ecological interdependencies that are challenging to decipher: the future impacts of today's actions are difficult to foresee. Similarly, the industry's demonstration videos of seabed mining machinery and operation plans cannot but be seen as simplified apprehensions of the long-term impact and wide-ranging influences of occurrences in the deep sea.

Conclusively, commentary from scientists from institutions, with whom Linke collaborated for this project, as well as activists, legal experts, and anthropologists provide additional information on the origins of the imagery.

Special thanks to all interview partners, institutions, and to all those who assisted to realize this project, especially to

Nigel Bax, Devra Berkowitz, Bismarck Ramu Group, Antje Boetius, Nicholas Boncardo de Leo, Brot für die Welt, Guigone Camus, Sabine Christiansen, Laura Fiorio, Fundació Sorigué, Anselm Franke, Matthias Haeckel, Patrick Heimbach, Stefan Helmreich, Jon Herbertsson, Stefanie Hessler, Barbara Hörhan, David Hranekovic, ILA Committee on International Law and Sea Level Rise, International Seabed Authority, Monique Jeudy Ballini, Taholo Kami, Ferial Nadjia Karrasch, Kai Kaschinski, Udo Kittelmann, Barry Lalley, Michael Lodge, Ute Meta Bauer, Edit Molnár, John Momori, Sandor Mulsow, Angela Pomaro, Sarah Poppel, Martina Pozzan, Piotr Rachalewski, Filipa Ramos Gonçalves, Lisa Rave, Markus Reymann, Marzia Rovere, Mari Sanden, Elisa Scaramuz-zino, Mira Schröder, Florian Schneider, Marcel Schwierin, Mauro Sclavo, Simone Sentall, Kati Simon, Territorial Agency (John Palmesino and Ann-Sofi Rönnskog), Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, Christina Tony, Fabio Trincardi, Sebastian Unger, Philip Ursprung, Ana Vallés Blasco, Ann Vanreusel, Davor Vidas, Paige West, Jan Zalasiewicz, Daniela Zyman

BISMARCK SEA, KONO VILLAGE PRINTS

Luxa Barok - The art view of the barok hausboi during a Community Ceremony, 2025

Philip Taen with contributions by Vincent Boski from Kono Village, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

Ocean is Life, 2025

Collectively created by Philip Taen, Vincent Boski, Chris (Albie) Brian, Hamilton (Tonton) Brian, Netric Kabog and Chris Malagan from Kono Village, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

Deep Sea Mining is Our Enemy, 2025

Philip Taen with contributions by Vincent Boski from Kono Village, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea

Three inkjet prints of pencil drawings created by people of Kono Village, New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea
91 x 64 cm, each

Courtesy of the artists

The production of the inkjet prints is supported by Studio Armin Linke, NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore and TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

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These drawings depict the life and culture of local communities located within the Solwara 1 Project Area* in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea. Luxa Barok portrays a sacred feast where clans gather to farewell the dead and install new chiefs. Ocean is Life and Deep Sea Mining is Our Enemy reflect the communities deep ties to the sea which is central to daily life, food, and spiritual balance. Together, these works reveal stories of tradition while voicing urgent concerns about the threat of deep-sea mining to these coastal communities, calling for the protection of their ways of life and the ocean that sustains them.

*The Solwara 1 project area is a deep-sea mining site located in the Bismarck Sea, approximately 30 km off the coast of New Ireland province in Papua New Guinea. The specific area under the Solwara 1 mining lease covers 0.112 km² at a depth of 1,600 meters. This project aims to extract copper, gold, silver, and zinc from seafloor massive sulfide deposits.

The Bismarck Sea Support Group came together as an initiative of Godfrey Jordan Abage, a resident of West Barok area of the Namatanai District, Kono Village and Advocate of the Shark Callers. It is supported in Papua New Guinea by Jonathan Mesulam (West Coast Development), John Momori (Caritas PNG), the Catholic Diocese of Kavieng, the Shark Callers of the Barok Area. It receives wider international support from Jan Pingel (Ocean Dialogue), Armin Linke, Ute Meta Bauer, Lisa Rave, Jonathan Galka, Karin Hassfurther, Angela Ricasio Hoten, Mei Jia Ng and others.

The villages visited include Komalabuo, Kono, Konogogo (Komalu) Rabeheh (Kokola, Labur, Rapontamon, Borokolai, Marianum (Saraha, Rasirik, Palabong). These villages are located within the Solwara 1 Project Area. The drawings took place in Kono Village.

Scan here to read 'Deep-sea Mining in the Bismarck Sea', February 2025, by Jonathan Galka and Godfrey Jordan Abage for more information.



Luxa Barok

The art view of the BAROK HAUSBOI during a Community Ceremony, 2025

Philip Taen with contributions by Vincent Boski from Kono Village, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea

The Luxa Barok is the most significant and sacred feast of the Barok-speaking communities of New Ireland, Papua New Guinea. Regarded as the root of existence, it serves as the final and highest decision-making ceremony—what is declared here is permanent and binding. This important celebration brings together multiple clans.

Two main reasons to organise a Barok are:

- **To farewell the deceased**

The community gathers to collectively honour those who have passed away. Due to the rarity of the occasion, it occurs within a period of up to seven years, to send the souls of all those who have died since the last Luxa Barok. Symbolically, the souls of the dead are placed on canoes and sent out to sea.

- **To install new chiefs**

Clan leaders are appointed, named, and ceremonially given the mandate to lead. This marks the official transfer of authority and responsibility within the community.

Pigs, a symbol of wealth and social status, play a central role in this ceremony. They are offered as a form of payment and tribute. The costs of staging a Luxa Barok feast can reach 50,000–60,000 PGK (approximately €10,700–12,800), with the price of a single pig starting around 1,000 PGK (€213).

The small house with a stone wall is called the Haus boi, or Raton (in barok language). There are two entrances: one in the center of the long side and the other at the short end.

The Raton is the clan's most important building. It is where discussions, rituals, and the teaching of secret knowledge to younger people take place.

In the centre of the stone wall is a 'bed' (a platform or huge table made of stone) surrounded by men and food. Central to their gathering is the Chief and pig operators. Among these men are the chief and the pig operators who own the powers of magics and spells, including to turn the food into a never-ending supply to feed the whole crowd who attends this Luxa Barok feast.

Outside the stone wall to the right is another 'bed' (a platform or huge table made of stone) with a cone on it called a Waro. The pigs and food brought by the different clans for the feast are stored here. The pigs are placed in front of the Chief, and the new chief steps forward to be instated and the powers and button of leadership are transferred. All the necessary rituals need to be performed on the 'bed'.

Deep Sea Mining Is Our Enemy, 2025

Philip Taen with contributions by Vincent Boski from Kono Village, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea

“This chart illustrates our life in the village and our connection to the ocean and what happens every day. The sea is used by the coastal people, as we are known for, fishing and you can see some pictures of people fishing in the sea and also enjoying the sea water there or swimming. Most kids around our community or in Kono village, because the village is located by the beach, enjoy the sea and there is no way we can say they can’t go out to the sea. Almost every morning a kid wakes up, it thinks about going to the sea and this is what happens every day. And also, for fishing it’s an everyday activity. People just walk out, pull out their canoe to the sea and they do fishing Kono village doesn’t have any flowing river. We clean all our pots and cooking utensils here. We collect the garden food, bring it to the village and we bring it to the sea and clean it, wash it and then bring it back for cooking. And we also use some of the salt water for cooking. There is a woman doing the laundry. She is doing the laundry actually in the sea. And this is exactly what happens around here in our village in Kono. We don’t have a river; there are streams coming out of the beach and therefore women would normally go there and dig up the sand. So, there is some water coming out of it and then they do the laundry. Kono village is known for its nice white sandy beach, people enjoy the beach. So, you can see the beach is also part of our leisure area. The people go there to sit around, relax if it is really hot or they go there for picnic.

With this (deep-sea mining) out in the sea, that’s a new technology; that’s a new thing coming. It is really foreign, it’s not related to peoples life and we are scared and we are afraid this will have something that might affect the ordinary life of the people in the village, the everyday life of the people and everyday activity of the people. So, it is one of our fears that we are not sure of the signs behind the deep-sea mining. What happens here, we don’t know, it’s really unknown to us and we are trying to tell our government to wait on a bit. We will need more information before we can say yes to it, otherwise after the operation, after the mining goes on, we won’t have this life anymore, this life will be lost from us. That’s why we decided to come up with this chart and name this chart ‘Deep Sea Mining is Our Enemy’.

Right there you can see people are together, people working together, staying together, living together, doing their activities together. Here comes something we don’t know. It seems to us like an enemy – it is really stealing minerals from our ocean, there. This ship doesn’t belong to our place; this ship doesn’t come out from a village here and starts digging gold here. It comes really from far away and it is here to steal minerals right in front of our eyes, right in front of our doorsteps. And we are saying to our government maybe we should consider, pause and wait, give us time. We need to understand the signs behind the technology before we consent to deep sea mining. So, this would be the kind of fear we have, and we are now calling this operation, the deep sea mining, as our enemy. It is a threat to our basic and ordinary activities that supports our life and survival.”

Excerpt by Godfrey Jordan Abage, a resident of West Barok area of the Namatanai District, Kono Village and Advocate of the Shark Callers, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea

Ocean is Life, 2025

Collectively created by Philip Taen, Vincent Boski, Chris (Albie) Brian, Hamilton (Tonton) Brian, Netric Kabog and Chris Malagan from Kono Village

“This is a simple picture how natural our environment is and how untouched it is. Though we have some human contact with the ocean - the reefs - but as you can see there is really limited and very cares human activities in the ocean. So, this is how our ocean is and yes, if you go diving in the sea at night or during the day you will actually encounter some of these creatures in the sea. Right now, we have beautiful oceans, we have nice corals which are still there, the fish are just plenty - more than enough and we go out there to get it whenever we want. And we want to show the world that this is what we don't want it get destroyed by deep sea mining. The food chain is really, really evident and I believe if deep bed mining comes it will disturb part of the food chain. This is what we believe, we don't need a scientist to explain to us. But we believe somewhere along the line, the food chain will be disturbed and that can affect the fish we depend on and the environment we depend on even the sea.”

Excerpt by Godfrey Jordan Abage, a resident of West Barok area of the Namatanai District, Kono Village and Advocate of the Shark Callers, New Ireland, Papua New Guinea