

Dates

December 13–15, 2016
8.30 am–10 pm

Venue Locations

Cochin Club 
Vasco da Gama Plaza 
Spice Market near
Jeevamatha Church 
Various sites in Fort Kochi 

Venue Partner

Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2016

Categories

Exhibition of books
Film screenings
Film shoot
Guided visits
Installation and sound piece
Keynotes
Performances
Poetry readings
Structured conversations
Talks
Workshops

Participants

Tanya Abraham
Anthony Acciavatti
Ravi Agarwal
Nabil Ahmed
Ute Meta Bauer
D. Graham Burnett
Zuleikha Chaudhari
Sitara Chowfla
Clémentine Deliss
TJ Demos
Georg Eder
Senator J. Kalani English
ESTAR(SER)
Cesar Garcia
Natasha Ginwala
Francesca von Habsburg
Stefanie Hessler
Ho Rui An
Shanay Jhaveri
Joan Jonas
Amar Kanwar
Lelei Tui Samoa LeLaulu
Charles Lim
Matt Lucero
Radha Mehandru
Sharmistha Mohanty
Christopher Myers
Tuan Andrew Nguyen
Jegan Vincent de Paul
Filipa Ramos
Markus Reymann
Ritu Sarin
Aveek Sen
Jamie Y. Shi
Tenzing Sonam
Pooja Sood
Matthew Strother
Phunam Thuc Ha
Davor Vidas
Vivek Vilasini
Linz Wilbur
Jana Winderen
Daniela Zyman

The Current

The Current is the exploratory soul of Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary. An experimental fellowship program based in the Pacific, The Current was born out of a deep concern for the oceans and an even deeper curiosity about and love for their interconnected ecosystems, staggering biodiversity, and the cultural diversity of people who live on their shores. Covering nearly 71 percent of the earth's surface, the oceans provide a habitat for 99 percent of life on our planet. They are home to both the largest animal and the mightiest living reef structure on our planet, the Great Barrier Reef. The reef can be seen from the moon, an environment we know more about than we know about the oceans. The oceans are our life support system, providing us with every other breath we take.

The oceans are being severely exploited and polluted. They are used as a dump site for things that we want to make disappear. But the ocean has an unmatched ability to regenerate. Previously unimaginable organisms living on chemical energy have been discovered to reside in deep-sea hydrothermal vents. Yet many of these vents are rich in rare earth metals essential for electronic consumer products and have become targets of a new industry with predictably devastating effects: deep-sea mining.

The events of recent weeks in international politics have underlined the urgency to act and to communicate the global challenges of our time far beyond the silos of our disciplines. The sea has been a source of inspiration for human culture for centuries, but due to the state it is in, and politicians' lack of vision, it is imperative that we shape a different narrative. The Current Convening #2 attempts just that: to foster collaborations between international practitioners of different disciplines, to imagine together with an engaged audience positive visions for the future, and to formulate strategies to put these into action. We no longer have the luxury of ignorance and procrastination. It is in this spirit that we invite you to actively participate in this program, which is designed to spark your curiosity, inspire, and entertain you.

Markus Reymann, director, TBA21–Academy

Conve- ning #2

TBA21–Academy presents The Current Convening #2 on the occasion of the opening of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2016.

Convening #2 is a three-day program profoundly dedicated to the oceans. It aims to reexamine and unfold questions arising from the ethics of exploration, the rights of nature and the international law of the sea, processes of image and knowledge making, collaborative modes of exchange, as well as sharing poetic approaches to currents and flows of water across cultures. We invite you to participate in this engaging program of structured conversations, workshops, performances, talks, and screenings convened by The Current expedition leaders Ute Meta Bauer and Cesar Garcia and TBA21–Academy curator Stefanie Hessler.

The Convening takes the form of an archipelago of processes sited throughout Fort Kochi. The Cochin Club functions as a central hub encouraging unique moments of daily encounter among The Current Fellows, local participants, and visiting guests. Expanding beyond the hub, the Convening is nested in the city's urban spaces, in the central Vasco da Gama Plaza, in the spice market, in its museums, and on the shores of the sea. Kochi's maritime history and narratives shaped by trade, migration, and travel at sea, alongside contemporary concerns such as dredging and labor conditions, resonate in today's cultural consciousness in the city and form the discursive background for the Convening.

Daily Structure

Following the biorhythms of different organisms and environments, located in the zones of indeterminacy between night and day, dawn and dusk, shade and light, the Convening is organized according to three different times of day:

DAWN

Malayalam: sandhya പൂർഭാരം, Tahitian: hitiraa mahana

ATTENTIONAL EXERCISES

Each morning, research associates of the collective ESTAR(SER) www.estarser.net lead interested participants in an exercise of sustained attention to the water forms in and around Kochi.

STRUCTURED CONVERSATIONS

Occurring every morning in the Cochin Club, the structured conversations offer spaces of encounter, debate, and exchange.

MIDDAY

Malayalam: uccaykk ഉച്ഛയക്ക്, Tahitian: avatea

FELLOWS PROJECTS

Occurring at various sites and throughout the duration of the Convening, the Fellows projects are “works in progress” contributions by the participants in the expeditions.

TEMPORARY ACADEMY

A major goal of The Current is to generate new models for collective learning and knowledge dissemination. The Temporary Academy encompasses an exhibition of books and a series of workshops.

DUSK

Malayalam: prabhatam പ്രഭാതം, Tahitian: maruapö

HUB NIGHTS

Each evening, the Cochin Club is activated with

keynote talks, readings, and other interventions from a host of contributing voices. Organized thematically and drawing on a cross-section of interests, these gatherings aim to experiment with forms of presentation that allow for expanded engagement with the oceans.

PLAZA CONFLUENCES

Poetry readings, performances, and film screenings at the Vasco da Gama Plaza in Fort Kochi engage with the oceans from a variety of perspectives.

About TBA21

Founded in 2002 by Francesca von Habsburg in Vienna, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21) represents the fourth generation of the Thyssen family's commitments to the arts. After more than fourteen years of collecting, commissioning projects, and engaged exhibition practice, TBA21 has established a highly respected collection of more than seven hundred contemporary artworks in the field of new media, including film, video, light, sound and mixed-media installations, sculpture, painting, photography, and performance. TBA21's unique collection is the result of its ongoing commitment to commissioning and disseminating numerous art projects, including multimedia installations, sound compositions, endurance performances, and contemporary architecture. This has led to its pioneering reputation in the art world. The foundation sustains a far-reaching regional and international orientation through collaborations with other cultural partners around the world and explores modes of presentation that are intended to provoke and broaden the way viewers perceive and experience art. In 2015 Francesca von Habsburg decided to dedicate the foundation's ongoing program to becoming an agent of change by focusing on the complexities and urgencies of the "Anthropocene era" as well as the pressing challenges posed by climate change, with a special focus on marine ecosystems.

Itinerary

December 13–15

DEC 13–15

ALL DAY

Film shoot



Various sites in

Fort Kochi

Please check
[www.tba21.org/
convening2kochi](http://www.tba21.org/convening2kochi)
for updates

DEC 13–15

ALL DAY

Exhibition of books



Cochin Club

The Episodic

by The Propeller Group

The Propeller Group is a cross-disciplinary structure for creating ambitious art projects, headquartered in Ho Chi Minh City. *The Episodic* is The Propeller Group's ongoing project within The Current. Conceived as a social media organism that occupies multiple online platforms, *The Episodic* presents a series of connected moments in the form of short videos and images that weave interconnected narratives about the ocean and the histories of exploration. *The Episodic* aims to create a structure for content that can connect participants in The Current with communities encountered through travel, audiences of the Convenings, and other makers and cultural figures. In *The Episodic*, everyone involved is a producer and a curator at once. During the Convening, The Propeller Group stages a series of improvisational and responsive shoots that will eventually create content for *The Episodic*.

From the (Kula) Ring to the Belt (& Road)

by Jegan Vincent de Paul

The Current Fellow Jegan Vincent de Paul presents a selection of books that are part of a collection of materials and ongoing research that he has

undertaken to examine (un)official perspectives on Chinese state-led infrastructure construction across the Indian Ocean littoral, attempting to reveal the political fallout of the routes and its general social, cultural, and economic effects.

DEC 13–15
ALL DAY
Installation and
sound piece



Spice Market near
Jeevamatha Church

Marketplace [Cartography 4]

by Christopher Myers

While international capital and information technologies circulate around the globe at dizzying speeds, there are other forms of globalization that predate these technological conduits. In local marketplaces throughout the world, exchange systems that have lasted for centuries continue to connect communities, cementing relations between far-flung geographies in the intimacy of goods bought for family dinners and in the age-old rituals of negotiation and haggling that are familiar everywhere from Papua New Guinea to New York City street corners.

Marketplace [Cartography 4] is an installation and sound piece by Christopher Myers that utilizes the discarded materials and evidence of these ancient and contemporary exchanges in order to highlight the overall unity in the rituals of trade and to rethink globalization from the vernacular and the cultural, rather than through formal and capital relations.

December
13

പ്രഭാതം

Dawn, prabhatam, hitiraa mahana

DEC 13

8.30–9.45am

Attentional exercise



Breakfast area of

Fragrant Nature

Hotel

Protocol of the Sea Watch, Action of the Crow's Nest

by ESTAR(SER)

The amphibious Irish-American-Polynesian naturalist-explorer known as “M. I. Return Maycomb” (1764–1818?) traced a marginal and meandering course at the peripheries of sea-knowledge and self-craft on the watershed of modernity. Was he associated with the *Order of the Third Bird*? New evidence, in the form of the *Protocol of the Sea Watch*, suggests that he was. This “attentional exercise” appears to derive from the habitus of nineteenth-century sailors, who spent years daily regarding the surface of the sea from their perches aloft, scanning for signs of shoals, whales, and weather. Each morning of The Current Convening #2, interested individuals are invited to join visiting research associates of the collective ESTAR(SER) to experiment with a reconstruction of the *Protocol of the Sea Watch*.

DEC 13

10.30am–12.30pm

Structured
conversation



Cochin Club

Unpredictable Oceans and the Monstrosity of the Sea

moderated by Ute Meta Bauer

with Tanya Abraham, Natasha Ginwala, Ho Rui An, Joan Jonas, Filipa Ramos, Vivek Vilasini, and Daniela Zyman

This conversation catalyzes narratives of mythological and cultural encounters with the sea, inspired by primordial, monstrous, and chaotic associations.

Artists, philanthropists, practitioners, and writers come together to share their different perspectives and forms of engagement with the oceans as moving, compelling, and precarious entities. The Current expedition leader Ute Meta Bauer moderates this conversation about the seas as unpredictable spaces that are constantly in flux, whose unstable perimeters are presently migrating due to climate change and shifts in oceanic traditions, giving rise to new challenges and evoking new imaginaries.

ഉപയോഗം

Midday, uccaykk, avatea

DEC 13

2–5pm

Workshop



Cochin Club

The Document's Expanded Field

by Jamie Y. Shi

Writer Jamie Y. Shi explores the publication as a site to document long-term, process-based projects beyond the image or video form. Thinking about experimental writing as a method, Shi works with five local emerging writers to collect distinct types of discursive elements from the Convening—transcripts from conversations, interviews with project participants, improvisational poetry, and scripts—to be included in a publication that will index the various depths, relationships, and intensities that form The Current. After the Convening, Shi will assemble a collective library of resources meant to exist on a website that will provide a communal reading list of works informing the practices of The Current participants and collaborators.

DEC 13
2–5pm
Workshop
🕒
Cochin Club

Nuclear Pacific:

A temporary working group on the tribunal for French nuclear weapons testing in Moruroa and Fangataufa (1966–96)

by Nabil Ahmed
with Ravi Agarwal, Nabil Ahmed, Ute Meta Bauer, Zuleikha Chaudhari, Stefanie Hessler, Amar Kanwar, KHOJ (Sitara Chowfla, Radha Mehandru, and Pooja Sood), Davor Vidas, and Linz Wilbur

The Inter-Pacific Ring Tribunal (INTERPRT) is an interdisciplinary project initiated by The Current Fellow Nabil Ahmed for an alternative commission of inquiry to investigate patterns of environmental violence and their impact on sovereignty in the Pacific region regarding land-based mining, deep-sea mining, and nuclear weapons testing. Unfolding the Pacific ring as a spatial diagram, the project tactically deploys architecture to evidence spatial realities of mineral extraction as well as spatially diffused and temporally protracted forms of environmental violence. Following The Current's recent expedition to French Polynesia in July 2016, this workshop constitutes a temporary antinuclear working group for the Pacific. With India's membership in the "nuclear club" in perspective, the group seeks to test the conditions for a future tribunal to emerge—one that aims to hold those responsible materially accountable for the devastating nuclear weapons tests that were conducted on and around the atolls of Moruroa and Fangataufa between 1966 and 1996, as well as the tests' contemporary planetary impacts.

DEC 13
2–5pm
Workshop
▲
Closed workshop,
various sites in Fort
Kochi

"Ambiguous Objects" and the University Museum

by Clémentine Deliss

The workshop invites museum professionals, academics, and those interested in museum collections to take

with a public interface on December 15, 2–5pm, at the

☉
Cochin Club

part in a three-day transdisciplinary, experimental exercise around “ambiguous objects.” In the first of three sessions, the workshop investigates a historical museum collection in Kochi in search of artifacts that blur the distinctions between nature and culture and sea and land, constituting “enigmatic debris” (“épaves énigmatiques,” Paul Valéry, 1921). During the second session, participants identify and acquire, where possible, unfamiliar artifacts from a local secondhand market that for them evoke the poetic uncertainty of meanings in the twenty-first century. The final and third session includes a discussion of the “ambiguous objects” acquired by each of the participants and an open exchange with the public. Through this inquiry, the workshop explores the potential for the remediation of historical artifacts using the format of a “museum-university,” a site of dialogical experimentation and research centered on museum collections.

DEC 13
3–4 pm
Guided visit of the installation and sound piece

▲
Spice Market near Jeevamatha Church

Marketplace [Cartography 4]

by Christopher Myers

Please find detailed information about the installation and sound piece in the ALL DAY program at the beginning of the itinerary.

സന്ധ്യ

Dusk, sandhya, maruapö

The evening starts off with an introduction to The Current and questions related to the ethics of visiting when embarking on expeditions, forms and tactics of structuring the gaze, and the eye of the camera. At the heart of this evening are a poetry reading by the celebrated author Sharmistha Mohanty and a performance by the artist and illustrator Christopher Myers, tapping into interrogations of broader histories of methods in visual ethnography, mapping, and knowledge and meaning making.

DEC 13
5–6.30pm
Introduction
📍
Cochin Club

Into The Current

moderated by Daniela Zyman
with Ute Meta Bauer, Cesar Garcia, Francesca von Habsburg, Stefanie Hessler, and Markus Reymann

Organized as a presentation by the founder of TBA21, Francesca von Habsburg, and the director of TBA21–Academy, Markus Reymann, “Into The Current” brings into conversation the expedition leaders Ute Meta Bauer and Cesar Garcia and TBA21–Academy curator Stefanie Hessler. The conversation homes in on cross-disciplinary encounters and new research-based working modes within the framework of knowledge transfer and exchange of The Current. Panelists introduce the program of Convening #2, look back at the previous expeditions, and discuss the potential of The Current for collectively creating visions for the deep future, enhanced though the intervention of an artistic imagination.

DEC 13
6.30–7 pm
Poetry reading
■
Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Landscapes Open in the Empty Self

by Sharmistha Mohanty

DEC 13
7–8pm
Performative talk
■
Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Marketplace [Cartography 4]

by Christopher Myers

Christopher Myers comes from a long line of storytellers. His performative talk traces new and vernacular forms of globalization in sound, media, and culture, thinking about how urban music, film, dance, images, and marketplaces transcend the local and provide new models for transnational communications.

DEC 13
8–10pm

Film



Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Fire at Sea

Gianfranco Rosi, 2016, 114 min.

Selected by the Dharamshala International Film Festival
introduced by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam

Situated 150 miles south of Sicily, Lampedusa has made headlines as the first port of call for hundreds of thousands of African and Middle Eastern refugees hoping to make a new life in Europe. After spending months living on the island and engaging with its inhabitants, Rosi accumulated an extraordinary array of footage, portraying the history, culture, and daily lives of the islanders. Focusing on twelve-year-old Samuele as he explores the land and attempts to gain mastery of the sea, the film slowly builds a breathtakingly naturalistic portrait of the Lampedusan people and the events that surround them.

December
14

പ്രഭാതം

Dawn, prabhatam, hitiraa mahana

DEC 14
8.30–9.45 am
Attentional exercise
▲
Breakfast area of
Fragrant Nature
Hotel

Protocol of the Sea Watch, Action of the Crow's Nest

by ESTAR(SER)

Every morning, interested individuals are invited to join visiting research associates of the collective ESTAR(SER) to experiment with a reconstruction of the *Protocol of the Sea Watch*.

DEC 14
10.30 am – 12.30 pm
Structured
conversation
◎
Cochin Club

The Ocean as Habitat: The rights of nature and the international law of the sea

moderated by Ute Meta Bauer
with Ravi Agarwal, Nabil Ahmed, D. Graham Burnett,
TJ Demos, Jegan Vincent de Paul, Markus Reymann,
and Davor Vidas

Climate change, pollution, and other habitat-altering agents are endangering the “common heritage of humankind.” The ocean as a global waste bin is hardly addressed as a result of insufficient international regulations of the sea. The constantly changing parameters and unpredictable developments of the oceans prompt a need to rethink and rewrite the obsolete international law of the sea that was conceived under the relative stability of the Holocene epoch. The conversation puts forward interdisciplinary

perspectives from the fields of art, ecology, law, and policy, recognizing the earth and its ecosystems as living beings with inalienable rights to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate their vital cycles.

ഉപയുക്ത

Midday, uccaykk, avatea

DEC 14

2–5pm

Workshop for
children



Cochin Club

To sign up for the
workshop, please email
kochiworkshops@tba21.org

Fish Tails and Fish Tales

by Filipa Ramos

The workshop is for children aged 5–11. Together we'll write one and many stories, thinking about how tales are told, inventing new ways of combining memory with discovery and imagination, and discussing the ways in which we share experiences, visions, and emotions with others.

The starting point for the workshop is a set of images that were taken during The Current's recent expedition to the Tuamotu Archipelago, in French Polynesia: pictures of fish, of crabs, of birds, but also of desert islands, of ecological disasters, and of people working and thinking together. How do images lead to stories? And how do stories convey images? In this workshop we'll explore the stories that images tell and the images that stories summon.

DEC 14

2–5pm

Workshop



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The Document's Expanded Field

by Jamie Y. Shi

Please find detailed information in the program of
December 13, 2–5pm.

DEC 14
2–5pm
Workshop
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Cochin Club

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various sites in Fort
Kochi,
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📍 Cochin Club

“Ambiguous Objects” and the University Museum

by Clémentine Deliss

Please find detailed information in the program of December 13, 2–5pm.

DEC 14
3–4pm
Guided visit of the
installation and
sound piece
▲
Spice Market near
Jeevamatha Church

Marketplace [Cartography 4]

by Christopher Myers

Please find detailed information about the installation and sound piece in the ALL DAY program at the beginning of the itinerary.

സന്ധ്യ

Dusk, sandhya, maruapö

The evening focuses on the rights of nature, ecological sustainability, and issues at stake in the law of the sea. The evening begins with keynotes by TJ Demos, author of *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of Ecology*, and Davor Vidas, director of the *Law of the Sea Program* at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute

in Oslo, followed by a performative talk by the visual artist and pioneer of video and performance art Joan Jonas, who reflects on the poetic and spiritual aspects of nature in the face of climate change.

DEC 14
5–5.30 pm
Keynote
◎
Cochin Club

The Capitalocene Pacific

by TJ Demos

The Capitalocene proposes an alternative terminology to the more familiar Anthropocene, designating the geologic age of the present as founded over centuries of capitalism-in-nature and nature-in-capitalism, according to the theorist of world-systems ecology Jason Moore. Drawing on his forthcoming book *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today*, TJ Demos investigates the Capitalocene Pacific as a site of conflict, one positioned between, on the one hand, ongoing industrialization and militarization and, on the other, negative geologic impacts (ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and mass species extinctions) and artistic-activist interventions directed against environmental destruction and catastrophic climate change—a conflict that will only intensify under the US presidency of Donald Trump.

DEC 14
6–6.30 pm
Keynote
◎
Cochin Club

The Law of the Sea— through time and place

by Davor Vidas

There are many ways of looking at the development of the law of the sea. Let us go on a journey. On a Sunday in September 1298, we start in the “Great Sea” (as the Bible calls the Mediterranean): here we visit a *semienclosed* sea found within a semienclosed sea. We then hoist sails and are out on the *oceans*: it is the late fifteenth century, the time of European overseas “discoveries”—and in 1500 we stop at a place important for the transoceanic spice trade. One hundred years later: in one *strait* on an early morning

in February 1602, we witness something that will lead to emergence of the law of the sea as a branch of international law. We then travel onward in time to an *island*—it is December 1982, and the end result of developments so far—UNCLOS—is signed here. Finally, we arrive at the present day and cast our glance toward the *polar regions*: what is going on there—and what is the outlook?

DEC 14
6.30–7 pm
Prose reading



Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Reading a Wave

by Ho Rui An

DEC 14
7–8 pm
Performative talk



Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Oceans— sketches and notes

by Joan Jonas

Joan Jonas's talk conceived for this Convening draws from a wellspring of materials, literature, mythology, and the artist's collections of sketches and notes on the sea, exploring "the ocean as a poetic, totemic, and natural entity, as a life source and home to a universe of beings." Video footage of underwater scenes—from Jean Painlevé's black-and-white reels of sea creatures to shots of aquariums—intersect poetically and associatively with excerpts from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Sy Montgomery's *Soul of an Octopus*, and Italo Calvino's *The Aquatic Uncle*. The oceans are an ongoing thematic touchstone in Jonas's recent works, such as her project for the United States Pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennale, *They Come to Us without a Word* (2015), a multilayered ambient work addressing the spiritual aspects of nature through video, drawings, objects, and sound.

DEC 14
8–10pm
Short films



Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Selected and introduced by Filipa Ramos

Swimmy

Leo Lionni and Giulio Gianini, with Ishu Patel, 1966, 6 min.

Swimmy is the story of a little black fish who survived a school of fish that was eaten by a large tuna. Alone and scared, different from all the other small red fish, Swimmy goes from hiding in the seaweed to making many friends and finding a way that will save them all from the big fish that terrify them.

Wutharr, Saltwater Dreams

Karrabing Film Collective, 2016, 29 min.

A delirious, dreamlike film, *Wutharr, Saltwater Dreams* is the most experimental of Karrabing Film Collective's works to date. Departing from a hypothetical situation of crisis in the Aboriginal filmmakers' daily lives, the film explores how the group addresses it through collective problem-solving gestures and how the legacy of colonialism, as well as the imposition of Christian moral codes and settler-colonial rule of law, condition and affect ancestral land use and traditional cultures.

Europium

Lisa Rave, 2014, 21 min.

Using various levels of imagery, the essay film *Europium* draws connections between Papua New Guinea's colonial past and fetish cult, the planned high-tech excavation of raw materials, and everyday consumer goods. The film weaves its individual images and narrative around the rare earth element europium. Named after the European continent, the material will be culled from the Bismarck Sea to ensure brilliant color images on smartphone displays and other flat screens.

Toilets Not Temples

Will Benedict & David Leonard, 2014, 26 min.

Toilets Not Temples combines different styles of narrative—such as live interviews, newsreel, sci-fi genre, and music video—to portray specific current situations that concern the production and distribution of food, from fish farms in Norway to onion plantations in India, addressing issues of global distribution, agriculture, environmental collapse, marketing, and trade.

December
15

പ്രഭാതം

Dawn, prabhatam, hitiraa mahana

DEC 15

8.30–9.45am

Attentional exercise



Breakfast area of

Fragrant Nature

Hotel

Protocol of the Sea Watch, Action of the Crow's Nest

by ESTAR(SER)

Every morning, interested individuals are invited to join visiting research associates of the collective ESTAR(SER) to experiment with a reconstruction of the *Protocol of the Sea Watch*.

DEC 15
10.30am–12.30pm
Structured
conversation
⊙
Cochin Club

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

moderated by Stefanie Hessler
with Nabil Ahmed, Ute Meta Bauer, Georg Eder, Amar
Kanwar, Charles Lim, Markus Reymann, and Davor Vidas

Deep-sea mining is a new extractive activity that has been recognized as an emerging threat to the oceans. Seabed mining targets polymetallic nodules that are used in the production of batteries and alloys, and there are strong indications that this might well be the next gold rush. Its effects will most likely impact ecosystems from the microbial level to the structural constitution of the seabed in a way that we are not remotely able to anticipate. TBA21-Academy was present during the 5th Deep-Sea Mining Summit in London in April 2016 and organized a conference titled “Design of the Seabed” at the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial in November 2016. Departing from these previous engagements, agents and practitioners from the fields of art, ecology, law, and science bring greater visibility to the potentially immense effects on the future of the oceans and humankind.

ഉപയോഗം

Midday, uccaykk, avatea

DEC 14
2–5pm
Workshop
⊙
Cochin Club

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The Document's Expanded Field

by Jamie Y. Shi

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“Ambiguous Objects” and the University Museum

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DEC 15

2–5pm

Workshop



Closed workshop,
deep-sea vessel by
CMLRE, Kochi, a
research institute
under the Ministry
of Earth Sciences,
Government
of India with a
mandate to study
the marine living
resources

This is a closed workshop,
to find out more,
please email
kochiworkshops@tba21.org

Rising Sea Levels

by Francesca von Habsburg

with Ravi Agarwal, Senator J. Kalani English, Francesca
von Habsburg, Lelei Tui Samoa LeLaulu, Davor Vidas,
and Linz Wilbur

Climate change is warming the atmosphere, glaciers are melting, and sea levels are rising—with surging waters threatening coastal societies from Venice to the Pacific. As inhabitants struggle to find methods of mitigation, migration may be the only solution: entire countries could disappear altogether over the next few decades. And so too will ancient dances, traditional cultures, and spiritual sites. Aside from economic and geopolitical issues, the case of lost habitat raises a number of important questions about cultural, linguistic, and spiritual heritage. Taking as its site the city of Kochi, which is thought to lie close to the ancient port city of Muziris, this workshop considers speculative, bold, ethical, creative, and legal possibilities to combat the effects of climate change. It asks whether there may be a plan A to counter forced migration and, if so, what it might be.

DEC 15
3–4 pm
Guided visit of the
installation and
sound piece

▲
Spice Market near
Jeevamatha Church

Marketplace [Cartography 4]

by Christopher Myers

Please find detailed information about the installation and sound piece in the ALL DAY program at the beginning of the itinerary.

സന്ധ്യ

Dusk, sandhya, maruapö

The evening is dedicated to flows, passages, and movements, from the rivers to the sea, to ever-changing currents, and to sonic ecological change. A performative talk by Anthony Acciavatti, architect, cartographer, and professor at Columbia University, and D. Graham Burnett, renowned writer, historian of science, and professor at Princeton University, is followed by a poetic and associative intervention by the curator Aveek Sen, circling around waterways and how these interweave with personal biographies, memories, and wider ecological concerns. A sound performance by the artist and former TBA21–Academy Fellow Jana Winderen turns our attention toward the sonic dimension of the oceans, making audible water currents and ecological change occurring in coral reefs.

DEC 15
5–6.30 pm
Performative talk

◎
Cochin Club

WATER MACHINES

by Anthony Acciavatti and D. Graham Burnett

Wallace Stevens's "Sea Surface Full of Clouds" (1924) is a poem in five sections, each of which returns to a single ambiguous scene: the blossoms of water vapor in a blue sky reflected in the heaving masses of water below. Across the poem, the sea and the sky function as mutual mirrors, which produce scintillating inversions that shake language loose from its moorings and leave the human adrift upon the "perplexed machine / of

ocean.” Departing from this image, Anthony Acciavatti and D. Graham Burnett will sequence through a series of water systems (hydrographic cycles, oceanographic structures, monsoon metrics, submarine optics), unfolding the poetics of techno-rationalizing regimes of aquatic knowledge.

DEC 15

6.30–7 pm

Poetry reading



Vasco da Gama
Plaza

The Tagore Letters

by Aveek Sen

Between 1887 and 1895 Rabindranath Tagore wrote a series of letters to his young niece, Indira, from the banks of a network of rivers in undivided Bengal. In them the river itself, with its endless flow and the myriad forms of human and animal life along its banks, animates the poet’s consciousness: the drift of his mind, his empathy, his memory, his gaze, his reading, his letters, essays, stories, songs, and poems, compulsively written throughout that leisurely time on the water. Many years later, in 1912, the year before he was awarded the Nobel Prize, Tagore published selections from these letters as *Chhinnapatra* (Scattered Letters). He based his text on his niece’s transcriptions of these letters but sequenced them himself as a work in its own right.

DEC 15

7–8pm

Sound performance



Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Drifting

by Jana Winderen

Drifting is a sound performance by Jana Winderen commissioned for Convening #2. From the North Atlantic Current to the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific washing onto the shores of Panama, Winderen is surveying the soundscapes of drifts that fluctuate according to the temperature, pressure, and salinity of water and are shaped by invisible landscapes hidden beneath the waves. Telling stories of currents, movement, and migration, these sound tracings are also indicators for the health of ecosystems and the manifold inhabitants of the seas, from cetaceans to plankton, as well as mammals, fish, and crustaceans feeding from these drifting microscopic organisms.

DEC 15
8–10pm
Short films

■
Vasco da Gama
Plaza

Originally selected for the Dhaka Art Summit program *Passages* by Shanay Jhaveri, assistant curator of South Asian art, Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Elementary Maps No. 3

Anna Bella Geiger, 1976, 10 min.

The visual poem alludes to the stereotypes and myths attributed to cultures from Latin America through the relationship between the anthropomorphic character of the South Cone's topography and semantic games, between the formal and the metaphorical.

Occidente

Ana Vaz, 2014, 15 min.

A film-poem of an ecology of signs that speak of a colonial history repeating itself. Subalterns become masters, antiques become reproducible dinner sets, exotic birds become luxury currency, exploration becomes extreme-sport-tourism, monuments become geo-data.

The Disappearance of the Aitus

Pauline Julier, 2014, 35 min.

A poetic essay about Tuvalu, a micro-state in the South Pacific that is threatened by rising sea levels. An analogy between the vanishing of the country itself and of its inhabitants' imaginaries. A metaphoric fable about the electrical modernization of the country. And scientific information about waves and stories.

Cargo

Laura Waddington, 2001, 29 min.

Cargo is a lyrical voyage on the Mediterranean depicted in a series of extended moments. Combining diaristic text with painterly visuals, Laura Waddington recounts a dialogue between a mute woman and the forgotten men who work on a cargo ship. We are drawn into a nomadic journey at the frontier of European consciousness, a reflection on what it means to be a citizen without country, to drift without destination.

Brouillard—Passage 14

Alexandre Larose, 2014, 10 min.

In this film made in his family's backyard in Lac-Saint-Charles, Canada, Alexandre Larose superimposes walking trajectories shot along a man-made path leading to a lake. The result is an extremely layered one-take 35mm film, creating an impression of the filmmaker's rich memories of this special place by the lake, reminiscent of its waters themselves.

Sea of Vapors

Sylvia Schedelbauer, 2014, 15 min.

Sylvia Schedelbauer's films negotiate the space between broader historical narratives and personal, psychological realms through poetic manipulations of archival footage. *Sea of Vapors* is a stroboscopic cascade of evocative images, cut frame by frame to flow into an allegory of the lunar cycle conflating landscapes and the human body.



July 2016 | Tuamotus – French Polynesia | Hydrophone | by Markus Reymann



July 2016 | Tuamotus – French Polynesia | Tree | by Ute Meta Bauer



July 2016 | Tuamotus – French Polynesia | Diver | by Francesca von Habsburg



October 2015 | The Kula Ring – Papua New Guinea | by Jegan Vincent de Paul



October 2015 | The Kula Ring – Papua New Guinea | by Francesca von Habsburg



October 2015 | The Kula Ring – Papua New Guinea | Dardanella | by Francesca von Habsburg

Partici- pants

Tanya Abraham **IN**

Journalist, author, and arts administrator, works for national and international publications and is the creative director and curator of Kashi Art Gallery and founder of The Art Outreach Society, Fort Kochi, India

Anthony Acciavatti **US**

Architect, historian, and cartographer, founding editor of *Manifest: A Journal of American Architecture and Urbanism*, professor at Columbia University

Ravi Agarwal **IN**

Artist, environmental activist, writer, and curator; founder of the environmental NGO Toxics Link, New Delhi, India

Nabil Ahmed **UK**

Researcher, writer, and educator working on environmental conflict and forensic architecture

Ute Meta Bauer **DE/SG**

Founding director of NTU CCA Singapore and professor at the School of Art, Design and Media (ADM) at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), expedition leader, *The Current*

D. Graham Burnett **US**

Works at the intersection of historical inquiry and artistic practice, focusing on experimental approaches to hermeneutic activities traditionally associated with the research humanities. He's an editor at *Cabinet* and teaches at Princeton

Zuleikha Chaudhari **IN**

Artist, theater director, and lighting designer based in New Delhi and Mumbai, India

Sitara Chowfla **IN**

Curator and program manager at KHOJ International Artists' Association in New Delhi, India, since September 2013

Clémentine Deliss **UK/DE**

Independent curator, publisher, and researcher, Fellow of Institute of Advanced Study, Berlin, curator of Dilijan Arts Observatory, former director of Weltkulturen Museum, publisher of *Metronome* and *Metronome Press*

TJ Demos **US**

Professor in the Department of the History of Art and Visual Culture, University of California, Santa Cruz, and Founder and Director of its Center for Creative Ecologies

Georg Eder **AT**

Project manager at TBA21, planning and organizing *The Current*

Senator J. Kalani English **US**

Represents the 7th Senatorial District of Hana, East & Upcountry Maui, Molokai, Lanai, and Kahoolawe and is currently the Majority Leader of the Hawaii Senate

ESTAR(SER) **US**

ESTAR(SER) is an established body of private, independent scholars who work collectively to recover, scrutinize, and (where relevant) draw attention to the historicity of the Order of the Third Bird. www.estarser.net

Cesar Garcia **MX/US**

Founding director and chief curator of The Mistake Room, Los Angeles; former associate director and senior curator of LA><ART (2007–12), expedition leader, *The Current*

Natasha Ginwala **IN/DE**

Curator, researcher, and writer. Curatorial adviser for documenta 14 as well as curator of Contour Biennale 8, entitled *Polyphonic Worlds: Justice as Medium* (2017)

Francesca von Habsburg **CH/AT**

Philanthropist, founder, and chairwoman of TBA21 in Vienna since 2002, commissioner *The Current*

Stefanie Hessler **DE/SE**

Curator of TBA21–Academy and writer from Germany, cofounder of the art space Andquestionmark in Stockholm, curator of several exhibitions around the world, from Chile to Sweden

Rui An Ho **SG**

Artist and writer working in the intersections of contemporary art, cinema, performance, and theory

Shanay Jhaveri **IN/US**

Assistant curator for South Asian modern and contemporary art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Joan Jonas **US**

World-renowned multimedia artist who has exhibited around the world, including in Documenta and the Biennale of Sydney, as well as in a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York

Amar Kanwar **IN**

Filmmaker and artist, recipient of several awards, including Golden Gate at the San Francisco Film Festival (1999); the Edward Munch Award for Contemporary Art, Norway (2005); and the Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change (2014)

**Lelei Tui Samoa
LeLaulu US**

Special adviser to the World Bank for oceans, member of the Advisory Council of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a director of the Caribbean Media Exchange on Sustainable Tourism, and chairman of the Earth Council Alliance, Apia, Samoa

Charles Lim SG

Award-winning filmmaker and world-renowned artist, founder of the art collective TSUNAMII.NET, founder of Bobbing Buoy Films

Matt Lucero US/VN

Graduated from the California Institute of the Arts in 2003 and is an artist and member of The Propeller Group since 2009

Radha Mehandru IN

Filmmaker and a member of the KHOJ curatorial and program team who focuses on the organization's community-based projects and outreach

Sharmistha Mohanty IN

Author of three prose works, *Book One*, *New Life*, and *Five Movements in Praise*. She is also the founder and editor of the literature journal *Almost Island*

Christopher Myers US

Widely acclaimed for his work with literature for young people, and is also an accomplished fine artist who has lectured and exhibited internationally

Tuan Andrew Nguyen VN

Cofounder of the Propeller Group and cofounder of *Sàn Art*, an artist-initiated exhibition space and educational program in Saigon, Vietnam. Has works in the collections of the Queensland Art Gallery; Carré d'Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Guggenheim Museum

**Jegan Vincent de
Paul LK/SG**

Worked as researcher and designer in various capacities around the world: from Ai Weiwei to LOT-EK architecture firm, research fellow at MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology, cofounder of Counter, cofounder and writer for *critical.org*

Filipa Ramos PT/UK

Writer and editor based in London, where she works as editor-in-chief of *art-agenda*. Her research focuses on the historical and contemporary intersections of humans and other animals in art and cinema

Markus Reymann DE/AT

Director of TBA21-Academy and *The Current*, initiator of numerous expeditions aboard the *Dardanella*, a moving platform of cultural production and interdisciplinary exchange within TBA21

Ritu Sarin IN

Filmmaker, artist, cofounder and codirector of the Dharamshala International Film Festival

Aveek Sen IN

Writer on art, literature, music, and society, associate editor at *The Telegraph*, Calcutta

Jamie Y. Shi US

Editor-at-large at *MISPRINT* and special projects manager at the Mistake Room, Los Angeles; curatorial assistant at Shanghai Project

Tenzing Sonam IN

Filmmaker, artist, cofounder and codirector of the Dharamshala International Film Festival

Pooja Sood IN

Independent curator and art management consultant, founding member and director of KHOJ International Artists' Association

Matthew Strother US

Writer, reader, and occasional performer. He received a BA from Yale in English and an M.A. from the New School for Social Research in Liberal Studies. He is a member of the speculative historiographical collective *ESTAR(SER)*

Phunam Thuc Ha VN

Specialist in filmmaking and antiquities, has restored antique sculptures as well as produced feature films; cofounder of The Propeller Group

Davor Vidas HR/NO

Research professor, director of the Law of the Sea Programme, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway

Vivek Vilasini IN

Multimedia artist, trained in sculptural practices from traditional craftsman, works recently shown at MOCA, Shanghai, CCCB, Barcelona, Chicago Art Fair, Newark Museum, in the Sharjah Biennale and in the show *Indian Highway* at Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway

Linz Wilbur US

Independent researcher and affiliate at the Hawaii Research Center for Futures Studies, Honolulu, USA

Jana Winderen NO

Multichannel artist, researcher of hidden depths with technology and audio

Daniela Zyman AT

Chief curator of TBA21 in Vienna, co-commissioner *The Current*

Organizers

Founder & chairwoman
TBA21, commissioner
The Current

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Chief curator, TBA21,
co-commissioner
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Director, TBA21–Academy

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leader, founding director,
NTU Centre for Contemporary
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Ute Meta Bauer

TBA21 The Current expedition
leader; founding director and
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Colophon TBA21

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Cory Scozzari

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