

Teacher Resource Notes – KS3-5

Aquatopia: The Imaginary of the Ocean Deep

12 October 2013 – 26 January 2014



Dorothy Cross

Relic 2010

Private Collection, London. Courtesy of the artist and Kerlin Gallery, Dublin

Booking

To book a gallery visit for your group call 01736 796226 or email

stivesticketing@tate.org.uk.

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Using this pack

These notes are designed to support KS3-5 teachers in engaging students as they explore the exhibition. As well as factual information they provide starting points for discussion, ideas for simple practical activities and suggestions for extended work that could stem from a gallery visit.

- **Ways In: a framework for looking** is a series of questions to help you and your students explore, reflect on and critically discuss the artwork in the exhibition. A huge amount of information can be revealed just by asking 'what do you see?' Once a few ideas are circulating this often cascades into very imaginative and perceptive ways of viewing the work. Asking 'why do you say that?' invites further considerations and sharing of ideas between students. **The Ways In questions can be photocopied and used to help students explore the works on display.** Please also **bring any clipboards and pencils that you will need** with you as unfortunately we are unable to provide them.
- The **Gallery Sheets** have images of key works, information about the exhibitions and artists, a series of questions and **In Your Sketchbook** activities that can be used as prompts for your students.
- Please refer to the **Essential Guide to Visiting Tate St Ives** for **practical information** about your visit including travel, facilities, use of art materials and gallery guidelines. This can be found at www.tate.org.uk/learn/teachers.

Risk assessments

It is the responsibility of the group leader to carry out a risk assessment and teachers are encouraged to make a planning visit and to carry out their own assessment.

Important information for risk assessments

- We ask you **not to touch** any of the artworks on display.
- Space in the galleries is quite limited so the **maximum group size is 20**. Larger groups will need to be split.
- Some artworks are displayed on the floor without barriers. Please take care when looking at them with your group.
- **Gallery 3:** This gallery will have low lighting. Please note that The Ottolith Group's film *Hydra Decapita*, on show in the enclosed booth, deals with slavery, global finance and climate change.
- **Lower Gallery 2:** has substrate (aquarium sand) on some areas of the floor. This is part of an art work so please do not touch it.
- **Studio:** Mati Diop *Atlantiques* 2009. This film explores crossing the Atlantic through the eyes of a young man from Dakar. Some viewers may find it upsetting.
- **Gallery 1** contains images of an explicit and sexual nature:
Spartacus Chetwyn *Erotics and Bestiality* and *Hokusai's Octopai* 2004
Katsushika Hokusai *Tako to Ama [Pearl Diver and Two Octopi]* 1814
Sean Landers *Nymphs and Shipwreck* 1995
The Jennifer West film, *Heavy Metal Sharks Calming Jaws Reversal* contains flickering images.
- Please note that no animals were killed for the purposes of this exhibition.

Please contact us on **01736 796226** or email stivesticketing@tate.org.uk if you have any concerns or questions about your visit.

Season Overview

At Tate St Ives, *Aquatopia: The Imaginary of the Ocean Deep* invites you to let loose your wildest imaginings and explore a world of sea monsters, sirens, shipwrecks and more, in the context of the gallery's inspirational setting, a stone's throw from the Atlantic.

This major exhibition brings together over 150 contemporary and historic artworks that explore how the deep has been imagined by artists, writers and poets through time and across cultures. Its briny depths are populated with ancient sea monsters and futuristic dolphin embassies, beautiful sirens and paramilitary gill-men, sperm whales and water babies, shipwrecks and submersibles, giant squid and lecherous octopuses.

Featuring important and iconic paintings, drawings and sculptures by artists including JMW Turner, Marcel Broodthaers, Oskar Kokoshka, Barbara Hepworth, Odilon Redon, Lucian Freud and Hokusai, amongst others, *Aquatopia* also includes video, performance, sculpture and painting by more recent figures in contemporary art, such as Mark Dion, Spartacus Chetwynd, Steve Claydon, Juergen Teller, The Otolith Group, Mikhail Karikis and Wangechi Mutu.

The Galleries: a quick guide

The galleries have been loosely grouped into key themes that the exhibition will explore. Your journey into the deep starts in the Heron Mall, with an introduction to the exhibition, and continues in Gallery 5 - to your left as you come from the staircase or lift on level 3.

Galleries 5, 4 & 3: Setting out to Sea

Standing on the coastline of *Aquatopia* we are looking at what has been drawn out of the ocean to less familiar territories of the shore. Looking back through art history these galleries explore humankind's relationship with the sea: our perceptions of it, its uses, and how it embodies our greatest fears.

The Apse: Exploring the Deep

This gallery looks at our desire to physically explore the ocean and how it has challenged and inspired humankind. This has led to the creation of endless undersea contraptions and continual attempts to foster an understanding of the strange creatures that lie beneath.

Upper and Lower Gallery 2: The Sub-Aquatic Human

Aquatopia features many examples of humans becoming, or attempting to become, aquatic. Look out for the sailors, submariners, pirates, mermaids and water babies who inhabit (and are transformed by) their watery worlds.

The Studio: Atlantiques

Mati Diop considers Atlantic crossings from a more contemporary perspective. In her video *Atlantiques*, a young man, desperate to escape life in Dakar, recalls his terrifying voyage in search of a better life in Europe.

Gallery 1: Curiosities of the Deep

In this gallery artists and filmmakers explore how sea creatures and monsters of the deep have captivated our imagination for centuries. Please note that this gallery contains flickering images and sexually explicit material.

Pre-visit activities

To maximise the enjoyment and value of the visit please consider doing one or more of these activities before your visit. We recommend that **teachers make a planning visit to the exhibition** to familiarise themselves with the galleries.

- Introduce some general background about Tate St Ives (www.tate.org.uk).

- **Discuss what a gallery is:**

What is its purpose?

Do galleries have a responsibility to show certain types of art?

Who are galleries for?

Should galleries show art that is controversial or difficult to explore, even if it may anger or offend some people?

Who chooses the art work that is on display?

Ask your students about any other galleries or museums they have been to and what they saw there. Did the visit affect them in any way?

- **Research** some of the artists or artworks in the exhibition and find out more about them and their work in preparation for your visit.

What impact does the research have on students' experience in the gallery?

Does it change the way that they relate to the art work on display?

It may also be interesting to **not find out anything** about the artists or artworks and see what it is like to experience the work with no prior knowledge of the artist or preconceived ideas.

Follow-up activities

These activities are designed to extend learning back in the classroom.

Discuss this statement from the overview of the exhibition.

'Aquatopia presents both utopian and dystopian visions, where what is known and stable becomes unfixed, all certainty dissolved.'

- What do we mean by *utopian and dystopian visions*?
- Thinking about your experience of the exhibition, do you agree with this statement?
- What is your understanding of *Aquatopia*? Following your visit produce a mind map of what *Aquatopia* means to you.

Exploring film. Discuss the different ways that artists have explored or used film in this exhibition, and then create your own film exploring one of the themes of *Aquatopia*. You may want to choose a literary work that you then re-imagine, like Guy Ben-Ner's *Moby Dick*, document your thoughts and feelings about the ocean through exploring beaches or the coast, or use your film to explore or document a story about the ocean like Mikhail Karikis or the Otolith Group.

Suffer a sea-change

Discuss Ariel's song in the light of what you have explored in the exhibition. What do you understand by the lines, *'But doth suffer a sea-change, into something rich and strange'*? How does this phrase relate to what you have experienced in *Aquatopia*? Read the song aloud and try doing a quick sketch as you say it. Research literary works and poems that have been inspired by, or explore, the ocean deep and use them as the basis for creating an artwork.

*Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made
Those are pearls that were his eyes
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change,
into something rich and strange,
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them, ding-dong, bell.
(Ariel's song, *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare)*

Make an exhibition in an unusual space in your school or college. Make decisions about what works to include and how to display them. How do the works relate to each other? Is there a theme? Will you use interpretation (captions, guides, text panels) or leave people to make up their own minds?

Continue the discussion...

The fearful deep. *Aquatopia* considers the ocean as a place of exploration and also of fear. Why are we afraid of the ocean and yet wish to explore it?

The politics of the sea. How has our relationship to the sea shaped political history? How are we affecting the oceans through climate change? What will our relationship be with the ocean in the future? How important is it that artists explore these issues through their work? What, if any, impact can they have?

Heron Mall: An Introduction. What is *Aquatopia*?

Much of the Earth's oceans remain unexplored. In the absence of knowledge the imagination has had full rein - the ocean has always bred monsters. This major exhibition brings together over 150 contemporary and historic artworks and artefacts to explore how the depths of the ocean have been imagined by artists and writers through time and across cultures.

Throughout recorded history the deep has been the site of shared myths, subconscious fears and unnamed desires.

***Aquatopia* is less about the ocean as it actually is and more about how it has affected the human mind.**

As you explore *Aquatopia* keep thinking about the statement above and the following question:

What does the artwork say about the affect of the ocean on the artist and/or the human mind?



Ashley Bickerton

Orange Shark 2008

Courtesy Murderme/Lehmann Maupin Gallery, New York © Ashley Bickerton

Get real.

How do you think the artist has made the work?

What materials and processes have they used?

Why do you think the artist has chosen to portray the shark in this way?

What do you think the artist is saying about the subject through their artwork?

Consider the impact of this artwork on the viewer. Why do you think the Curator has chosen to place it here?

As you explore the building and galleries consider how the galleries have been curated. Would you have made the same choices?

In Your Sketchbook: make a drawing of the shark, then another from a different angle on top of the first. Keep adding drawings from different angles to create your own multi-angled art work.

Galleries 5, 4 & 3: Setting out to Sea

These galleries look back through art history to explore our relationship with the sea: our perceptions of it, its uses and how, through real and imagined creatures, it can embody our greatest fears.

Gallery 5

Standing in Gallery 5, on the coastline of *Aquatopia*, we are looking at what has been drawn out of the ocean to less familiar territories of the shore.



Oskar Kokoschka
The Crab 1939–40
Tate © The estate of Oskar Kokoschka



Mark Dion
The Sturgeon 2010
Collection NMNM. Acquisition made tanks to the partnership with Compagnie Monégasque de Banque Photo: © Marc Domage

All in the mind. Consider Mark Dion's *The Sturgeon* and Oskar Kokoschka's *The Crab*.

What do you think the artists are saying about, or exploring through, these strange creatures discarded by the sea?

To what extent are they real or imagined? Why do you think the artists have chosen to portray them in this way?



John Bellany
Star of Bethlehem 1966
Tate
© the estate of John Bellany

Consider **John Bellany** *Star of Bethlehem* 1966 and **Alfred Wallis** *Whalers* 1941–42

How are the artists exploring human interaction with the ocean?

How do these artworks make you feel? Why do you think they make you feel that way? Consider palette, tone, subject matter and composition.

Gallery 4



Simon Starling

Infestation Piece (Maquette) 2007

Steel replica of *Bronze Reclining Figure* attributed to Henry Moore (circa 1960)

Courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

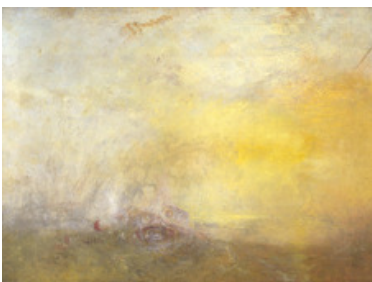
Starling made this piece while working on a commission for a contemporary art gallery in Toronto. It conflates two disparate stories: the Art Gallery of Toronto's purchase of work by British sculptor Henry Moore, and the accidental introduction of Russian zebra mussels into the Great Lakes. Starling submerged a steel replica of a sculpture by Moore in Lake Ontario for eighteen months, during which it too was colonised by mussels.

What do you think is Starling exploring through this artwork?

How does it relate to the collage by Simon Starling *Proposal for Lake Ontario – Infestation Piece* 2006 (on the wall to the left)?

To what extent is this piece created by the artist or by nature?

Consider other works in Galleries 5 & 4 that have used real marine life. What impact does using real creatures have on our perception of the artwork? Is it ethical to use them?



Joseph Mallord William Turner

Sunrise with Sea Monsters c. 1845 Tate

Look at JMW Turner's *Sunrise with Sea Monsters* c. 1845 and *Drawing of a fish entitled Gurnard* c. 1839– 40. Turner often made studies of fish and may have used some of these watercolour sketches as the basis for larger oil paintings.

In Your Sketchbook: Find a sea creature that inspires you, sketch it and see what it becomes...

Gallery 3

In Gallery 3 we look beneath the ocean to see beautiful creatures, but also human tragedy - explored in the Otolith Group's film *Hydra Decapita* that deals with slavery, global finance and climate change.



The Otolith Group

Hydra Decapita 2010

Courtesy of The Otolith Group

This film deals with slavery, global finance and water, examining the relationship between globalisation, capitalism and climate change. Its starting point is Drexciya, a fictional aquatic world populated by descendants of African slaves drowned in the Atlantic.

How does the piece make you feel?

What do you think this film is saying about the ocean as a place of political histories?

Listen to the soundtrack. Do you like it? How does it affect your interpretation of the film?



Rudolf and Leopold Blaschka

Pelagia cyanella 19th century

Ar fenthyg gan/Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales / James Turner

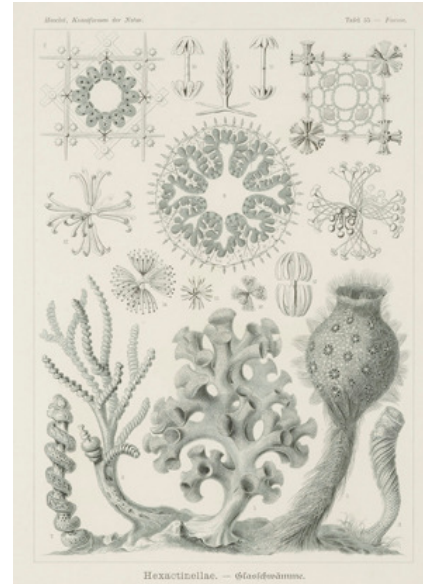
Beauty and Tragedy

Why do you think the Curator has chosen to display the **Rudolf and Leopold Blaschka** glass models and **The Otolith Group's** *Hydra Decapita* within the same gallery?

How do these models compare to the **Ernst Haeckel** prints in the Apse?

The Apse: Exploring the Deep

This gallery looks at our desire to physically explore the ocean and how it has challenged and inspired humankind. This has led to the creation of endless undersea contraptions and continual attempts to foster an understanding of the strange creatures that lie beneath.



Ernst Haeckel

prints from *Kunstformen der Natur* 1899–1904

The prints by Ernst Haeckel 1899–1904 detail undersea life to try to foster an understanding of the strange creatures that lie beneath. Ernst Haeckel was an influential and controversial German biologist, natural historian, philosopher and artist, who popularised and developed Darwin's theory of evolution, sometimes in ways that have since been discredited. As an artist he is best known for his extraordinary illustrations of animals and sea creatures in *Kunstformen der Natur* [Art Forms of Nature], first published in 1899.

Discuss the connections between Haeckel's work and the glass models by Rudolf and Leopold Blaschka in Gallery 3.

In your sketchbook: explore the use of lifelike drawings to understand more about an object from the exhibition.

The US Navy Standard Diving Hood 1851 and the brass soled leather diving boots displayed here, exemplify a long history of equipment to try to aid human exploration of the ocean. Look closely at these objects and the engraving ***Diving Machines 1803***.

In Your Sketchbook: sketch the diving boots and the helmet. Play with the forms and see what undersea contraptions you can create.

Upper and Lower Gallery 2: The Sub-Aquatic Human

Aquatopia features many examples of humans becoming, or trying to become, aquatic. Philip Hoare, in his catalogue essay, uses the term 'homo-aquaticus' for humans whose element is water: sailors, submariners, water babies, mermaids and pirates.

Look for **representations of sub-aquatic humans** in Upper and Lower Gallery 2.

What do you think the artists are trying to explore through them?

What do you think our fascination with this subject says about the affect of the ocean on us?

Upper Gallery 2

The artist **Guy Ben-Ner** has re-imagined the literary work *Moby Dick*. *Moby Dick* follows the adventures of the sailor Ishmael as he voyages on the whaleship Pequod, commanded by Captain Ahab, looking for a ferocious sperm whale know as Moby Dick.

What is your opinion of the film?

Why do you think he has chosen to explore a classic work of literature in this way, within a domestic setting and including his family?

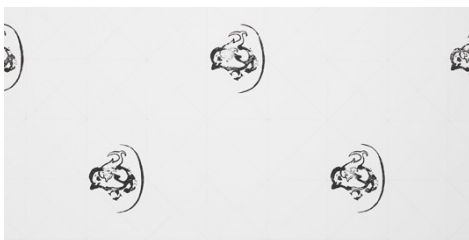
Is this film a piece of art? Why?

You can watch this film at youtube.com. Discuss whether experience of doing so is different to viewing it in the gallery?

Look out for other artworks inspired by literature in the exhibition. How have other artists re-imagined literary works?



Guy Ben-Ner
Moby Dick 2000
Courtesy of the artist & Gimpel Fils,
London © The artist



Steve Claydon

Thames and Thames and Thames and Thames 2012
Sadie Coles HQ, London © Steve Claydon
Photo: © Andy Keate

In Your Sketchbook: sketch Steve Claydon's print Thames and Thames and Thames and Thames 2012 and then play with pattern.

What is the impact of displaying other artworks against this print?

Lower Gallery 2

The mysteries of the ocean's depths are often associated with the feminine. Sirens, oceanic *femmes fatales*, would lure ships onto rocks with their irresistible song and beauty.

SeaWomen focuses on a fast-vanishing community of female sea workers living on the North Pacific island of Jeju. Karikis spent three months on the island, staying with a group of elderly women who continue this ancient female profession, diving to great depths with no oxygen supply to find pearls and catch seafood.



Mikhail Karikis
SeaWomen 2012
Courtesy of the artist

The mermaid myth: Can you see any relationships between this work and those of Liz Craft and Frantz Zéphirin?

What do you think the artist wants to communicate through this artwork? Does it have a social or political meaning?

Is this film a documentary? If so why is it being shown in a gallery?

What do you think of the way that this artwork is displayed? What is the impact of using five screens instead of one?

In Your Sketchbook: Close your eyes. Listen. Draw.

The Studio: Atlantiques

Mati Diop considers Atlantic crossings from a more contemporary perspective. In her video *Atlantiques*, a young man, desperate to escape life in Dakar, recalls his terrifying voyage in search of a better life in Europe.

How does the film make you feel?

How does Mati Diop's work differ from some of the more traditional western views of the ocean shown in *Aquatopia*?

What connections can you see between this work and the The Otolith Group's *Hydra Decapita* 2010 in Gallery 3?

Gallery 1: Curiosities of the Deep

In this gallery artists and filmmakers explore how sea creatures and monsters of the deep have captivated our imagination for centuries. In this room the **cephalopod** makes its final appearance, this time as a less threatening sea monster.

Cephalopod - a type of marine mollusk including squids, cuttlefishes, and octopuses.

Please note that this gallery contains flickering images and sexually explicit material.

Spartacus Chetwyn *Erotics and Bestiality* and Hokusai's *Octopai* 2004

Katsushika Hokusai *Tako to Ama [Pearl Diver and Two Octopi]* 1814

Sean Landers *Nymphs and Shipwreck* 1995

The Jennifer West film, *Heavy Metal Sharks Calming Jaws Reversal* contains flickering images.



Juergen Teller
Björk, Spaghetti Nero Venice 2007
Courtesy of the artist

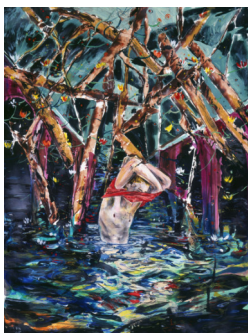


Juergen Teller
Octopus on Bed, Rome 2008
Courtesy of the artist

Look at Teller's images: How do they make you feel?

What do you think he is exploring through them?

Look at the range of interpretations of Octopuses in this gallery. Octopuses, often referred to as devilfish, have captivated the human imagination for centuries, becoming extremely misunderstood. Why do you think artists are so fascinated by them?



Hernan Bas
Before the Flood, Underneath the Domes 2005
Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro, London
© Hernan Bas



Hernan Bas
The Primordial Soup Theory (Homosexual) 2010
Fabrizio Affronti Collection, Savona, Italy
Courtesy of the artist and Victoria Miro, London
© Hernan Bas

In Your Sketchbooks: explore Bas' use of composition and the relationship between the figure, the water and the landscape. How do these artworks relate to the others in this gallery? What do you think Bas is exploring through his work?

Ways In: a framework for looking (KS3-5)

Exploring the object: what can you see?

- What is it? (painting, collage, sculpture, film, textile, print, etc.)
- Is the work part of a **series**; does the artist paint/photograph this subject frequently?
- How do you think the artist has made the work? What **materials** and **processes** have they used?
- Is the work part of a **series**? Does the artist explore this **subject** more than once?
- How is the work displayed? How does it relate to other work in the exhibition?
- What is the **scale** of the work and how does this affect our relationship to it?
- What tactile/surface qualities does the work have?

Make it personal: what do you think?

- What word(s) does the work make you think about?
- How does it make you feel?
- Have you seen anything like this before?
- Does the title tell you anything more?
- How does it feel to be in the gallery?

Ideas and meaning: is there a story?

- What do you think the artist wants to communicate?
- Is it about real life?
- Is there a story or narrative in the work?
- Does it have a cultural, social or political meaning?
- Does it tell us about an issue or theme?
- Does it relate to our lives today?
- Does the title affect the meaning of the work?

Art in context: what else can we discover?

- Is the work about a particular place or person?
- Who is the artist? Is it important to know who created the work? Does the artist's background change the way that we think about the work?
- Does the work say anything about our society?
- Does the work relate to a particular period in history?

This activity sheet can be photocopied and used to help students explore the works on display.

Resources

A catalogue is available for this exhibition.

Books & Journals

Art Forms in Nature: Prints of Ernst Haeckel by Olaf Breidbach, Irenaeus Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Richard Hartmann

Barbara Hepworth Stone Sculpture by Dr Sophie Bowness

Cornish Legends published by Tor Mark

Encyclopedia Prehistorica: Sharks and Other Sea Monsters (Encyclopedia Prehistorica) by Robert Sabuda and Matthew Reinhart

Ingo by Helen Dun

Japanese Prints (Taschen 25th Anniversary) by Gabriele Fahr-Becker

Ley Lines of the South West by Alan Neal

Mermaid to Merry Maid, Journey to the Stones by Ian Mc Neil Cooke

Modernism on Sea: Art and Culture at the British Seaside by Lara Feigel and Alexandra Harris

Moby-Dick by Herman Melville

Sacred Cornwall published by The Heritage

Sea Monsters on Medieval and Renaissance Maps by Chet van Duzer

Shark: Travels Through a Hidden World by Juliet Eilperin

The Cornish Traditional Year by Simon Reed

The Graphic Works of Odilon Redon by Odilon Redon and Alfred Werner

The Tide Knot by Helen Dumore

Weblinks

[Guy Ben-Ner](#)

[www.youtube.com Guy Ben-Ner Moby Dick](http://www.youtube.com/GuyBenNer)

[The Otolith Group](#)

otolithgroup.org

[Barbara Hepworth:](#)

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tateshots-barbara-hepworth>