

OCEAN DRIFTERS

Concept for an immersive sound and visual experience: Ocean environments from the planktons' point of view. UK artists Tyler Moorehead and Lucy Papadoupoulos.

Tens of thousands of marine creatures drift our ocean waves to feed and to breed. Many of these are the microscopic plankton that make up 90% of all marine life, and which form the foundation of our ecosystem.

The explosive sound and energy of air guns used in underwater oil and gas exploration are an example of human activities known to harm zooplankton. Research suggests rising temperatures, increased sound from land, air and sea, and intensifying vibrations now threaten the survival of these organisms and with them, our entire chain of life.

Ocean Drifters opens a playful enquiry into the serious question of human impacts on marine organisms' ocean drifting way of life. The soundscape accompanies abstract marine scapes and uses an array of analog and digital sounds, including the sound of air guns and found materials in the sea, to convey the distortion of sound in ocean water. A mix of low frequency, high decibel and explosive sonic events are used to simulate a dynamic, vibrational ocean environment, intensified by human activities and changing weather patterns. Low frequency vibrations are heavily used to create a feeling of deep sea sonic resonance that can, at times, be uncomfortable for humans.

In a live installation a controller triggers electro magnetic sounds in response to movement towards the Ocean Drifters visuals, a reminder to visitors of the dangers humans pose to ocean life.

The artists draw inspiration from Thomas Nagel's 'What it's like to be a bat', who stressed the importance - and the impossibility - of understanding the subjective experience of smaller organisms; and Ursula K. Le Guin who defines a skill of living as animal to animal kinship - the artist's opportunity being to extend the rational scientific aspect of our sense of relationship to creatures without nervous systems -- to fellowship as creatures with other creatures.