

Contribution to
<https://letsbenicetotheocean.org/raise-your-voice-for-the-ocean/>

on behalf of

TBA21 Organismo¹ and *The Ministries of the Ocean Platform*

April 30th, 2024

In a time of material and information overwhelm, the capacity of art to move and transform [metabolize] is an essential and regenerative principle. Art addresses the root of the inability of humans to reverse or reduce the damages caused to Earth: a profound lack of empathy and imagination to create liveable futures in accordance with **ecological transformation** [understanding ecological as a **system of political, social, environmental - human and non-human- ecologies**]. Such ecologies are all interconnected. That in-between space is where art stems from and where it works as a **metabolic agent**.²

In the current polycrises context, building synergies across disciplines is the only way to address global challenges. Only truly open platforms and networks composed of human and non-human communities, particularly of those that have not had a voice, can go beyond mere inclusion but ensure participation in decision-making. **Therefore, we strongly support the request of the creation of Ministries of the Ocean as put forward in the LetsbeNicetotheOcean (2023³); and we will launch a platform to question and imagine these institutions (www.ministriesoftheocean.com) from an all-inclusive, interdisciplinary and comprehensive standpoint.**

Art has always been a powerful tool through which to examine and to question the status quo, in order to articulate transformation processes and more importantly bring about behavioural change and re-imagined encounters with the world. **Platforms such as Organismo, Embassy of the North Sea, Ocean Uni and Ocean Archive are already exploring new ways to approach ocean matters through art, education, science, and advocacy. Our platform proposes a complementary approach focused on ocean governance and policymaking through research and investigation with artistic methods.**

That being said, these future Ministries need to recognize the role of culture and arts towards building a future proof ocean governance. When conventional methods are failing to penetrate through the bureaucratic deadlock and the mind fog, ultimately art is

¹ "Organismo - Art in Applied Critical Ecologies" is an independent study program of the TBA21 Academy and Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza created to address the role of art and the humanities in ecological transformation.

² Michael Marder, 2021, *The Dump Philosophy - A phenomenology of devastation*

³ <https://letsbenicetotheocean.org/resources-lets-be-nice-to-the-ocean/>

the way into the heart of transformative action. Therefore, on behalf of those who don't have voices, we demand a new way to engage human and non-human beings into ocean governance and advocacy, to **make ocean protection the norm, rather than the exception**:

Arts to liaise anthropic and non-anthropic experiences of the world: *when discussing protection, it is inevitable to think about the power dynamics it carries. It makes us raise new approaches to intersectionality. Who protects who? Who protects what? Who should be protected? Who would enforce protection? The Ocean has forever been protecting humanity without supervision, can we really care without any utilitarian purpose?*

Art to go beyond utilitarianism: *how to care for something that is not close to me? Art moves us in a way that data or information design can't. It is a powerful tool to create and enrich ways for a multilectic world, with plural perspectives to respect the difference by enabling hybrid spaces for conviviality.*

Art to wonder: *can we embrace the unknown? Art is a driver for curiosity to become action. It connects us in new levels of complexity thanks to its potential beyond the rational approach.*

Art as a process to overcome gaps between knowledges: *could a true integration between arts and science be achieved? Could we even overcome the disciplinary distinction? Art to go beyond rigor as a way to imagine the unimaginable. Arts to imagine a glossary that reunites versatile realms in a new no-discipline⁴.*



www.ministriesoftheocean.com

⁴ The manifesto was collectively developed by participants of the TBA21 Workshop "Art for Advocacy " with partners including DHub Barcelona, Sonar+, Institut de Ciències del Mar, Barcelona Supercomputing Centre and the Varda Group in a side-event to the UN Ocean Decade Conference in Barcelona, Spain.