

EXPLORATIONS IN OCEAN SPACE VI

>>>>>>>>>> North Adriatic <<<<<<<<<<<<

This year's course will engage with the project Komuna Maro, focused on the North Adriatic, funded by the FWF (Austrian Research Fund), and based at TU Graz. BAS (Nancy Couling) has been invited as an expert to collaborate in the two-year programme.

This project will provide a common geographical area, theoretical inputs and discussions, a way for the students to exhibit their work within a larger project, and interactions around the field-trip.

In addition, Ocean Space aims to continue the dialogue with Bergen Assembly, initiated during the Autumn 2023 course though inviting Ravi Agarwal to a review and exhibiting some projects at the Bergen Assembly open office space. The way this collaboration could unfold include:

- consulting Ravi and Adania about the list of artist's for the first workshop "Exploring Artist's Methods" and on the DAV teaching for the course- could be in collaboration with a BAS teacher
- inviting Ravi or Adania to reviews, discussions and specific inputs, in particular concerning "How we Learn" with the sea
- consulting Bergen Assembly about the mid-term and final presentation/exhibition- content, place, public engagement and ways of learning
- participating in the public programme, Oct 2024
- using The Literature Boat?

KOMUA MARO PROJECT COORDINATORS:

Ana Jeinić - the principle investigator and project leader—is an independent researcher, educator, curator, and utopianist working at the intersection of architectural, spatial, and design theory, curatorial engagement, and speculative/utopian practice.

Ana Dana Beroš, TU Graz: is an architect, curator, editor and educator focused on creating environments that catalyze social change. Co-founder of ARCHIsquad—Division for Architecture with Conscience and educational programs Urgent Architecture.

Milica Tomić, Head of Institute of Contemporary Art (IZK), TU Graz

OUTLINE

"Komuna Maro is the first project to investigate the North Adriatic in a critical, comprehensive, and transdisciplinary way by interweaving various forms of knowledge and combining different methods of sensing, mapping, and speculating about this marine region in the context of arts-based research."

(from project description, funding application)

Komua Maro addresses 4 topics each over 5 months, and each ending with a "working exhibition". The area of investigation is the North Adriatic- in particular the intersection between Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia, around the ports of Rijeka (Croatia), Koper (Slovenia) and Trieste (Italy).

Our course will coincide with two topics: The Sea of Infrastructure (April-End September), and Terraquas,—Territory & Governance (October-March)

The Sea of Infrastructure focuses on relations of power /ownership / working conditions and how marine life is included in processes in metabolical accumulation.

Three perspectives are explored:

- atmospheric/geographical (top down) – produce alternative mappings

- surface: ethnography, travelling with people
- sediment- traces of these processes on the ocean floor

This coincides with our workshop on QGIS, and more ethnographic fieldwork conducted on site during the field-trip.

With the project coordinators, we have discussed a common pop-up travelling exhibition during the field trip, showing the works so far, including the results of Komuna Maro's work, and travelling in a boat from Koppa (CR), to Rijeka, and Trieste (IT). This exhibition aims to foster exchange with the community- and is seen as a community event.

The work form Ocean Space can contribute to the Komuna Maro Symposium, Exhibition & citizens workshop, planned for May 2025, including **project partners, other scientists & students**.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION, EXPLORATIONS IN OCEAN SPACE

The sea carries multiple histories and cannot be defined solely by dominating colonial and industrial narrative around our understanding of the world's seas and oceans. Seas are specific geographic places— cultural products, “constructed” socially¹ through layers of regulations, activities and the human imagination as they interact with physical oceanographic properties.²

The course aims to find our own reading of the sea— a more balanced perspective where sociocultural factors, more-than-human protagonists and intangible heritage influence our standpoint alongside state-of-the-art developments in the maritime industries. Such readings form the basis for developing original narratives that will weave through final design proposals at the end of the semester.

If we were to think of the Ocean as a geographic place with spatial characteristics, protagonists, histories, and desires inscribed into its waters, how could we begin to represent it? How could we position ourselves to interact with it, to tell its stories and to intervene as architects and multi-scale designers?

Explorations in Ocean Space aims to facilitate an understanding of the sea as a spatial realm, provide basic knowledge on ocean ecosystems, hydrographic properties and a critical perspective on the current state of the World Ocean. This is complemented by a closer look at the North Adriatic, including exchanges with land, people, culture and spirit, where we dive under the saturated surface of data and industry to explore socio-cultural interactions that can inspire interventions.

Our previous studies have shown that Western society has developed an overwhelmingly exploitative relationship to the ocean, firmly maintained by government collaboration with the maritime industries. The *space* of the sea has now become a premium resource for the energy transition and for new forms of extraction and injection. But changes in oceanic patterns, including warming temperatures and sea-level rise, have gained public attention. An urgent collective, cross-disciplinary effort is required to address these complex challenges, which cannot be solved purely by science, technology or the industrial sectors that have so far dominated the sea space. At a time when the ecological crisis is a global preoccupation, different forms of narration are needed to recount today's most critical story and to find ways to collectively reconnect to the seas we have lost. Multiple voices have asserted that the current ecological crisis is accompanied by a crisis of the imagination.

In autumn 2024, our large-scale exploration is focused on the North Adriatic. The course offers different ways of approaching ocean space, encouraging dialogue between different types of knowledge and thereby enriching not only ocean literacy in BAS students, but also understandings

¹ Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 78 (Cambridge [etc.]: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

² Nancy Couling, 'Ocean Space and Urbanisation: The Case of Two Seas', in *The Urbanisation of the Sea: From Concepts and Analysis to Design*, ed. Nancy Couling and Carola Hein (Rotterdam: nai010, 2020), 189–203.

within current large-scale debates. Becoming more literate in ocean space is one way of overcoming *Sea Blindness*, a way to develop a sense of public stewardship towards the sea and is a form of creative empowerment for architects towards the other 72% of the earth's surface. In autumn 23 a series of specific inputs around ocean soundscapes will be an integral part of the course.

COURSE STRUCTURE

1. Researching artistic practices Nancy Couling APP, DAV (1 week)

In order to structurally include plural forms of understanding, the programme explores intuitive, artistic, technological, scientific and indigenous directions, including the distinct methods particular to each. Intuitive "projective" works produced during the course's opening workshop are important to explain personal relations to the sea and to forge or reexamine emotional ties.

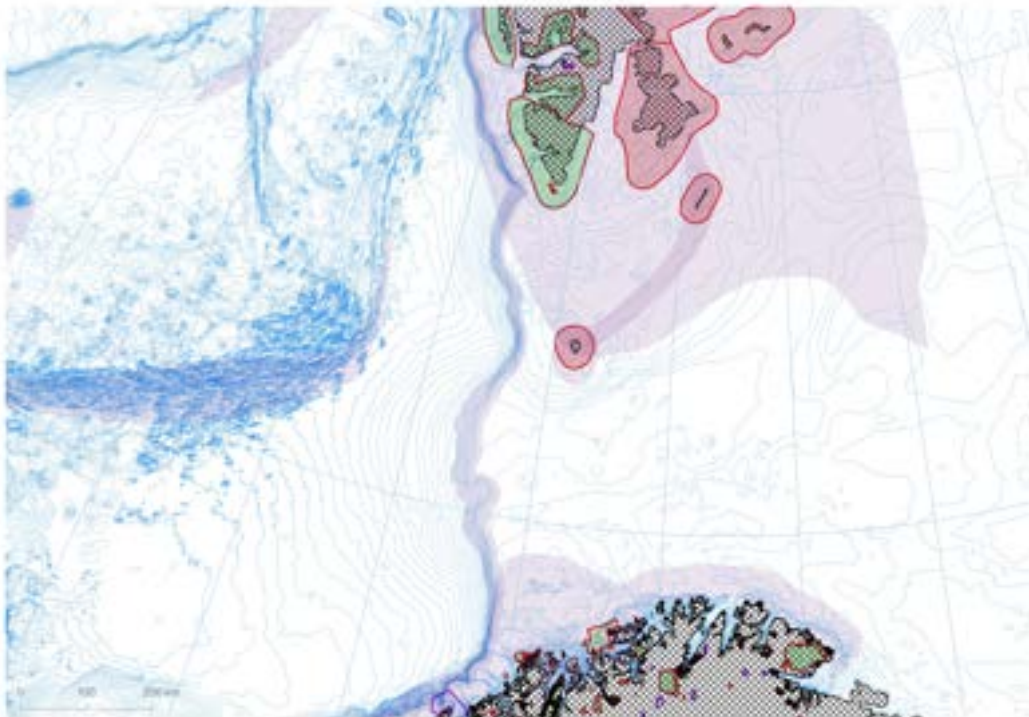
Students research the work of contemporary artists and testing their methods. A list of interesting indigenous, sound and "sea" artists is proposed. Through this process, new ways of communicating critical issues and engaging the senses are opened up – some of which have direct influence on the final project direction. The workshop serves as inspiration- the focus lies in the making of the student's own interpretation. Input open lecture by a selected artist. Lesson in hydrophones.

2. Oceanographic Cartography Nancy Couling APP / External QGIS tutor (1 week)

GIS data is useful to trace the geophysical characteristics of the North Adriatic In this part of the course we plunge into oceanic data, learn to use the open source software QGIS to research available sources and compile thematic layers of oceanic and socio-cultural information. We trace the life and movements of both the natural and human-induced marine protagonists– cod, haddock, King-crab, plankton, pollution, shipping, maritime borders, infrastructure, fishing, oil & gas, monitoring, mammals, birds, wind, currents, ice and water-masses.

This results in a shared cartographic resource, and forms the basis of thematic fields of interest that are pursued up until mid-term. We are conscious of the political dimensions to scanning, mapping, dividing territory, gathering seabed data and selecting forms of representation.

Parallel to this work, an introductory lecture on Oceans and Climate is given by Helge Drange, Oceanographer at UiB.



Protected and valuable areas, Barents Sea, Wi Chen, BAS 2022

3. History & Theory workshop Nancy Couling APP/ with TU Graz (1 week)

Developing and sharing a background to critical themes important for the course. We explore texts and discuss issues around colonisation, the Anthropocene/Capitalocene, the more-than-human, thinking with the sea, , aiming to identify specific areas of interest and research questions to be more closely positioned in the following field-trip preparation.

4. Fieldwork research Nancy Couling APP/ external experts (1 week)

In preparation for the field-trip, more detailed research is carried out on the site under thematic headings that concern both the industrial and the sociocultural sea. Work from the oceanic cartography and history/theory workshops are revised and finalized to be brought together into a shared lexicon and guide & for the field-trip.

5. Field-trip Rijeka (Croatia), Koper (Slovenia) and Trieste (Italy) Nancy Couling APP/ ?? DAV / local experts

Planned for 7-10 days in September, between 18-29.09, the fieldtrip is particularly important to enter first hand dialogue with local communities, to participate in different forms of documentation, mapping and story-telling which will inform the work up until mid-term and to experience the land- and seascapes. We will carry out the field-trip in collaboration with our partners at TU Graz. We aim to restrict travel costs to around NOK 4000

6. Synthesis - Mid-term presentations and reviews Nancy Couling APP/ DAV / invited critics

The synthesis of work so far – findings and inspirations on heterogeneous seascapes, intersections and border zones including conflicts and potential ways forward– will be developed in thematic groups leading up to the mid-term review. At this presentation, smaller groups and individual students should be able to articulate an area of interest for their ongoing explorations in second half of the semester. Group work in exhibition format.



Four Ecologies of the Fjord, mid-term exhibition in silo basement, BAS 2022

7. Project development Nancy Couling APP/ DAV / marine biology /invited guests

After mid-term, time and space is dedicated to further project development individually or in small groups with ongoing input and support from course teachers, a marine biologist, a curator, project presentations from previous course students, and an introductory video-making course. Regular reading/discussion sessions in relation to project work occur throughout. Students are expected to find their own project direction and medium resulting in a wide-range of topics and modes of communication, including video, installations, sound, creative writing, models and drawings. The relevant scale of projects will also vary greatly. We encourage projects ranging from geo-political concerns of the Barents Sea, to abstract, conceptual explorations, to detailed studies of the local socio-cultural site and marine life and to concrete material contributions such as boat-building or seaweed cladding.

8. Final presentation

Nancy Couling APP/ DAV / invited guests

The course maintains an open approach to formats for the final presentation, presented as an exhibition. Formats discussed with the teachers throughout the semester according to the projects themselves, and students are encouraged to explore and to pursue their own methods of research, project development and narrative communication. Findings feed into the ongoing Index of Terms and Lexicon of Species and Things and further venues/platforms for presentation of the project results in a wider context or at the project site will be investigated.

