

RESEARCH IN PRACTICE

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THREE KEYWORDS/PHRASES-

- 1) MYSTERY OF THE OCEAN
- 2) MARINE ART
- 3) OCEAN CONSERVATION AND ART

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Proposed question for Independent Project (Part One in Independent Project in Year Three)- How can the ocean be used as an element for graphic design?

In this research document, I will be studying about the different aspects of ocean, and how art can be used with respect to the ocean. I will be including the mystery of the ocean, marine art and the concept of art and ocean conservation. With the help of these three key phrases and my research into art and creators, I plan on creating a proposal for my dissertation next year.

KEYWORD 1 – MYSTERY OF THE OCEAN

My first keyword is something I have been passionate about ever since I was a kid. The ocean. What we see is just the surface and far below it is a lifeless, lightless desert. It is a huge body of saltwater that covers *75% of Earth's surface*. The planet has one global ocean, but oceanographers and countries have named different areas of the ocean. The mysteries of the deep is a topic which has not been fully discovered and there are loads of theories about everything. More than 80% of the ocean has not been mapped by humans. One of the most fascinating discoveries by oceanographers has been trenches. One of the fields that deals with the study of ocean is biological oceanography. Scientists constantly seek to understand the changes that occur in the ocean

To understand the mystery of the ocean, we need to know a bit about the meaning of biological oceanography, which is the study of all life in the ocean. According to the research (All the Science, n.d.), "Distinguished from marine biology, which focuses on the biology of specific marine creatures, biological oceanography seeks to understand the interactions between all levels of life in the ocean and their environment. As biologists and other scientific professionals work to understand how

changes in the ocean are affecting life forms ranging from microscopic bacteria to the big blue whale, this relatively new scientific field has grown in significance. (All the Science, n.d.)

Galtsoff in his article about the Mystery of the ocean says about how life in the ocean still remains shrouded in mystery, and a biologist today embarking on a new exploration may be just as excited as the scientific forerunners who sailed with Magellan and Cook were. It is true that with the advancement of scientific knowledge, the romance and adventure of the old days associated with the great oceanic expeditions have been lost. But his main objectives are different. Instead of discovering and describing new life forms, he is currently more interested in figuring out the principles that govern life in the ocean and in understanding the complex interactions that exist between the sea's inhabitants and their environment." (Galtsoff, 1934)

The Greek philosopher and physicist Aristotle was one of the first theorists to investigate the ocean. In "Meteorology," he investigated the characteristics of the ocean and its interactions with the atmosphere. He saw that the ocean supplied the air with moisture and that the moon had an impact on its tides and movements. He also thought that the ocean carried loads of knowledge and potential for discovery because it was home to several, mysterious species and secrets. (Alexander and Lewis, 2014)

Charles Darwin was also another theorist who significantly contributed to ocean theory. He studied the development and evolution of coral reefs which he considered was a crucial component of

ocean's ecology in his study "the structure and distribution of coral reefs." He was also one of the first to appreciate the oceans and his discoveries helped enhance our understanding of various species in the ocean. (Barrett, 2016). A lot of poets have been inspired by ocean history too.

Herman Melville is one of the most well-known, and his book "Moby-Dick" is a reflection on the might and grandeur of the sea. "MobyDick" has become a classic of American literature thanks to Melville's stunning descriptions of the ocean and its inhabitants and his study of subjects like fate, obsession, and the quest for knowledge. (Melville, 1997)

So much remains unknown about one of Earth's most complex and mysterious realms – the ocean. A critical aspect that puzzles researchers today is its profound depth. On average, the ocean measures an astounding 12,080 feet (3,682 meters) deep while boasting even deeper pockets untouched by human hands.

The book Ocean anatomy (Rothman and Niekrasz, 2020) is one of the books that explains the ocean in the most illustrative way there is. This book is filled with fun text, doodles and quotes which talks about the ocean. Although this is a children's book, it captures the topic of the ocean perfectly.

There are loads of chapters, right from the evolution of ocean to the different species in it. In The first chapter Rothman starts by saying how there was a subregional ocean called Panthalassa which surrounded the supercontinent Pangea. These tectonic plates then started to break apart due to which the first oceans- Atlantic Ocean and Indian ocean appeared.

KEYWORD 2- MARINE ART

According to Google Arts and Culture (n.d.), Ships and the sea are the main subjects of maritime art.

Many people have traditionally found great inspiration in the seafaring realm.

Great artists like Hieronymus Bosch as well as painters like Willem van de Velde the Younger found inspiration in nautical landscapes and went on to attain international acclaim. They give an exquisite perspective of 600 years of maritime art together. Painters express a unique perspective on the maritime world they inhabit through their works of art. Hence, the paintings are both works of art and windows into the past and present. Maritime art is used for pure joy of its beauty. However, it is also important in its role as a glimpse into history.

Someone who is drawn to ships and seafaring by a painting or print is one step closer to understanding nautical history and enjoying our maritime heritage. Figure 1 is an example of old maritime art.



FIGURE 1- CHRIST IN THE STORM ON THE SEA OF GALILEE

One of my prime focuses on this part of the keyword is Japanese art and how it beautifully shows the visions the sea, mostly in form of waves. Marine day in Japan celebrates the country's long-

standing relationship with the sea. The ocean is a great source of trade and food, but it is also a strong force that has the potential to do horrific harm. These life-giving and life-threatening qualities are both deeply ingrained in the collective memory of Japan and frequently appear in the history, culture, and art of the nation.



FIGURE 2- THE GREAT WAVE OF KANGNAWA

The great wave of Kangnawa, a masterpiece by Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai is one of the most famous paintings in the world. The royal blue wave with the white cresting foam, about to crash down the boats underneath beautifully conveys the force of nature. It also gives us a far view of Mount Fuji. Hokusai's work captures the beauty and danger of the ocean, inspiring viewers to contemplate their own relationship with the natural world.



FIGURE 3- *Stormy Sea (The Wave)*

Gustave Courbet is one of the best examples for artists who got inspired by the ocean. He paved the way for the impressionist movement in France and it is believed that he got inspired by the Great wave of Kanagawa painting by Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai. According to Eschmann (2020), after Courbet had discovered Japanese art, his understanding of aesthetics was changed. While most European artists idealised the beauty of nature, Courbet decided to show an intense version of the sea. His works visioned the power of natural forces at work.

The artist in the painting above shows a vivid depiction of a stormy sea with the brutal force of nature at action. It can also be seen that he has used knife painting for this artwork and the paint seems thick.

Three horizontal bands make up his composition: the shore, where two fishing boats are parked, the waves, which are depicted in a variety of dark greens and are accented with white foam, and the warning sky.

One of the most famous is the French Impressionist Claude Monet, who was enthralled by the ocean's constantly shifting hues and moods. The beauty and mystique of the ocean are captured, together with a sense of its immensity and force, in his series of paintings of the sea at various times of day and in various weather conditions

Another artist who was deeply influenced by the ocean was the American painter Winslow Homer. He spent much of his life on the coast of Maine, where he painted many scenes of the sea and its inhabitants. His works capture the drama and intensity of the ocean, as well as the quiet moments of contemplation that it can inspire.

He spent a large portion of his life painting pictures of the sea and its inhabitants on the coast of Maine.

His artwork captures both the peaceful moments and the dramatic moments of the ocean, as showing in figure 4



FIGURE 4- BREEZING UP

OCEAN CONSERVATION AND ART

My final keyword is how art is used promote sustainability. Art has the power to change people's perspective on things and inspire change and it has been used in the sphere of ocean conservation in the form of powerful visualisations that pay homage to the ocean, and also showcase the effects of humans on oceans. These include textile art, ceramics, sculptures, painting, etc.

June 8 is also celebrated as world ocean's day where people around the world gather together to learn about the challenges faced by the ocean. There are loads of events that take place regarding beach clean-ups, cleanliness drives etc. Artists and activists use marine plastic as a medium, to create artwork. These artworks convey the profusion of plastic in the environment in an aesthetic way.

According to research, (Gertz, 2016) the results of studies on the problem of marine debris are not positive. By 2050, according to a forecast made by the World Economic Forum in January, there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish. Because marine plastic does not entirely dissolve but instead fragments into ever-tinier particles known as microplastics, it poses a unique concern. The use of marine plastic as a medium for artistic creation, like paint or clay, has attracted the attention of environmentalists and artists. Although frequently artistically stunning, the installations highlight the alarming abundance of these

plastics in our world. By increasing awareness of the ocean's significance and vulnerabilities, art has been essential in advancing ocean conservation. In order to urge people to act and conserve the ocean, artists have been employing their ideas and ingenuity to produce works of art.

According to Verve magazine had an article in 2017 about an artist from Singapore who turned ocean waste to art.



FIGURE 5- PLASTIC OCEAN

Artist Tan Zi xi's installation which was exhibited at Sassoon Dock art project as a part of St+art Mumbai urban art festival, 2017 comments on the realities of the toxic levels of sea pollution. She composed around 20000 pieces of waste. In the interview with verve magazine, she said her idea for the artwork was to increase awareness about the dire situation the oceans are in and make people think about their personal plastic waste habits. "Plastic Ocean will appeal to the morality of the public and shed light on how the culture of convenience is unsustainable" she says.

Washed ashore is a prominent organisation with the motto of art to save the sea. This is a screenshot of a series of their , which can be seen as mostly beautiful sculptures made from waste. The sculptures also focus on sea animals like dolphins, whales, starfishes, sharks etc.

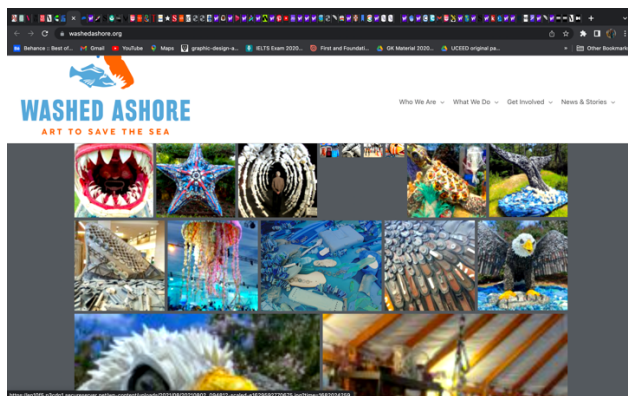


FIGURE 6- SCREENSHOT FROM WASHED ASHORE WEBSITE

On the website itself, they said their mission is

“To build and exhibit aesthetically powerful art to educate a global audience about plastic pollution in the ocean and waterways and to spark positive changes in consumer habits.”

They've created a jellyfish out of transparent water bottles, a whale ribcage out of white bleach canisters, and a bleached coral reef out of Styrofoam. Even a glass bottle-based musical starfish that can be pounded with a hammer exists. (Washed Ashore, n.d.)

Another artist who has explored the mystery of the ocean is the contemporary sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor. Taylor is known for his underwater sculptures, which are designed to create artificial reefs and provide habitats for marine life. His work blurs the line between art and science, combining aesthetics with ecological preservation. By placing his sculptures in the ocean, Taylor invites viewers to contemplate the beauty and fragility of the underwater world.

Coral and other marine life can grow on the pH-neutral materials used in Taylor's sculptures.

Also, they operate as a tourist draw that boosts the regional economy and advocates for ocean preservation. Figure 7 is an example of one of his works in France.



FIGURE 7- CORAL REEFS

From the research of the three key phrases, we can clearly say that Ocean has been my prime focus of the essay. I have analysed how art is related to the ocean, and how artists have used it as a medium shed light on environmental issues and challenges our oceans face. I have talked about the history of the ocean, and then moved onto the art aspect where I included ocean conservation and marine art. While the first keyword is mainly theory, like the books on mysteries, oceanography etc,

the other two keywords are most practical. I have analysed some famous works of artists and creators, which gave me an insight towards their work. One of the parts of the research which fascinated me the most was how far back marine art goes back to. Artists have been interested in the ocean since almost the 16th century and have been creating wonderful pieces of work ever since. Another aspect that interested me was how Japanese artists used art to convey the forces of nature, by painting strong waves instead of subtle seascapes. Apart from the aesthetic paintings, my final keyword focuses on the conservation of the ocean and how art is used to make a change. There are loads of different artists, painters, sculptors etc who have created various kinds of pieces to create awareness about the ocean and its plastic. Reading about the use of ocean waste in art also interested me. Overall, we can clearly agree that

In addition to highlighting the environmental problems and difficulties that our seas currently confront, art has the ability to capture the beauty, mystique, and immensity of the ocean. Artists have conveyed their deep connection to the ocean through a variety of art genres, including painting, photography, sculpture, writing, music, and performance, and they have done this while promoting marine sustainability and conservation.

The question I have in mind for my dissertation is “How can the ocean be used as an element for graphic design?”, where I plan to research about graphic design in particular in relation to the ocean and how it can help in educating us in both ocean conservation and maritime history.

I am hoping my practical project to be an immersive experience where users can enter an oceanic world through art. This will include various mysteries of the ocean, sea creatures and conservation methods.

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FIGURE 2- KATSUSHIKA HOKUSAI (1760-1849) 'UNDER THE GREAT WAVE OFF KANAGAWA', FROM THE SERIES THIRTY-SIX VIEWS OF MOUNT FUJI. (n.d.). [1831]

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