



Silent Seas

Water pollution affects all living organisms and access to clean water is one of the concerns for future generations as the impact of climate change and mass extinction takes hold. Water pollution, however, is not always visible, but often audible. As pollution increases, through poisonous chemicals, rising temperatures, other human activity such as noise from ships and industry, the vibrant soundworld of clicks, pops and whistles from moving, feeding, communicating aquatic wildlife decreases. This silencing is a loud, clear warning to us, but only if we listen to what our environment is telling us. If we listen with care and attention, understand how deeply entangled we are with our environment, then we will hear, as many people who depend on their livelihoods on the sea are telling us, that our existence is as threatened as the existence of the aquatic wildlife that is becoming ever quieter.

This work is not a lamenting of the devastating effects pollution, including noise pollution, has on the marine world, but rather an imagining of an alternative future, one that is absolutely possible if we desire it and work towards it, of vibrant and species rich seas.

We jump into the sea to explore what lies beneath the waves. It is far too dark to see what is around us, but we hear the sounds of fish and crustations going about their business, the seagrass and kelp forests popping. We don't quite know what fish we're hearing, we can take a guess, maybe, but it surely is a rich soundworld full of life.

We start to hear bangs and roars and become aware of the ever increasing human activity drifting into this soundworld—maybe pylons driven into the seabed in the search of oil, boats roaring past or fish being dredged from the waters—until we

realise that there are no sounds of fish, no photosynthesis popping of plants anymore, all life has been sucked from the ocean in our pursuit for profit.

But once life is drained from our oceans we too will not be far behind. Human made sounds begin to decline as humankind struggles to survive on a depleted planet. A deafening nothingness follows.

Yet what if we were to stop our thirst for profit, if we stopped thinking of fish as stock, of the seabed as a space for exploitation, of the oceans as a resource to drive capitalist growth? If we instead saw growth in the diversity and abundance of underwater life, if we acknowledged fish as our kin, the ocean as the giver of life, value in the ocean's beauty and its life-sustaining qualities for us?

Then maybe slowly, every so slowly we start hearing the seagrass photosynthesise again, the shrimp starting to chirp, the fish communicating, the sea mammals playing. And maybe if we're really lucky we might even hear the mermaids sing.

This 28-minute sound work imagines these possibilities described above. It is entirely constructed of foley work to create the underwater soundworld. But all the fish and plant sounds, as well as the human activities are based on actual underwater recordings, though of course not the mermaid songs!

Our oceans are under great pressure from pollution, including noise pollution, which can have a devastating effect on the life cycle of sea creatures. Many ocean scientists and ecologists, as well as people working and dependent on the sea for their livelihoods have spoken to this and are drawing our attention to this—to most of us—unknown world, and the urgency to protect it, not only for planetary health, but also for human survival. *Silent Seas* is a celebration of their tireless work and advocacy and their imagination in building a healthier relationship to our oceans.

We invite you to write down your own relationship to the sea, what does the sea mean to you? Once you have done this please add your thoughts to the installation.

Claudia Molitor

Claudia Molitor is a composer and artist whose work hovers between music and sound art, extending across contemporary art practices, such as video and installation art. Exploring the role listening can play in our world as well as embracing collaboration as compositional practice is central to much of her practice.

Recent work includes the audio-visual installation *Listen to my World* which toured to Wilde Westen (Kortrijk/Belgium), Spor (Aarhus/Denmark), hcmf// (Huddersfield/UK), Onassis Cultural Centre (Athens/Greece), Time of Music (Viitasaari/Finland); *A Thousand Words for Weather* produced and commissioned by Artangel, installed at Senate House Library, London; *In den Träumen* a piano work for Zubin Kanga released on October House Records; *Fever* for the 8 trumpet Monochrome Project, performed at hcmf// and Merz Musik (Berlin), which received a RPS (Royal Philharmonic Society) award in 2026; *The unheard also Glistens*, as soundwalk for urban areas, first presented at Rainy Days in Luxemburg and available through APRIA, ArtEZ Platform for Research Interventions of the Arts; and *Gedenke die Zukunft*, a performance, sound installation and card game created as part of a Stadtkünstler residency in Schwaz (Austria) this year.

More information can be found at www.claudiamolitor.org