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To the Uttermost End:

*The photographic amalgamation of history, imagination,
science and exploration in the seascape.*

*An exegesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

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*at Massey University, Wellington,
New Zealand.*

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Abstract

This exegesis is essentially a quest to discover a place that still remains in the realm of the unknown; where imagination and science, history and memory, reality and artifice are all architects of space. Framing this investigation in the locality of the sea, this research explores mythological, scientific and imaginative agents that allow access to concepts of the intangible and unseen. Through photography, *To the Uttermost End* explores the dichotomy between objectivity and artifice, touching on notions of the technological sublime.

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Contents:

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
To the Uttermost End - An Introduction	1
Beyond the Dark Veil - 'Discovery' in the South Pacific	3
Distorted Mirrors - the Age of Exploration	5
Limitations of the Known	10
Salt and Silver - Photography and the Seascape	13
Witness to the Intangible - Photography, Science and Imaging	19
Submerged in the Archive	25
Into the Hadal - Contemporary Exploration of the Sea	29
Fathomless Depths	34
Battle for the 'Last Frontier'	41
Depth Information	45
Unknown Oceans - Concluding Thoughts	51
Notes	53
Image List	54
Reference List	57

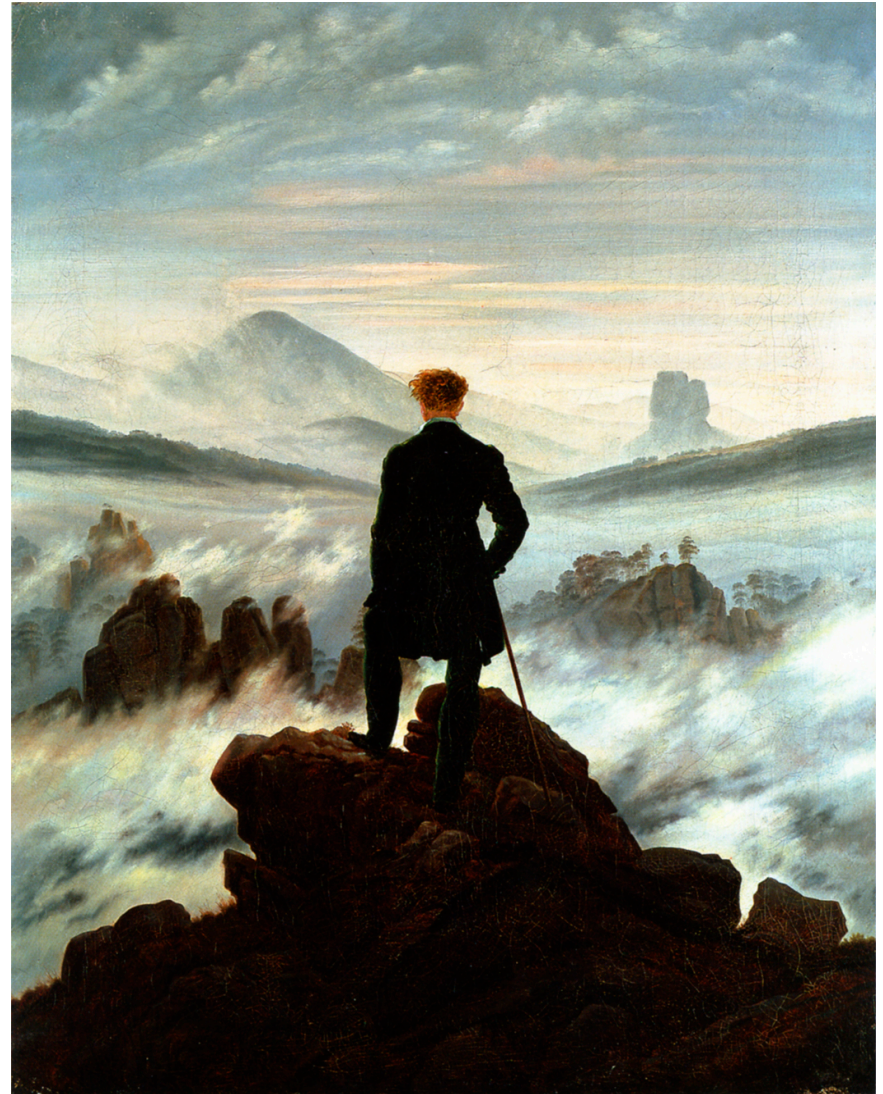


Figure 1. *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, Casper David Friedrich, 1818.

To the Uttermost End – An Introduction

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus observed through water that everything exists in a state of flux. Situated between sharpness and form; or potential and reality, its perhaps the perfect lens through which to consider ideas about who we are, and our place in the world (Kent, 2003, p.13).

He stands at the edge of all that is imaginable. Never once looking back, he remains silent as he is still. It is in the moment as I gaze over his shoulder that I know I will never see what this *wanderer* sees.

Looking upon the painting, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (Fig.1) by Casper David Friedrich I was struck with a kind of envy. For before the ‘wanderer,’ there are unimaginable discoveries to be made, seas to chart and lands to map. There are journeys to be had to the far reaches of the world and all that remains unknown. The world still remains a place of sheer possibility and I realise I am not content with being a bystander. I desire to stand in ‘*wanderer’s*’ place and gaze upon this epic scene with my own eyes and imagination; for when I look out I see not a scene of fog but rather,

it is the sea that consumes my vision. Surveying this vast sea I would bear witness to landscapes as they shift and rise out of the watery depths only to fade away into nothingness. I want to stand on the precipice of imagination and gaze into the unknown; I want to be this *wanderer*.

This research is essentially my quest to tease out and perhaps discover a space that remains unknown, unmapped and the intangible. Mediating between historical and contemporary contexts I come to focus on the sea. It is in the unknown waters of the sea that I argue that imagination, science, history and artifice are all architectural agents in the construction of the seascapes. While not entirely innocent in their production these agents allude to agendas of cultural desire.

In my pursuit into unknown space of the sea I employed photography to map my journey. I argue the photographic medium through its intrinsic qualities is the perfect medium to synthesise my methodological and conceptual notions. With this inquiry in mind my photographic practice is centred around the question; ‘how can a seascape be visualised to enable photographic experiences that intertwine imaginative, scientific and historic modes of exploration?’ This research aims to create an experience of discovery in which

boundaries of photographic representation and imaginative narrative construction are pushed *To the Uttermost End*.

Beyond the Dark Veil – ‘Discovery’ in the Pacific

In terms of physical geography New Zealand still remains one of the most isolated countries in the world. Hidden and positioned in the vast waters of the South Pacific Ocean its very existence was not known until 1642. With this discovery in mind it could be concluded that New Zealand’s history remains relatively brief, being only 371 years. However this account of history not only neglects the Polynesians who settled here long before European ‘discovery’, but also overlooks an extensive history of European myth making in the south Pacific.

Out of the vast expanses of the southern Pacific Ocean Europeans conjured illusionary landscapes approximately two thousand years before western explorers ever set foot on a landmass in the south Pacific (Arthur, 2007, n.p.). These perplexing conjured illusions stem from ancient Greek theory that sought hemispherical balance of the earth. This theory conceived that the amount of the land in the northern hemisphere was equal to the amount of land in the southern hemisphere. This supposed hemispherical balance would be seen as proof of the existence of a large unknown southern

landmass. Lastly, the theory would provide the foundations for imaginative myth making that would persist in the south Pacific until 1775.

With this extensive history in mind I will examine *The Age of Exploration* (15th century to 17th century) as a period of European ‘discovery’ in which the south Pacific became illuminated by a vast array of imaginative representations.

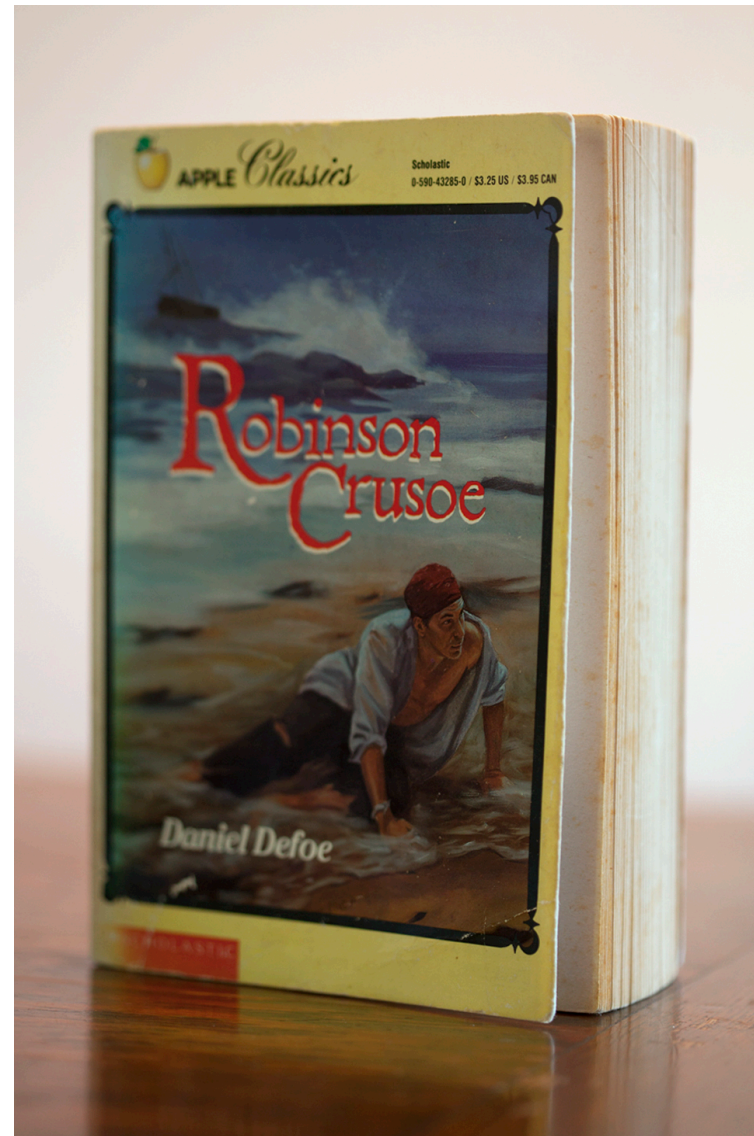


Figure 2. *Robinson Crusoe*, Image by Author, 2013.

Distorted Mirrors – the Age of Exploration

At the beginning of the 18th century one third of the earth remained a mystery to Europeans (Ferns et al., 2007, n.p.). While the majority of the northern hemisphere had been geographically navigated, the southern hemisphere remained largely uncharted by European explorers. However, the South Pacific Ocean was not seen as a void, rather it became a theatre in to which European imagination projected illusionary landscapes such as the *Antipodes*, *The Great Southern Land* and *Terra Australis Incognita*. These hypothetical landmasses:

Were originally conceived as a means of speculating on a geography that could not yet be described and therefore invited imaginative invention. The reference was not so much to place as to a symbolic space that captured the mystery of all that was physically beyond Europe's reach (Arthur, 2007, n.p.).

This unknown zone (the Pacific Ocean) enticed authors, cartographers, artists and explorers to fill the space with representations, that were not only motivated by imagination, but

also responded to a newly developing vision of objective science. It was too, a pre-photographic period.

In literature, imaginary or virtual sea voyages were depicted so convincingly they were thought of as fact rather than artifice. David Fausett states, "Weaving a text from the tension between the real and the ideal, between travellers' reports and the ideas of cosmologists or geographers, they held up images of other worlds to the real as distorting mirrors" (Fausett, 1993, p.7). As a child I was gifted Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*, which I still own to this day (Fig. 2). I remember vividly being disturbed by the novel, not because of prolonged isolation, but the fact that Crusoe was unaware of his exact location in the world. *Robinson Crusoe* and other novels such as *Utopia*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *New Atlantis* and *The Tempest*, not only depicted imaginative landscapes but were all 'located' in the dark unknown recesses of the Pacific Ocean.

Cartographers visually depicted the South Pacific Ocean complete with illusionary lands such as *the Great Southern Land* and *Terra Australis Incognita*. Maps gave equal treatments to fact and fiction, thereby supporting the creation of myths (Longley, 2010, p. 21).



Figure 3. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Abraham Ortelius, 1570.

This can clearly be seen in the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* 16th century map (Fig. 3) by Flemish geographer/cartographer Abraham Ortelius the name of which translates as *Theatre of the World* (State Library of South Australia, n.d.). It is in this map that the southern Oceans are the stage for the illusionary landmass, *Terra Australis Nondum Cognita; the Southern Land Not Yet Known* (State Library of South Australia, n.d.). Gazing upon this map I am still astonished by the depiction of a landmass that remains entirely blank of internal topographical features and how this becomes a vast space of imaginative possibilities.

The naming of places both real and imaginary was an important part of the creation and ownership of both European ideological and imperial space. A map is the ordering of space into a two-dimensional plane and on this surface that it reveals how that space has been imagined. If we refer back to *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, *Terra Australis Nondum Cognita* is the visual manifestation of European imagination and thus a projection of the culture. “Rival European nations, with different aims and agendas, each had their own specific visions of the antipodes that they sought to fulfil through exploration and conquest” (Arthur, 2007, n.p.). Cartography

during the Age of Exploration would provide the enticing motivation for exploration in the southern Pacific.

Onboard the HMS Endeavour Captain James Cook set out in the Pacific Ocean on an expedition of scientific discovery. His orders were to observe the Transit of Venus from Tahiti, but this was just one part of the mission. It was actually *The Great Southern Land* myth that lured Cook into the southern Pacific Ocean and as a result Europeans circumnavigated New Zealand and the eastern shores of Australia for the first time (Edmond, 2009, p.147). During Cook’s voyages, “He made three separate passes through the empty ocean east of New Zealand, where Dante had placed Mount Purgatory, and showed once and for all there could not be any great land mass in those waters” (Edmond, 2009, p.149). It would be these navigational events that would disprove and eradicate the elusive southern continent.

Voyages were not only motivated by empirical and imaginative notions, but had monetary agendas of sourcing resources for their respective motherlands. Resources such as metals (gold, silver, iron) textiles, glass, soap, spices and paper were valuable possessions for countries to control. Nations not only hunted for unknown lands, but upon finding a territory in reality, they sought to

claim it under their domain. By knowing the exact location of a territory nations could then exploit its resources and increase their wealth and authority. Whether it was situated in reality or in the realm of artifice, exploration was informed by a myriad of perceptions and agendas. It is the same way that renderings such as literature and maps remain complex and multifaceted projections of the culture that produced them.

Like the seascape in constant motion, the Age of Exploration presented images that underwent an ever changing, shifting process that encouraged imaginative narratives in the south Pacific. In essence, the vast unknown interior of the South Pacific Ocean provided a reflective space for European projections of desire and anxiety. It is these projections that would provide the motivation for exploration and discovery in the south Pacific. As Geoffrey Batchen states poignantly, “These early images and texts are fictions in name only, however, for like all representations, they had real, lived, material effects” (2003, p.28). These fictitious spaces not only set the stage for exploration but also would subsequently lead to the conquering and colonisation of the Pacific. Furthermore, myth making played a part in defining Europeans as religiously, morally and evolutionary superior to their south Pacific counterparts. For it was thought to discover a place remote in space was to travel back

in time from ‘civilised culture’, to a less evolved culture that was more akin to the primal origins of man¹ (Rennie, 1995, p.1).

What captivated my interest was the sheer imaginative possibilities of the unknown. Trawling through research I felt as if I had stumbled upon an alternative version of history; a history that was filled with peculiarities and oddities that were more aligned with a mysterious conspiracy theory. When pondering the tales of illusionary lands I felt a strange sense of disorientation, as I was located in the actual physical space where these ideological narratives were situated. Enthralled by this history that had never come to pass I began to consider how I could explore notions of the imaginative unknown photographically?

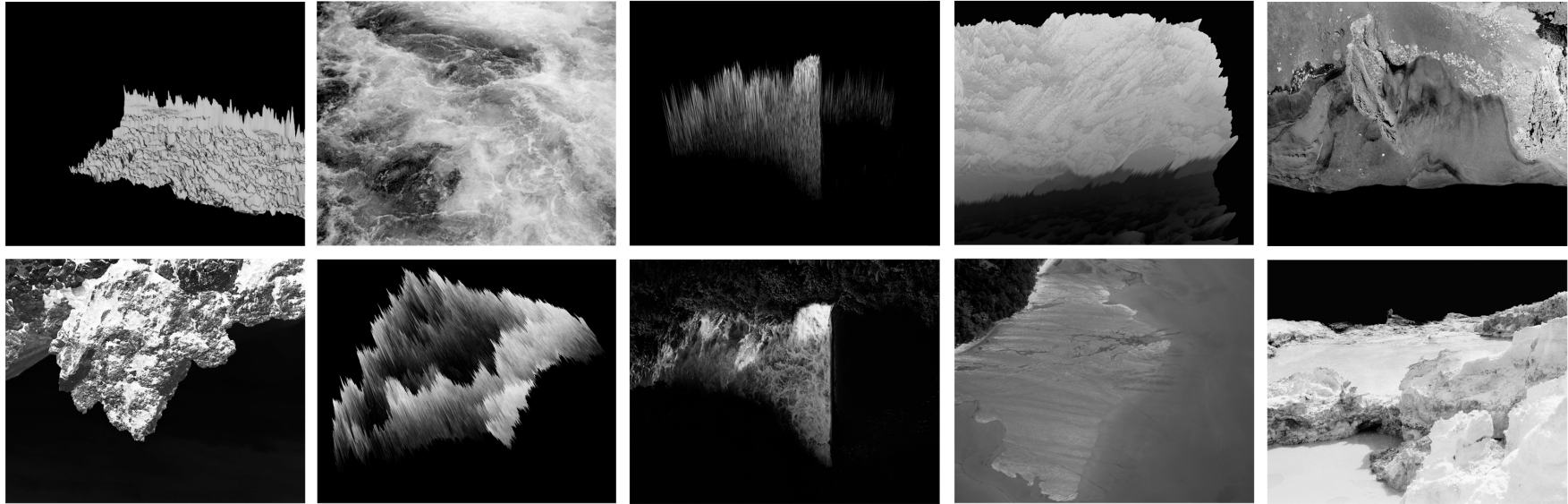


Figure 4. *Untitled*, Image by Author, 2012.

Limitations of the Known

Inspired by my research into pre-18th century European illusionary landmasses of the south Pacific I initiated a terrestrial based investigation. I began by photographing the New Zealand landscape for evidence or signs that would operate as spaces for imaginative narratives. Changing my perspective from the obvious I began to look for idiosyncrasies in the landscape that sparked my own imaginative thought process. Travelling throughout the central North Island I connected with touristic hubs such as Rotorua, Taupo and National Park. In addition I was fortunate to be able to take a small plane trip in which I was able to photograph the landscape from an aerial perspective. Through my imagery I was interested in distorting the familiar overexposed New Zealand landscape into the unfamiliar, and creating a space for imagination to develop. Essentially I was fascinated by the notion of reviving a sense of imaginative narrative of wonder and the thrill of the unknown.

Through the process of editing I became frustrated with the output of some of the images as they were ultimately tied to a world that was all too familiar. If we consider the vertical pairing at the end of the image sequence we can see that they still remain in the

boundaries of the familiar (Fig. 4). The bottom image points to a glacial form while the top image references planetary landscapes; both images suggest landscapes that we as viewers are accustomed to. With these limitations in mind I began to experiment with 3D rendering. Created by using the photographs of New Zealand landscape I had taken as source material, I then imported them into a program that rendered the images into a three-dimensional space. These 3D renderings referenced mapping technology that is used in contemporary cartography. The renderings varied in appearance from images that visually emulated etchings, to images that referenced data/scientific projections, while others communicated a sense of landscape (Fig. 4). More significantly these images were an entry into a methodology that echoed my conceptual ambitions.

In the previous chapter, Age of Exploration, I considered images that probed the unknown by creating speculative geographies. In their production these images often dealt with the dichotomy between what was known and unknown, fact and fiction, imagination and science. It is here that I argue that my methodology of using 3D renderings echoes researched historical dichotomies. Through the process of creating the 3D renderings the information of the source photograph is distorted into a virtual rendered 3D

form. Teetering on the boundaries of these dichotomies the 3D images ultimately intertwined my methodology and conceptual agendas. These resulting images established some of my major conceptual themes, but would be fundamentally flawed due to their presentation (Fig. 5).

The images were paired with an image of a 3D rendering and the source image below and compiled within a grid. It was clear from the feedback that this presentation method was problematic and the small scale limited the visual impact of the images. I wanted the viewer to experience a sense of exploration and discovery but be unable to locate the image in space and time. This sense of exploration and disorientation was not apparent in feedback, but it was clear that the series had provoked a sense of outer space exploration, rather than exploration of the sea. This threw me into questioning the relevance of the seascape. Previously I had focused on the illusionary landmasses but I became increasingly aware of the greater significance of the sea as a space of the unknown. Thus raising the question; how has the sea as a subject of contemporary photography been explored to construct a space for narrative development and articulation?



Figure 5. *Installation Image*, Image by Author,

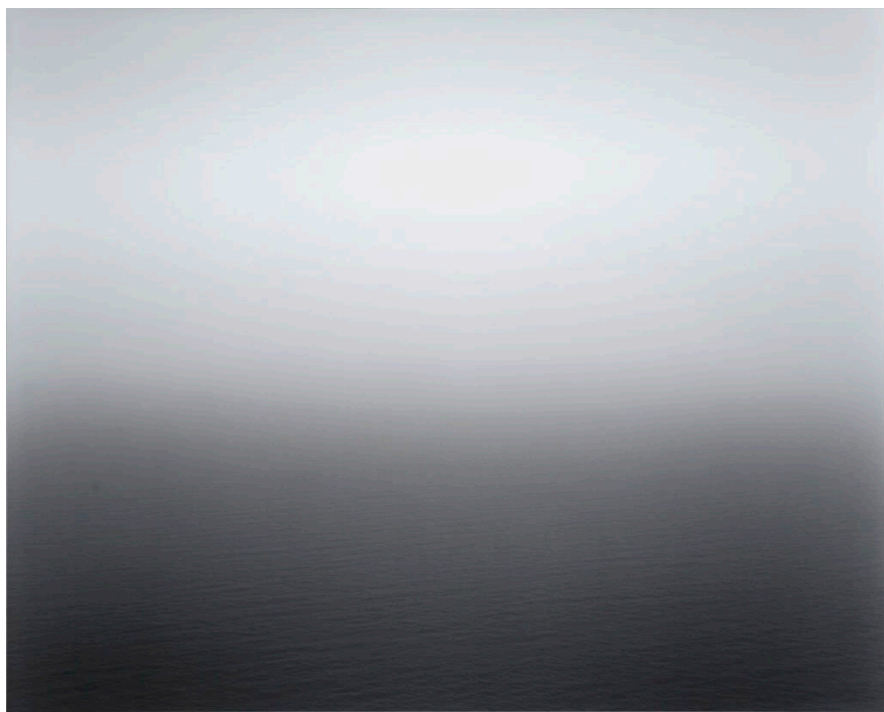


Figure 6. *Towards Tomorrow (International Date line, Alaska)*, Marine Hugonnier,



Figure 7. *Seascape: Aegean Sea, Pillon*, Hiroshi Sugimoto, 1990 (Silver Gelatin Print).

Salt and Silver – Photography and the Seascape

The seascape facilitates a questioning of not only the space, but also the culture that has imaged it. This reflective nature could be considered to be true in relation to the photograph. “Just as the oceans’ visible face hides processes of infinite complexity, so do modern images of it encode a concealed cultural history” (Hamilton-Patterson, 1998, p.9). This concealed cultural history alludes to the notion that the photograph will always remain a moment of the past time trapped in the present, forever out of context. John Berger describes this disconnect between past and present in the photograph as an ambiguous abyss (1982, p.87). This photographic abyss offers a surface for the viewer to project their own personal narrative. “Human beings have a deeply rooted need to create and identify with narratives, an instinct linked with the tendency we have to see our selves as stories” (Edwards, 2005, p.6). If the viewer has a need to identify and relate to the photograph, how have contemporary photographic artists constructed a space that challenges the boundaries of narrative and notions of the seascape? In an effort to answer this question I will examine the

photographic works of Marine Hugonnier, Hiroshi Sugimoto and Tacita Dean.

In the series *Towards Tomorrow*, Marine Hugonnier (Fig. 6) explores the seascape and its cultural constructs. In 1884 The International Date Line was established and the world was divided into time zones. This imaginary boundary opened up a 24-hour gap between Russia and the United States of America. Hugonnier set out to journey from Alaska towards Siberia and in the process catch the sunrise of the coming day, in essence the future (Mansart, n.d., n.p.).

What the photograph captures is a suspended moment of time and this moment is together situated in the past. Theorist Roland Barthes called this moment the “*that-has-been*” and that it allows the viewer to witness passed time in the present (1982, p. 72). *Towards Tomorrow* is in contradiction of the past as it seeks the future. It is in this future time that there is an opening of narrative space for the viewer to contemplate artificial construction of universal time.

Hugonnier depicts The International Date Line as a historical construct. It is a border that essentially does not exist in a physical

sense but it has a significant impact on how we structure contemporary culture. Liz Wells point out that, “Indeed borders and histories may be relatively invisible unless we know where to look and are prepared to look closely; they are cultural knowledge which may not be obviously marked in the land itself” (2010, p.81). Hugonnier has responded to the regiment of the International Date Line and the implementation of universal time, revealing its illusionary and imaginary nature; a prospect that I find to be fascinating. Ultimately I am intrigued by Hugonnier’s failure to capture something that will forever remain un-recordable. It is through Hugonnier’s mediated moment of failure that she, very sophisticatedly, leaves me as the viewer to contemplate not only the limitations of photography, but also the ramifications of this imaginary line.

In the series *Seascapes*, Hiroshi Sugimoto (Fig. 7) offers a space for the viewer to fill with their own imagination. These images are black and white and are devoid of any visible human presence. The frame is divided in half by the horizon line, giving equal importance to sea and sky. This rigid construction of space sets the stage for the viewer to contemplate their own personal narrative in accordance with the image.

It is here that these images offer a narrative space to consider metaphysical questions. Humans have gazed upon the sea for thousands of years and are but a speck on its vast history. Sugimoto states, “Mystery of mysteries, water and air are right there before us in the sea. Every time I view the sea, I feel a calming sense of security, as if visiting my ancestral home; I embark on a voyage of seeing” (n.d, n.p.). It is in Sugimoto’s metaphysical aspirations that his work could be connected to a discourse of Romanticism.

Romanticism sought to connect the viewer with phenomena beyond their comprehension a notion that could be articulated as the sublime. According to Denise Markonish, 18th century philosopher Edmund Burke, “Suggested that the sublime, a mood prompted by some overwhelming or awe-inspiring natural feature, would create in the viewer an unsettling fear or astonishment, similar to what Sigmund Freud latter called ‘the Uncanny’” (2008, p.19). If the sublime sought to reconcile an emotional response in the viewer does Sugimoto’s provoke such a response? On one hand they offer a mediated space for imaginative narratives, which would be coincide with notions of the sublime. While on the other hand their state of mimesis results in a sense of sameness and



Figure 8. *Untitled Image, Teignmouth Electron*, Tacita Dean, 1999.

ultimately disengagement. The sublime as an emotional response depends on the viewer's experience of the work.

In the work *Teignmouth Electron* (2000), Tacita Dean (Fig. 8) crafts a narrative that approaches the sublime. Through text and image Dean explores the ill-fated journey of Donald Crowhurst. Competing in a nonstop solo voyage around the world Crowhurst puts all his efforts into winning the race and the prize money that will relieve him of his business' financial burdens. Through this incredible tale Dean weaves a compelling narrative of Crowhurst's race attempt, and his psychological journey towards his death. Actual photographs of Crowhurst's sailing boat (named Teignmouth Electron) accompany the writing. The photographs document the boat in a state of decay and their banal ambiguity offers the viewer no quick answers.

It is through text and images that Dean offers a space for contemplation of the tragic events. Dean gives the reader/viewer an insight into Crowhurst's isolation, treachery and finally his fatal demise, but more importantly Dean gives insight into his state of mind. As time went on Crowhurst mental state deteriorated into a condition Dean defines as 'time-madness' (1999, n.p.). Maintaining exact time is the essential element when implementing a

chronometer to calculate ones position on the earth. Losing sight of the time and thus not knowing his position, Crowhurst with his chronometer in hand jumped overboard into the sea.

As I read through the expertly crafted story I was terrified by the prospect of being surrounded by a horizon of water and not knowing your position. It is the same fear that I had experienced when reading the tale of *Robinson Crusoe*. As I pondered my connection to both texts I concluded that this emotional response ultimately navigated the territory of the sublime, making it a hauntingly memorial experience. Furthermore, these two tales are not only linked through their exploration of the sublime, but their transitions between fact and fiction. *Teignmouth Electron* is not strictly a factual work as Dean's exploration of history is fluid. Dean explains, "I wish to present my collection of thoughts, feelings and ideas alongside images I took of the *Teignmouth Electron*" (Dean, 1999, n.p.). In another statement Dean quite clearly describes her intentions as, "I realised that in order to deal with fact it was best to resort to fiction" (Dean, 2006, p.13). By blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction I would suggest that Dean creates a compelling narrative of an ill-fated oceanic journey. Dean's fluid transition between reality and artifice connects with my own dichotomic explorations.

These three artists have all approached the concept of the seascape in different ways. What unites these three artists is their use of narrative to open up the seascape as a space of imaginative potential. An additional linking thread drawing these artists together is the unknown. There is something in all of their photographs that remains in the realm of the unknown, which I would argue is a catalyst for the production of narrative. Another point of interest was the concept known as the sublime and I wondered if this was the term that described my desired emotional connection to the work.

Lastly, a thread that unites all three artists' is that they all have situated their practice in the 'now' and have explored contemporary subject matter. In relation to my own practice, I began to ponder the merits and relevance of my historical based investigation. Through research I establish that the sea has been represented in a series of convoluted processes involving imagination, exploration, science, mapping, naming and in some cases colonization; but what was the relevance of these notions to contemporary culture and landscape? I began to consider my practice as being caught in a whirlpool of indulgent nostalgia where the sea provides a space for meanderings between imagination and science, history and memory, reality and artifice. Were these ponderings even relevant to

contemporary discourses around the seascape? As Trudy Stack questions, “Has the passage of the Age of Discovery, the complete circumnavigation of our wet orb and the advent of air travel, made the sea an obsolete secondary subject or just more elusive?” (1998, p.13).

This questioning was the impetus to my investigation as I considered whether my path was relevant. With no distinctive answers in sight I turned my curiosity from imaginative narratives to the role of science in photography.

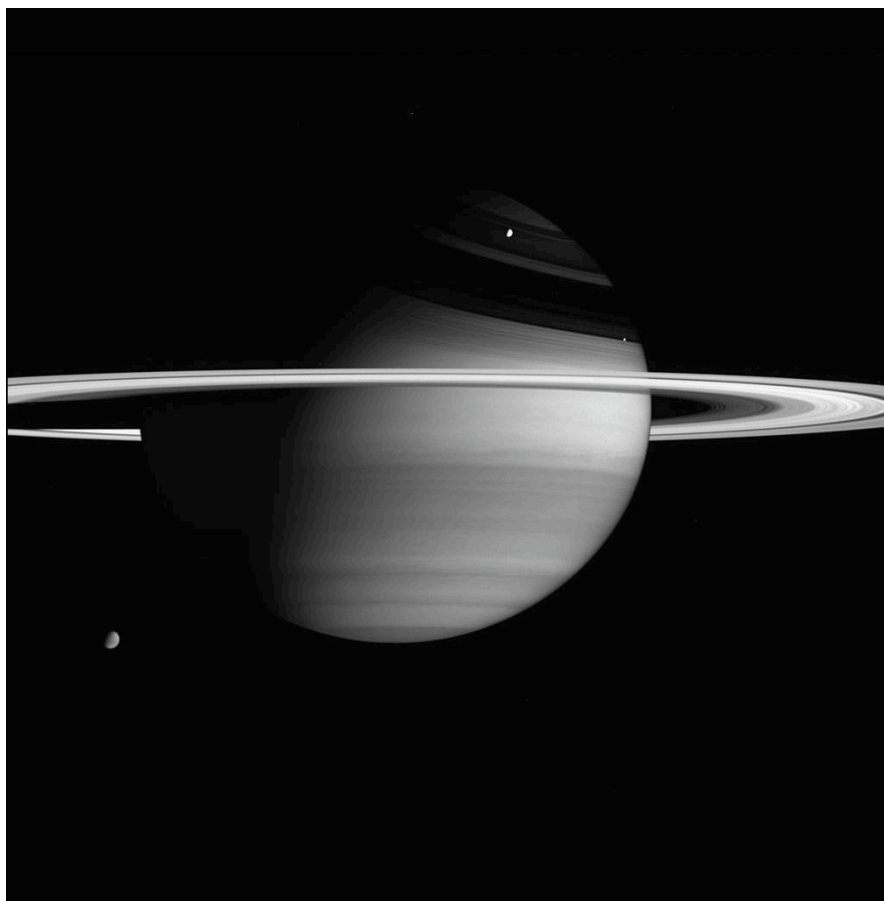


Figure 9. *Cassini*, NASA/JPL-Caltech, NASA, n.d.



Figure 10. *Cassini 1*, Thomas Ruff, 2008.

Witness to the Intangible – Photography, Science and Imaging

From the very beginning photography has teetered on the precipice of being both art and science. When considering the photograph in his 1844 book entitled, *The Pencil of Nature* William Fox Talbot states, “formed or depicted by optical and chemical means alone, and without the aid of any one antiquated with the art of drawing” (1844, n.p.). In this statement Talbot is privileging the mechanical objectivity of photography as a form of representation (Maimon, 2011, p.959). It is because of this continued perceived objectivity that photography has been employed in the recording of the landscape of the unknown both real and imaginary. To articulate this perceived objectivity I will examine the works from NASA, Thomas Ruff, Joan Fontcuberta and Taryn Simon.

Through photography we have witnessed the tremendous scenes and events of the universe from Earth. Photographs depict what would otherwise remain unseen; “like a canary in the coal mine, photography is often called on to do work in areas where human senses fail” (Wilder, 2009, p.53). Consider the image taken from NASA robotic spacecraft Cassini (Fig. 9); in the photograph we are

able to clearly see the planet Saturn and the three moons Tethys, Rhea, Enceladus. When viewing this photograph I am aware that I am witnessing the intangible landscape of space. It does not matter how many times I view an image of the space I am always in a state of awe as I think of the epic unknown limits of the universe. The fascinating truth is that these are landscapes that for the perceivable future can only be witnessed through images. Carolyn Porco contemplates this relationship as she explains, “because we humans are exquisitely engineered to comprehend visual stimuli arrayed into two dimensions, images hold a pre-eminent position in the vocabulary of human communication” (2012, p.36).

Let us now consider another image from the *Cassini* by contemporary German photographic artist Thomas Ruff (Fig.10). Both NASA and Ruff’s images depict the planet Saturn as their subject matter and viewing these two images together there is a strange sense of mimesis. This mimicry is justified as Ruff has sourced his images from NASA Cassini Robotic Spacecraft archive. Using the NASA sourced black and white imagery Ruff then digitally adds saturated colour to the image. This adding of colour separates the image from its objective scientific source and into the realm of illusion. “Reality does not disappear in the illusion, the illusion disappears in the fullness of reality” (Baudrillard, 1996, n.p.). This

seemingly innocent but intentional gesture of digital manipulation raises alarming questions about the archive and its perceived system of certainty (Christov-Bakargiev, 2009, p.45). *Cassini* like much of Ruff's work questions the visual language of photography and how it captures the universe.

In another series named *Zycles* Ruff employs the 3D modeling program *Cinema 4D* to generate mathematical equations into visual forms (Fig. 11) (Christov-Bakargiev, 2009, p.82). Ruff was influenced by the book *A Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism* (1973) by James Clerk Maxwell, a Scottish mathematician and physician. These virtually generated abstract images of curving lines challenge notions of photographic meaning. "The images cannot be traced back to analog photographic techniques that seek to represent reality" (Christov-Bakargiev, 2009, p.82).

What I find compelling about both series is that they leave the viewer in a position to consider the implications of technology in the production of imagery. It is through my conscious experimentation with 3D rendering that I am aware that I am also in a position to question the relationship between photography and technology.

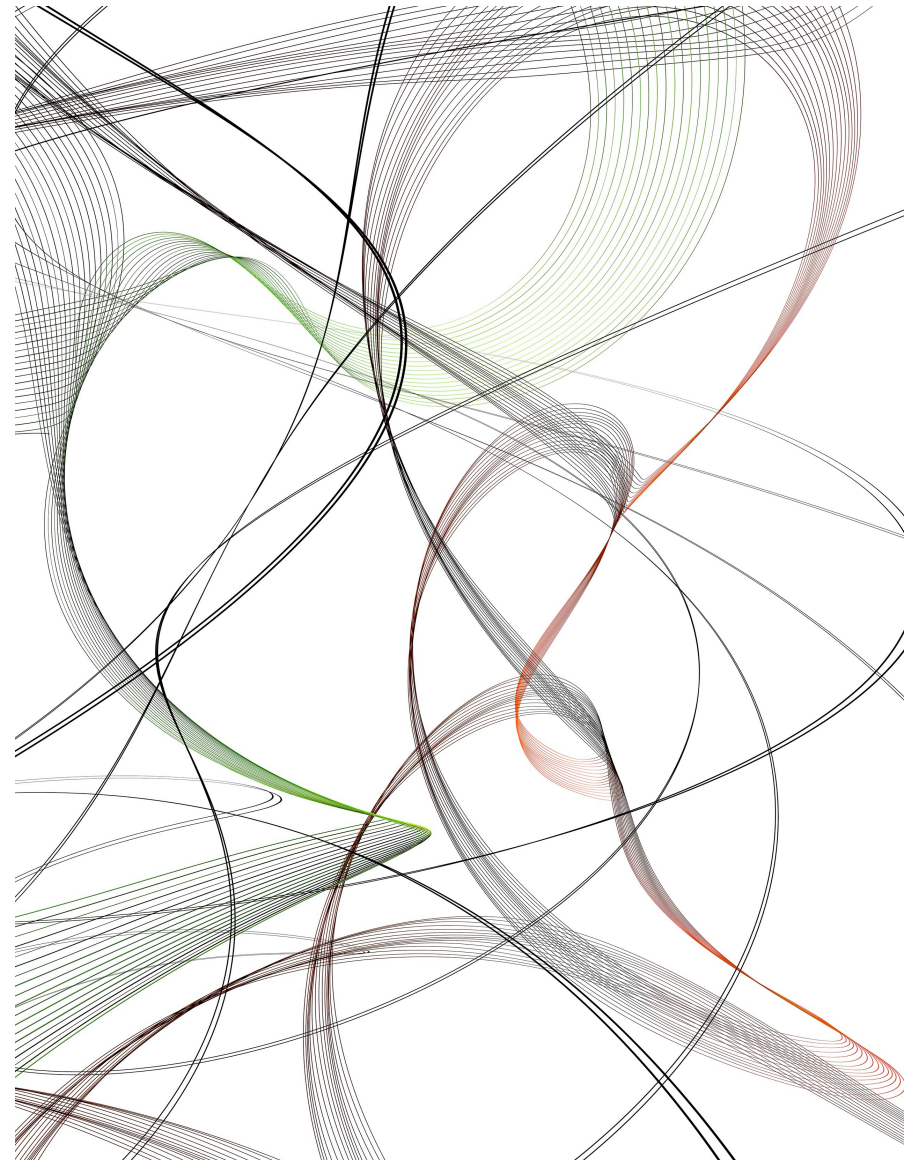


Figure 11. *Zycles*, Thomas Ruff, 2008.

In the series *Orogenesis* Joan Fontcuberta employed the 3D rendering program *Terragen* to construct 3-D landscapes (Fig. 13). The process he implements is very similar to my own (Fig. 4) as he uses imagery as source material. Fontcuberta uses historically significant images and tricks the program into reading the image as a map. The resulting landscapes are picturesque and even banal with overarching sublime aspirations. I find their presentation contrived as both images are displayed together, both being the source image and the 3D rendered image. I consider this to be a tedious assemblage of before and after. Although my previous experiments replicated this presentation method it was clear for me that having both before and after was unnecessary as the 3D rendering are compelling enough on their own.

The strength of Fontcuberta's work much like Ruff's is in the challenges that it sets for photography. As Fontcuberta argues, "It is clear that what had once been the most dependable medium for representing nature...the so called Pencil of Nature was now becoming the Pencil of Technology – and this raised challenging aesthetic and epistemological issues" (2005, p.5). What is gripping about these landscapes is that they have no histories or memories; they are virtual and will forever remain unobtainable as unknown

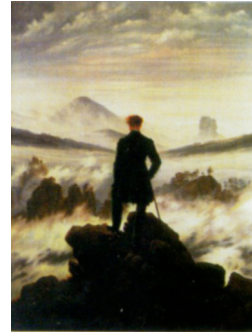


Figure 12. *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, Casper David Friedrich, 1818.

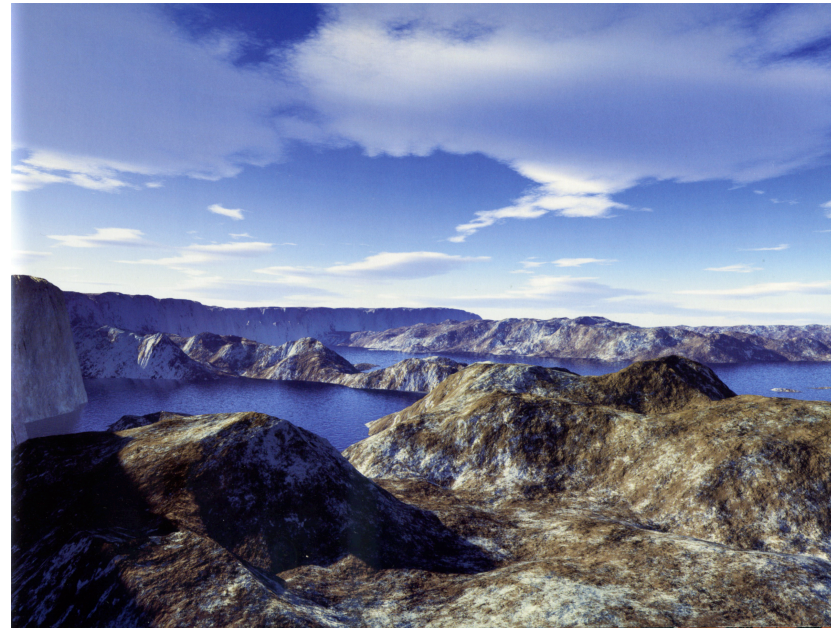


Figure 13. *Orogenesis: Friedrich*, Joan Fontcuberta, 2002.

spaces. It is this creating of virtual spaces that echoes my own methodology of creating imaginative landscapes.

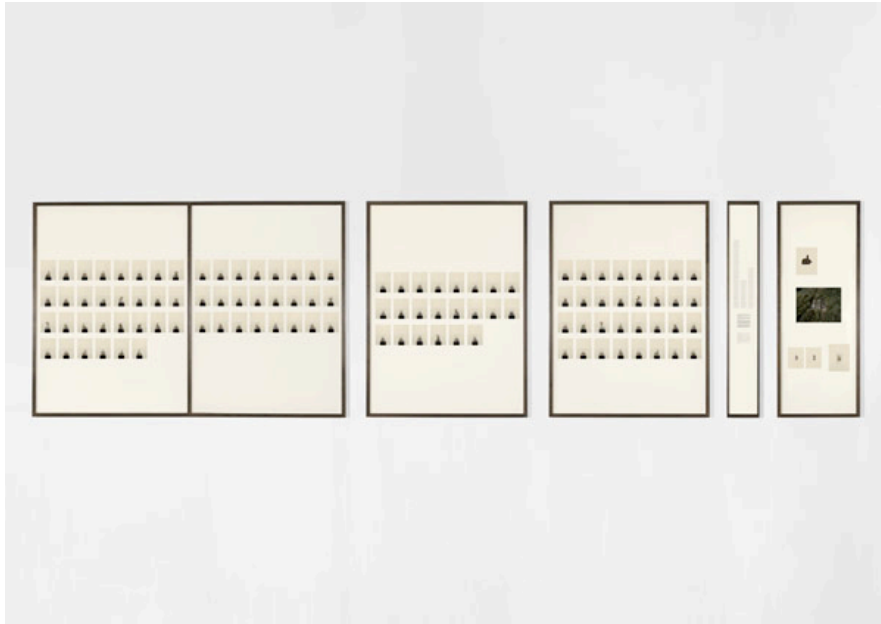
In contrast to Ruff and Fontcuberta, Taryn Simon's series *A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters* engages with an almost scientific objectivity. Simon through photographic investigation sought out bloodlines all over the world and mapped their genealogy. Constructing 18 photographic records that range from Australian rabbits to victims of Bosnian genocide, but "in each case mapping the personal and social relationship between blood relations and lived experience" (Batchen, 2011, p.739).

Each bloodline is recorded in a three-paneled presentation (Fig. 14). The first being the portraits of the families in the bloodlines, which have been taken in a strict regimented objective process so that each portrait is as consistent as the last. Portraits are ordered from oldest to youngest and what comes to resemble a periodic table; revealing their patterns or codes (Fig 15). The second is a text panel that offers the viewer contextual information about the bloodline. The final panel Simon describes as a footnote panel (Fig. 16); holding photographic fragments that are the beginnings of other stories. I found the footnote panel to be extremely evocative as it

creates an opportunity for the viewer to interact with other more abstracted narratives.

Simon's implementation of the bloodline panel and the text panel engage the viewer in a very focused narrative. While the footnote panel alludes to wider or more abstracted narratives. The structure of the work creates both an opening and narrowing of narrative space. It is this fluctuating narrative space that I find there is an overlap between Simon's work and my own, as I too strive to create an engaging photographic narrative that is both broad and specific.

All three artists have challenged the perceived scientific objectivity of photography in their work and have questioned the relationship between art and science. It is photography's fluctuating relationship between art and science, artifice and objective truth that makes it the principal medium for my investigation into the unknown. My research not only aims to implement photography as an agent in probing the unknown but also in doing so seeks to question the very nature of the photographic medium.

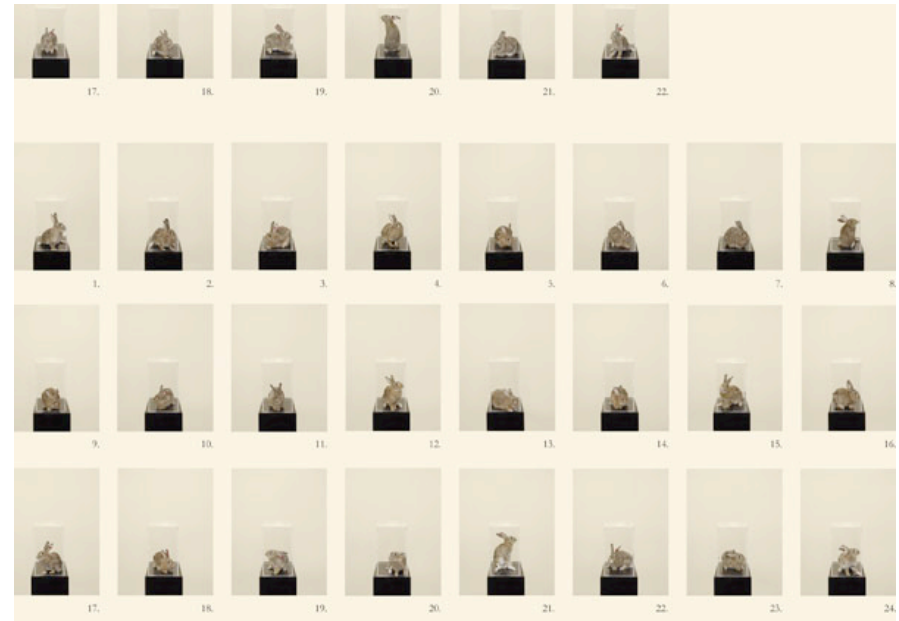


From Left to Right:

Figure 14. Chapter VI, *A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters I-XVIII*, Taryn Simon, 2008-2009.

Figure 15. Excerpt from Chapter VI, *A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters I-XVIII*, T

Figure 16. Excerpt from Chapter VI, *A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters*



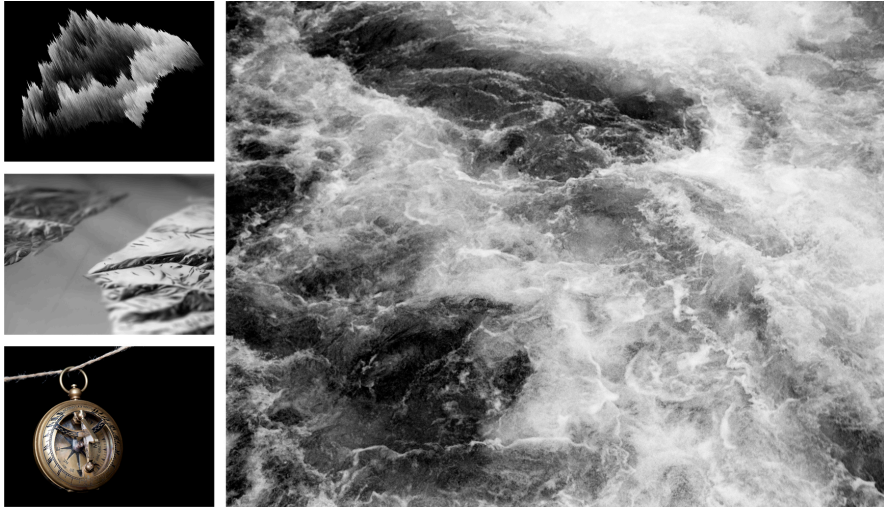


Figure 17. *Devil And The Deep*, Image by Author, 2012.

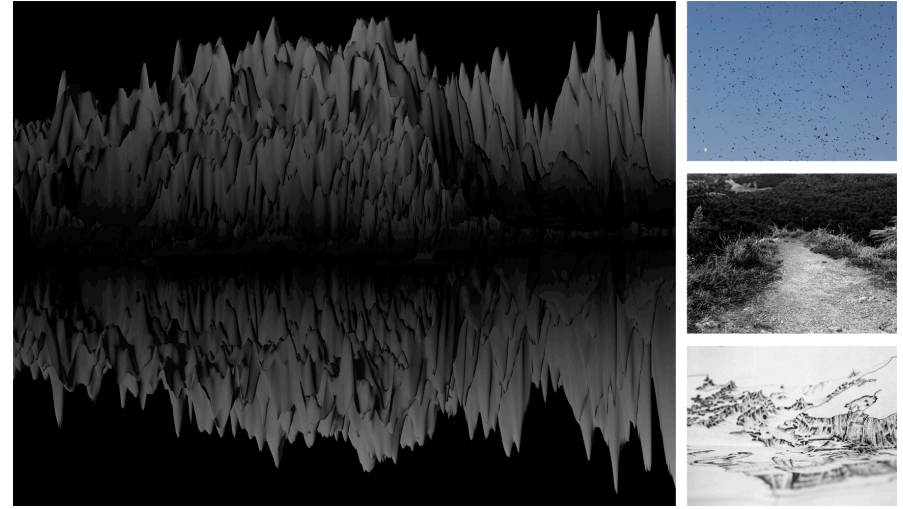


Figure 18. *Malcontents*, Image by Author, 2012.

Submerged in the Archive

In contemporary culture there could be considered another cartographic renaissance taking place (Pagen, 2008, p.28). Google Maps and Earth, GPS, have become a part of vernacular culture. The outcome of this is that we now have the ability to personally monitor and navigate our position on earth with such precision and ease that has never been experienced before. These technologies have become a way of engaging with the unknown. It is by gazing upon a 3D world like Google Earth we are aware of the enormity of the sea.

Engaging with 3D technology and mapping, I have created a series of 3-dimensional renderings. What remains a clear distinction between my works and that of Fontcuberta's is the extent of the 3D rendering process. Fontcuberta's images undergo a sophisticated process using mathematical algorithms whilst my process is a more direct conversion into a 3-dimensional form. In my process the software uses the image and its pixel tonal variation to create a 3-dimensional depth map. The data remains the same but has been re-presented into a 3-dimensional form. In essence these photographs lie somewhere between landscape, mapping and data.

Extending this series I employed a methodology of sampling as I searched for different references to the exploration of a seascape. Mining sources of appropriated information, data and maps I have photographed and shifted these sources from their original contexts. Fortunately, I was able to take photographs at the Museum of Wellington City and Sea offsite archive and at Land and Information New Zealand. It is from these two sites that I obtained most of my mapping subject matter.

Another component to this series was a set of images that I had taken at Castlepoint. Located on the Wairarapa Coast it is known for its rugged and dramatic coastline. For me this landscape with its epic end of the world appearance spoke directly of exploration and discovery.

The last source of imagery employed is the product of studio construction and objects. These constructions much like my 3D rendering were a direct response to the limitations of finding images that enticed imaginative readings. As a result I physically constructed miniature scenes that allude to the notions of a landscape.

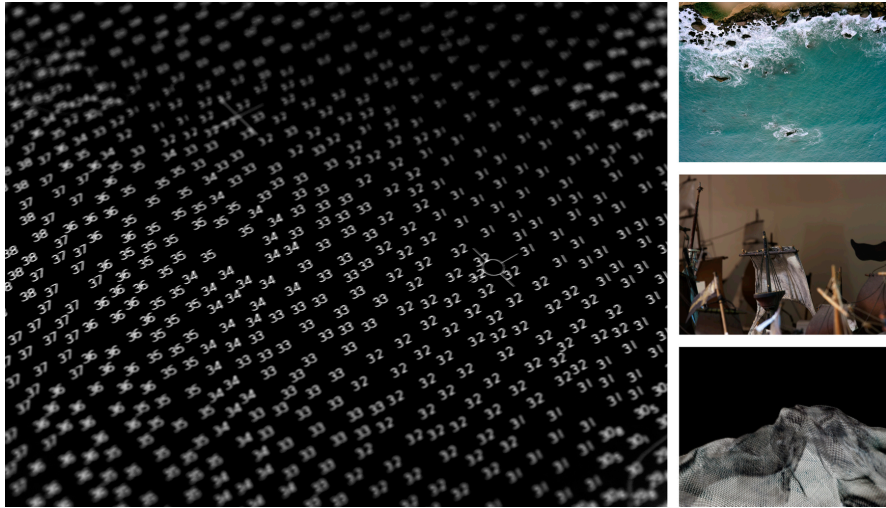


Figure 19. *Blown Out To Sea*, Image by Author, 2012.



Figure 20. *At The Sight Of The Spyglass*, Image by Author, 2012.

Looking at these images in this series (Fig. 17-20) it is evidently visible that there is not actually a straightforward seascape scene. It was my intention to examine the seascape in a broader sense with photographic interventions. It is important to note that the images taken during this period of sampling were used as source photographs for the creation of the 3D renderings.

The final presentation was a series of four-way structured image groupings. It was my intention that these groupings would encourage the viewer to question the relationship between images. The structure was based around the concept of literary referencing in which a main body of writing is supported or extended by endnotes or footnotes. This structure was influenced by Simons formatting as I was interested in the challenges it proposed in constructing a narrative. The intention in my work was to create a format that would develop a narrative that gave sense of journey, discovery, exploration, navigation and travel.

During feedback and reflection it was evidently clear that the presentation method was not successful (Fig. 21). The structure imposed an order that constrained the visual experience of the viewer and this is in contradiction to my intentions of creating an imaginative experience for the viewer. Another problem was the

vast array of different kinds of subject matter. The photographing of subject matter that related directly to the sea, such as seascapes, model boats were obviously linked to the sea and spoke more to a historical perspective.

Another problem that also encouraged a historical reading were the titles of the works. The titles were derived from chapter titles from fictitious travel novels like Robinson Crusoe. With titles like, *At the Sight of the Spy Glass* (Fig. 20) it became all too clear that these titles were historically loaded and fundamentally led to a reading as such.

At this point I considered my work to be saying everything and in the process was communicating nothing. Most importantly for me this series of works lacked the emotional response I was looking for. I wanted to rekindle the awe and amazement that I had felt when I had began my research into illusionary landscapes. My intention was to create an experience in which the viewer encountered a moment of uncertainty but with all the historical references the viewer was lured back into the realm of familiarity. It is clear that if I were to dive into the sea as my subject matter I need to ascertain what aspects of the sea, if any still remain in the realm of the unknown.



Figure 21. *Installation*, Image by Author, 2012.

Into the Hadal - Contemporary Exploration of the Sea

Covering seven-tenths of the earth, the sea remains one of the last frontiers on this planet. James Hamilton-Patterson states:

For all their technological advances, oceanographers are the first to admit that our understanding of the sea is still rudimentary. Faced with its inconceivable bulk, it is all too clear that it will always remain beyond the scope of 'can do' technological fixes (1998, p.12).

The Pacific Ocean alone is the planet's largest single geographical entity, making up approximately one third of the earth's surface and covering an area greater than all the earth's land put together. Historically the interest in the sea was focused on its relationship with the land and what was on the surface. There has now been a shift in scientific and imaginative perspective, what is of interest is now not located above the surface, but lies deep below the oceans depths. Simply put there has been an ideological reallocation from a more terrestrial investigation of the sea to a submarine one.

It is remarkable to consider that throughout history there has been conscious effort made by mankind to explore the terrestrial landscape of earth to the far reaches of space. The quintessential fact is we look up towards the sky rather than towards the depths of the ocean. This is intriguing when considering we know more about the other parts of our solar system than we know about the ocean floor. Sylvia Earle, Oceanographer, explains in Jackson (2012) that, "we have better maps of the moon, Mars and Jupiter than we do of our own ocean floor" (p.16). The fact is that, there have been twelve humans that have walked on the moon, while only an exclusive three have been to the earth's most ultimate depth (Keplan, 2011, n.p.). This is further evident when we consider the plethora of remarkable stellar events that we have witnessed through visual imagery, but it is difficult to recall when one has seen an image of the sea floor. In my investigations of the seascape it became apparent that it was in the fathomless depths of the ocean that there remained a submarine landscape that remained shrouded in a cloak of the unknown.

Plummeting to the deepest, darkest abyss of the ocean, we enter a zone known as the hadal. Named after the ancient Greek God Hades, god of the underworld, it is an environmental zone of extremes. As a zone it accounts for the deepest 45% of the

oceanographic landscape, between the depths of 6000m to 11000m (Jamieson et al, 2009, p.190). The hadal is a place of crushing density, cold temperatures and where no sunlight ever permeates its depths. With a temperature range from 1-2 °C and with pressures reaching 1000 times that at sea level, the trenches could be considered one of the most extreme environments on earth (Priestley, 2012, p.53).

Below the depths of the ocean it would be easy to imagine a static, unchanging landscape, but it is not the case. There are dynamic geological processes that create the trench and its environment. Seismic activity resulting in frequent earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and gravity-driven sediment slides are all architects in the construction of this space. These are geological processes far beyond human control, but can have devastating effects for the terrestrial environment and inhabitants. “The sudden release of forces built up along subduction zones as plates slip over and past one another spawns great undersea earthquakes, unleashing devastating tsunamis such as the one that hit the north–east coast of Japan” in 2011 (Keplan, 2011, n.p.). Live video documented the Japanese tsunami and we witnessed as the sea rose silently into such a formidable force that it destroyed everything in its path. It is a disturbing reminder of a process that is indeed far beyond human

control, but can have a devastating effect on our everyday experience.

It is through these scientific descriptions that I became curious about the possibilities of this space of the hadal. It seemed I had finally found a space that exists on earth that could fulfill my thirst for the discovery unknown. Furthermore, this was a space that I would never be able to photograph directly and this was a prospect that stirred my imagination. Enthralled by the science of this space I sought to determine if there were any methodological meanings associated with the hadal.

In the hadal there lies the deepest point of the earth’s crust, deep-sea trenches. As plates oceanic and continental collide, the heavier oceanic plate is forced down “resulting in a narrow plate boundary zones, or subduction zones, resulting in the formation of a trench (Jamieson et al, 2009, p.191). To descend into the depths of the trench is to take a geological journey back in time, as the trench represents the most ancient part of the seafloor (Keplan, 2011, n.p.). Deep-sea trenches can be 11000km deep and cast a shadow over the most awe-inspiring terrestrial peak on earth; Mount Everest at its peak reaches a now dismal height of 8,848m.

These two topographic features could be considered to be polar opposites not only for their environmental differences, but their cultural connotations. To ascend a mountain is culturally acknowledged as a journey associated with positive spiritual enlightenment. This space maybe linked to a Christian belief that the paradise of heaven is located above us and to enter this paradise a process of ascension is required. In contrast, descending into the earth is associated with spiritual transgression and widely considered in mythology and some religions to be the place of external damnation, hell. These culturally constructed spaces are polarised as heaven and hell, good and evil, ascent and descent, positive and negative. However both of these mythological spaces offer a place of possibility. Similarly the hadal as a zone of the unknown offers possibilities and has facilitated contemporary narratives of exploration of science and the imaginary.

Spiritual regression can be witnessed in contemporary media in the reporting of James Cameron's descent 11000m into the Mariana Trench². The tale of Cameron's solo journey hit the headlines with the advantageous title, *To Hell and Back* by The Daily Mail (Durante & Waugh, 2012, n.p.). Adding to the mysterious nature of the journey were Cameron's descriptions. Upon reaching the deepest point of the earth Cameron did not describe an environment on

earth, but intriguingly depicted an alien, desolate, lunar like landscape. I found these observations to be fascinating because there was no place on earth that was similar. Cameron therefore turned to the descriptions that articulate the landscape of space. Lastly, upon returning from his voyage Cameron limited the release of visual images, showing only those depicting little more than a spotlight illuminated murky depth (Fig. 22). It is the limitations of visual evidence that Cameron's decent became a widely publicised elusive spectacle.



Figure 22. *The Sea floor 7 miles down*, James Cameron & National Geographic, 2012.

The Mariana spectacle has confirmed that the sea still remains a place of cultural interest and emotional currency, even though the seas vast interiors remain outside of our everyday experience. The shift has been from a more terrestrial investigation to a submarine one where the trenches are the last frontier on earth to be explored. The hadal and the trenches that lie in it abyss remain a place of the unknown; where imagination and science, history and memory, reality and artifice are all architects of space.

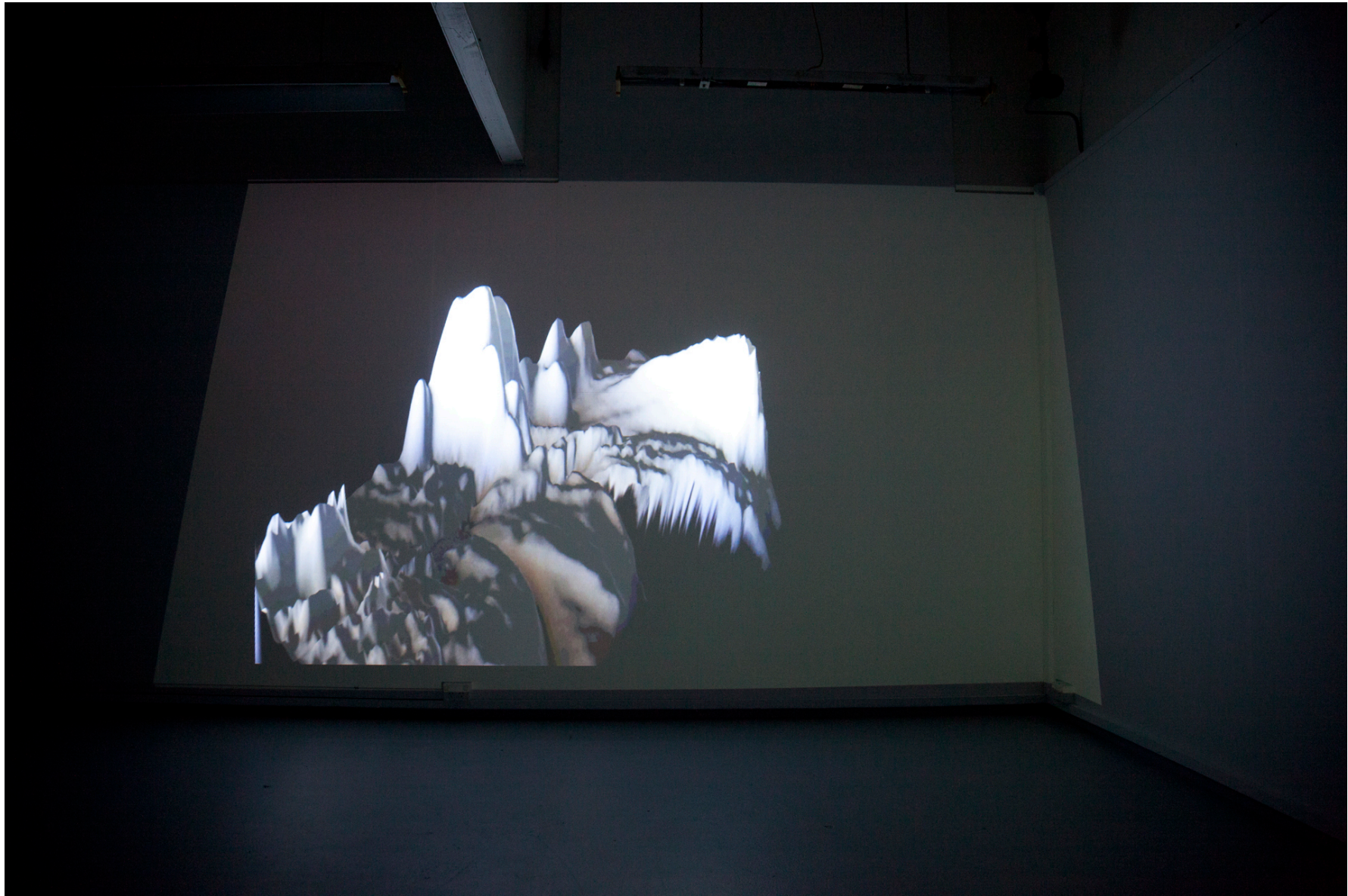


Figure 23. *Installation of Projection.* Image by Author, 2012.

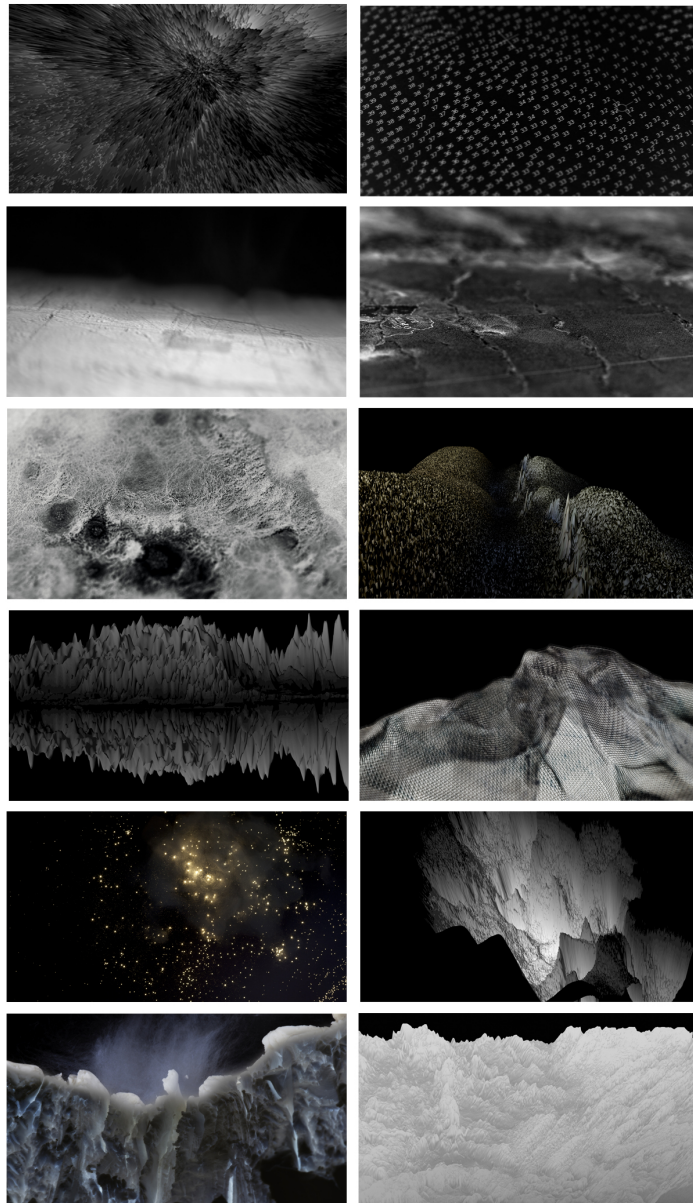


Figure 24. *Still From Projection*, Image by Author, 2012.

Fathomless Depths

My third series explores the unknown abyss of submarine landscapes. From this tactical position I developed an installation combining projection and photographs.

The projection displayed a slideshow that was then followed by a 3D animation (Fig. 23-24). Projected at large scale I wanted it to be an immersive experience as is possible. The slideshow presented images that slowly emerged from the darkness and then fade back. This slow progression gave the viewer not only time to contemplate each image individually, but also to consider the image in relation to what they had previously seen in the slideshow. The slow linear repetition of the slideshow set the viewer on a journey of discovery of the unknown. With no titles and with the use of ambiguous and in some cases abstracted imagery, there were no clear indicators for the viewer to clearly discern the location of the landscape spaces. Although there was a strong sense of landscape it was ultimately up to the viewer to try and locate this landscape within their own imaginative consciousness. Even though I am intending a narrative to develop, it is a non-linear and ambiguous one. As all the images are very different there is a pushing and pulling effect as multiple narratives evolve and visually entice the viewer.

The photographic landscapes are varied from cavernous 3D renderings, to images that refer to maps and data. The images reference different structuring systems for constructing landscape or a typology. Collectively the images are pooled to form an archive of references that navigate and blur the boundaries of science, imagination, mapping, geography, artifice, reality, history and memory. The images presented gave no quick solutions, but were more open ended to which the viewer could then fill with their own imaginative projections.

The second part of the projection is a 3D animation where a slow moving camera moves through a darkened space towards a landscape. Using the same process I had used to generate my previous 3D renderings I was then able to extend into animation. Fundamentally the animation is of a camera that moves through the tonal depth information of the photograph. I find this to be an intriguing relationship where the photograph and its data have become the landscape. The photograph has become both the medium and the subject.

Another unique quality of the 3D rendered animation is the extreme clarity and sharpness that it presents before the viewer. In contrast

with Cameron's murky landscape images I thought of these landscapes as being visually rewarding as you are able to witness the forms of the landscape. Suspended in a void like darkness there is no way for the viewer to tell if the camera is moving through space or whether in fact the landscape is moving. "Voidness involves existential incomprehensibility; to 'touch the void' is to risk trauma of uncertainty" (Wells, 2010, p.3). It is in the void that the viewer is unaware of the scale of the 3D landscapes, making their dimensions incomprehensible.

It is at this point that the boundary between video and photography has become blurred. It is in this relationship that I connect with the work of Bill Viola and Lynne Marsh.

In the work, *Five Angles for the Millennium* Bill Viola creates a projected installation that approaches notions of the sublime (Fig. 25). The five projections are of slowed down videos of various angles ascending and descending out of water (Grotenhuis, 2004, p.178). It is in this slowed down movement of time and in its installation that the work approaches the sublime. It is in "multi-screen environment, which demand personal and entirely subjective

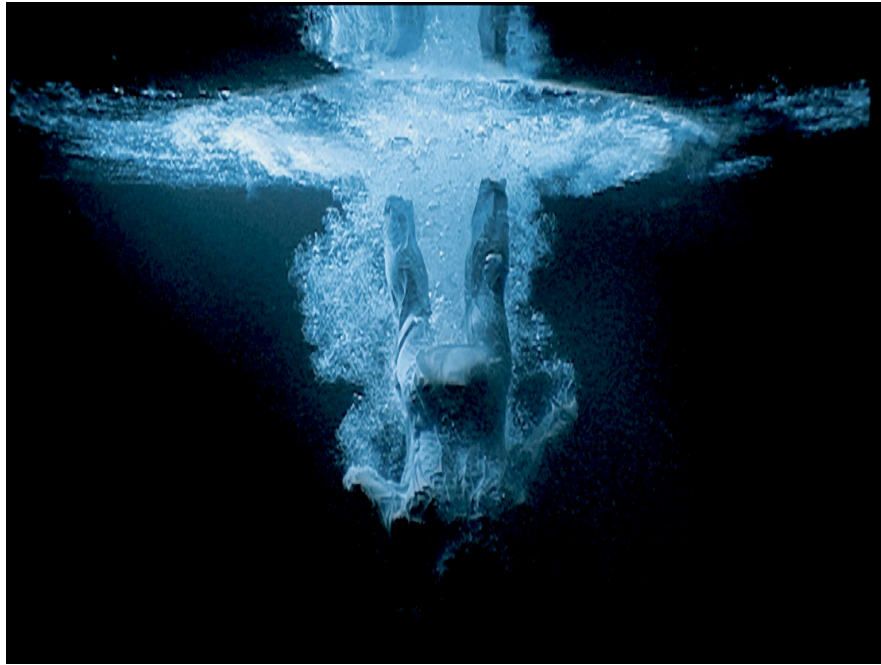


Figure 25. Five Angels for the Millennium, Bill Viola (Video, 5 projections, colour and sound), 2001.

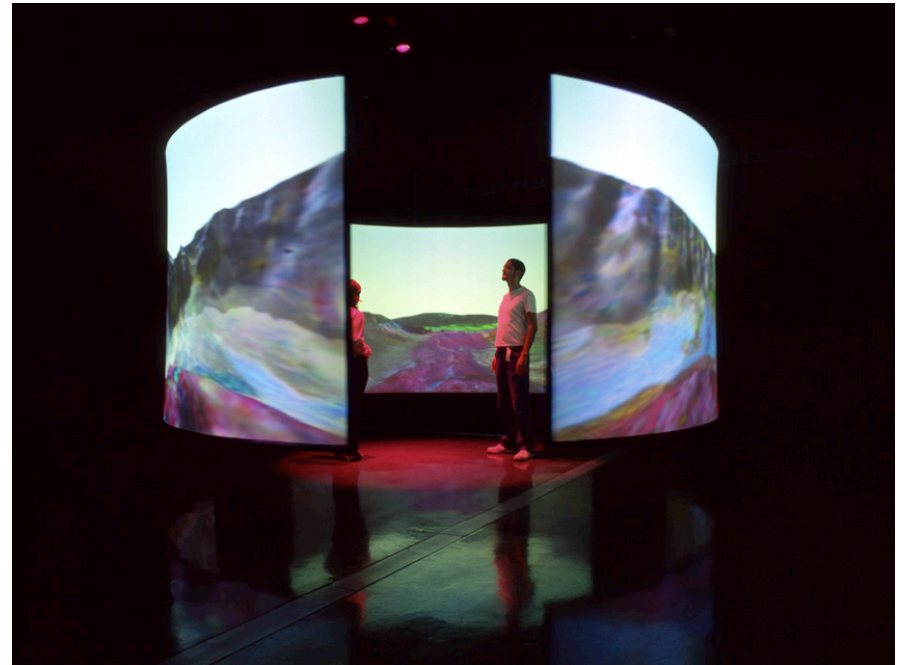


Figure 26. Excerpt From Crater, Lynne Marsh, (Double-sided video projection, surround sound, 3 curved screens), 2005.

interpretation based on interaction and the individuals cognitive processes” (Davies, 2004, p.143). Viola’s work is inspired by his research into art history and religious mythology but ultimately it remains a personal experience. “The sublime experience is fundamentally transformative, about the relationship between disorder and order, and the disruption of the stable coordinates of time and space” (Morley, 2010, p.12). Through the stillness of the subject matter and installation, Viola creates an experience that is open to the sublime imaginings of the viewer.

In contrast to Viola’s work, Lynne Marsh video pieces are heavily mediated by her use of technology (Fig. 26). In the piece *Crater*, Marsh sourced imagery from the National Geographic Society to create a 3D simulation of the crater of St Helen’s (Langford, 2005, p. 52). It is through Marsh’s use of technology that she engages with data visualisation. “Data visualisation allows information gathers to make mock-ups of things they have limited access to or cannot document with a degree of detail they would like” (Dagenais, 2005, p.47). It is through data visualisation that the viewer is transported to a space/place that they most likely would never encounter in reality.

Marsh extends the viewers’ experience of *Crater* by installing it as a cylindrical panorama. By doing so Marsh places the viewer into the very centre, creating an all-encompassing vista in which they are “thrillingly close to the source of earthly volatility” (Langford, 2005, p.52). Marsh engages the viewer in the technological sublime transporting them to a place of uncertainty.

Both Viola and Marsh have used video projection to create a viewer driven experience that engages with notions of the sublime. It is here that I establish that my practice lies somewhere in-between Viola and Marsh. In implementing a slowed video pace and with my reference to history and mythology these methodologies connect my work with that of Viola’s. While the use of data visualisation to create unreachable spaces echoes the work of Marsh. What remains a clear distinction from both artists’ is that my works remain silent which contributes to the sense of voidness but also refers back to the silence of the photograph.

The final components of the installation were two large-scale prints. These two photographic prints showcase a continued experimentation in landscape construction and modelling. Not only using 3D rendering (Fig. 27), I also constructed scenes manually focusing on very minute details and textures (Fig. 28). These images

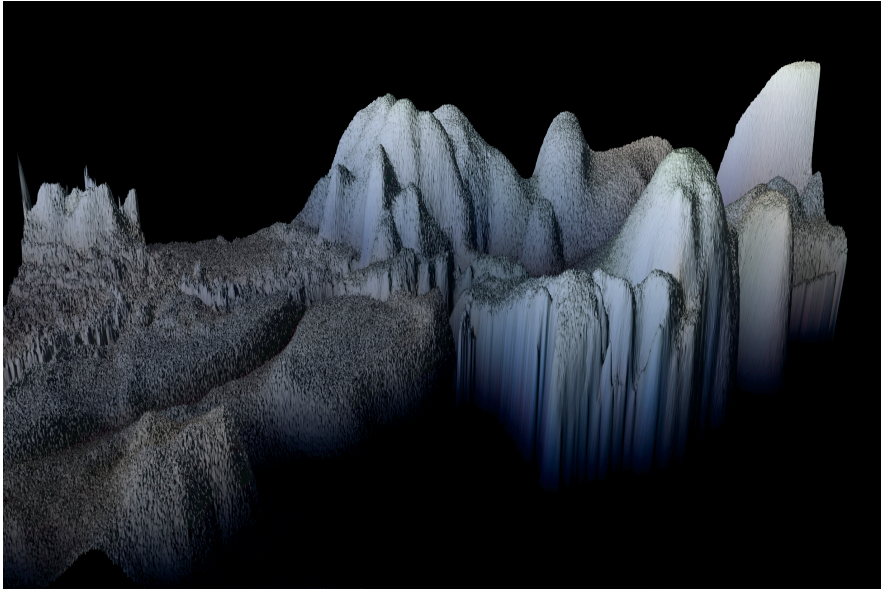


Figure 27. *Untitled*, Image by Author, 2012.



Figure 28. *Untitled*, Image by Author, 2012.

allude to a landscape and remain strangely familiar as they reference imaging of past scientific expeditions. The intention for these images was that not only would a narrative develop providing a sense of journey and exploration but they would also evoke notions of the sublime.

My aim is for my photographs to evoke a sense of discovery and an anxiety of being at the pinnacle of absolute failure or success. It is about pushing the limits until the possible is distorted into the realm of the unknown and having to reconcile that with the ramifications of that process. In my practice I am not intending to portray a specific geographic location or time, but I am employing photography to visually map my investigation into the navigation and production of space in the seascape. Through visualising the seascape I am examining the imaginative, scientific and historical constructs of the seascape.

Reflecting on the audiences' feedback the work was well established in the realm of the unknown but it was not one of submarine exploration. This situation is comparable to my first developmental series where the audience established a narrative that was situated in outer space. It is all too clear that to navigate the submarine environment of the sea will be a delicate journey

between establishing a space that provokes imaginary narratives but also gives a sense of the depth below. What also became evident in feedback and through my own reflection is that the research sublimated a range of contemporary political issues.



Figure 29. Plated Russian Flag on the Antarctic Ocean Seabed Under the North Pole, n.a., 2007.

Battle for the 'Last Frontier'

On the 4th of August 2007 a Russian Team in a submarine planted a rustproof metal flag 4,200m on the sea floor directly beneath the North Pole (Fig. 29). This symbolic act sent ripples through the international community as the Arctic and whom it belongs to is a contested subject. Denmark, Canada, United States of America, Norway and Russia all consider their borders to extend into the Arctic region and all have staked their claim on the Arctic. The real question is why has this polar region drawn so much international attention?

The very simple fact is, that under the Arctic ice-shelf and below the Arctic Sea, there lays a treasure trove of resources. It is estimated that 22 percent of the earth's unexplored energy resources lies under the Arctic (Energy Tribune, 2008, n.p.). Oil, gas, minerals are all enticing opportunities to generate revenue, a prospect that any country would desire. With the continued melting of the ice in the Arctic regions, the seabed is revealing itself and its energy resources are more and more accessible. It is clear that the Arctic seabed will be a continued source of diplomatic conflict as long as there is an economic profit to be made.

Closer to home in New Zealand waters there are prospective oil and gas reserves that would generate a desirable amount of revenue. New Zealand has the fifth largest EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone)³ in the world, 15 times the New Zealand landmass and totals a marine area of 4.3 million square kilometres (The PEW Environmental Group, n.d., n.p.). It is in this considerable area that there are significant potential energy resources.

In the search for undersea riches, US oil company Anadarko will drill a single deepwater well in the Taranaki Basin (Rilkoff, 2012, n.p.). Anadarko hopes they will be able tap into the billions of barrels of oil believed to be trapped below the seabed. Gas resources are also an alluring opportunity for wealth and prosperity. It is estimated that there is a massive reserve on the "eastern margin of New Zealand North Island...including up to 12.5km³ concentrated in "sweet spots" suitable for commercial production" (Ramirez-Llodra et al, 2011, n.p.). These considerable gas and oil reserves could mark a 'new frontier' in New Zealand's seabed exploration and revenue collecting, but also would be a grave risk to the environment.

More environmentally concerning is the prospect of deep-sea mining for minerals. The demand for metals has never been higher

as terrestrial mines reserves are depleting; as a result deep-sea mining has become a solution. From the sea floor hydrothermal vents erupt water and in the process eject massive amounts of sulphides in the near vicinity (Barratt, 2011, n.p.). In these sulphide deposits there can be found valuable minerals such as gold, copper, magnesium, nickel, platinum, silver, zinc, cadmium and cobalt (Ramirez-Llodra et al, 2011, n.p.). These deposits unlike terrestrial mines are amassed in highly concentrated areas and amounts.

Currently there is one active deep-mining operation, 1600m under the Bismarck Sea off the coast of Papua New Guinea (Milman, 2012, n.p.). The Canadian company Nautilus Minerals hopes to extract the high-grade copper and gold that are deposited there. The fact that the Papua New Guinea's government has a severe lack of regulation, in conjunction with its isolation makes the monitoring any of the mine's environmental effects is extremely difficult. A report compiled by the Deep-sea Mining Campaign warns that, "underwater mining will decimate deep water organisms yet to be discovered by science, while sediment plumes could expose marine life to toxic metals that will work their way up the food chain to tuna, dolphins and even humans" (Milman, 2012, n.p.). More alarming is that Nautilus has around 524,000sq km of seafloor under its licence

or pending licence, including waters around Tonga, Fiji and New Zealand (Milman, 2012, n.p.).

The sea floor and its increased state of exploration can be essentially linked to the high demand for resources. To meet these demands there has been an increased investment in both scientific and technological endeavours to come up with solutions in mapping, sampling and then exploiting the resources that remain under the ocean. Even environmental endeavours are a direct response to increased commercial desire for sea-floor resources. As scientific purists strive for acknowledgement and protection of these hidden habitats. The discoveries being made in 'last frontier' are therefore linked directly to a culture of consumerism.

As I pondered the relationships between mapping and resource discovery I was very much driven back to the relevance of my previous research into the Age of Exploration. It seemed that there was a direct correlation between the search for land in the Age of Exploration, and the contemporary exploration of the seabed for resources. To me there seemed to be a historic echo occurring here, in which mapping the unknown is directly related to commercial and economic desires. What has changed is the specificity of these desires. No longer content with mere land but

our pursuits have narrowed to source single elements essential to our technologically driven culture.

At this point there can be established a relationship between my own practice and mapping for economic desires. My own 3D rendering (Fig. 27) replicate the final outputs of imaging systems used for mapping and resource analysis. “Revealing the connections between the data about the landscape and the data as landscape” (Stalbaum, 2006, p.5). Other images such as my *Number Sea* relates directly to the notion of searching below the depths. The *Numbered Sea* (Fig. 30) is in actuality a photograph of sonar data recorded before being transferred into maps. The numbers represent scientific data and evoke a sense of mapping or searching of a landscape. Being digits they could also provoke a sense of economy and monetary agenda.

It is these aspects of my developmental work that there are hints at a narrative that engages with resource exploration, but does so not at the cost of imaginative interpretation. Through my engagement with 3D rendering and its dualism with imaging systems there is a return to the fictitious, non-objective possibilities of mapping. The 3D renderings present a mirror image of objective imaging systems and reveal in this reflection an illusory imaginative landscape.

However what the audience is really viewing in reality is the depth information of a photograph, in other words a datascape (Stalbaum, 2006, p.5).

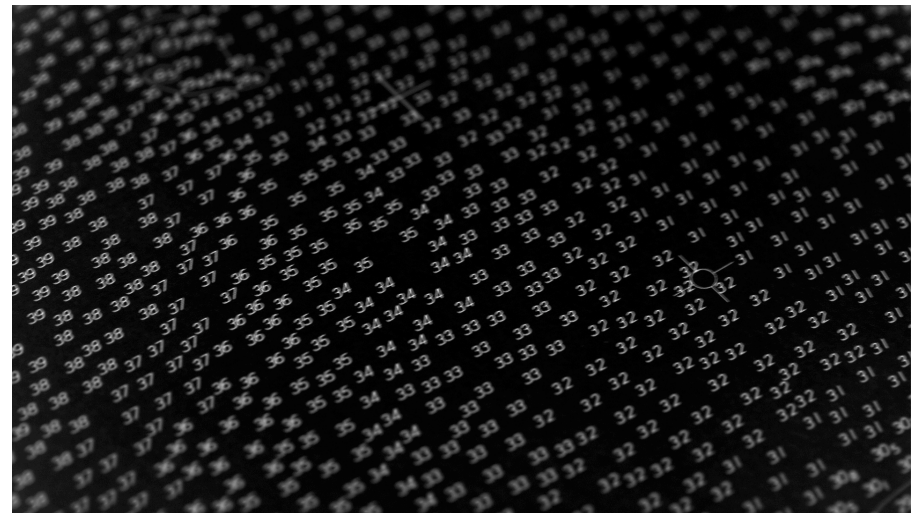


Figure 30. *Numbered Sea*, Image by Author, 2012.

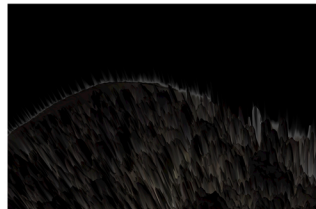
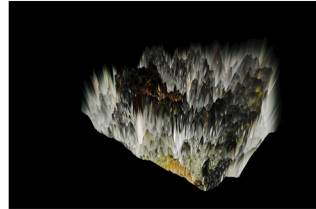
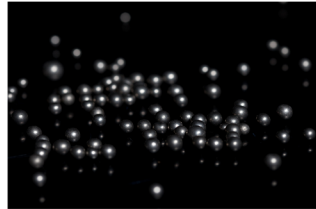
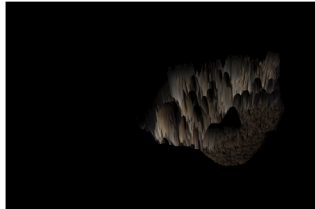
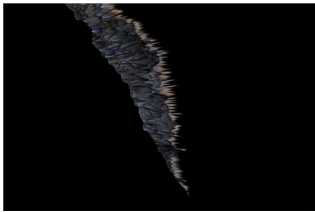


Figure 32. *Transition Elements*, Images by Author,

Depth Information

In an effort to reconcile my practice and my research with the politics of the seabed I developed a series of works. As a continuation from my previous series it focused on combining photographs and video within an installation.

Fascinated but troubled by the prospect of the seabed becoming a mining site I responded to this strange occurrence by producing a series of photographic works (Fig. 32-33). The photographic works explored the relationship between the landscape, mapping and the search for resources. The subject matter for these images would be the metals (gold, copper, magnesium, nickel, platinum, silver, zinc, cadmium and cobalt) that could be mined from the under-sea hydrothermal vents. Fortunately I was able to source five of the metals in their pure states to be photographed. Again I retreated to the studio to construct/manipulate these metals into landscape scenes. While my intentions were to create a sense of landscape while I was experimenting in the studio I was more allured by the abstracted forms.

In persistence with my dichotomic methodology I produced in addition to my analogue constructions a series of digital 3D

renderings. This 3D rendering would consist of the other four metals that I could not source directly. To create each 3D image I searched through Internet images of each individual metal and then these images were used as source images to create the 3D renderings.

To combine both the analogue constructions and digital renderings I formatted the metals into a grid. This grid replicated the periodic table and each individual metal was positioned in accordance within this scientific system of classification. Although somewhat ambiguous in presentation it was my intention to communicate to the viewer the idea of scientific sampling. In this formation the photographs lend themselves to a more objective record and while some were in actuality images of real metal the others were virtual, reflecting the dichotomy of fact and fiction. Another conceptual clue of the subject matter origins was the title, *Transition Elements*, which refers to the particular grouping of metals on the periodic table. I also like the connotations of the title as it evoked a sense of movement in which a form is in a process of change. I considered this to be not only a direct link to the metals origins on the periodic table but also hinted at the act of mining. In a more monetary reflection the word *transition* suggests an exchange or economy.



Figure 33. *Installation of Transition Elements*, Images by Author, 2012.

The second part of the installation was a two-channel projection (Fig. 34-35). Much of the material was derived in the same manner as my last projection piece, however there were some different elements that were included. The first to be included was the addition of video that was more about how a landscape is mapped into data. In some cases these were more like digital drawings that developed before the viewer. One piece was a line drawing that seemed to replicate typography (Fig. 34). In reality this was a line drawing of the fabled landscape *Terra Australis Nondum Cognita*. Although something of an inside joke this piece has a connection

back to my historical research into seascape exploration. When this piece is included with the 3D rendering it presents a synthesis of past and present exploration of imaginative landscapes.

Another addition to the projection was videoed scenes of constructed setups. These setups varied in subject matter from metal orbs moving through water, to white landscape that appeared to have strange atmospheric conditions. Although these elements were visually interesting they seemed to be somewhat of an overstatement. Fundamentally the variation in subject matter and the sheer amount of it pulled the piece into obscurity.

The final difference was that this was a two-channelled video installation. Presented side by side these projections showcase two different video sequences that were never synchronised. This meant that the viewer would never witness the same combination between the projected images, making it always a journey of discovery. When viewing the two videos together there were distinctive moments when the imagery complemented each other, either through their similarities or differences. As a viewing experience the scale was absorbing as it filled the entire wall as an epic panorama. Ultimately I found the presentation to be distracting because as a

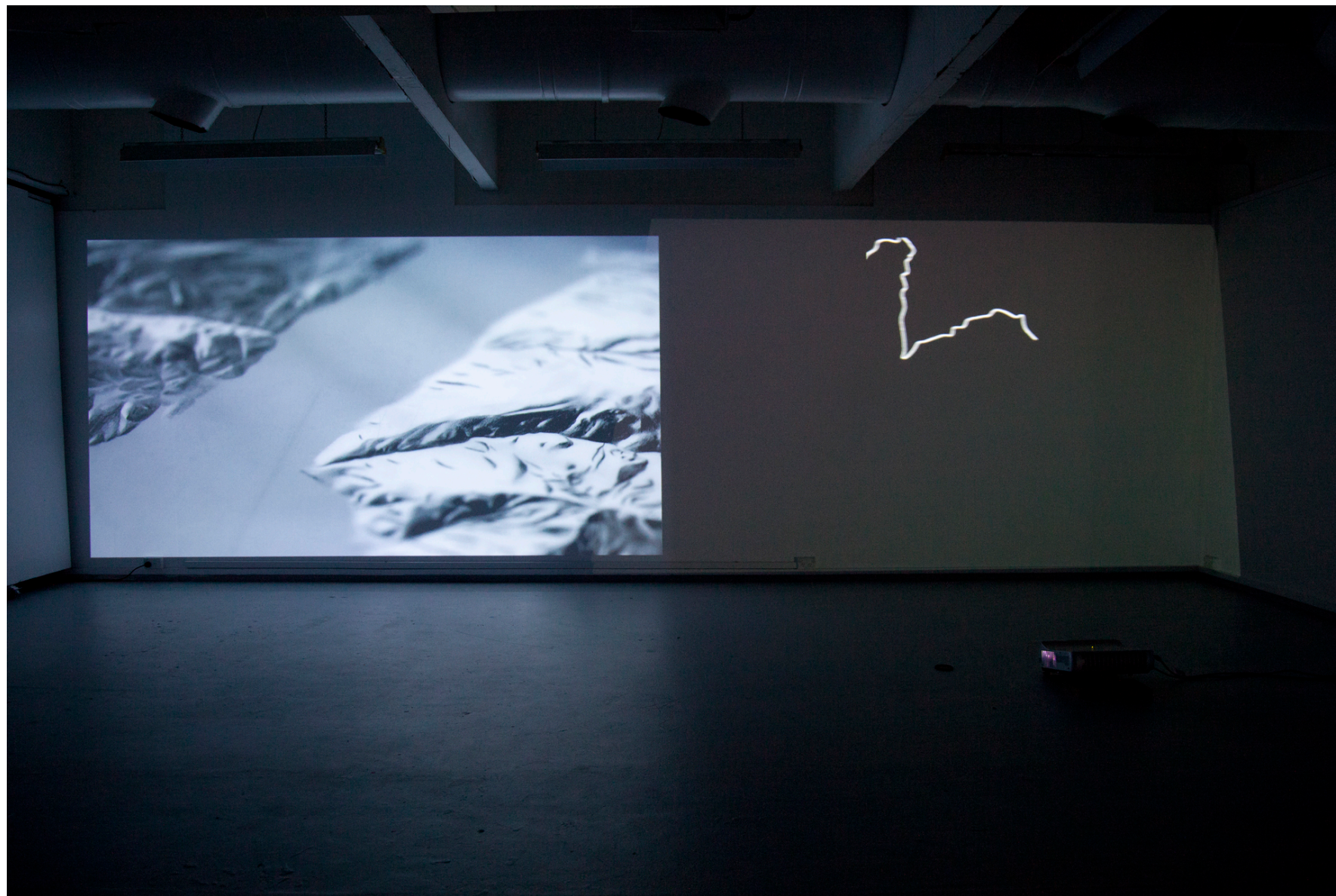


Figure 34. *Installation of Projection*, Image by Author, 2012.

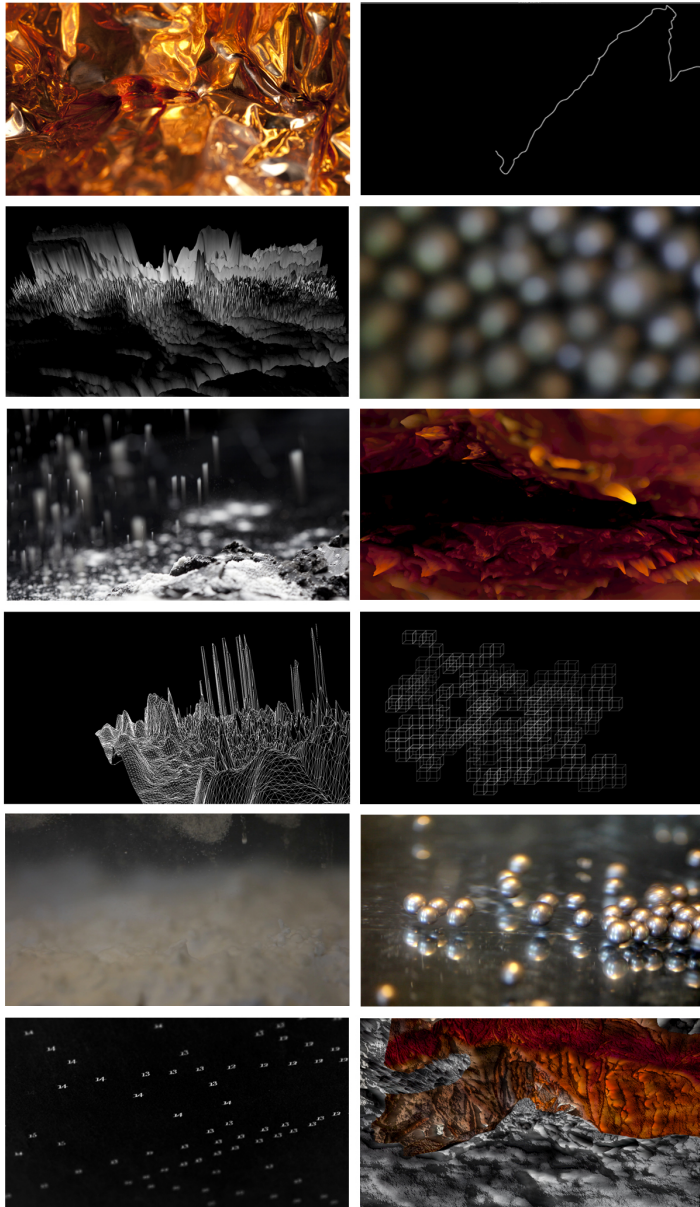


Figure 35. *Stills From Projection*, Image by Author,

viewer you were always pulled between the two projections, never being able to appreciate a solitary video.

Furthermore it was evident that although these two works were conceived as a cohesive installation that they were in fact very different. While the photographs focused on the mapping of resources, the projection considered the vast unmapped landscape of the seabed. In the end it became a decision between a work that considered the political issues of the seabed while the other focused on creating a poetic space of discovery. As I pondered the ramifications of basing the work in the security of the political I felt that this was in contradiction to what I had set out to achieve. While these conservation issues are significant and extremely important, my research was not primarily about preservation or environmental agendas. However, these issues were still implicitly present in the generating of content. Whether it was through my engagement with 3D rendering, or the photographing of mined metals; there were subtle links to consumerism and political desires that could not be disregarded. It seemed that these issues were inescapable and added another layer of meaning to the primary focus.

The main aim in the investigation is to communicate a sense of the apprehension of situating oneself in a disorientating space. “To

orientate is to hop back and forth between landscape and time, geography and emotion, knowledge and behaviour” (Hall, 2003, p.15). It was always about questioning how we as a viewer draw meaning and essentially orientate oneself in the space of the unknown.

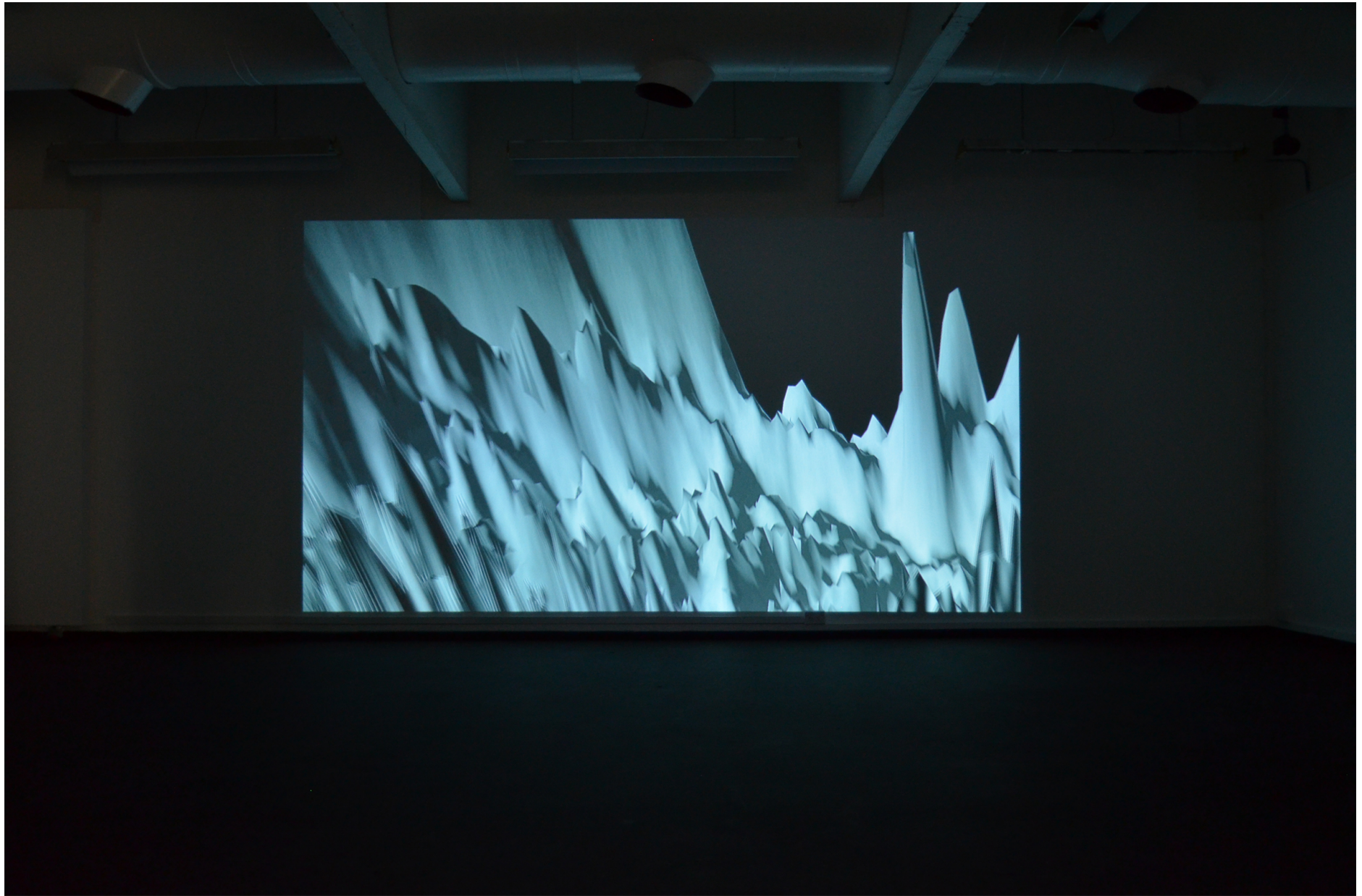


Figure 36. *Final Installation (Into the Hadal)*, single channel projection, black paint, Image by Author, 2012.

Unknown Oceans – Concluding Thoughts

I began my journey by looking out into the horizon and seeing the faintest illusion of a mythical landscape, and now as I conclude my expedition there seems to be another such landscape hidden in the deep interior of the sea. Framing my investigation in the locality of the hadal I have explored mythological, scientific and imaginative agents that allow access to concepts of the intangible and unseen.

Through my engagement with photography I have explored the dichotomy between objectivity and artifice. This has been further extended with my experimentation with data visualisation in which the depth data of the photograph has been represented into a 3D form, creating a datascape that touches on the technological sublime. This has seen the photograph become both the medium and the subject. By using the method of 3D rendering I have mimicked imaging systematic processes that are used to analysis and map resources. It is through this relationship that the work subtly connects with the political agendas and economic desire without intrinsically narrowing the imaginative and poetic potential of the work.

The question driving this investigation was, how can a seascape be visualised to enable photographic experiences that intertwine imaginative, scientific and historic modes of exploration? I believe it is through my synthesis of the conceptual and visual practice that there is an opening of a space known as the unknown. In the space that interstices between imagination and science, history and memory, reality and artifice, are the architects of narrative space. In combination with viewer's engagement these narratives have potential to slip into readings as sublime.

Gazing upon the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean we are no longer content. We do not hover above its surface and we descend. Slowly we plummet through the watery depths. The light fades away and the pressure grows. We end our journey at the uttermost depth and we remain in the darkness of the unknown. We do not look back, we are silent as we are still. We gaze outward and we are the '*wanderers*'.

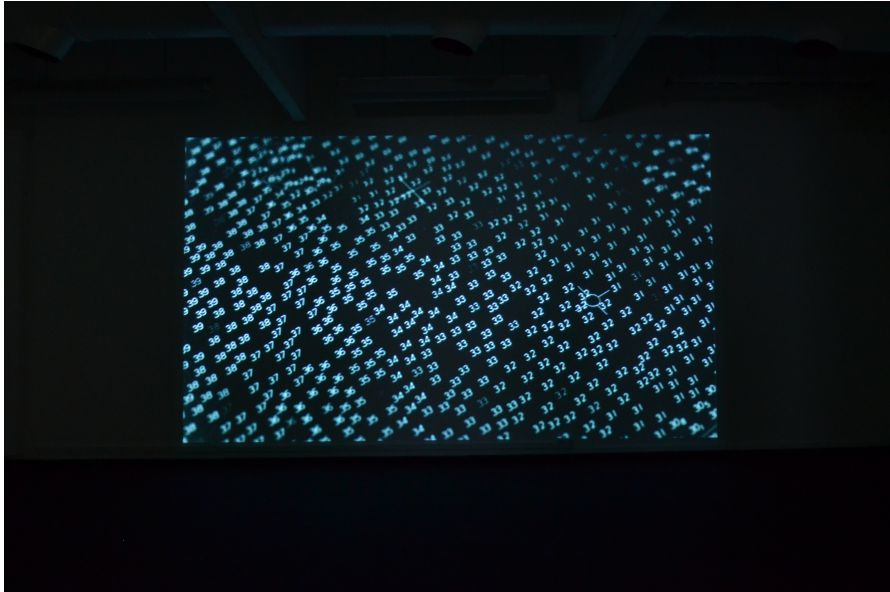


Figure 37 & 38. *Final Installation (Into the Hadal)*, single channel projection, black paint, Image by Author, 2012.

Notes:

¹ Representations were not only connected to notions of 'the Other' and identity stereotypes but were key in manufacturing perceptions that would persist into colonial and post-colonial discourse. Although I am aware of these relationships this will not be the focus of this investigation.

² The Mariana Trench is located in the western regions of the Pacific Ocean and is a geological scar formed by plate tectonics. It is the point of contact where the Pacific plate and the Marianna plate collide in an epic formation.

³ EEZ describes a zone that surrounds a landmass that extends into the surrounding sea-zone, giving that landmass an exclusive right to the use of marine resources.

Image List:

Figure 1. *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, Casper David Friedrich, 1818 (Oil on canvas, 98.4 x 74.8cm). Retrieved from http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/his/CoreArt/art/rom_fri_wand.html

Figure 2. *Robinson Crusoe*, Image by Author, 2013.

Figure 3. *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Abraham Ortelius, 1570. From Clark, J.O.E (Editor). *Remarkable Maps: 100 examples of how cartography defined, changed and stole the world*, (p. 107) London: Conway Maritime.

Figure 4. *Untitled*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 5. *Installation Image*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 6. *Towards Tomorrow (International Date line, Alaska)*, Marine Hugonnier, 2001. Retrieved from <http://ec2-79-125-84-180.eu-west-1.compute.amazonaws.com/en/entries/1172/michele-chomette-somewhere-in-between>

Figure 7. *Seascape: Aegean Sea, Pillon*, Hiroshi Sugimoto, 1990 (Silver Gelatin Print). Retrieved from <http://c4gallery.com/artist/database/hiroshi-sugimoto/seascapes/hiroshi-sugimoto-seascapes.html>

Figure 8. *Untitled Image, Teignmouth Electron*, Tacita Dean, 1999. In Dean, T. (1999). *Teignmouth Electron*. London: Books Works in association with National Maritime Museum.

Figure 9. *Cassini, NASA/JPL-Caltech*, NASA, n.d. Retrieved from <http://consciouslifeneeds.com/nasa-finds-oxygen-and-co2-on-saturn-moon-rhea/113474/>

Figure 10. *Cassini 1*, Thomas Ruff, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.contemporaryartdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/cassini-01.jpeg>

Figure 11. *Zycles*, Thomas Ruff, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.dr-messner.de/presse/01-12/pressebilder.html>

Figure 12. *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, Casper David Friedrich, 1818 (Oil on canvas, 98.4 x 74.8cm). From Fontcuberta, (2005). *Landscapes Without Memory*. New York: Thames & Hudson.

Figure 13. *Orogenesis: Freidrich*, Joan Fontcuberta, 2002. From Fontcuberta, (2005). *Landscapes Without Memory*. New York: Thames & Hudson.

Figure 14. *Chapter VI, A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters I-XVIII*, Taryn Simon, 2008-2009. Retrieved from http://tarynsimon.com/works_livingmanindex.php

Figure 15. *Excerpt from Chapter VI, A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters I-XVIII*, Taryn Simon, 2008-2009. Retrieved from http://tarynsimon.com/works_livingmanindex.php

Figure 16. *Excerpt from Chapter VI, A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters I-XVIII*, Taryn Simon, 2008-2009. Retrieved from http://tarynsimon.com/works_livingmanindex.php

Figure 17. *Devil And The Deep*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 18. *Malcontents*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 19. *Blown Out To Sea*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 20. *At The Sight Of The Spyglass*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 21. *Installation*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 22. *The Sea floor 7 miles down*, James Cameron & National Geographic, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/americas/article3365446.ece>

Figure 23. *Installation of Projection*. Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 24. *Still From Projection*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 25. *Five Angels for the Millennium*, Bill Viola (Video, 5 projections, colour and sound), 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/viola-five-angels-for-the-millennium-t11805>

Figure 26. *Excerpt From Crater*, Lynne Marsh, (Double-sided video projection, surround sound, 3 curved screens) 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.lynnemarsh.net/crater/>

Figure 27. *Untitled*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 28. *Untitled*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 29. *Planted Russian flag on the Arctic Ocean seabed under the North Pole*, n.a., 2007. Retrieved from http://www.investors.com/image/ITc0630_ph100629.jpg.cms

Figure 30. *Numbered Sea*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 31. *Untitled*, Image by Author 2012.

Figure 32. *Transition Elements*, Images by Author, 2012.

Figure 33. *Installation of Transition Elements*, Images by Author, 2012.

Figure 34. *Installation of Projection*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 35. *Stills From Projection*, Image by Author, 2012.

Figure 36. *Final Installation (Into the Hadal)*, single channel projection, black paint, Image by Author, 2013.

Figure 37. *Final Installation (Into the Hadal)*, single channel projection, black paint, Image by Author, 2013.

Figure 38. *Final Installation (Into the Hadal)*, single channel projection, black paint, Image by Author, 2013.

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