

bitforms gallery

Wet Logic

February 6 – March 15, 2020

Opening Reception: February 6, 6 – 8 PM

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday 12 – 6 PM

Wet Logic, a collaborative exhibition by Sarah Rothberg and Marina Zurkow, presents a model of the world organized according to a wet, oceanic ideology rather than a dry, land-based paradigm. This is a world that manifests the circuitous nature of time, the enmeshment of humans to the planet, and the shifting boundaries of earthly spaces. Rothberg and Zurkow present a series of systems that further human connection to oceans by way of action and imagination.

Accretions is a series of silkscreens on repurposed packaging cardboard. Zurkow describes these works as masses of consumer goods: the result of what is bought, shipped globally, and discarded over time. *Accretions* relate the artist's generative animations from her series *MORE&MORE*, which depict the international exchange of goods via ocean freight.

Water Without Wet (WWW) by Sarah Rothberg is a VR installation that examines the atemporal qualities of water. *WWW* engages two audiences, the headset-user, and the spectator. The user is immersed in a virtual world, instructed to enact simulations of everyday interactions—drinking from a glass, flushing a toilet, watering a plant. The spectator watches the user simulating these actions, as well as two external displays of the virtual world. These renderings appear in different styles, from different viewpoints, and at different scales. At times chaotic and random, the procession of vignettes cycle out of the user's control. However, their actions cause the environment to become increasingly abstract and complex. *WWW* disrupts linear time to mirror the fluid and expansive consciousness of oceans.

The title of Zurkow's animation series, *Oceans Like Us*, uses pun and metaphor to express a desire for the ocean to love us. Part one of the series, *Love Me*, summons the elements that make oceans beloved: their soothing rhythms and splendiferous lifeforms, as well as our fetishistic enthusiasm for creatures both real and imagined. *Milkcrate Plasticsphere* plunges into the deadly capitalist ocean of toxic plastics. Combining these opposites is *Bow Null*, a journey through the techno-ocean, buzzing with instruments of sensing, measuring, and monitoring that turn the ocean into a body to be dissected and penetrated, but also, perhaps, into a world to be known and respected.

In contrast to the wet logic of the main exhibition, the front of the gallery exists in geologic time. Geological strata can make it seem as if our impact on the earth exists in a compact layer, fixed with a linear history. In this area, *Toilet Joke I*, a collaborative work by both artists, overflows with reground and pelletized plastic, unable to flush away more waste. An old phone plays a video of waves: the ocean virtualized. In *Study for Toilet Joke II*, positioned at the back of the gallery, the water in the fishbowl is physical. Where a fishbowl normally acts as a reminder of oceanic life in the dry world, Zurkow and Rothberg position it as a microcosm of the churning plastic, suspended in an infinite flush.

Overall, the use of technology in this exhibition is purposeful in relation to its subject. The artists address the tension between dissolving, delirious immateriality and the consequences of material entanglements. Aspects of digital technology allow the artists to propose new watery philosophies—for example, the software of this exhibition is non-linear and dislocating. Technology creates an interconnected mesh of relationships in a global network. While this network invites comprehension of the world on a more-than-human scale, it is also endemic to the cycle of extraction and e-waste, engendering consumption and desire without consideration of technology's tangible being.

This show marks the culmination of the artists' ongoing research into the fields of environmental and blue humanities. Influential sources include Philip Steinberg and Kimberley Peters' essay *Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces*, the artists' first-hand investigation of ocean habitats through swimming and snorkeling, and research into plastic composition and recycling capacities.

A percentage of exhibition sales will go to Ocean Conservancy and Natural Areas Conservancy.

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Exhibition Credits

Scenic painting Jim Donahue
Recycled plastics Ultra-Poly Corporation
Install supervision Scott Neal
Install assistance Matt Romein
Custom scent Agu Zegers
Rubber flooring Thor Performance
Art technician Scott Neal

Oceans Like Us

Animation Marina Zurkow and Ewan Creed
Software Sam Brenner
Sound Design Scott Reitherman
Tech installs Jim Schmitz
3D wireframes Will Hallett

Toilet Joke

Vortex Wizard Dave Rife

Water Without Wet

Attribution for free assets and code libraries : Keijiro Takahashi, Jordan Speer

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Brooklyn Editions

Bibliography

Stacy Alaimo, "[Violet Black](#)," [Prismatic Ecology](#) (2013)
Adrienne Marie Brown, [Emergent Strategy](#) (2017)
Una Chaudhuri, "Becoming Mineral" (2018)
Heather Davis, "[Toxic Progeny: The Plastisphere and Other Queer Futures](#)" (2016)
Amitav Ghosh, [The Great Derangement](#) (2017)
Stefan Helmreich, "How Like a Reef Figuring Coral" (2015)
Eva Hayward, "Fingeryeyes: Impressions of Cup Coral" (2010)
Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, "The Climate Crisis is an Oceans Crisis," The Ezra Klein Show (2019)
Robin Wall Kimmerer, [Braiding Sweetgrass](#) 2013
Daisy Hildyard, [The Second Body](#) (2018)
Philip Steinberg, Kimberley Peters, "[Wet Ontologies, Fluid Spaces: Giving Depth to Volume through Oceanic Thinking](#)" (2015)
Astra Taylor, "[Out of Time](#)", Lapham's Quarterly (2019)
Kathryn Yusoff, [A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None](#) (2018)
Joanna Nassar, "[Compliant lightweight non-invasive standalone "Marine Skin" tagging system.](#)" Nature (2018)