

Ocean Imaginings

The Sea



All through the nineteenth century, scientists studied the sea to learn more about its composition, its depths, its currents, the phenomena of tides and waves, its flora and fauna. There were numerous large-scale scientific expeditions to all four corners of the world, some of them including artists. François-Auguste Biard sailed on 1838-1840 expedition of the corvette *La Recherche* to Scandinavia, Lapland and Spitzberg led by the naturalist Paul Gaimard. Biard returned with extraordinary landscape paintings

exalting the fantastical aspect of the Arctic setting, including *Greenlanders Hunting Walrus: View of the Polar Sea* (1841). The jumbled shapes of Biard's blocks of ice are echoed in Théodore Gudin's depiction of the raging sea off the coast of Belle-Ile, chosen by the biologist Alfred Fré dol to illustrate *Le Monde de la mer* (The World of the Sea, 1865), one of the earliest popular science books.

The American artist Edward Moran's painting *The Valley in the Sea*¹ (1862) is more forward-looking. At the time, exploration of the sea-bed had not yet begun and an attempt to lay the first transatlantic telegraph cable (in 1858) had ended in failure. Moran offers a purely imaginary vision of the bottom of the oceans, based on traditional elements of terrestrial scenery, but his depictions of its fauna and flora are based on the first works of science published on the subject.



The Salon of the Venuses

Moran's picture was exhibited in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia in 1862. The following year, Parisian art-lovers were offered a very different vision of the sea. The Salon of 1863, which Théophile Gautier nicknamed "the Salon of the Venuses", included no fewer than three renderings of the birth of Venus. The artists had racked mythology for an excuse to revisit the traditional genre of the nude. The critics were not deceived: they were quick to identify these Venuses as very human courtesans.

Amaury Duval's² picture was purchased by the museum of Lille. The two others were bought by the Emperor Napoleon III (Cabanel's picture, now owned by the Musée d'Orsay) and the Empress Eugénie.

The birth of Venus continued to be a popular subject right into the early twentieth century, as shown by the depictions of Henri Gervex, Adolf Hirémy-Hirschl and Arnold Böcklin. However, the figure of Venus was presently eclipsed by sirens and mermaids.

¹ Edward Moran, *The Valley in the Sea*, 1862, huile sur toile, Indianapolis Museum of Art © Indianapolis Museum of Art.

² Eugène-Emmanuel-Amaury Pineu-Duval (1808-1885), *The Birth of Venus*, 1862, Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille © RMN – Grand Palais / Thierry Le Mage.

Cabinets of Curiosities



The first oceanographic survey was conducted between 1872 and 1876 by HMS *Challenger*. It led to the discovery of over 4,000 new animal species, some of them at depths of more than 5,500 metres. A century of exploration had commenced with the first French expedition to the southern lands in 1800, in which Charles-Alexandre Lesueur³, from Le Havre, took part. Taken on board as a draughtsman, Lesueur recorded numerous species. His natural history illustrations are now in the keeping of Le Havre Natural History Museum.

Until early experiments in photography, drawings were the only means by which the morphology of species could be recorded. Before underwater photography was invented, cyanotypes (photograms made using a cyan blue mixture of chemicals) were used. Anna Atkins used this process to create her seaweed herbarium in 1845, and it was later used by Julius von Wiesner to capture images of diatoms seen under a microscope.

Between 1899 and 1904, Ernest Haeckel published *Kunst-formen der Natur (Nature's art forms)*, a collection of 100 plates depicting and describing plankton and jellyfish. The book was phenomenally successful and became a source of inspiration for many artists.

Nemo's World



When Jules Verne's adventure story *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* was published in 1869, exploration of the sea-bed was still just a dream. His novel anticipated science, and its text and illustrations offered readers a fantastical vision of the depths of the ocean. Captain Nemo⁴, exploring and dominating the fascinating undersea world on board his submarine, the *Nautilus*, embodied science and technological prowess.

The sea was certainly popular with writers at this time. Jules Michelet published *La Mer (The Sea)* in 1861 and Victor Hugo's *Les Travailleurs de la mer (Toilers of the Sea)* came out in 1866. In 1876, Gustave Doré produced an atmospheric set of engravings for an illustrated edition of Samuel Coleridge's poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (first published several decades earlier).

It was not until the early 1890s that early attempts at underwater photography began to be convincing, with Louis Boutan's photographs of sea anemones *in situ*, taken between 1893 and 1898 - and it was only much later, in the early 1930s, that film-makers began to make moving pictures underwater. Until then, film depictions of the sea-bed had been limited to Georges Méliès' short comic films using mock-ups of the sea-bed that looked like something out of Jules Verne. Incidentally, the shy, solitary figure of Nemo continues to resonate for with us today, witness the work by contemporary artists Pierre and Gilles.

³ Charles-Alexandre Lesueur, Jellyfish *rhizostoma octopus* (linné 1788), aquarelle sur vélin, Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle du Havre.

⁴ Pierre et Gilles, Captain Nemo, 2004, photographie peinte, marouflée sur aluminium, collection François Pinault © Pierre et Gilles.

Hybrid Beings: The Lure of the Sirens



The fascination with hybrid creatures was reaffirmed by the Symbolists. Although classical mythology contained numerous fantastical semi-human beings, including the Sirens (which were bird-women in Homer), in the late nineteenth century, salons and exhibitions suddenly seemed to be full of hybrid beings. Previously seen on the water's surface, these strange figures now seemed to spring from the depths. The impact of the first explorations of the sea-bed and the theory of evolution fired artists' imaginations, and sea-monsters and women who were half fish or seahorse rubbed shoulders with sirens who lured sailors to their doom. Some of these creatures look disarmingly naive (as in Séon's picture), but others lie in wait for their prey (in Gustave Moreau's, Jerichau-Baumann's and Alex Deschmacker's⁵ versions) or have already devoured it (in Gustave-Adolphe Mossa's painting).

The Decorative Arts and the Marine World



The decorative arts too felt the sea-breeze. The first examples of Art Nouveau appeared in the early 1890s. Its exponents wanted to end eclecticism - hotch-potch borrowing of shapes from a range of historical styles - in architecture and decoration. Observation of living organisms offered an ideal means of doing so. The plates published by the biologist Ernest Haeckel were a fount of inspiration. The shapes of plankton and jellyfish species depicted by Haeckel were used in architectural features, furniture and decorative objects. Vases, goblets, ceramics and jewellery were adorned with marine flora and fauna such as seaweed, sea lilies, fish and seahorses, prompting one critic to remark: "If there is such a thing as a modern style, it is essentially marine."

Emile Gallé, who founded the École de Nancy in 1901, was one of the most creative exponents of the genre. His final masterpiece, *Hand with Seaweed and Shells*⁶, which is displayed here, was first exhibited a month after Gallé's death at the Exhibition of Decorative Art in Nancy, in 1904.

⁵ Paul-Alexandre Deschmacker, *The Big Blue Mermaid*, huile sur toile, La Piscine, Musée d'Art et d'industrie André Diligent, Roubaix © RMN – Grand Palais / Arnaud Loubry.

⁶ Emile Gallé, *Hand with Seaweed and Shells*, 1904, verre à plusieurs couches travaillé à chaud, regravé à froid, Musée de l'école de Nancy © Musée de l'école de Nancy, Studio Image.

Elsa Guillaume: On the Dorsal of my Dreams



The young artist Elsa Guillaume⁷ was one of the artists invited on board the schooner *Tara* in 2016 for a scientific expedition to the Pacific Ocean. Fascinated by the sea, marine charts, travellers' tales, figures of explorers, and the works of Louis Boutan, Jean Painlevé and Bill Viola, in September 2016 Guillaume embarked on a month-long voyage from Easter Island to Papeete. As she always does when travelling, she kept a logbook of sketches and notes to use as the

basis for drawings or ceramics once she was back in her studio.

Her 14-metre drawing of marine riders and the sea-bed was created *in situ* especially for this exhibition. In front of this spectacular ephemeral work, forming a counterpoint to it, is an installation consisting of three large porcelain spider crabs.

Jean Painlevé: Documenting Marvels



Jean Painlevé⁸ (1902-1989) was the son of Paul Painlevé, a mathematician and politician. He studied medicine and natural science but chose to work as a film-maker from 1925 onwards. Science films quickly became his speciality. Between 1927 and 1982, he made nearly 200 popular science documentaries and research films.

Four of his pre-war films are shown as part of this exhibition. The first, *The Octopus* (1928), is based on a memory from his childhood in Roscoff. It is followed by *Hyas and Stenorhynchus*, *Marine Crustaceans*, *Skeleton Shrimps and Sea Spiders*. Observing the movements of the small crustaceans in the last of these films, Fernand Léger said that it was the finest ballet he had ever seen. Finally, we are also screening *The Seahorse*, for which Painlevé filmed underwater sequences actually in the sea for the first time, using a camera in a waterproof crate. It was initially released in a silent version. Then a sound version (with music by Darius Milhaud) was distributed for screening in Pathé cinemas. When it came out in 1935, the film was a great success with audiences - and even more so with the Surrealists, who were fascinated by scientific films and photographs.

⁷ Elsa Guillaume, *On the dorsal of my dreams*, montage, 2018 © Elsa Guillaume.

⁸ Jean Painlevé, *Head and shoulders of Seahorse*, 1931, épreuve gélatino-argentique, Paris, Archives Jean Painlevé © Archives Jean Painlevé, Paris.

Latter-day Nymphs and Sirens

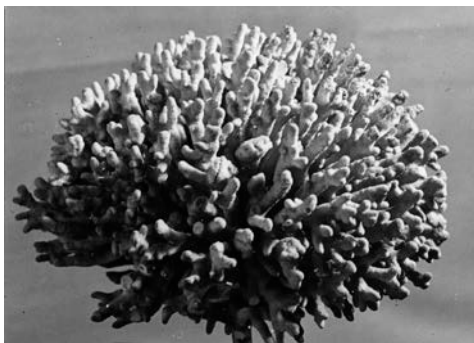


Public aquariums began to be seen in European and American cities in about 1850. Functioning as large-scale aquatic menageries, they reconstructed life in the depths. The untamable marine world, with its octopuses and sea-monsters, was presented, captive and housed in small tanks, to the gaze of curious spectators. But aquariums also triggered reflections about the similarities between the human and piscine worlds. In 1863, one critic described the aquarium as "a moral theatre in which the fish are clad in our vices and passions."

Aquariums had an enduring fascination. Etienne-Jules Marey observed and dissected the movement of a skate and Painlevé directed his first films through the glass of the aquarium, and aquariums and fishbowls were important elements in Surrealist imagery. Their translucent surface offered a glimpse of sometimes murky waters in which figures became distorted or elongated, and lens effects invented strange monsters.

In *L'Amour fou* (Mad Love), published in 1937 with illustrations by Brassai, Man Ray, Rogi André, Dora Maar and Henri Cartier-Bresson, André Breton related his meeting with the "scandalously beautiful" Jacqueline Lamba in 1934 (they married shortly afterwards). She was appearing as an aquatic ballet dancer in a well-known cabaret, the Coliseum, where Rogi André photographed her as latter-day naiad in a glass aquarium. The Surrealist photographers seized delightedly on the figure of the water-nymph, female bather or immersed female body, revisiting the theme of the siren with their own take⁹. The undersea world became one of the laboratories of the strangeness of reality Breton called for. "Beauty must be convulsive if it is to exist", he wrote at the end of *Nadja*. In other words, convulsiveness was a vital precondition for beauty.

Flora and Fauna



"The marvellous is always beautiful; whatever is marvellous is always beautiful; only the marvellous is beautiful," asserted the Surrealist theorist André Breton in his 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism*. The exhibition includes several photographs of the sea-bed by unknown individuals from Breton's private collection, as a reminder that science, with its ability to inspire wonder, was one of the Surrealists' most fertile sources of the marvellous. As Dalí wrote, he and his friends were always on the lookout for "pictures capable of making us ecstatic".

The flora and fauna of the depths of the sea were a rich source for artists in search of strange kinds of beauty, as the photographs of Jean Painlevé, Man Ray and Brassai demonstrate. Brassai's "Madrepores"¹⁰ were commissioned by Dalí to illustrate André Breton's text "Convulsive Beauty". The extreme close-ups of anatomical details taken by some photographers, like André Steiner's *Octopus Tentacle*, reflect this scientific stance.

⁹ Laure Albin-Guillot, composition with female swimmer, 1937, épreuve gélatino-argentique, Centre Pompidou © RMN – Grand Palais / Guy Carrard.

¹⁰ Brassai, Madrepore, vers 1934, épreuve argentique d'époque, succession André Breton, Galerie Thessa Herold, Paris.

Sea-monsters



In the nineteenth century, the narratives of Jules Verne, Victor Hugo and Lautréamont still featured sea-monsters, but they took even stranger forms in the visual arts.

Lucien Levy-Dhurmer's picture is a terrifying reworking of the figure of Medusa¹¹, in which the Gorgon's bulging-eyed, seaweed-haired head rolls in the backwash of a wave. Rodin's fish-woman (1915) has a monstrously animal appearance, while Odilon Redon's version is nightmarishly formless.

Jean Painlevé conjured up monsters from the deep by massively enlarged images and pointing out likenesses between sea-creatures and human beings. Other Surrealist artists used overprinting (André Steiner) or collage and artificially staged scenes (Max Ernst) to create disturbing new shapes, or manipulated the image at the printing stage, using solarisation (Man Ray) or burnouts (Raoul

Ubac) to create works that have no discernible link with reality.

Following World War 1, Philippe Soupault and Louis Aragon rediscovered *Les Chants de Maldoror* (The Songs of Maldoror) in the 1920s. Lautréamont's poem inspired Lucien Lorelle's and Judit Reigl's strange illustrations. In 1952, Simon Hantaï used a fishbone to create the small picture/object/reliquary entitled *Look into my Eyes. I Am Looking for You. Do Not Hunt Me* (or perhaps *Do Not Chase Me Away*), which he set in front of the door of André Breton's home.

What colour is the ocean? What is it made of?



Alarming reports of global warming, the death of coral reefs, the proliferation of plastic waste in oceans, and the discovery of a seventh continent a third the size of the USA or six times as big as France in the north Pacific are changing the way we view the marine world.

As early as 1989, the British artist Boyd Webb¹² depicted a jellyfish as an iceberg made of shreds of plastic bags. The works produced by Elsa Guillaume (in 2016) and Nicolas Floc'h (in 2017) during their time on board the schooner *Tara* illustrate the way scientists and creative artists worried about the equilibrium of the planet and its systems are now conducting detailed observations and analyses of the surface and the depths of the oceans to draw attention to the visible effects, taboo subjects and ambiguous attitudes of our economic systems.

Nicolas Floc'h's large-format photographs of corals record the effects of global warming and the acidification of the oceans along the Kuroshio ("Black Current") in Japan. The larger seaweed species are gradually disappearing and being replaced by small brown algae and corals; in the most acid sites,

¹¹ Lucien Levy-Dhurmer, *Medusa or the furious wave*, 1897, pastel et fusain sur papier contrecollé sur carton, Musée d'Orsay, Paris © RMN – Grand Palais / Hervé Lewandowski.

¹² Boyd Webb, *Denizen*, 1989, épreuve cibachrome, Centre Pompidou © RMN – Grand Palais / Philippe Migeat.

only soft corals survive, and the sea-bed resembles a lunar landscape. These images are contrasted with paradisiac photographs of dense laminaria forests.

Today, scientists are using large aquariums – wave canals – to model wave movements. The artist Hicham Berrada also experiments with a form of modelling in the enclosed space of an aquarium. By mixing and manipulating chemicals that react with each other, he creates a world of movement. The transformations of matter produce a fantastical landscape reminiscent of an imaginary sea-bed, "exciting each viewer's visionary faculties" as the artist puts it.

The exhibition ends with Nicolas Floc'h's audio work *The Colour of Water* (2017), and the words of Hubert Loisel, a research scientist in the Oceanology and Geosciences department of the University of Lille, as an invitation to feel the poetry of the language of science.

Timeline

1800

In October, the vessels *Le Géographe* and *Le Naturaliste* leave the port of Le Havre under the command of Nicolas Baudin, for a “voyage to the southern lands”. This first scientific expedition to New Holland (present-day Australia) is to take four years. Initially included in the expedition as a draughtsman, Charles-Alexandre Lesueur collects and records numerous specimens.

1837

Publication of Hans Christian Andersen's story *The Little Mermaid*.

1843

Anna Atkins uses the cyanotype process to take pictures of seaweed. Her collection *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* is seen as the first botanical work to be illustrated with photographs.

1855

United States Navy commander Matthew Fontaine Maury publishes the seminal oceanographic work *The Physical Geography of the Sea and its Meteorology*.

1859

In England, Darwin publishes his book on the theory of evolution. (A French translation is published in 1862 under the title *De l'origine des espèces, ou des Lois du progrès chez les êtres organisés*.) The same year, the first underwater telegraph cable is laid between Europe and America, and the first French marine zoology and physiology laboratory is set up in Concarneau.

1861

Jules Michelet writes *La Mer* (The Sea), based on his impressions of the sea during stays on the coast of France and meticulously documented.

1862

Edward Moran presents his picture *The Valley in the Sea* at the Pennsylvania Academy of Art, in Philadelphia.

1863

Three paintings of the birth of Venus cause a sensation at the Paris Salon. Alexandre Cabanel's picture is at once purchased by Napoleon III, Paul Baudry's by the Empress Eugénie and Amaury-Duval's by Lille Museum.

1866

Victor Hugo writes *Les Travailleurs de la mer* (Toilers of the Sea), a paean to the sea and human courage in the face of the vastness of the oceans.

1867

A huge aquarium is exhibited at the Paris World's Fair. The visitors who flock to see it include Jules Verne.

1868

An aquarium made up of 46 large tanks with “a host of fish, molluscs, annelids and zoophytes living in it” is exhibited in the first International Maritime Exhibition in Le Havre.

1869

Jules Verne publishes his adventure story *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea), which revisits the legend of Atlantis and introduces the popular figure of Captain Nemo and his submarine, the Nautilus.

In the same year, Isidore Ducasse's work *Les Chants de Maldoror* (The Songs of Maldoror) is published under the pseudonym Le Comte de Lautréamont. Its publication goes virtually unnoticed, but it is rediscovered after World War 1 by the Surrealists Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon and André Breton, who see it as a forerunner of their movement.

1872

A biological research station is set up at Roscoff by Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers.

1872-1876

A first maritime survey is conducted by a team of scientists on board the British vessel HMS *Challenger* between December 1872 and May 1876. The ship covers almost 120,000 kilometres of ocean. Over 4,000 hitherto unknown animal species are discovered, some of them living at depths of more than 5,500 metres.

1876

Gustave Doré illustrates Samuel Coleridge's book *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

1880

Gustave Moreau takes part in the Paris Salon for the last time. For his depiction of marine flora on the cave floor in *Galatea* (now in the Musée d'Orsay), he draws inspiration from science books in the Natural History Museum.

1883

Odilon Redon publishes an album of eight lithographs entitled *Les Origines* (Origins), clearly inspired by Darwin's theory of evolution.

1893-1898

Louis Boutan makes a camera that can be used underwater, and takes the first in-situ photographs of marine flora at Banyuls.

1897

Jean-François Auburtin designs a large mural entitled *Les fonds de la mer* (The Sea-bed) for the Sorbonne's zoology department lecture theatre.

1899-1904

The German biologist, philosopher and free-thinker Ernst Haeckel publishes his *Kunst-Formen der Natur* (Nature's art forms), a collection of 100 plates describing and depicting plankton and jellyfish. The book reveals the splendour of undersea fauna to the world as a whole and is highly popular, especially with artists.

1900

René Binet designs a monumental entrance for the Paris World's Fair inspired by a drawing of a radiolarian (a planktonic animal organism) by Ernst Haeckel. To the question "Do we have a modern style?", the art critic Robert de la Sizeranne replies, "If there is such a thing as a modern style, it is essentially marine."

Auguste Rodin holds his first major solo retrospective in the Place de l'Alma as a fringe event during the World's Fair. He includes the group sculpture *The Sirens*, which he reuses for the *Monument to Victor Hugo* and for *The Gates of Hell*.

1901

The École de Nancy is founded.

1902

Georges Méliès makes his film *Le voyage dans la lune* (A Trip to the Moon), inspired by the works of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Five years later, he films *Deux cents milles sous les mers ou Le cauchemar du pêcheur* (Under the Seas).

1904

Émile Gallé's *Hand with Seaweed and Shells* is shown at the Exhibition of Decorative Art in Nancy in October, a month after the artist's death.

1905

Claude Debussy composes *La Mer, trois esquisses symphoniques pour orchestre* (The Sea, three symphonic sketches for orchestra).

1910

Monaco Oceanographic Institute founded by Prince Albert I.

1910-1912

Mathurin Méheut spends two years at the marine research station in Roscoff. In 1913, he publishes *Étude de la mer. Faune et flore de la Manche et de l'océan*. (Study of the Sea. Fauna and Flora of the Channel and the Ocean) with Maurice Pillard-Verneuil.

1924

André Breton publishes his Manifesto of Surrealism, in which he declares: "Poetry must be practised" and advocates "systematic illumination of hidden places." He sees the discovery of everyday marvels, and especially the wonders of the undersea world as revealed by science periodicals, as a form of the "poetry in action" by which he sets store.

1928

Man Ray directs the short film *L'Étoile de mer* (The Starfish), assisted by Jacques-André Boiffard. The film is based on a poem by Robert Desnos about a starfish found in a junk shop in the Rue des Rosiers.

In the same year, Jean Painlevé shoots his first "popular science" film, *La Pieuvre* (The Octopus), immediately followed by *La Daphnie* and *Les Oursins* (Daphnia and Sea Urchins) (1929), *Caprelles et pantopodes* (Skeleton Shrimps and Sea Spiders, 1930) and *Hyas et Sténorinques, crustacés marins* (Hyas and Stenorhynchus, Marine Crustaceans).

1929

Colette publishes *Regarde...* (Look...), a large album illustrated with 29 compositions by Mathurin Méheut that invites the reader to take a closer look at animal and plant life at the seaside.

1933

In June, Albert Skira publishes the first issue of the periodical *La Minotaure* with Tériade as art director. Contributors include André Breton, Salvador Dali, Paul Éluard, Michel Leiris, Pablo Picasso, Tristan Tzara and Jacques Lacan. In 1934, Brassäi published his famous photographic series *Madrepores* in it.

1934

Jacqueline Lamba appears as an aquatic ballet dancer in a cabaret on the Boulevard Rochechouart, Le Coliseum, a former swimming pool converted into a music-hall. Fascinated by André Breton, Lamba engineers a meeting with him on May 1934 and marries him in August of the same year, with Alberto Giacometti and Paul Éluard as witnesses.

1935

Cinema release of Jean Painlevé's film *L'Hippocampe* (The Seahorse), shot in 1931 using a mobile insubmersible camera for the first time. The film is a great success with the public, but US film censors ask for scenes of "copulation" and of the male seahorse giving birth to be removed. The same year, Painlevé and Commandant Le Prieur set up the Club des Sous l'Eau (Under-the-Waters Club), Europe's first amateur diving club.

1936

In June, London's New Burlington Galleries hold the International Surrealist Exhibition. Invited to the opening by André Breton, Salvador Dali attends in a diving-suit.

December sees the opening of an exhibition entitled "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, including Dora Maar's iconic photograph Portrait d'Ubu (Portrait of Ubu). It probably shows an armadillo foetus, and was inspired by Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu roi* (1896), in which Ubu is described as: "brother to the horse crab, the most aesthetically horrible of marine beasts".

1937

Publication of André Breton's *L'Amour fou* (Mad Love). Illustrated by Brassai, Man Ray, Rogi André, Dora Maar and Henri Cartier-Bresson, it recounts a performance by the "scandalously beautiful" Jacqueline Lamba swimming naked in the glass aquarium of the Coliseum cabaret. As Breton tells it, her entrance is announced, by a waiter saying to a waitress "Ici l'on dîne !" (People dine here!), which Breton hears as "Ici l'Ondine !" (Here's the water-nymph!).

Publication by GLM of Man Ray's collection *La photographie n'est pas l'art* (Photographie is not art), with a preface by André Breton, including a picture of a seahorse entitled *Histoire naturelle* (Natural History).

1939

Raoul Ubac and David Hare develop a photographic process they call "burnout", in which the emulsion of the negative is softened by contact with heat. *The Nebula*, a figure made up of wavy, moving fluids, is the masterpiece in a series that includes other images of the sea-bed rendered almost phantasmagorical by the burnout process. André Breton is to say of the female figures in Ubac's photographs: "They are incredible fossil flowers, fisherwoman who tame the quicksands."

1940-1941

Some of the Surrealists flee to Marseille to escape Nazism in 1940. Although hampered by lack of means, the artists draw numerous "cadavres exquis" and make a version of the Tarot de Marseille entitled *Le Jeu de Marseille* (The Marseille Card Pack). The *Ace of Flames*, signed by Max Ernst, revisits the theme of the siren. The card *Paracelsus*, signed André Breton, features a double octopus.

1950

Jacques-Yves Cousteau travels the world in the Calypso, conducting large-scale oceanographic surveys.

1952

On 7 December 1952, the day of his 30th birthday, Simon Hantaï sets a small picture/object/reliquary made from a fishbone and entitled *Look into my Eyes. I Am Looking for You. Do Not Hunt Me* in front of the door to André Breton's home. He follows it up with other works referencing the undersea world.

1954

André Breton is bowled over by a work created by Judit Reigl in 1950 whose title, *Ils ont soif insatiable de l'infini* (They are insatiably thirsty for the infinite) and some of whose figures are borrowed from Lautréamont's *Chants de Maldoror*: "the big fish that, as they swim, show their black backs, then plunge into the abyss." The picture is followed by several other collages taking up the theme of sea-monsters explored in the narrative.

2003-2018

The TARA expeditions organised since 2003 are intended to further our understanding of the effects of climate change on the oceans. Like the nineteenth-century expeditions, they include both scientists and artists, who work side by side on board the schooner *Tara*. Elsa Guillaume took part in the 2016 expedition, and Nicolas Floc'h followed suit in 2017. The works by the two artists displayed in this exhibition resulted from the expeditions. The wheel has come full circle, back where it started with Lesueur.