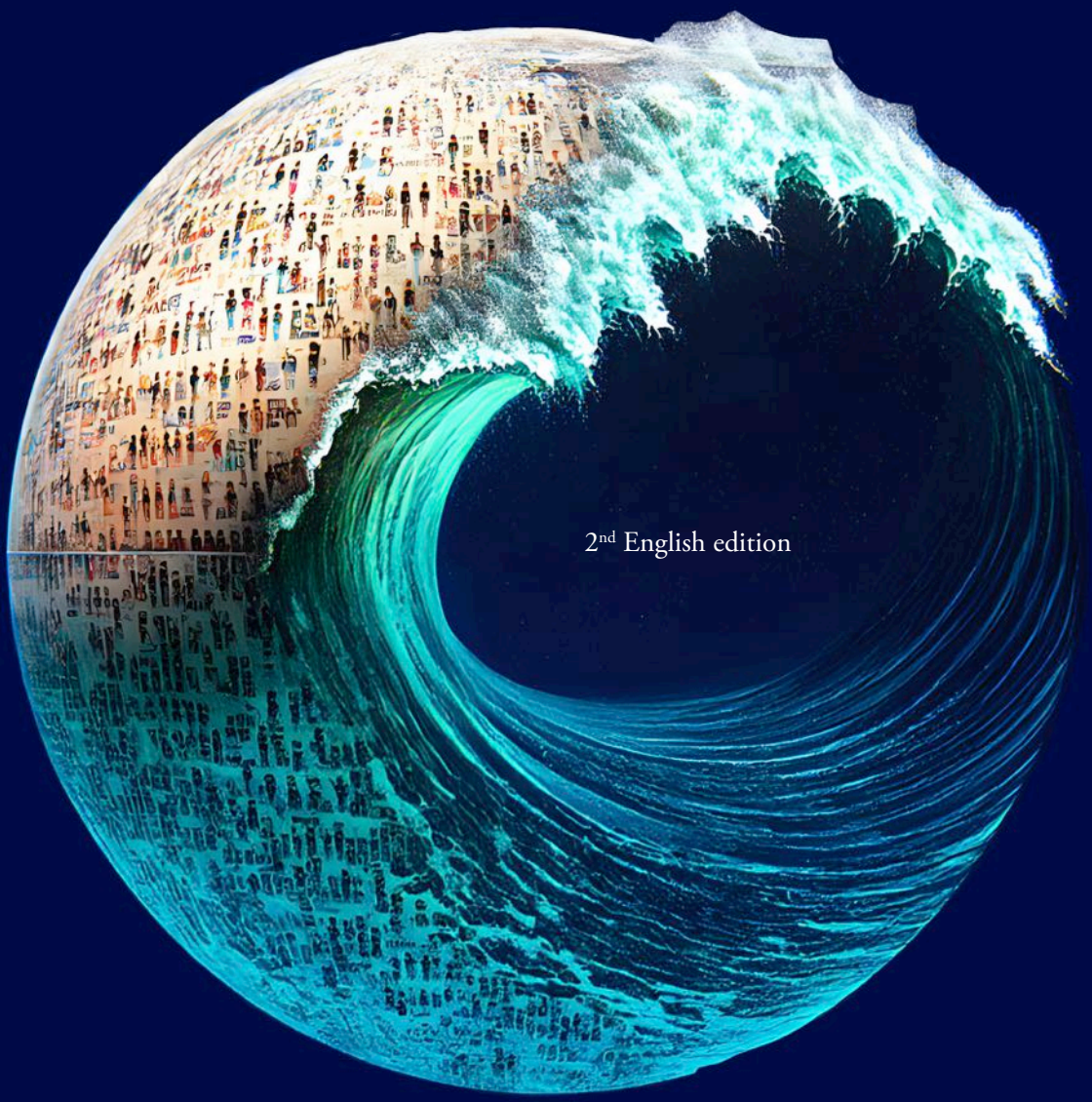
Dialogues across the Seas

The Ocean that keeps us apart also joins us

Charting knowledge and practice in the Anthropocene

Edited by Pier Luigi Capucci



2nd English edition

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Texts by Tracey M. Benson, Roberta Buiani, Pier Luigi Capucci, Giorgio Cipolletta, Ian Clothier, Nina Czegledy, Freddy Paul Grunert, Vincenzo Guarnieri, Elena Giulia Rossi, Mario Savini, Franco Torriani

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art*science
art & climate crisis

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VITAL
TRANSFORMATIONS

ArtSci Salon

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From the Mediterranean to the Pacific. Dialogues across the seas

Opening event of the art*science 2018-2020 program
Art & Climate Change
Cervia, 27-28 July 2018

Curated by Pier Luigi Capucci and Roberta Buiani in collaboration with Nina Czegledy, with the participation of Ian Clothier, Elena Giulia Rossi, Mario Savini, Elaine Whittaker, Giorgio Cipolletta

In collaboration with:

- "Vital Transformations", exhibitions, events, concerts and conferences held simultaneously in New Plymouth, New Zealand, curated by Ian Clothier and Intercreate.
- MUSA (Museum of Salt) and La Salina in Cervia

Interactive installation by Elaine Whittaker and Roberta Buiani, *Creating and Destroying: Salty reflections*, 2018
Installation by Giorgio Cipolletta, *Ant(h)ropocene*, 2018

MUSA
MUSEO DEL SALE

Patronage

COMUNE DI CERVIA

MUSA MUSEO DEL SALE

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LEONARDO

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FESTIVAL DELLA COMPLESSITÀ

PANEL SESSION 10 // THE OCEAN THAT KEEPS US APART ALSO JOINS US: CHARTING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

This panel consist of five experts who have collaborated across hemispheres of Earth in the context of environment. Collaboration has become increasingly common over the past 15 years, to now being a pre-eminent form of creative practice. Over the same period, the human connection to climate change has moved from being predominantly known in academia, to a situation where the climate crisis is widely acknowledged intergenerationally and across most mass media. This development has forced a revision of knowledge and theory, led to engagement with indigenous peoples and new sites for projects. The notion of the constitution of a sentient human being has changed, in particular moving out of solely Western conceptions. These forces have led to an activist re-orientation in creative practice, with ramifications for art, society, humanity and Earth which together lead to a re-shaping of language.

The ocean that keeps us apart also joins us: charting knowledge and practice in the Anthropocene.

Nina Czegledy, Pier Luigi Capucci, Ian Clothier, Roberta Buiani, Elena Giulia Rossi
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Figure 1. Google spherical projection map of the Pacific Ocean Te Moana Nui a Kiwa with Tahiti marked.

A few notes about this book

The origin of the project

The project *Dialogues across the seas* was born in 2018, six years ago. From then some things seem changed. Today there is more awareness about the climate crisis emergency and about the issues related to the ocean and sea environments. In 2021 the United Nations have proclaimed the "Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)", in order to search for solutions about a sustainable development and for connecting people through the oceans and the seas.

This publication is born from some events on the impact of the climate crisis on the seas and the marine environments. The first one was entitled "From the Mediterranean to the Pacific. Dialogues across the seas"[1], and took place on July 27-28, 2018, in Cervia, a coastal city nearby Ravenna where the Po Valley ends in the northern Adriatic Sea. Cervia is located in one of the most critical areas at risk of submersion in Italy: according to a research[2] the sea level could rise from 315 to 1535 mm by 2100. The event in Cervia was made in collaboration with "Vital Transformations", a series of events on art and climate change taking place simultaneously in New Plymouth, New Zealand. This collaboration set up an ideal bridge across two remote maritime venues – Cervia and New Plymouth – geographically located at almost the opposite sides on Earth but interested and linked by a common issue, the rising of the sea level: the climate emergency is both a local and global issue.

The second event was the panel "The ocean that keeps us apart also joins us: charting knowledge and practice in the Anthropocene"[3], that due to the Covid–19 pandemic took place online at ISEA 2020 "Why Sentience?" on

1 See https://artscience.online/2018/07/18/dal-mediterraneo-al-pacifico-dialoghi-attraverso-i-mari-from-the-mediterranean-to-the-pacific-dialogues-across-the-seas/ (Last accessed24/01/22).

2 See K. Lambeck *et al.*, "Sea level change along the Italian coast during the Holocene and projections for the future", *Quaternary International*, Vol. 232, Issues 1–2, 15 February 2011, pp. 250-257; F. Antonioli *et al.*, "Sea-level rise and potential drowning of the Italian coastal plains: Flooding risk scenarios for 2100", *Quaternary Science Reviews*, Vol. 158, 15 February 2017, pp. 29-43.

October 14th, 2020, in Montreal. The panel, introduced by a 40 minutes video with all the speeches[4], presented and discussed internationally the topics of the event in Cervia adding new perspectives. Among them the collaboration across Earth hemispheres in the context of the environment, the intergenerational relevance of the climate issues, the importance of the indigenous peoples' knowledge beyond the Western conceptions, and the necessity to reshape the language as a result of these viewpoints and their influence on the creative and social practices.

*The art*science – Art & Climate Change project*

The event in Cervia inaugurated the "art*science – Art & Climate Change" research project[5], focused on the climate emergency and the role that art can play in interpreting and making people aware of the great transformations that our Planet is undergoing. But the artistic methods can be crucial and powerful research tools both for the communication and the development of science. They can suggest new ways to approach, react to, and learn to manage the complex phenomena involved in the climate emergency.

The "art*science – Art & Climate Change" research program aims to create a constructive transdisciplinary dialogue on topics that are very popular but also controversial, like "green", "sustainability", re-using and recycling, alternative and renewable energies, the environment as habitat, the idea of "Nature"... Today a fundamental field of research on climate concerns the state and evolution of the seas and the oceans, on which the United Nations has published a report[6] and stated the "Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030)"[7].

We are glad to contribute in the discussion on these topics with this publication, whose contents have anticipated those programs thanks to the foresight of the people who participated in the above events and collaborated in this project. This new English edition updates the contents of the first one, published in 2022, and adds some new contributions.

3 See https://isea2020.isea-international.org/isea2020-online-program/ (Last accessed 24/01/22).
4 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FuhzUrlv8Kg (Last accessed 25/01/22).
5 See https://artscience.online (Last accessed 26/01/22).
6 United Nations, *The United Nations World Water Development Report 2021: Valuing Water*, Paris, UNESCO, 2021. Also available online: https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-world-water-development-report-2021/ (Last accessed 27/01/22).
7 See https://www.oceandecade.org; https://en.unesco.org/ocean-decade; https://decenniodelmare.it (Last accessed 27/01/22).

Some ideas for the future

All living beings live inside and through water, water and life are intimately connected on Earth. Since ancient times, seas and oceans have been elements of division, of geographical separation, but at the same time they have culturally and historically connected peoples and cultures. Today cultures and people are connected thanks to the "technologies of distance", like the Internet, but for centuries boats and seas have represented the longest-range connection systems, allowing to go beyond the land journeys possibilities.

But water does not only concern seas and oceans. Seemingly in contradiction with the increase in sea levels, global warming makes vast land areas arid, drying up rivers, basins, lakes, glaciers, creating phenomena of water scarcity aggravated by waste and pollution. All this causes not only environmental but also social and political upheavals, generating mass migrations towards more habitable areas of the planet. Furthermore, with the climate crisis, the temperature – and therefore the energy – of the atmosphere increases, causing more frequent extreme meteorological events, storms and floods, as it happened in a catastrophic way this year in many zones of the world.

Therefore we want to expand the *Dialogues across the seas* art/science project in a more inclusive way, aiming at connecting more cultures worldwide. One more direction is to include in the project also fresh waters related issues and situations, that have entered in a deep crisis in many areas of the world. Our goal is to organize events and exhibitions involving artists, scientists, scholars, activists, to discuss the issues, increase awareness and reflect on viable solutions and future from many perspectives. We would love to make *Dialogues across the seas* an ongoing, expanding and unfinished project, enriched by new periodic publications that bring together voices from around the world.

P.L.C.