

Riley Rosa  
Visualizing Nature Final

### Abstract

My unpaper is a quilt that visualizes my view of the ocean. It embodies everything that is known, confusing, loved, feared, real, or imagined. The quilt is more full and colorful towards the top, because that is what feels known and welcoming about the ocean, but the further down, the more empty and dark it becomes, since the depths of the ocean are still so unknown, and scary to me. It includes narratives and imagery found in the various readings throughout this course, as well as prevalent ocean images I have had for a while. This includes my childhood love of hammerhead sharks, continued fear of giant squids, and thoughts of the ocean as a place for food like tuna and crabs.

### Annotated Bibliography

Jørgensen, Dolly. "Mixing Oil and Water: Naturalizing Offshore Oil Platforms in Gulf Coast Aquariums." *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2012, pp. 461-480.

This journal is about oil rigs in the ocean and how they are placed in aquariums in order to convince people that it is okay and normal for them to exist in nature. It also discusses the issue of how, "corporate sponsorships of exhibits, which are a necessity for many nonprofit institutions to exist" (464). This article, as well as a video we watched in class, showed the difficulties that arise in corporations controlling narratives about the ocean. This reading made me want to include an oil rig in my quilt but searching for reference images was unsuccessful, which resulted in a much more interesting visual in my quilt. An outline of an oil rig with the words "oil rig image redacted" shows the complexity of this issue and the ability to withhold information that these companies have.

Kingsley, Charles. *The Water Babies: A Fairy Tales for a Land Baby*. 1880.

*Water Babies* is a story about a young boy who gets a second chance at life by dying in the water. He experiences a whole world of creatures, friends, and life lessons in the ocean, showing the ocean as both chaotic and friendly. I wanted to include the spirit of Water Babies in my quilt by tapping into this type of narrative, embracing childhood, more traditional ways of storytelling, and both fear and lightness. My quilt includes a direct quote from Water Babies as

well, “We float out our life in the mid-ocean... and that is enough for us” (112). Another quote that was inspiring to me to capture the dream-like and child-like view of the ocean was, “He had nothing to do now but enjoy himself, and look at all the pretty things which are to be seen in the cool clear water-world where the sun is never too hot, and the frost is never too cold” (70).

Muka, Samantha. "Imagining the Sea: The impact of marine field work on scientific

portraiture", *Soundings and Crossings: Doing Science at Sea 1800-1970*, Katharine

Anderson, Helen M. Rozwadowski, Science History Publications. 2016.

This piece is about illustrations of fish both in and out of the ocean, and what narratives they enforce. This is obviously super informative for any visual art about the ocean. My biggest takeaways from this piece are the representation of families, the way colors and anchoring informs mood, and the ways in which we make fish look full of life or empty. For the embroidered fish towards the top and the two yellow fish I made sure to show them together with family to keep the lighter, friendlier, more anthropomorphized narrative of the ocean in my upper section. The piece states, “illustrators often drew marine mammals in highly anthropomorphized social groups playfully interacting with each other” (268). I wanted to disrupt the standard of only showing mammals like this by being sure to include many individuals in my shark square, and in the previously mentioned fish squares. The quilt includes two painted reimaginings of the illustrations on page 270, the one in the top left being the “romantic, dark” Charles Knight inspired image, and the one in the middle being a more grounded “watercolored, dreamlike” Murayama-esque image (270). I wanted to use the idea of representing fish as lifeless and ornamental to emphasize the contrast between the top and bottom of my quilt. Since I’m scared of huge fish like tuna and also think of them more often as food than as beings, I wanted to show it, and the other creatures in the lower section, in a much more lifeless way, from a direct, analytical side or front view and for the tuna, with a big, lifeless eye.

Powell, David C. *A Fascination for Fish: Adventures of an Underwater Pioneer*. U of

California P, 2003.

This book is about the life of David C Powell and his work with the Monterey Bay aquarium. It discusses his interest in fish starting from his early life, as well as his innovations in aquarium and tank design. This book inspired me to include visuals of the more memorable

tanks we see in this and other aquariums, specifically kelp (192-194, 214) and coral reef (34-35, 98-101) tanks.

Rudwick, M. J. *Scenes from Deep Time: Early Pictorial Representations of the Prehistoric World*. U of Chicago P, 1992.

This piece is about early narratives of the ocean, specifically religious ones. This reading in conjunction with others helped to show me the complexity of the ocean with fighting narratives between chaos and fear versus abundance of life and imagination, which I tried to embody in the layout and color choices of my quilt. Despite being a mostly negative piece, it does speak on the abundance of life found in the ocean when it says, “God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly... : and God saw that it was good” (10).

Solomon, Rivers, et al. *The Deep*. Simon & Schuster, 2019.

The Deep tells the story of the origin of zoti (mermaids) and their culture. It follows one specific mermaid on their quest to find out who they are outside of their duties to their family. This book obviously influenced me to include a mermaid in my quilt, but it also informed the moody, scary, but still beautiful and intriguing view of the ocean depths that I have. I used the quote “Endless beauty, endless dark” (34) to try to show the ocean’s beauty not just despite its vastness and apparent emptiness, but because of it. Another quote that was inspiring to me was, “The deep is our home... This cold place will become a shelter for any stranded, abandoned thing” (54).

I pledge my honor that I have abided by the Stevens Honor System. - Riley Rosa