WASHED UP
WASHED UP

Washed Up celebrates fashion’s creative debt to the ocean. The exhibition’s landscape is created from dead coral seized from illegal smugglers at British customs and kept in the Aquarium at London Zoo. Now drained of its colour, the coral is a poignant reminder of the destruction of the ocean’s beauty and life-sustaining resources.

The crystalline and arabesque-like structures of aquatic creatures, including many varieties of coral, were recorded over a century ago by Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919); his book Art Forms in Nature popularised shapes that fed into artistic movements, including Art Nouveau. Many species previously unseen by the naked eye suddenly came into focus as a new decorative alphabet, and were seen throughout Europe. The former invisibility of so many species that were once the source of so many tales about sea monsters was irresistible to the creative imagination: their reality was even more extraordinary.

The objects in this exhibition have been selected to reflect the changing nature of the ocean’s inspiring depths— from Stephen Jones’s debt to 18th century Rocaille, Gareth Pugh’s fish scales under the microscope, to Alexander McQueen’s morphing together of land and sea, in his futuristic Atlantis.

Recent avant-garde fashion has been inspired by the complex structures that we witness so startlingly here when we get closer to the coral, from the distance a pile of quasi-urban rubble.

Judith Clark, Curator

THE UK BORDER AGENCY FULLY SUPPORTS THIS EXHIBITION OF CONFISCATED CORALS FOR PROJECT OCEAN. IN KEEPING WITH THE AIMS OF PROJECT OCEAN, THE EXHIBITION URGES VISITORS: “DO YOUR BIT FOR REEF CONSERVATION AND DO NOT BUY CORAL SKELETONS EITHER FOR YOUR FISH TANK OR AS A CURIO. LEAVE IT ON THE REEF WHERE IT BELONGS.” ZSL
LOOKING OUT TO SEA

The late 19th century witnessed a huge interest in popular science. Darwin had published *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and Ernst Haeckel’s artistically recorded species were enthusiastically received throughout Europe. The ocean held a particular fascination for Haeckel, revealing species previously unknown due to their microscopic nature, invisible to the naked eye. His illustrations revealed the decorative virtuosity of the ocean as never before.

Mid 19th century Britain was gripped by the Industrial Revolution. Microscopic prints became prevalent as powerloom technology made them possible, the minute fish of the *Stored* dress [2] only visible on close inspection, echoing Haeckel’s own revelation of the ocean’s hidden landscape.

By the 1870s, the concept of leisure dressing had begun to take hold as women became more publicly visible. Principal amongst these fashions were seaside dresses [1], brighter, more eccentric than regular day dresses, but still incorporating the major fashion of the day – the bustle, high neckline and flared wrist.

THE WATER’S EDGE

The turn of the 20th century saw women expose more of their bodies and take to the sea, at the same time as they fought for greater public prominence and recognition on land. Swimsuits were clothes designed to inhabit both land and sea, epitomising the liberation of the female body during the Roaring Twenties.

Up to this point, more women were drowned at sea due to the cumbersome “water overcoats” they were forced to wear than for any other reason (decency laws were still acted upon until WW1). Nautical ensembles [2] were a halfway house between full seaside dress and the 1920s swimsuit shape that marks the fastest form of the swimsuit we know today [1]. Freed, by then, from the cumbersome skirts and decency laws of the previous century, women adopted skirted swimsuits, produced in lingerie-weight jersey by designers such as Coco Chanel and Jean Patou.

STRUCTURE & GEOMETRY

Whilst Haeckel’s illustrations, and the technology that made them possible, opened up the ocean for its scientists and biographers, the images themselves, and the greater understanding of the ocean’s inhabitant’s structure on a micro level, inspired generations of designers to explore this newly visible geometry.

Sandra Backlund’s extraordinary piece takes us through the idea of accidental symmetry via an exploration of geometry in paper, using the Japanese tradition of origami. The resulting piece echoes the urchins dotted across the sea’s submerged landscape [1].

Van Herpen’s *Crystallization* collection realises the transformation from water’s apparent chaos and flow to its rigidity and structure as ice. The designer describes her fascination with water’s secrets and invisibility. This ensemble is the collection’s finale, encapsulating the softness and fluidity of water and the geometry of crystal [2].

UNDERWATER FLORA

Living amongst the coral reefs are thousands of ocean flora, tiny plants who energise the coral draw upon for its survival. Clustered alongside are an equal number of animals, like the coral itself, whose outer appearance gives the impression of an abundant, blooming garden. Haeckel’s illustrations celebrate the beauty of these underwater flora, redolent of the botanical drawings so familiar from his time.

Margiela’s *Flora* dress echoes Haeckel’s animal blooms [1&2]. Anemones, corals, annelids, cnidarians, sponges and echinoderms appear to envelope this structured body. Created entirely by hand, and from rare vintage material, each piece from Margiela’s *Artisanal* collection is entirely unique.

Rocha’s inspiration for the S/S 2011 collection, an aristocratic bohemian traveller, was drawn from his journeys in Italy of the 1950s [3]. The black and white reef dresses in this exhibition allude to the captivating beauty of the sea that laps the country’s shores, and the potent image of its destruction.

TEXTURE

The rich texture of the sea, its marine and plant life, have presented designers with a vast source of inspiration. As advances in technology allowed for a greater understanding of the ocean world, so great advances in machine and textile innovation have enabled designers to represent the ocean’s texture literally rather than simply graphically, through print.

Van Herpen’s *Radiation Invasion* collection was inspired by the image of radiation waves flooding across the body [3]. The modern dread of the invisible wave of electricity echoes the awe and fear the invisible forces, waves of the sea would have instilled in centuries passed.

The fishscale body echoes across European mythology, the mermaid both hypnotic and repellant, drawing man in to the watery depths through the dazzling beauty of her golden scales. Gareth Pugh creates sculptured bodies that both attract and repel, the mermaid’s armour a perfect foil for the complexity of feminine representation [2].
RADIOLARIUM

Heacock made his report on radiolaria during the voyage of the HMS Challenger from 1873-1876. Radiolaria are microscopic amoeboid protozoa that have a central capsule which protects their inner core and an outer layer of ectoplasm that keeps them buoyant, living ocean bubbles. They are found as zooplankton throughout the sea, and their skeletal remains cover large portions of the ocean bottom as radiolarian ooze.

Chalayan’s Bubble dress is a feat of exquisite lightness formed through rigid structure [1]. Like radiolaria, the bubble is one of the world’s enduring fascinations, capturing the imagination as it floats – rigid for a fleeting moment before it bursts and scatters its now invisible components to the wind.

THE BEACH

The beach is a site of statement and display that has moved from that of shows of decorum at the turn of the 20th century to shows of the spectacular body at the turn of the 21st. Never has this been clearer than in a time of prevalence of media “snapped” celebrity bodies, revealed in all their human frailty (and, occasionally, superhuman splendour).

Manuel’s Octopus print dress [1], originally twinned by the designer with a black catsuit, plays on the idea of the bathing dress of Victorian times, shielding the body from prying eyes, and reflecting a return to covered dressing for the beach that the burkini may be heralding. Her witty juxtaposition of reddened crustacean sea-creature, cooked for consumption, with the figure of so-called perfect body, in the Lobster Bodybuilder ensemble [2], is a pop take on the complexity of our relationship with the exposure a seaside holiday now often demands.

Jean Charles de Castelbajac’s S/S 2010 collection plays on the pop cultural relationship we have with the sea, and its most famous predator, the shark. Whilst JAWS, Spielberg’s classic 80s thriller, ushered in an era of high-cost, high-tech, high-speed movie-making it also reflected an era of “pop” statement fashion that the Shark dress epitomizes [3].

The octopus, like the shark, is one of the great sea creatures to have captured the creative imagination. The octopus is believed to symbolise the water and the unconscious deep, a powerful sea spirit helper in Shamansic traditions, its eight arms a magical and auspicious number that contributes to its power. Its ability to transform seamlessly to its surroundings, and to incorporate within itself its means of adaptation, survival and attack make it a potent symbol of the mysteries of the ocean.

The seamless body of the octopus is reflected in Iris van Herpen’s Octopus dress – not only in its form, but in its construction [3]. The dress is totally 3D printed, created without seams or recourse to any handwork; by rapid prototyping. In this van Herpen seeks to “meld ancient and new worlds.”

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The ocean’s depths have a powerful hold over the cultural imagination; eerie, haunting and yet hypnotic, they stand as an alien world into which we enter at our peril.

Hussein Chalayan is one of the world’s most innovative living designer-artists. His exploration of technology’s relationship to fashion is unparalleled on the contemporary catwalk. The LED dress [3] is typical of his play on human fear and fascination with new technology, drawing as it does on the image of the shark, a creature from the deep that inspires terror, mainly unfounded – out of more than 360 species, only four are dangerous to humans.

The dress is created with 15,000 LED’s embedded beneath the fabric, their pulsating, ethereal beauty drawing us in to a world from which we are separated by only a transparent layer.
LOOKING OUT TO SEA

N°1... BLUE & WHITE STRIPED BUSTLE DRESS 1870s
Courtesy: Sheila Cook Textiles

N°2... STORED' DRESS WITH ABSTRACT FISH MOTIF 1863
Courtesy: Sheila Cook Textiles

N°3... TYVEK STORAGE COVER (CLASSIFIED WITH A PRINT OF ERNST HAECKEL'S DRAWING OF A JELLYFISH FROM ART FORMS IN NATURE) 2011
Judith Clark, Courtesy: Judith Clark

THE WATER'S EDGE

N°1... BLUE & YELLOW SKIRTED SWIMSUIT 1920's
Courtesy: Sheila Cook Textiles

N°2... SWIMSUIT C. 1900
Courtesy: Martin Kamer Collection

TEXTURE

N°1... DRESS R0011, RADIATION INVASION, ECCO LEATHER, PORCELAIN TREATMENT
Iris van Herpen, Courtesy: Iris van Herpen

N°2... FISHSCALE DRESS SPRING/SUMMER 2011
Gareth Pugh, Courtesy: Gareth Pugh

STRUCTURE & GEOMETRY

N°1... ORIGAMI TOP, INK BLOT TEST, PAPER 2007
Sandra Backlund, Courtesy Sandra Backlund

OIL SPILL

N°1... BLACK REEF DRESS, AUTUMN/WINTER 2010
John Rocha, Courtesy: John Rocha

THE DEEP

N°1... OCTOPUS DRESS, KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE DOUGHNUT 2010
Mariel Manual, Courtesy: Mariel Manual

RADIOLARIUM

N°1... BUBBLE DRESS SPRING/SUMMER 2007
Hussein Chalayan, in collaboration with Swarovski, Courtesy: Swarovski

N°2... TYVEK STORAGE COVER (CLASSIFIED WITH A PRINT OF ERNST HAECKEL'S DRAWING OF A 'RADIOLARIUM' FROM ART FORMS IN NATURE) 2011
Judith Clark, Courtesy: Judith Clark

UNDERWATER FLORA

N°1... FLORA DRESS, BODY & SHOES AUTUMN/WINTER 2011
Martin Margiela Artisanal, Courtesy: Martin Margiela

N°2... FLORA DRESS, BODY & SHOES AUTUMN/WINTER 2011
Martin Margiela Artisanal, Courtesy: Martin Margiela

N°3... WHITE REEF DRESS SPRING/SUMMER 2011
John Rocha, Courtesy: John Rocha

OCTOPUS

N°1... OCTOPUS DRESS ESC0101, ESCAPISM COUTURE
Iris van Herpen, Courtesy: Iris van Herpen

ATLANTIS

N°1... JELLYFISH ENSEMBLE, PLATO'S ATLANTIS SPRING/SUMMER 2010
Alexander McQueen, Courtesy: Alexander McQueen

N°2... JELLYFISH PRINT DRESS, PLATO'S ATLANTIS SPRING/SUMMER 2010
Alexander McQueen, Courtesy: Alexander McQueen

N°3... SEAWEED DRESS, SERENADA MOLECULARE 2008
Andrea Cammarano, Courtesy: Andrea Cammarano

THE BEACH

N°1... OCTOPUS DRESS ESC0101, ESCAPISM COUTURE
Iris van Herpen, Courtesy: Iris van Herpen

OCTOPUS

N°1... OCTOPUS DRESS ESC0101, ESCAPISM COUTURE
Iris van Herpen, Courtesy: Iris van Herpen

THE BEACH

N°1... OCTOPUS DRESS ESC0101, ESCAPISM COUTURE
Iris van Herpen, Courtesy: Iris van Herpen

RADIOLARIUM / 1
ATLANTIS / 1
STRUCTURE AND GEOMETRY / 1
ATLANTIS / 2
ATLANTIS / 3
CABINETS / HATS

**N°1, ECHINODERMS**
Das Ruu for Alexander McQueen, Courtesy: Private Collection

**N°2, DRAGONFLY 9 HEADRESS**
Emma Yeo, Courtesy: Emma Yeo

**N°3, HEADRESS**
Zara Gorman, Courtesy: Zara Gorman

**N°4, SHELL HAT**
Zara Gorman, Courtesy: Zara Gorman

**N°5, LEAF HAT**
Philip Treacy, Courtesy: Philip Treacy

**N°2, FISH TANK**

**N°1, FISH MOBILE HAT**
Stephen Jones, for W.F.E. T by Walter Van Beirendonck
Courtesy: Walter Van Beirendonck

**N°3, TROPICAL SHOAL**

**N°1, FEATHER OCEAN WORM HAT**
Philip Treacy, Courtesy: Philip Treacy

**N°2, ROPE-OCTOPUS HAIR**
Justin Smith Esquire, Courtesy: Justin Smith Esquire

**N°3, SWAN 2.0 HEADRESS**
Emma Yeo, Courtesy: Emma Yeo

**N°4, SHOAL HAT**
Stephen Jones, Courtesy: Stephen Jones

**N°5, ROPE BEACH BONNET**
Justin Smith Esquire, Courtesy: Justin Smith Esquire

**WONDERWALL**

**N°1, LOBSTER HAT**
Philip Treacy for Lady Gaga, Courtesy: Lady Gaga

**N°2, SWAY HAT**
Stephen Jones, Courtesy: Stephen Jones

**N°3, CRYSTAL SWIMMING CAP**
Naomi Feldman, in collaboration with Swarovski, Courtesy: Swarovski

**N°4, BEACH COMBER HAT**
Stephen Jones, Courtesy: Stephen Jones

**N°5, ZERO GRAVITY HAT**
Philip Treacy, Courtesy: Philip Treacy

**N°6, 1920'S BRAIN CORAL CLOCHE**
Courtesy: Private Collection

**N°7, PEARL WAVES: A HYPOTHETICAL 1930's WIG**
Judith Clark, Embroidery by Rosie Taylor-Davies, Courtesy: Judith Clark
Coral Facts

A coral is an animal with tiny plants living inside it.
The plants act like solar batteries giving the coral energy.
Many corals spawn just once a year on the same night.
Coral reefs are the biggest structures on earth made by living creatures.
The Great Barrier Reef can be seen from space.
Coral can grow up to 20cm a year.
Coral have skeleton made of rock.
Coral are tiny animals but they can build whole islands.
Baby corals can swim.
Baby corals have a sense of smell.
Corals have stinging cells to trap plankton prey.
Corals have pigments in their tissues that act as sunscreen.
Many corals fluoresce under UV light.
Corals evolved about 450 million years ago.
There are over 800 species of coral spread around the world.

Illegal Trade

All of the corals in this exhibition usually live in the aquarium at London Zoo. Each one came from confiscations made at Heathrow by the UK Border Agency. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) controls the trade in corals and sets quotas for how many can be taken each year. The international trade in live corals is a large and lucrative one; Indonesia is the main exporter and the US and EU are the main importers. Last year Indonesia had export quotas for 3.4 million coral colonies.

The Zoological Society of London Aquarium Team have been working with the CITES team at Heathrow for the last 8 years to enforce the rules on coral trade. All confiscated corals are taken care of and exhibited at the aquarium, so the public are educated about the role the Border Agency plays in enforcing the law.

Without laws to control the trade in live corals they would face the risk of over-exploitation of their wild populations, which are already under threat from climate change, pollution and disease.

The dead coral skeleton used in this exhibition was donated to the Zoological Society of London by the UK Border Agency many years ago. The Border Agency confiscated ten tonnes of coral skeletons and over three tonnes were sent to ZSL London Zoo.

The coral originated in the Philippines and represents thousands of individual coral colonies. Some of the large colonies may have been hundred of years old when they were taken from the reef. This coral was destined to be used as decoration for people’s homes. Coral skeleton is often made into jewellery or other curios and sold to tourists in shops around the world.

Do your bit for reef conservation and do not buy coral skeleton either for your fish tank or as a curio. Leave it on the reef where it belongs.
The world’s three largest oil spills are: January 1991, Kuwait: 240 million gallons; June 1979, Mexico: 140 million gallons; March 1992, Uzbekistan: 88.0 million gallons.

The 1989 Exxon Valdez spill impacted over 1,300 miles, and took 10,000 workers, 1,000 boats, 100 airplanes, and the Navy, Army, and Air Force four summers to clean up.

The amount of spilled oil was 10.8 million gallons or 257,000 barrels or 28,000 metric tonnes. This amount of oil can fill up about 125 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

2,800 sea otters and 250,000 seabirds were killed by the Exxon Valdez spill, and over ten years later only two species impacted by the damage are known to have totally recovered.

New estimates for the BP Gulf Oil spill show the undersea well has spilled between 17 and 39 million gallons. These estimates dwarf those of BP, who claimed the spill had only released 11 million gallons to date, and mean that the Gulf leak is far bigger than Exxon Valdez, making it the worst spill in American history.

Local shrimpers in Louisiana are already predicting that it will be seven years before they can set to sea again.

The widespread manmade pollution of the sea that can be detected by current spaceborne systems is concentrated in the Middle East, particularly in the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

Oil spills account for only about five percent of the oil entering the oceans. The Coast Guard estimates that for the United States, water sewage treatment plants discharge twice as much oil each year as tanker spills. During the last decade, more than one billion gallons of oil spilled worldwide.