

Ocean literacy through art: a partnership between art educators and marine scientists

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Learning about the ocean is certainly not limited to formal education. Also, extramural activities can enhance ocean literacy. In the 'Marine Art' project three partners will go into a unique co-operation to enhance ocean knowledge, observation and curiosity by a creative process:

- Marine science & knowledge: At the University of Ghent 24 research units are involved in marine research. Recently they united in the interfaculty research consortium **Marine@UGent**.
- Creativity, art: **The Academy for Visual Arts of Ghent** organises art education for children, youngsters and adults in the extramural circuit (on evenings and in weekends) to enhance creative skills and learn several techniques in the disciplines drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, mixed media, ceramics, illustration & cartoon, photo art or animated film.
- Co-ordination: **The Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ)** is the coordination and information platform for marine scientific research in Flanders. Among others, it promotes the visibility of marine science and ocean knowledge to the public at large by means of popularisation and science communication.

During the first semester of the academic year 2012-2013, the students and teachers of the Art Academy will be brought into contact with scientists of the Marine@UGent consortium. The students will be introduced into the different marine research topics practiced at the University of Ghent - by means of a presentation, a dialogue, a visit to the lab or the field. Aim is to 'infect' the art students with curiosity in the sea and coastal processes, and give inspiration for work of art created by the artists in-spe.

End-point of the project is an exposition for the public at large in the weekend of February 2, 2013. The art work will be displayed in confrontation with the science that gave the initial inspiration. A catalogue will be elaborated for the exhibition.

Objectives of the project:

- make ocean sciences and marine knowledge approachable to people previously disconnected to it
- enhance new perspectives to look at the marine environment
- engage experimental learning through creative interaction with the scientific process and content
- by giving a personal meaning to scientific information art students become ocean literate participants
- build bridges between marine researchers and art students, who both need good observation, curiosity, creativity and intuition
- attract an even wider audience to marine research by means of the art exhibition.