



KIDSPACE
at MASS MoCA

OCTOBER 1, 2011 –
MAY 28, 2012

Ginger Ertz
Johnston Foster
James Grashow

Aurora Robson
Dirk Westphal
Deborah Wing-Sproul

Under the Sea

Under the Sea features six internationally acclaimed artists who explore the ocean as habitat, myth, and a necessary element of life on earth. Through various themes and innovative materials, the artists examine the mystery and power of the ocean as well as the catastrophic consequences of our abuse of this natural resource.



Ginger Ertz

A self-proclaimed "river-gazer" since childhood, sculptor Ginger Ertz works with chenille stems to depict the movement of waves and ripples in the water. Her work, which also includes an oil spill, invites the consideration of the effect of our pollution on the ocean. Because each sculpture evolves during her artistic process, she views it as a metaphor for how life changes over time, a metaphor also reflected by the movement of water. Just as no phase in the sculpture is better or worse than any other, so are the phases in life, a fact we must learn to accept.

CLOCKWISE L-R *Slick*, 2011, *Splash*, 2010 and *Shell*, 2006
All photography by Arthur Evans.

James Grashow

With just cardboard and paint, James Grashow of Redding, Connecticut, creates a larger-than-life mermaid and a school of brightly colored fish that swim through the gallery. As each cardboard sculpture eventually would dissolve in water, the viewer is invited to ruminate on the transience of these sculptures of supposedly seaworthy creatures as well as the transience of all things.

RIGHT *Under the Corrugated Sea*, 2011



In 2000, the Clark, Williams College Museum of Art, and MASS MoCA formed the collaborative project KIDSPACE, a contemporary art gallery and workshop space for children. KIDSPACE promotes the understanding and teaching of art through experiential learning opportunities. School programs include artist residencies, multiple gallery visits, teacher workshops, and educational materials, which are designed in partnership with six elementary schools in North Adams, Florida, Clarksburg, and Savoy, Massachusetts. KIDSPACE organizes after-school programs for local elementary and middle school students. Working with KIDSPACE staff and artists, students and teachers learn new ways to connect contemporary art to their classroom activities and to their everyday lives. The public is also invited to visit KIDSPACE during public hours to view exhibitions and make art.

Open every day except Tuesdays, 11am to 4pm. Art-making Friday through Sunday with gallery admission.
Admission is free. Donations are gladly accepted and are used to support educational programming and supplies.

Major season support for KIDSPACE is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ann R. Avis and Gregory M. Avis Fund, and an anonymous donor. Additional support by the Brownrigg Charitable Trust; The Hearst Foundation, Inc.; Milton and Dorothy Sarnoff Raymond Foundation; Alice Shaver Foundation in memory of Lynn Laitman; the James and Robert Hardman Fund and the Gateway Fund of the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.



Under the Sea was curated by Laura Thompson, KIDSPACE Director of Exhibitions and Education. KIDSPACE is eternally grateful to the staff of the three museums for their consistent support of KIDSPACE, and especially to MASS MoCA's staff who are responsible for promoting, designing, and installing the exhibition. The exhibition project and programs are also greatly benefited from the dedication and hard work of KIDSPACE Education Coordinator Shannon Toys; summer interns Danielle Christensen, Rachel Heisler, and Hannah Mangham; fall interns Shannon Costello, Jeff Gagnon, Samantha Naring, and Amanda Tobin; and local teachers Lori Austin and Erica Manville.

413.664.4481 ext. 8131

kidspace.massmoca.org

kidspace@massmoca.org



Johnstone Foster

Sculptor Johnstone Foster of Richmond, Virginia, shows alternative uses for discarded items by creating his sharks entirely from materials salvaged from roadsides and dumpsters. Intrigued by the fascination that people have with sharks as a predator and the sensationalism surrounding them, Foster constructed sharks displayed on traffic cones. Although his work began as a physical exploration of the material, the material itself encourages the viewer to think more about the connection between the plastic deposits in the ocean and the traffic cones, tires, and plastic which comprise his sculptures.

LEFT *Life Psychotic II*, 2009

Aurora Robson

Sculptor Aurora Robson of Brooklyn, New York, uses only plastic bottles and paint to create colossal coral reefs and plankton that serve as a meditation on our over-consumption of plastic and our pollution of the ocean. Based on childhood nightmares of sea creatures, Robson's work illustrates the power of transformation as a once-feared entity becomes one of beauty, and what was once garbage becomes art.

RIGHT L-R *Kamilo*, 2011 and *Rational Optimism*, 2011



Dirk Westphal

Manhattan photographer Dirk Westphal shares the inherent beauty of clownfish and damselfish through colossal, wall-sized photographs of astounding clarity. Having first encountered damselfish at the ocean as a child, Westphal seeks to invoke the awe he feels for the fish, which are not afraid of anything.

BELOW *Chrysiptera rollandi*, 2004



Deborah Wing-Sproul

Part science and part art, the sculptures and video art of Deborah Wing-Sproul of Maine invite the viewer to meditate on the vastness and strength of the ocean and the corresponding fragility of human life and the consequent implications. Her sculptures of spoons and slippers made entirely of seaweed will disintegrate with time, illustrating the important connection between the inhabitant and its habitat, for only out of water does seaweed become brittle. Her video art inspires the viewer to ponder the ocean as a connector for all cultures, requiring the humility and compassion of all people.

LEFT *Tidal Culture Part III: Latitude 65.570N/Longitude-37.890W (Greenland)*, 2009