



Research trip to Lerici, Italy, spring 2024 (Photo: Riikka Tauriainen)



PlanktoScope. Research trip to Lerici, Italy, spring 2024 (Photo: Riikka Tauriainen)

Plankton Ecosystems – Shaping the Narrative of Climate Change

The Pro Helvetia Synergies project “Plankton Ecosystems” is a participatory art-science programme by EcoArtLab that seeks to understand plankton diversity and its role in climate change from a non-anthropocentric perspective. Its focus is on community science technologies, collaborative art formats and experiential learning about marine ecology and ocean literacy, while exploring the connections and interactions between different water bodies.

Das Pro Helvetia Synergies Projekt «Plankton Ecosystems» ist ein partizipatives Kunst-Wissenschaftsprogramm des EcoArtLabs, bei dem ein Verständnis der Planktonvielfalt und ihrer Rolle im Klimawandel aus einer nicht-anthropozentrischen Perspektive im Fokus steht. Durch Technologien der Community Science, mit kollaborativen Kunstformaten sowie mit erfahrungsorientiertem Lernen über Meeresökologie und Ocean Literacy werden Verbindungen und Wechselwirkungen verschiedener Gewässer untersucht.

Publications: Tauriainen, Riikka; Vogt, Meike. “Drifting into the Plankton Imaginary” in: Huber, Martina; Jetzer, Gianni (eds.): *Experimental Ecology: Kunst und Wissenschaft im Dialog = Art and Science in Dialogue* (pp. 149–164). Basel: Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger (KBH.G), 2023.



Introduction: Plankton are extremely sensitive to environmental changes, and their condition is essential for the well-being of all marine life. For example, phytoplankton provide more than 50% of the Earth’s oxygen supply through photosynthesis and sequesters large amounts of carbon dioxide. It is therefore necessary to develop an awareness of aquatic networks and to think about the socio-political rights of living and dying bodies of water. “Plankton Ecosystems” is a participatory art-science programme by the EcoArtLab.

Methods: “Plankton Ecosystems” focuses on community science technologies, collaborative art formats and experiential learning about marine ecology, plankton diversity and ocean literacy. To this end, it “situated” approach that takes into account the different conditions in aquatic ecosystems and establishes relationships between the Alps, rivers, lakes in Switzerland and the sea. It builds an artistic-scientific knowledge base about aquatic ecosystems, focusing on the role of plankton in marine ecosystems and the regulation of the Earth’s climate. Film and storytelling are being used to explore how sensory experiences with water create connections and complex interactions of imagination, emotion and physical reality.

Results: This collaboration between artists, researchers and the public aims to convey an inclusive understanding of water landscapes and to transfer this into new contexts. Participatory formats (study groups, art-science talks and workshops), a film and an artistic research manual on community science will be used to bridge the gap between knowledge and action in society.

This project is being analysed by and carried out in collaboration with the SNSF project “EcoArtLab: Relational encounters between the arts and climate research”.

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