ELOQUENCE ART PRIZE 2025

« *L’art, l’écologie et les océans* »

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I'm a master's student at the Ecole du Louvre, specializing in the arts of the Pacific, with a focus on the contemporary productions of the indigenous communities of Arnhem Land. I aspire to become a cultural project manager and in the future to build significant projects between France and the Pacific.

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Facing the Ocean: Contemporary art across representations, coastal communities, and ecology

Two artists, two cultural backgrounds, different mediums, and one shared issue : to take part in saving the Oceans. Through the presentation of the artworks of the Brittany Nicolas Floc'h and the Erub islander Jimmy John Thaiday, we will question to what extent the ocean becomes a shared space for artistic creation for French and Australian coastal artists.

Jimmy J. Thaiday in his studio with ghost net art
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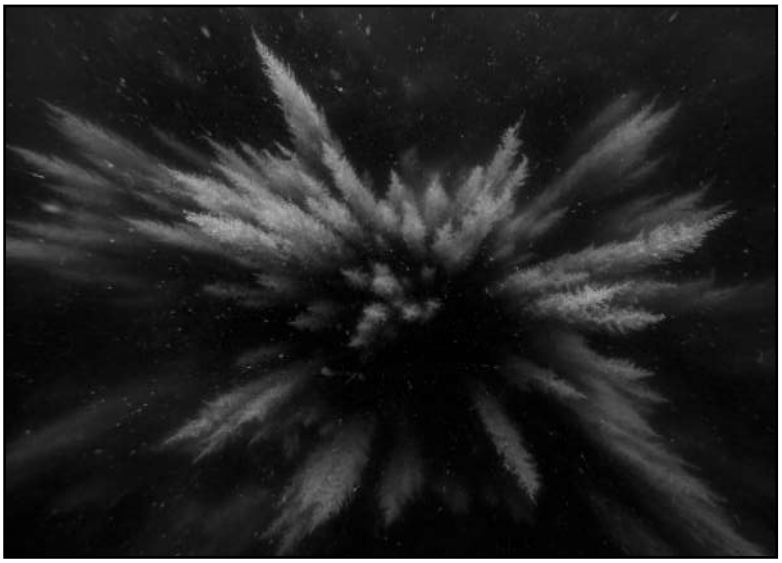
Jimmy Thaiday is an indigenous artist associated with the Ghost Net Australia program, a program dedicated to the collection of stranded fishing nets. Those nets are then recycled into artworks called "ghost net arts". Jimmy Thaiday creates animal sculptures made of ghost net.

Nicolas Floc'h is a photograph and visual artist specializing in seascapes and the photic zone. He focuses on the structuring natural habitats in the water and the color of the ocean.



Nicolas Floc'h, « Initium Maris », photograph, 2019
© Nicolas Floc'h

I will demonstrate how these artists both renew our relationship to the ocean, moving from a depicted threatening sea (19th century) to the presentation of a threatened sea.

Studying the imaginaries linked to the oceans will allow us to situate our artists' productions in the history of sea depictions. We will also apprehend the renewal of their ocean's vision ; by moving away from an anthropocentric gaze, they present the diversity of the marine world and the life it shelters. Nevertheless, their relationship with nature differs according to their cultural context; while Nicolas Floc'h is interested in a untouched underwater world, Jimmy Thaiday claims a territory animated by local indigenous beliefs. The artists have a similar relationship with waste; while waste is a component of today's seascape, it is transformed into both subject and material. Waste is especially significant for Jimmy Thaiday as it constitutes his main material. Finally, by combining these sensitive representations of the ocean with scientific knowledge, the artists work to protect it.

I will then invite you to consider the ocean as more than just a subject: as a connecting space for people.

Nicolas Floc'h and Jimmy Thaiday are part of collaborative networks and engage different communities in their artistic practices: ecological art is socially structuring, and ocean preservation cannot be achieved by artists alone. Furthermore, the artists are reinforcing the ocean's place in the identity of coastal populations, reinforcing ancient cultural dynamics.

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