

The Census of Marine Life and the Arts

“Both artists and researchers are driven by curiosity about the world around them. They observe and then communicate their observations. Both can learn from each other.”

– Odd Askel Bergstad, Project Leader, MAR-ECO

The discoveries of the Census of Marine Life, particularly the variety of marine organisms it has studied, have inspired many forms of art around the world. Likewise, the artists who use the Census as content for their work help to broaden the audiences who will learn about the Census and its findings. Over the years, the Census has welcomed collaborations with the arts, and several examples will be highlighted through the ***Census of Marine Life 2010: A Decade of Discovery*** events in London on 4-6 October 2010.



Albacore tuna (*Thunnus alalunga*) feeding on horse mackerels near the Azores Islands. Image by and courtesy of the Galatée film team.

Films and Documentaries: *Océans*

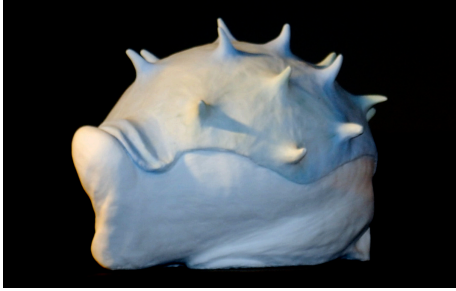
Headed by renowned French film director and actor Jacques Perrin, Galatée Film Productions, creator of *After the Monkey Folk*, *Microcosmos*, *Himalaya*, and *Winged Migrations*, produced *Océans*, released in 2010, about the world's oceans. The Galatée team received the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation on behalf of the Census of Marine Life and worked closely with Census scientists to ensure the scientific accuracy of the film. In conjunction with the film's worldwide release, Galatée and the Census have organized symposiums on the making of the film and the scientific discoveries associated with the habitats and organisms featured in it.



Rapture of the Yeti Crab by Lily Simonson (Oil on panel, 2008).

Paintings: *Yearning Yeti Crabs* and others

The Yeti Crab (*Kiwa hirsuta*), a new species discovered by Census researcher Michel Segonzac during an expedition to the Easter Island microplate, inspired a series of paintings by Lily Simonson, an artist based in Los Angeles, California. In her paintings, such as *Rapture of the Yeti Crab*, *Yearning Yeti Crabs*, and *Yeti Knew*, Simonson anthropomorphizes the creatures and highlights their otherworldly ambiguities, evoking specific aspects of human psychology. Other biologically oriented paintings by Lily feature lobsters and tube worms.



Art in clay by Anne Berg Edvardsen.

Sculpture: Marine life interpreted through clay

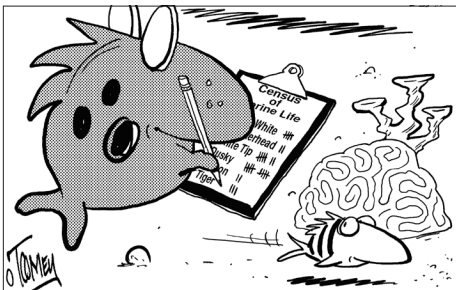
Norwegian artist Anne Berg Edvardsen uses sculpture to communicate things one can only “see” with one’s hands. A 2006 expedition by the Census project MAR-ECO to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge inspired her to create a body of sculpture to accompany her master’s thesis: *Where Art and Research Meet*. Her sculptures are unglazed clay in various shades of white. Berg Edvardsen explains that the lack of color allows the forms “to speak for themselves.”



Fabric design, a portion of a larger pennant depicting a census of coral reefs, by Judith Wagstrom.

Textiles: Pennants representing the Census research projects

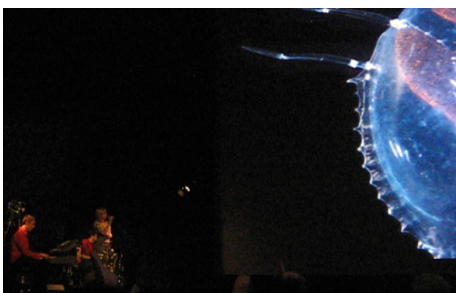
Judith Wagstrom, a textiles artist from the United States, created 17 fabric pennants that together reflect the full scope of research projects of the Census. In intricate detail, the pennants depict Census approaches to studying life in all ocean realms, from coral reefs to seamounts to the vast abyssal plains. The pennants will be displayed around the Royal Institution of Great Britain’s Faraday Auditorium during the Census of Marine Life 2010 News Conference and Panel Presentations on 4 October 2010.



A cartoon frame from *Sherman’s Lagoon*, created by Jim Toomey especially for the Census of Marine Life.

Cartoons: Syndicated comic strip *Sherman’s Lagoon*

Sherman’s Lagoon, by cartoonist Jim Toomey, is a syndicated comic strip that appears daily in over 150 newspapers in the United States and around the world. In a series of cartoons in 2009 and 2010, the fish character Ernest is enlisted to conduct a Census of Marine Life, through which he meets a number of interesting creatures that live in the sea. Toomey, who was educated in marine and environmental science, uses his celebrity and *Sherman’s Lagoon* to advocate for ocean understanding and conservation.



Norwegian musicians, Rockegården, perform music inspired by photographs from the deep sea.

Music: *Look to the Sea* and other

The Census has served as a muse for musicians. Australian songwriter Maryann Camilleri wrote and performed “Look to the Sea,” a song inspired by the Census that will premier during the Census of Marine Life 2010: A Decade of Discovery events in London on 4-6 October 2010. The Norwegian band Rockegården wrote and performed music set to a photographic slideshow of deep sea marine life at a public symposium about the Mid-Atlantic Ridge census in October 2009 and will perform a new song set to images from all ocean realms at the J. Frederick Grassle Science Symposium on the Census of Marine Life on 6 October 2010.

For more examples, visit the [Census in the Arts section of the Census of Marine Life Web Portal \(www.coml.org/media-resources/arts\)](http://www.coml.org/media-resources/arts).