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Visualising the North Atlantic Gyre: Co-Creative Depollution

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We live in a plastic debris era. In the first decade of the twenty-first century plastic production has quadrupled in comparison to the last century. Currently, global oceans are the largest unprotected ecosystem on the Earth. Anthropogenic litter is present in all marine habitats, from the coast to the most remote points in the oceans. Plastic and metal are the most prevalent litter item found on the deep sea bed. Plastic waste is concentrated in five rotating currents, known as *gyres* (Maximenko et al., 2012). Marine research has revealed that synthetic polymers are a toxic pollutant, as they are spread throughout all the world's oceans. Currently 269,000 tons of plastic composed of 5.25 trillion particles are afloat at sea (Eriksen et al., 2014). The public's conception of this problem is founded on descriptions of the North Pacific gyre as a large scale island of trash. Sadly this *wicked* problem is more complex then it seems, as the large scale *ocean clean-up* will solve what meets the naked eye only. Using the design and craft axiom, this research based paper will question: How can we gaze into the closest gyre to Europe, in the North Atlantic? I suggest approaching this problem through the process of making and visualization. This research based paper proposes to analyse two UK based workshops held in 2015, using five levels meta-narrative as research lens (immediate impressions, facts, relational /systems, futures, synthesis). Pilot workshops explored the collaborative visualization of the North Atlantic Gyre using a co-creative strategy as a framework for future thinking and action towards global marine depollution. If we could visualise this global collective issue as a radiating micro plastic cloud, as the workshops attempts to approach like a lantern fish, which eat up to 24,000 tons of plastic per year (Davidson & Asch, 2011).

The Design transposal workshop's primary objective is to visualize the future possibilities for ocean plastic depollution, using plastic disposal to co-create a 3D gyre installation. It strives to incorporate joyful activism, trash aesthetics, craft making and installation. The workshop is a participatory platform, facilitating rather than dictating. The practice argues that a changing relation to disposal is a changing relation to oneself (Hawkins, 2006).The future aim of this ongoing design research is to co-create new discard values and induce community relation towards urban-ocean plastic waste on a small everyday scale. The process of making and visualizing was initiated from the lantern fish's point of view and their mundane entanglement with gyre. Thus this paper will attempt to socially narrate the quality of everyday life and global progress in more holistic terms than only the economic indicator of GDP or scientific marine data. When we transgress the surplus-driven consumer culture, taking the seemingly useless discarded plastic and transposing it into a designed objects and 3D installations; we reveal how disposed materiality can contain a dimension for spaces of possibility, creating new values and even hope for global 21st century depollution.