

Short stories about the ocean: An art integrated project

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“mon ocean & moi” (monoceanetmoi.com) combines several activities to outreach on ocean sciences and to connect people. These activities address a non-scientific audience and in particular young people. This year, “mon ocean & moi” sought to propose an activity adaptable to school levels from kindergarten to high school that can be performed in an international context in a multidisciplinary way, and that accentuates creativity.

In order to meet this multitude of objectives, an art integrated project was proposed: Short Stories about the Ocean. As an art technique the shadow theatre has been chosen and the students should videotape their performance for documentation and sharing. Based on previous artistic work such as the participatory installation “Species Encounter: Dive In!” (exhibitions 2013-2014, www.micheleguieu.com/wordpress/portfolio/species-encounter-dive-in/), this approach has been selected for many reasons. For example, it can bridge cultures without a language barrier and it allows using an array of traditional techniques and technological tools.

In our presentation, we would like to summarize the feedback we received up to now, give an outlook on upcoming actions within this context and show selected shadow play videos. They evidence that such an art integrated project indeed allows the teachers to team one discipline with another (e.g. life and earth sciences, visual art and informatics) and the students to learn in a creative way. Using a combination of transfer of knowledge and skills, the students explored ocean topics and worked on individually or collectively. They defined their ideas, concepts and messages clearly and were encouraged to take decisions. The school children were very excited and happy with the project and what they learned about the ocean. Finally, the project aimed to give school children an opportunity to express their concerns and communicate about their ocean hot topics. Ranging from plankton to endangered species, from natural processes to anthropogenic disturbances, one of their main messages is: no ocean – no life. By giving the school children “a voice”, they become as well actors and multipliers in the outreach process as they give an important feedback to “mon ocean & moi”.