

RESET> MAR MENOR 2018

Call for Arts, Science, Technology and Ecology projects in Mar Menor

Project title: out of sight out of mind

Artists: Paul Sermon (contact), Charlotte Gould, Jeremiah Ambrose

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Project description

This proposal would involve three main phases of production, which would commence with the 10 day residency on Mar Menor in September 2018, where the majority of the secondary and primary research would take place by gathering data from scientific evidence, through interviews and recording material from observations and experiences. The second phase of the project would involve collating the material and the development of a complete interactive installation in post-production ready for the final exhibition phase of the project in Murcia in March 2019.

The project proposal has been developed by a team of three artists from Brighton, UK, each bringing specific experience and knowledge of 360° video to undertake the research and create a unique understanding and manifestation of the changing ecosystem of Mar Menor. This includes Paul Sermon who is currently working on collocated telematic experiences in 360° live video environments, Charlotte Gould's work on developing immersive 360° animated augmented reality and Jeremiah Ambrose who is working on gaze controlled navigation through 360° video narratives. This practice-based team of artists are currently undertaking research using a range of video and gaming software and advanced hardware devices, including Insta360 Pro 8K video cameras and Oculus Rift head-mounted-displays in conjunction with live video switchers. This has produced a range of ultra HD 360° outputs involving stereo 8K and real-time 4K environments with augmented live 360° video and animation sequences through live chroma-keying effects.

The overarching aim of this proposal is to create a unique interactive 360° video experience of Mar Menor that manifests the anthropocene effects on this natural landscape as augmented surreal and metaphysical interpretations of the artist's experiences during the residency and available scientific data of the Mar Menor ecosystem. Through environmental, social, economic and cultural observations and encounters the team will create an immersive 360° environment that incorporates both video and audio recordings with augmented imaginary and predicted realities transformed from scientific data in obscure and profound guises. Following the residency the team will collate the gathered material to produce a 360° telematic installation in Murcia in March 2019, that will incorporate live audience interaction within the original 360° video experience.

The material would be generated through an intensive stage of data gathering using the aforementioned 360° video techniques, as well as spatial audio recordings, generated through both interviews/conversations and observation/experience methods of research. By conducting interviews with local Mar Menor residents, land owners and policy makers the team would aim to build a unique picture of Mar Menor's memories, histories, tragedies, myths, aspirations, regrets

and possible futures. Through discussions in parallel with the scientific collaborators the team aim to better understand the specific ecological effects on the Mar Menor lagoon and surrounding landscape, as well as the environmental predictions and forecasts of the worst and best case scenarios for Mar Menor in the future. Of specific interest will be the “Servidor de Datos Científicos del Mar Menor” and the data available on the lagoon’s water temperature, salinity level, turbidity quality, chlorophyll and oxygen levels, radiation levels and water currents. Available data such as this would make a significant contribution to how the team manifest and communicate a unique experience of Mar Menor as a bizarre uncanny encounter of a landscape proliferated by familiar animated objects representing this data. For example, a mountain made of bags of salt indicating the salinity level in the lagoon, green clouds in the sky representing its chlorophyll level or a tower of suitcases signifying the increase of tourism. This technique of augmenting animated elements in 360° video has been developed by Charlotte Gould and is illustrated in the Figure 1 mock-up below, exemplifying augmented data that causes the user to question the very environment they inhabit by aiming to offer alternative experiences to our pervasive anthropocentric perspectives.

The scientific analysis and interviews/conversations will be further explored through the team’s own observations and experiences of Mar Menor, captured through a range of unique approaches to 360° video recording. This will include underwater filming in the lagoon and drone controlled aerial recordings over the lagoon and land areas of Mar Menor as well as other unique filming opportunities that arise. Using a technique of gaze-controlled interaction it will be possible to link the 360° video shots together to explore a non-linear narrative of the entire Mar Menor area to create movement between and interaction with the 360° film content and embedded overlays. They will also be combined with spatial audio and post-production techniques to explore layered immersive experiences. For example, a 360° recorded conversation with a participant on the shoreline of the lagoon could involve them pointing across the water, at which point it would be possible to look in the same direction and enter another 360° video sequence that travels over the lagoon to the location they were pointing at. This 360° navigation technique, developed by Jeremiah Ambrose has been successfully used in previous projects and is further explained in Figure 2 below.

The post-production stage of the project will follow the Mar Menor residency, from late September 2018 up until the exhibition in Murcia in March 2019. During this time the team will be reviewing the gathered data and editing the material to construct the non-linear interactive 360° video experience, complete with augmented animated elements. This will also incorporate the development of the immersive 360° telematic environment allowing public participants the opportunity to observe their own presence within the interactive 360° video experience of Mar Menor. Using a system of live 360° chroma-keying between two separate locations, possibly Murcia and Mar Menor, the participants will be able to encounter each other in this obscured landscape of recorded and imagined realities by standing within a constructed 4 x 4 metre blue box space installation. This 360° telematic technique is currently being developed by Paul Sermon and is further explained in the installation workflow diagram Figure 3. The intension is to provide the participant with a greater sense of presence and objective responsibility for the environment they exist within and are connected to. The final installation will seek to present the consequence of the anthropocene as a direct result of our own interventions, rather than being an ‘out of sight out of mind’ experience of Mar Menor.



Figure 1. Mock-up of equirectangular 360° environment with augmented animation elements



Figure 2. Virtual gaze interaction to create movement and interaction with 360° film content

Project equipment and materials for residency and exhibition

Provided by the artists:

- 2 x Insta360 Pro camera
- 2 x Monopod
- 1 x Ricoh Theta V 360 Camera
- 2 x Panasonic AV-HS50 HD video switcher
- 2 x Blackmagic UltraStudio Mini Recorder
- 2 x PC Laptop (VR Ready)
- 2 x Oculus Rift

Purchased or hired locally:

- Portable video lighting
- Sound recording equipment
- Portable green screens and stands
- Portable hard drives and SD cards
- Lightweight Drone and 360 camera mount
- Underwater housing case for 360 camera
- Cables: 2 x Micro HDMI to HDMI, 5 x 4K HDMI 6 to 8 metre, 2 x 4K SDI 6 to 8 metre, 2 x Thunderbolt 2, 2 x USB extension 6 to 8 metre, 4 x HDMI coupler

Additional equipment and materials for exhibition of installation in Murcia:

- 2 x 4K 65" LCD screen
- Video lighting
- Chroma-key green screens and paints
- Installation construction, MDF wood, and paints etc.

Estimated budget

Residency in Mar Menor:

- 3 x Return flight London Gatwick to Murcia San Javier 630.00 euros
- Hire of audio/visual equipment 800.00 euros
- Purchase of peripherals and media storage 400.00 euros

Exhibition in Murcia:

- 3 x Return flight London Gatwick to Murcia San Javier 630.00 euros
- Hire of audio/visual equipment 1000.00 euros
- Purchase of installation materials 1000.00 euros

Project timeline

June and July 2018: Develop working plan for residency project.

August 2018: Prepare materials, equipment and travel for residency.

10 to 20 September 2018: 10 days residency in Mar Menor.

October and November 2018: Collate materials generated/gathered during residency.

December 2018: Develop and prototype installation outcomes.

January and February 2019: Complete installation and documentation outcomes.

March 2019: Install work for Exhibition in Murcia from March to April of 2019.

May 2020: Install work for collective exhibition in Murcia.

Artist's websites of previous work

- Paul Sermon <http://www.paulsermon.org>
- Charlotte Gould <http://www.charlottegould.org>
- Jeremiah Ambrose http://www.jeremiahambrose.com/index_2.html