

**TBA21–ACADEMY CONVENES ARTISTS, SCIENTISTS, AND HEADS OF STATE FOR
CROSS-DISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE, EXCHANGE, AND PERFORMANCES TO
ADVANCE OCEAN CONSERVATION AND LITERACY**

**Participants Included Joan Jonas, Mark Dion, Walter Munk, Sylvia Earle, David Gruber,
President Remengesau of Palau, and Senator English of Hawai'i, Among Many Others**

VIENNA, AUSTRIA—June 13, 2017—To mark the first-ever United Nations Ocean Conference, TBA21–Academy convened influential scientists, noted contemporary artists, political leadership, and ocean advocates from around the globe for a week-long series of events, presentations, and performances at the U.N. and The Explorers Club in New York City.

Founded in 2011, the nonprofit TBA21–Academy is driven by a belief in the power of collaboration among disciplines and in the power of the arts to serve as a catalyst for communication, change, and action. TBA21–Academy's initiatives during World Oceans Week embody the Academy's mission—advancing interdisciplinary research, stimulating new knowledge, and inspiring artistic expression to foster a deeper understanding of the ocean and uncover groundbreaking solutions to the ocean's most pressing issues.

TBA21–Academy's **two-day conference at The Explorers Club**, held on June 5 and 6 and curated by Academy director **Markus Reymann**, illuminated the importance of alliances across different fields and knowledge-sharing in conserving and sustaining the world's ocean.

- Among the scientists who participated in the conference were: **Walter Munk**, who has been called the "Einstein of the Ocean," of Scripps Institute of Oceanography; marine biologist **Sylvia Earle**, president and chairman of Mission Blue; and **David Gruber** of the City University of New York and the American Museum of Natural History, who studies marine biofluorescence and microbial ecology.
- Artists participating included: **Mark Dion**, whose work explores environmental issues and blurs the boundaries between science and art; **Joan Jonas**, visual artist and pioneer of video and performance art whose work draws inspiration from the ocean; and **Rosanna Raymond**, whose Samoan heritage informs her diverse artistic practice.
- A range of other leaders and innovators also presented at the conference, including: **Dieter Paulmann**, chairman of the Okeanos, a community of international ocean navigators, scientists, cultural leaders, spiritual advisors, activists, and artists; and **David Lang** co-founder of OpenROV, an open-source underwater robot and international community of DIY ocean explorers.
- Ocean advocate and the **President of the Republic of Palau, Thomas Esang Remengesau, Jr.**, made a special appearance to share Palau's ground-breaking initiatives in ocean conservation.

In honor of World Ocean Day on June 8, TBA21–Academy **commissioned a new performance** by New York-based Mexican artist **Laura Anderson Barbata** in collaboration with the **Brooklyn Jumbies** and choreographers **Chris Walker** and **Mei Yamanaka**. The performance, presented on the United Nations Plaza, combined stilt dancing, music, and spoken word. Barbata combined the opening text of the Paris

Climate Agreement with her research and experiences on expedition in Papua New Guinea with the TBA21–Academy to create a spectacular public call to action for ocean conservation.

On the evening on June 6, the **Permanent Representatives of the Pacific SIDS** (Small Island Developing States), in partnership with **TBA21–Academy founder Francesca von Habsburg**, hosted leaders at the **U.N.** for a special event to commemorate the global commitment to a sustainable ocean by the year 2030. With a special address by **António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations**, the event recognized how pacific leaders (including the Cook Islands, Palau, French Polynesia, and Fiji) have mobilized as global leaders in addressing ocean issues and making some of the world’s largest commitments for marine managed areas. Event attendees included:

- **President of Nauru, Baron Waqa**, and the **President of the Republic of Palau, Thomas Esang Remengesau, Jr.**;
- **Peter Thomson, President of the U.N. General Assembly**;
- **Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO**;
- **Prince Albert II of Monaco**;
- **Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime Minister of Samoa** and chairman of the Pacific Islands Forum;
- **Josaia Voreqe Bainamarama, Prime Minister of Fiji** and co-host of the Ocean Conference; and
- **J. Kalani English, Hawai’i State Senate Majority Leader**; among many other ministers and ambassadors.

At the gathering, the legendary Jamaican reggae group, **Third World**, performed a new work they created to mark the Ocean Conference.

Prior to the U.N. Ocean Conference, on June 1, the **Hawai’i State Legislature passed a bill drafted by the State Senate Majority Leader J. Kalani English, in collaboration with TBA21–Academy**, which funds the creation of a new state commission on climate change and provides a guide to implementing new strategies as well as to monitoring and forecasting the impact of climate change at the regional, state, and local levels. The measure adopted relevant sections of the Paris Agreement as state law, which gives legal basis to continue adaptation and mitigation strategies for Hawai’i, although the Federal government has withdrawn from the treaty.

ABOUT TBA21–ACADEMY

Founded by Francesca von Habsburg and drawing on her experience as a producer of cross-disciplinary art installations and socially engaged cultural programming, TBA21–Academy leads artists, scientists, and thought-leaders on expeditions of collaborative discovery. Its mission is to foster a deeper understanding of our ocean through the lens of art and to engender creative solutions to its most pressing issues. The itinerant Academy commissions interdisciplinary research that catalyzes engagement, stimulates new knowledge, and inspires artistic production. Established in 2011, the nonprofit’s program is informed by a belief in the power of exchange between disciplines and in the ability of the arts as a vessel for communication, change, and action. TBA21–Academy’s first exhibition, *Tidalectics*, presenting 13 artists whose work reveal diverse perspectives on the cultural, political, and biological dimensions of the ocean, recently opened in the foundation’s headquarters in Vienna.

Media Contacts

Resnicow and Associates

Juliet Sorce jsorce@resnicow.com; 212 671 5158

Sarah Palay spalay@resnicow.com; 212 671 5163