

About TBA21–Academy

Established in 2011 by Francesca von Habsburg and drawing on her experience as a producer of cross-disciplinary art installations and socially engaged cultural programs, TBA21–Academy is dedicated to fostering a deeper understanding of the ocean through the lens of art. Led by Director Markus Reymann, the itinerant academy brings together artists, scientists, policy-makers, and other thought-leaders on expeditions of collaborative discovery. TBA21–Academy leverages the arts as an investigative tool to support education, advocacy, policy, and change, working to address to the most pressing issues faced by the environment today through an innovative program of symposia, conferences, fellowships, and art commissions.

At the heart of TBA21–Academy’s activities is its signature three-year fellowship program, *The Current*, a pioneering initiative that cultivates transdisciplinary practice and the exchange of ideas. Taking inspiration from the ocean tides, the program is organized in three-year cycles led by curators and artists selected by TBA21–Academy. These Expedition Leaders guide one expedition annually over the course of three years and propose fellow participants from a range of backgrounds to join the journeys aboard the research vessel, the *Dardanella*. Leaders and participants subsequently contribute to a Convening—held approximately six months after each expedition—that engages local communities and the public with experiences and lessons learned from the participants’ fieldwork in the Pacific. Curator Ute Meta Bauer served as the first Expedition Leader of *The Current*; curator Chus Martínez and artist collective SUPERFLEX are currently the leaders of the second cycle of the program that launched in 2018.

Alongside *The Current*, TBA21–Academy has inspired and supported the creation of major new arts projects since its establishment in 2011, including the commissioning of some 15 new works by artists including John Akomfrah, Joan Jonas, Armin Linke, and Eduardo Navarro, among many others. In 2017, TBA21–Academy organized its first major traveling exhibition, *Tidialectics*, and published its eponymously titled anthology, curated and edited by Stefanie Hessler, released jointly with MIT Press in 2018, offering new research into the cultural, political, and biological dimensions of the oceans.

In addition to its work in the cultural sphere, TBA21–Academy has been seminal in the development of new research, legislature, and conservation efforts around the world, including the establishment of the East Portland Fish Sanctuary in Jamaica; the launch of a conservation and research project for the pelagic species that inhabit the waters surrounding Cocos Island off Costa Rica; and most recently the designation of the first-ever off-shore marine-protected-area in Fiji surrounding Navatu Reef. TBA21–Academy is the first and only arts organization to be granted observer status at the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the UN body located in Kingston, Jamaica, that administers and distributes resources on the seabed of the high seas.

In Summer 2019, TBA21–Academy will launch Ocean Space in the restored church of San Lorenzo in Venice, a dynamic, new, cross-disciplinary center that will build on these ongoing efforts and provide unprecedented access to the Academy’s programs, archives, and resources.