

When the sea holds its breath

This exhibition explores the concept of the sea as a living entity which changes with the cycles and tides, which can be ferocious and calm, transformative and cunning. Jorge Luis Borges writes that the sea is a constant force which gnaws at the pillars of the earth, also unknowable in its being. He asks, "Who is the Sea?"

Wade Davis in his book, "Wayfinders," writes about a knowledge of the sea gained through wayfinding which occurs through staying with the sea. This allows for observation of wind patterns, seeing the positioning of kelp beds as aids to navigation, understanding currents, bird life, winds and the movement of sea animals.

The sea is a creature
It breathes
It inhales and exhales
And moves constantly
As an ocean swimmer I am aware of the constant changes
Currents move across and under the water
Tides pull water over sands exposing the shore, the rocks, leaving inked tidal lines
Alternating then and covering shells, rocks, rays
Camouflaging deep drops into ravines
The rips create a divide in the surface
Here the sea holds its breath
Before strong winds and changing tides
The sea waits
Inhaling
Then unleashes an exhale which create large forms
Stampeding waves
I look for signs of currents and
Under the surface to the seabed
Is a ray camouflaged in the underwater reef?
Moulds of sand are formed by the movement of the tides
Refracted light creates hues of blue and green
I see the prehistoric patterning on stingrays
Which lie on the sea floor or move with ease flapping their side wings
Tail extended
I see dark forms of shipwrecks which at times feel sinister
I feel I have eyes on my body
Sensing temperature, sea breathing
The sea also imprinting my body and mind

Barbie Kjar, 2025