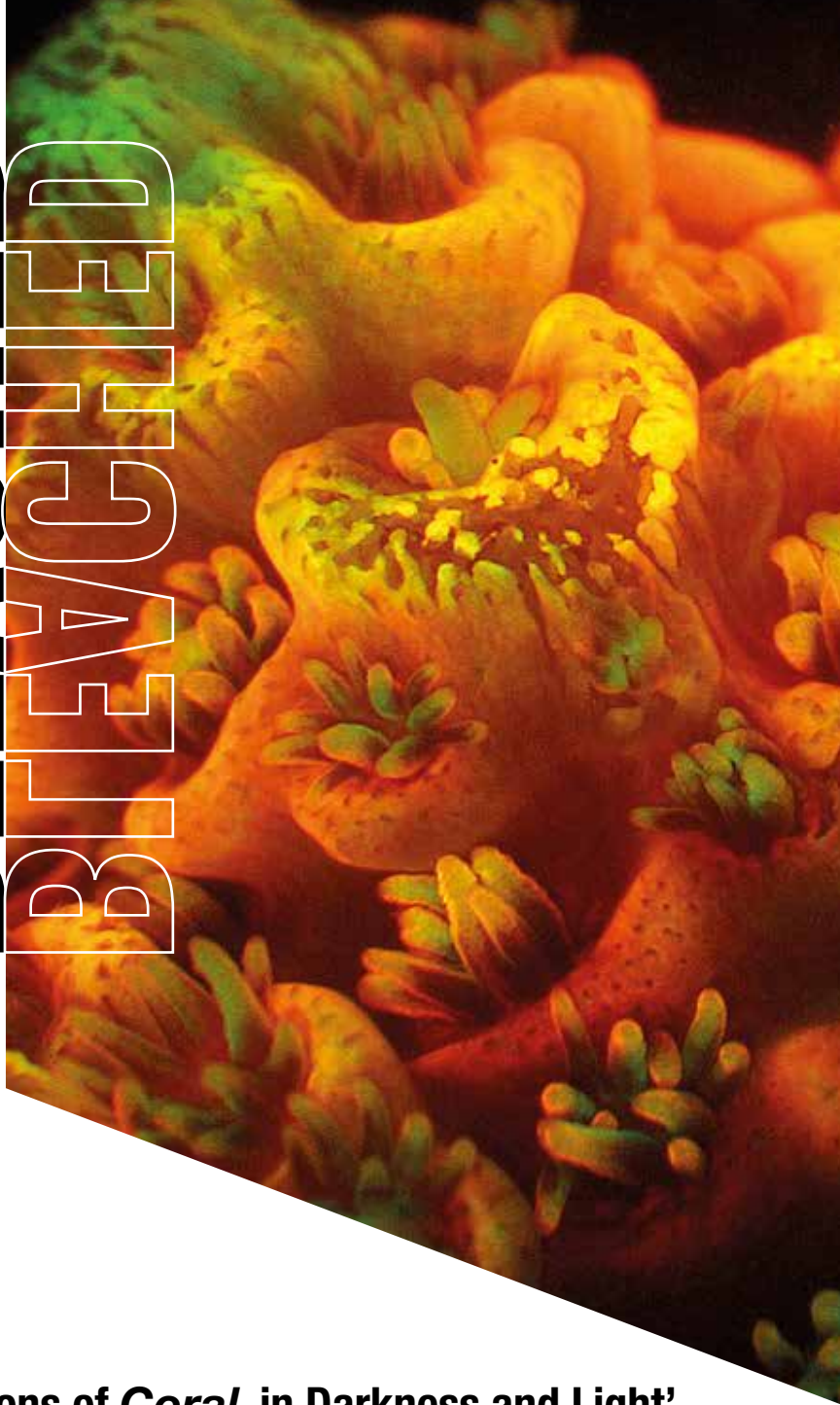


BLEACHED



‘Visions of *Coral*, in Darkness and Light’

01.

BLEACHED is an exhibition about the real-life story of coral reefs. It is a collaboration between the artists of the Vulgar Earth Collective and the Coral Reef Laboratory at the University of Southampton. **BLEACHED** represents a conversation between science and art, between fact and emotion, between the clinical and the personal.



Frances Carlile. Full Fathom Five

BLEACHED

While scientists are unlocking the secrets of coral, artists stand beside them, engaging new audiences and bringing the subject to life. The stories of the reef take on a new power when told with imagery, stirring emotions and engaging the heart. If we are to react proportionally to the messages of science, we must first become emotionally involved in the peril that nature faces.



J. Wiedenmann & C. D'Angelo.
Bleached staghorn coral

BLEACHED



Katherine Jack. Photo No.1: Humans interacting with reefs of Palawan, Philippines

BLEACHED

From the perspective of our land-born lives, the ocean is a vast and alien place that often seems so separate and other it is easy to forget that our planet is an ocean world, and that humanity is just a small part of it. Within this watery world today's coral reefs have existed for some 25 million years, a thousand times longer than modern humans.

They are comparatively small, seemingly insignificant, intricate, diverse and beautiful, yet their size defies their importance. These ecosystems are integral to life on Earth, they are the nurseries of the ocean, supporting a third of all ocean life and, in turn, the oceans support all life on Earth. Coral reefs are a barometer to the health of the oceans and our world, and they are in trouble.

02.

THE SCIENCE

The work that has inspired this collaboration has been undertaken by Dr. Cecilia D'Angelo and Prof. Jörg Wiedenmann of the Coral Reef Laboratory at the University of Southampton. The science explains the mechanisms that lead to coral bleaching and the role of coral colours in this process.

Glowing proteins produced by the corals are responsible for many of the stunning colours of reefs. As a result of the research undertaken by the scientists of the Coral Reef Laboratory, these proteins have been integrated into medical research as versatile imaging tools. Research suggests that in the reef environment these pigments optimise the light climate inside the coral host for the benefit of the symbiont algae. The excess production of these pigments can be seen as a warning sign of the stressful environmental conditions that can lead to coral bleaching.

Conversely, the evidence suggests that the accumulation of these colourful pigments can help the coral to recover.

Coral reefs are in trouble and they need our help to create the systemic cultural change required to protect these beautiful ecosystems and the environments and ecosystems that they support. Coral colours offer a powerful vector to communicate this message.

BLEACHED

“Our work explains how disturbing *natural* levels of nutrients in the *water column* can reduce the capacity of *corals* to resist coral *bleaching* caused by elevated summer temperatures. We conclude that the necessary global *action* against climate change required to save *coral reefs* needs to be underpinned by maintaining the best *possible water quality*.”

Dr. Cecilia D'Angelo and Prof. Jörg Wiedenmann of the Coral Reef Laboratory at the University of Southampton

BLEACHED

Glenn Morris. Torch Coral



Cecilia D'Angelo & Joerg Wiedenmann: Fluorescence microscopic image of polyps of a staghorn coral revealing the glowing pigments.

VULGAR EARTH

ARTS COLLECTIVE

BLEACHED

03.



Maisie Noble. Neolith

VULGAR EARTH

Vulgar Earth is a not-for-profit artists collective, which aims to promote awareness and discussion of contemporary social, political and environmental issues. By producing engaging, emotive and stimulating exhibitions and events, we attempt to hold a mirror up to the beauty and vulgarity of human relationships with the natural world, and our current disassociation from it.

Each member is an independent creative practitioner who adds their voice and vision to a collective message for change. Within the small immersive world of the exhibition, a world where imagery, form and light can isolate us from the distractions of daily life and transport us to an alternative reality, we seek to activate emotion and a sense of connection, to challenge our feelings of detachment and invite a new perspective on our world.

Our intention is to generate emotion and open dialogue that will incite discussions on the direction of humanity and the individual's place within it. We hope that by generating eco-conscious work that is grounded in research, and by situating that work in accessible public spaces, we can help to steer the development of our society in a more humane, sustainable, fair and rewarding direction.

BLEACHED

“I think it’s very exciting that the *division* that we often grow up with at school, between *art* and *science*, is kind of smashed apart by this *exhibition*”

Sam Fraser, BBC Radio Solent



*Visitors exploring the glow of living corals under blue light illumination.
Photograph: Jon Banfield*

BLEACHED
GOD'S HOUSE TOWER
13th May – 5th June 2022
Southampton, UK.

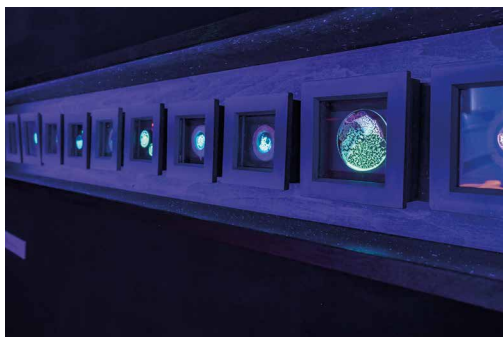
Vulgar Earth
ANDREW LAMONT GALLERY
14th April – 20th May 2018
Theatr Brycheiniog,
Brecon, UK.

Vulgar Earth
CANWOOD GALLERY
1st July – 13th August 2017
Canwood Gallery,
Hereford, UK

Memorials to Symbiosis
ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE
2nd Oct - 25th Nov 2021
Aberystwyth University,
Ceredigion, SY23 3DE



Jo Chalkblack. *Open Body*



Tina Walton. *Stress Patterns*

PAST EXHIBITIONS

BLEACHED

04.

THE SCIENCE

We consider *public* engagement and *community* building to be an integral part of our *creative* ethos.

We seek to become familiar with each locality we are invited to, learning about the audience in order to tailor the social engagement around each *BLEACHED* exhibition to specific situations and types of communities. Several members of the collective have significant experience with community and social engagement projects, working with visiting schools/ education groups, virtual communities or specific groups who may historically have experienced barriers in integrating into cultural spaces. We are keen to discuss possible opportunities for a programme of activities. These could include but are not limited to: lectures and talks, workshops and performance based interactions, educational visits and Q&A sessions.

We also believe in the importance of involving local artists; from emerging to established artists, we seek to feature work from invited members in each locality that we visit. *BLEACHED* is a unique opportunity to engage people in an interconnected science and art collaboration. When these disciplines collide, a broader perspective emerges, bringing in a wider cross-section of the community and visitors and empowering them to become involved in the discussion. We are always seeking new ways to engage, surprise and delight visitors, and by nurturing relationships between galleries and the public, artists and scientists, we hope to leave a legacy in each new area we visit.

BLEACHED

*BLEACHED at Gods House Tower,
Southampton, Spring 2022.
Photograph: Jon Banfield*



05.

WORKING WITH US

Our Spring 2022 exhibition
at the arts and cultural *heritage*
venue *God's House Tower*,
Southampton placed us in a
prime location to *advocate* for
environmental activism in ocean &
reef conservation.

Lois Meiklejohn. Anthropocene 1

BLEACHED

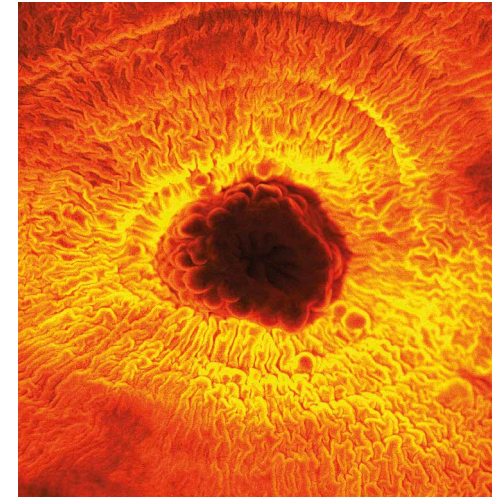
Located near the Southampton ports and cruise-ship docks and nestled into the historic city walls, God's House Tower is a venue that attracts a diverse population ranging from local communities to the tourists of the international cruise routes.

BLEACHED presented work in all of the main gallery spaces within the building, including a showreel of artists' moving-image and educational films in the *Project Space*, a series of large-scale installations and 2D work in the *Main Gallery* and an immersive dark-room environment with live corals, projection mapping and fluorescing artworks in the *Crawford Room*.

"The *exhibition* is an other-worldly experience of *immersion* into the *exquisitely* balanced lives, forms and ecosystems of our *coral reefs*. In a light controlled gallery, living and *bleached* coral samples are found alongside *traditional*, contemporary and digital artworks. Visitors are invited to *contribute* to the 'calls from the reef' wall with their *thoughts*, messages and *poetry*" - godshousetower.org.uk

BLEACHED

WORKING WITH US



C. D'Angelo & J. Wiedenmann. Fluorescence microscopic image of a polyp of a mushroom coral.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

BLEACHED can be adapted for any space; we work hard to find innovative ways to make maximum use of every setting, and will specifically select or create work to this end. The range of artists and disciplines within the collective means that we can work with you and your space to tailor a bespoke exhibition that ranges from immersive/interactive works to large-scale sculpture to 2D work, or a combination of the above. Both as individual practitioners and as the Vulgar Earth Collective we have significant experience working with galleries and museum spaces. We have our own in-house technical team, but we are also happy to collaborate with your own team as required.



Sam Lucas. Venus Trap

PRESS & VISITOR

BLEACHED

FEEDBACK

“This *exhibition* shows that the melding together of *art* and *science* is powerful in bringing greater *attention* to *environmental* issues.”

Siobhan Flax, Deputy Director of the
Government of the British Virgin Islands
London Office

“Inspiring and incredibly positive. A perfect example of academia working with culture for the public (and green!) good. Shows science and art can complement one another in an informative way.”

“I am a practising artist and I have gained valuable insights into the fragility of the ecosystem.”

“Very thoughtfully conceived & beautifully exhibited. Aesthetics and learning – what could be better!

“Awesome exhibition; instructive without being overwhelming. Great for adults and kids!”

“Wonderful mesmerising combination of art and science. Most illuminating!”

“Good balance of art and science – most art/science exhibitions don’t actually give much scientific info, but we learnt a lot!”

“I absolutely loved this exhibition. I really enjoyed the combination of science and art and the wide array of art and mediums which featured in the exhibition.”

BLEACHED

PRESS & FEEDBACK



Rose Sanderson. Barnacles



Glenn Morris. Torch Coral

Contact Details & Project Leads:

Lead Artists

Simon Meiklejohn // Curator and Vulgar Earth Founder (simon@vulgarearth.com)

Glenn Morris // (arctictreesurgeon@yahoo.co.uk)

Maisie Noble // (studio@maisienoble.co.uk)

Lead Scientists

Dr. Cecilia D'Angelo // Lecturer Marine Biology (cda1w07@soton.ac.uk)

Prof. Jörg Wiedenmann // Professor Biological Oceanography
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Get in Touch

Visit our website: bleached.org.uk

Social Media

Instagram: @vulgarearthartists, @uni_southampton

Twitter: @VulgarEarth @TheCoralReefLab @unisouthampton

Facebook: Vulgar Earth Artists

In association with

Vulgar Earth Artists
University of Southampton

More images of previous exhibitions, including virtual reality tours, can be viewed on our website.

BLEACHED

**VULGAR
EARTH**



University of
Southampton