

Emma Critchley

8 February - 3 May 2025

Soundings

Soundings looks at the urgent and complicated issue of deep sea mining through filmmaking, movement, and public engagement.

With conversations happening around the world, the 2-year road map for deciding the rules for mining is set to come to an end in 2025.

Emma's project asks us to think about the ecological, geopolitical, and cultural risks involved in mining minerals from the deep sea. Most of the seabed is legally the shared responsibility of all humankind.

As a regulator of the earth's climate the deep sea is also a source of food, materials, cultural heritage, and identity for many countries.

We need to think about how we consider this important issue and how we manage it.

Key words:

Mining – digging underground to get minerals.

Seabed – the ocean floor.

Indigenous people – descendants of people who lived in a country or region at the time when people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived.

Pacific – an ocean that separates Australia and Asia from America.

Minerals – naturally occurring elements or compounds.

National Oceanographic Centre – a place that looks at ocean science in Southampton.

Sustainable Oceans Alliance – looks at the problems that face the ocean.

Ecological – living things and their relationship to their environment.

Geopolitical – the politics between different areas of the world.

Cultural heritage – includes legacy of languages, customs, traditions, values, places and objects created by people as an expression of living that is passed down generations.

Road map – a plan with an end goal in mind.



Emma Critchley, *Sirens* (film still, from the Soundings project), 2023

Gallery 2

Should we mine the seabed?

That's the question that is being asked this year!

We don't know if this will be a good or a bad thing. Scientists are still thinking about it as it hasn't been done before.

What do you think about when you imagine the deep sea?

Emma is really interested in how you can think of the deep sea as an active part of the world we live in.

This idea is explored through film and dance, and how information can be shown through the body and movements.

Gallery 3

Rights of the Deep is a seven page letter looking into how the deep sea should be treated the same as any other place on Earth.

Emma worked with Indigenous people in the Pacific region to understand how they think the deep sea should have rights and be treated equal to land.

Normally with big issues like deep sea mining, scientists, government officials and business leaders are asked to give their opinion first, before the effected communities.

Emma has switched this around and led with the Pacific community voices as the Pacific is one of the key regions where deep sea mining will happen.

Barker-Mill Gallery...

This deep sea garden shows us lots of sea creatures and plants that live on the seabed. These are creatures that are alive now and will be affected by the mining if it takes place.

Emma is asking us to think about the impact mining will have on the seabed. Big companies have said that for our planet to become more 'green' we need to mine the seabed to get minerals.

However, we do not need to mine the seabed to get all of the minerals for our technology. Scientists have developed man-made materials that can go into our batteries for example.

The drawings on the wall in Barker-Mill Gallery are by artist Else Bostelmann and cartographer Marie Tharp. Both were interested in the seabed and were exploring this at a time when not much was known about what lived in the sea or how deep it was.

