

Ship to Shore and Powerful Tides

By Jean Wainwright



Project Details

Name of Researcher:	Professor Jean Wainwright
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Name of Output:	Ship to Shore and Powerful Tides
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UCARO link:	https://research.uca.ac.uk/view/projects/Ship_to_Shore.html
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Output Type:	T – Other; multi-component output comprising curation of 2 exhibitions and a monograph
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Year and mode of dissemination:	<p><i>Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea</i>, exhibition, SeaCity Museum, Southampton (8th February – 4th May 2014)</p> <p><i>Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea</i>, exhibition, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (8th February – 4th May 2014) [concurrent]</p> <p><i>Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea</i>, monograph (John Hansard Gallery/Cornerhouse Publications, 2018. ISBN:978 085432 9762)</p> <p><i>Powerful Tides: 400 Years of Chatham and the Sea</i>, exhibition, Historic Dockyard Chatham, (23rd March - 17th June 2018)</p>
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Key Words:	Curation, exhibition, photography, film, artefacts, archive, seas, oceans, Historic Dockyard Chatham, Southampton
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Synopsis

Ship to Shore and Powerful Tides is a research output by Professor Jean Wainwright comprising two exhibitions and a book that together explore artistic responses to the sea.

The first component was the exhibition *Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea*, curated by Wainwright and extending over two sites in Southampton, the John Hansard Gallery and SeaCity Museum. This was the first exhibition to link the history of Southampton as a seaport with contemporary artists' responses to the lure of the sea. It included the work of 17 contemporary artists, museum objects, testimony from Southampton's oral history archive, and a new sound installation work composed from oral recollections and archival recordings by Wainwright, whose curatorial and critical practice is centred on the artist interview.

The book *Ship to Shore* includes a substantial introductory essay by Wainwright, a chapter by the writer and maritime

historian Philip Hoare, and interviews by Wainwright with all 17 artists in the exhibition. It presents new insights into the working methods and artistic responses, personal and political, of the artists in the *Ship to Shore* exhibition.

Wainwright was able to continue her investigation into artists' relationship to the sea in the exhibition *Powerful Tides*, curated to mark the 400th anniversary of Chatham Historic Dockyard. It brought together significant museum loans of historical works with the work of contemporary artists, structured around a narrative that journeyed from the rivers Medway and Thames out to the open sea.

This portfolio presents contextual information including research aims, context and processes leading to new insights, and information on the public reception of the research. It includes the research itself as images of works from the exhibitions, object lists and installation views. The research is also submitted as a PDF of the book *Ship to Shore*.

Context

The exhibitions in this research output, *Ship to Shore and Powerful Tides*, drew on Wainwright's expertise in curation developed over many previous projects such as *The Search for Andy Warhol's Voice* (De La Warr Pavilion, 2012), *Gestures of Resistance* (Documenta Athens, 2017), *The Data Battlefield* (FOMU Antwerp, 2017) and many others. The research also built on her expertise in the contemporary artist interview, as a long-time contributor to Audio Arts with a commitment to putting the artist's voice at the centre of her curatorial practice.

There is rich history of exhibitions that explore the work of artists in relation to the sea. The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, for instance, has explored 'Turner and the Sea' (2013) and many other galleries have presented aspects of Britain's maritime, naval and seagoing colonial past through the art it inspired, or foregrounded the work of pre-eminent romantic artists such as Turner and Constable who returned again and again to the lure of the sea in their work. Other exhibitions (primarily of photographic work) have engaged with the seaside as a site of leisure and pleasure. Fewer have considered in detail the ongoing resonances of the subject of the sea in contemporary art, where artists from diverse backgrounds continue the investigation of the sea's power, and challenge and unsettle the grand narratives of the maritime tradition. This was Wainwright's aim in curating *Ship to Shore and Powerful Tides*. Both exhibitions also aimed to respond to the very specific contexts of their locations—the great seaport of Southampton, and Chatham Dockyard with its legacy of naval shipbuilding—and to place historical works related to these sites in a contextualising relationship to contemporary practice, much of it conceptual in nature. Both of the chosen sites had experienced a loss of primacy in comparison to their former importance as locations of civilian and naval shipbuilding, economic and political power, and the exhibitions and the artworks they contained responded to the fracturing of certainties in the post-colonial and post-industrial context.

Key Texts:

Bathe, B.W. (1972) *Seven Centuries of Sea Travel: from the crusaders to the cruises* (London: Barrie and Jenkins)

Crawshaw, J.D. (1999) *The History of Chatham Dockyard* (Isabel Garford)

Hoare, P. (2013) *The Sea Inside* (London: Fourth Estate)

Klein, B. and Mackenthun, G. (eds) (2003) *Sea Changes: historicizing the ocean* (London: Taylor & Francis)

MacDougall, P. (2012) *Chatham Dockyard: the rise and fall of a military industrial complex* (History Press)

Prentice, R. (1994) *A Celebration of the Sea: the decorative art collections of the National Maritime Museum* (London: HMSO)

Riding, C. and Johns, R. (2013) *Turner and the Sea* (London: National Maritime Museum)

Roussel, M. (2010) *Southampton Maritime City: ocean liners to cruise ships* (DB Publishing)

Taylor, J. (1985) *Images of Sail Sea and Shore* (Greenwich: National Maritime Museum)

Taylor, M. (2007) *Southampton: Gateway to the British Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic)

Wainwright, J. (2020) 'Small lies? Authenticity and the artist interview'. *Journal of Art Historiography* (23). ISSN 2042-4752

Wilton, A. (1987) *Turner in his Time* (London: Thames and Hudson)

Research Questions and Aims

Research questions:

What are some of the varied ways in which artists, past and present, respond to the sea in their work?

How do artists articulate their practice through a site-specific artwork related to the sea?

What is the significance of Southampton as a site for the artists in *Ship to Shore*?

What is the significance of the Historic Dockyard Chatham as a site for, and a link between, the artists in *Powerful Tides*?

Research aims:

To explore aspects of the relationship between artists and the sea, both historically and in contemporary art.

To explore through art the relationship between Southampton and the sea, and the cultural importance of the city's identity as a seaport.

To explore through art the relationship between Chatham and the sea, and the significance of the naval dockyard.



Catherine Yass, Lighthouse (North North West), 2011. Duratrans transparency lightbox. Copyright the artist. Courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London

Research Methods and Process

SHIP TO SHORE: *Ship to Shore* started with a consideration of Southampton's long history as a seaport and hub for transatlantic travel and its more recent development as a centre for the cruise industry. This seafaring heritage is deeply important to both the culture and the identity of the city, and *Ship to Shore* explored this through an examination of the 'lure' of the sea, its ongoing fascination for artists. The research process began with extensive historical and contextual research. Wainwright read key texts on the artists she knew she wanted to include, researched the history of the city, and consulted archive material in Southampton City Museum. This included exploring an archive of oral history recordings of people who had worked in the port or at sea.

This archival research provided important contextual material for the exhibition, including posters and ephemera. Wainwright worked with Southampton City Art Gallery to borrow historical works including Gustave Courbet's *La Vague*, c.1869 and James Tissot's *The Captain's Daughter*, 1873, and used the oral history recordings she had found (along with material from her own archive) to construct a sound installation documenting voices from Southampton's maritime past.

The exhibition presented the work of 17 contemporary artists, all included for the way their works responded to the exhibition's themes of diaspora, immigration and emigration, navigation, trade, and the push and pull of political alliances and rivalries. All these themes were examined by the artists and works in the exhibition in ways that engage conceptually with both historical contexts and contemporary concerns. Collectively, the works explore the lure of the sea through its physical and physiological pull, considering time and distance, and expressing both its poetic and brutal possibilities.

Tacita Dean's work, *Teignmouth Electron, Cayman Brac* (1999) was based on Donald Crowhurst's beached boat, which the artist tracked down to a remote Caribbean island. In 1968 Crowhurst attempted to circumnavigate non-stop around the world, however, alone at sea, with failing equipment, he began to fake his journey, calling in false positions and eventually (it is thought) committing suicide. Wainwright created new recordings to accompany Dean's installation and secured on loan from the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich Crowhurst's 'Navicator' (sic) navigation device to display alongside Dean's work.

Isaac Julien's film *Western Union: Small Boats (The Leopard)*, highlighted the plight of migrants traversing the Mediterranean sea from Libya to escape war and famine. This was the first time this work had been shown in the UK.

Langlands and Bell's work *Into the Blue* (2014), commissioned by Wainwright for the exhibition, focused on how ships and their registered names become encoded as social, political and economic phenomena and how these become entwined with the complex networks that link ocean liners, cargo ships and trade routes.

Wainwright emphasises the artist's voice in her curatorial practice. She interviewed all the contemporary artists in *Ship to Shore*, and these interviews were published in the book *Ship to Shore*, with a substantial framing essay by Wainwright and a chapter by writer and maritime historian Philip Hoare. The publication of these interviews with each artist allowed the exploration of the research themes in greater depth. The *Ship to Shore* book is the first collection of contemporary artist interviews to focus in depth on the sea as its theme.

Research Methods and Process

POWERFUL TIDES: *Powerful Tides* continued Wainwright's research into artists' engagement with the sea, but in a new site with distinct historical contexts. *Powerful Tides* addressed the same research questions and concerns as *Ship to Shore*, but called for new research and developments in Wainwright's curatorial approach. Three artworks from *Ship to Shore* were also featured in *Powerful Tides* (Steffi Klentz's *Concert for Maison Sirène*, Yinka Shonibare's *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, and Tracy Emin's neon piece *She Lay down Deep Beneath the Sea*). Two artists (Catherine Yass and Langlands and Bell) were featured in both exhibitions but with different works. While these artists show the common themes of the two exhibitions, new artists and works, including historical works, were brought in to respond to the new site.

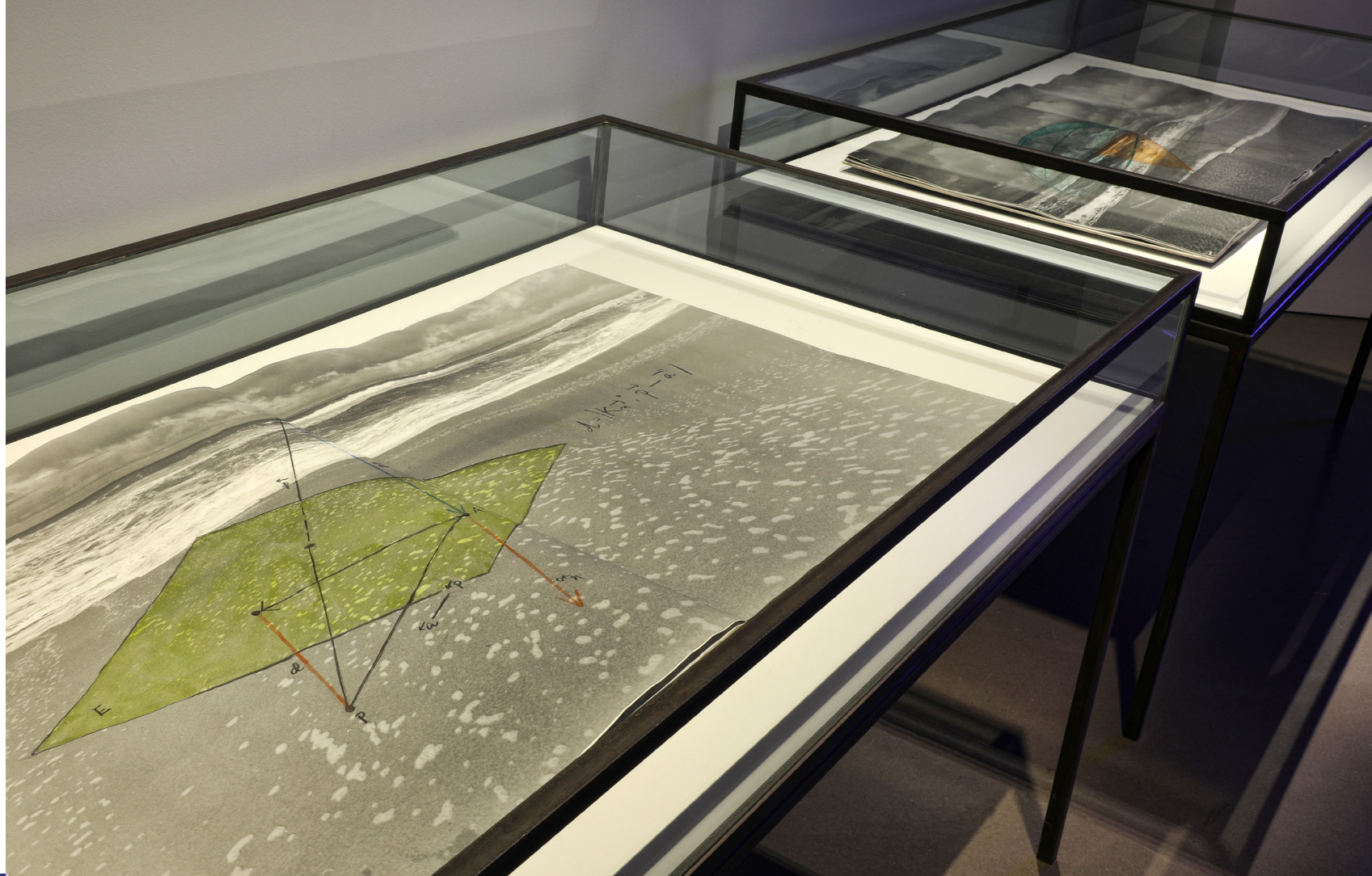
As with *Ship to Shore*, research commenced with contextual and archival investigations, this time on Chatham Dockyard and its history of naval shipbuilding. To a greater extent than in *Ship to Shore*, Wainwright drew these historical contexts into the exhibition, identifying for inclusion archive materials from the Dockyard, including maps of the site early in its history, and selecting paintings in the Dockyard collection, for instance a little-known work by Beatrix Nickalls. She researched artists and writers who had a connection with the dockyard or who had visited it, investigating works by John Constable, JMW Turner and William Wyllie, as well as twentieth-century artists Eric Ravilious, Norman Wilkinson and Muirhead Bone. The exhibition included works by these artists, as well as the words of Charles Dickens. *Powerful Tides* involved the loan of a significant number of important works from national collections: the British Library, Imperial War Museum, Tate, National Maritime Museum and the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth. These included three works by Turner (including a large study for *The Fighting Temeraire*, shown

to the public for the first time, and a sketch for *The Battle of Trafalgar*), and two by Constable.

This historical material was interspersed with works by contemporary artists, with the exhibition curated so that each one contributed to a visual journey from one artwork to the next, from the Chatham Dockyard out through the river Medway to the Thames estuary, the North Sea and the oceans beyond. Maps, images and manuscripts describing the early dockyard were placed next to Christiane Baumgartner's 9 photogravure works picturing old and half-sunken boats on the Medway, made in conscious reference to the Raid on the Medway of 1667, when the Dutch navy attacked and sank English battleships at anchor on the river. Nadav Kander's 6 monumental photographs of the Thames estuary were adjacent to Beatrix Nickalls' 1908 painting *On Guard at the Nore*, depicting a dreadnought patrolling the Nore sandbank at the confluence of the Medway and Thames. Tracey Emin's poetic and evocative neon work, *She Lay down Deep Beneath the Sea*, was positioned in relation to works by war artists Wilkinson and Ravilious that pictured submarines. Through this geographical arrangement, thematic connections—industry, trade and passage, lights, icons revisited—were also made.

As with *Ship to Shore*, Wainwright recorded interviews with all the artists in *Powerful Tides*. A selection of material from these interviews will be published in a forthcoming book from Routledge, *Hybrid Marines* (Gee, G. (ed.), forthcoming).

In both *Ship to Shore* and *Powerful Tides*, the design of the exhibition and the deployment of space was researched by building models of the galleries and the works within them, taking into consideration specific conservation requirements, especially of the historical works.



*Installation shot of Powerful Tides:
400 years of Chatham and the Sea,
The Historic Dockyard Chatham.
Anselm Kieffer, Coagulatio Maris
(2011) and Archimedes (2011)*

Research Insights and Contribution

Ship to Shore was significant as the first exhibition in Southampton that presented so many internationally-renowned contemporary artists responding to the theme of the sea. The exhibition reflected Southampton's long history as a seaport, hub for transatlantic travel and a centre for the cruise industry. It revealed the sea not only as the location of trade routes and exchange, but as a site of trauma for migrants and others, at a time when it was increasingly becoming a focus of international political tensions. Wainwright's sound installation within the exhibition showed how, through the use of archival recordings, whole strata of society are revealed in relation to their class mores and the intricate lines of social authority.

These insights were further crystallised in the book *Ship to Shore*. Wainwright's framing essay discussed in depth the themes that underpinned the exhibition. The artist interviews reveal in detail the creative practice of these artists and provide insights into the artworks in the exhibition. Two of the artists, Chris Burden and Susan Hiller, died before the book was published, making their interviews with Wainwright their last public statements.

Powerful Tides built on the research in *Ship to Shore*, highlighting the historic significance of Chatham as a naval base and centre of shipbuilding for four centuries. It

documented the artists inspired by the Dockyard, the ships that were built there, and the waterways and sea to which it is connected. The historical works in the exhibition showed a progression from romanticism to the cooler industrial perspective of the mid-twentieth century. The contemporary works showed how the River Medway, Thames Estuary and the North Sea, all important routes to the dockyard in the past, still inspire artists today.

Langlands and Bell's *Into the Blue* (2014) was a new work commissioned for *Ship to Shore*. They further developed their ideas for another new commission *Into the Blue: Time Tide and Power* (2018) for *Powerful Tides*, experimenting with a single-screen digital work for the first time. This work was funded by the Historic Dockyard Trust.

Steffi Klenz developed *Concert for Maison Sirène* in specific response to *Ship to Shore*.

Ship to Shore was the first UK showing of Isaac Julien OBE's work *Western Union: Small Boats (The Leopard)*. It has subsequently been exhibited in a number of different venues in the UK.

Powerful Tides was the first time that Turner's sketch for *The Fighting Temeraire* had been publicly exhibited.



*Installation view of Powerful
Tides: 400 years of Chatham and
the Sea, The Historic Dockyard
Chatham*

Research Dissemination and Recognition

Dissemination:

The *Ship to Shore* exhibition took place at both SeaCity Museum in Southampton, UK, concurrently, from February to May 2014. There were 18,000 recorded visitors.

An education programme and talks ran alongside both exhibitions, including a UCA-run study day.

The book *Ship to Shore* was published by John Hansard Gallery and distributed by Cornerhouse. 700 copies were printed for sale.

Powerful Tides: 400 Years of Chatham and the Sea took place in No 1 Smithery at the Historic Dockyard Chatham, from March - June 2018. There were 65,221 ticketed visitors to the exhibition.

An accompanying exhibition, *Of the River and Other Stories*, also took place in No 1 Smithery, the Historic Dockyard Chatham. This showed work from students from the School of Fine Art and Photography, UCA. The exhibited artists responded to and reflected on the theme *Powerful Tides: 400 Years of Chatham and the Sea*.

PRESS

Radio broadcast with Jean Wainwright on the *Ship to Shore* exhibition, Resonance 104.4 FM, April 2014: <https://www.mixcloud.com/isotopica/ship-to-shore-a-nautical-adventure-with-jean-wainwright-isotopica>

Radio broadcast with Jean Wainwright on the *Ship to Shore* book, Resonance 104.4 FM, January 2019: <https://soundcloud.com/user-140970273/resonance-fm-ship-to-shore-with-jean-wainwright>

Research Dissemination and Recognition

Dissemination:

PRESS (continued)

Ship to Shore book interview for TRT World (Showcase), December 2018:

<https://www.trtworld.com/video/showcase/jean-wainwright-and-ship-to-shore-in-conversation-showcase/5c3ebe02ee5fd32a74cad9a7>

Powerful Tides press included numerous newspaper and magazine reviews and articles, including:

Aesthetica Magazine 15.03.2018

Financial Times 17.03.18 (and Critic's Choice for 3 weeks)

Studio International 26.03.18

The Guardian 30.03.18

The Spectator 31.03.2018

The Sunday Times 29.04. 2018

The Times 31.03.2018

The Times 07.04.2018

Follow-on activities:

Wainwright was invited to present a paper at the annual conference of Art Historians on Sea Trading in the Age of Simulacra. <https://eu.eventscloud.com/website/758/hybrid-marines/>

Catherine Yass has commissioned Wainwright to write an essay for her forthcoming book on her film *Lighthouse* (2014) which was exhibited in *Ship to Shore*, to accompany a new exhibition of her work.

Gabriel Gee of Franklin University, Lugano, is editing a book entitled *Hybrid Marines* and has invited Jean Wainwright to contribute a chapter based on artist interviews from *Powerful Tides*.

A new exhibition, *Sea Fever*, is currently in development.

Ship to Shore: John Hansard Gallery, Southampton





*Shown previous page:
Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
John Hansard Gallery. Isaac Julien,
The Leopard (Western Union: small
boats), 2007*

*Shown here:
Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
John Hansard Gallery. Chris
Burden, Ghost Ship, 2005. Digital
photograph.*



Installation shot of Ship to Shore, John Hansard Gallery. From Left: Thomas Joshua Cooper Moonrise Over the End of the World – Furthest West – The Mid North Atlantic Ocean “The Lighthouse at The End of the World”, Faro Orchillo. The Isle of El Hierro. (Near the West-most point of the entire Canarian Archipelago and the furthest extent South-West of the Old World). The Canary Islands, Spain, 2002 102 × 137 cm. Selenium and gold chloride toned silver gelatin print. Near North-most – The North Atlantic Ocean and The Pentland Firth Strathy Point, near Dunnet Head Sutherland, Scotland, 3/3, 1991–2001 102 × 137 cm. Selenium and gold chloride toned silver gelatin print.



*Installation shot of Ship to Shore, John
Hansard Gallery. Catherine Yass, Lighthouse,
2011.*

*35mm and HD film transferred to ProRes
QuickTime (12 minutes 42 seconds).*

Ship to Shore: SeaCity Museum, Southampton





*Shown previous page:
Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Framed archival
materials, in background: Simon
Patterson, Cousteau in the
Underworld, 2008, Fabric Charts.*

*Shown here:
Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Steffi Klenz,
Concert for Maison Seirén, 2014,
12 individual metallic C-Type
Prints, framed in brushed steel tray
frames.*



*Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Simon Patterson,
Cousteau in the Underworld, 2008
25 Fabric charts.*



Installation shot of Ship to Shore, SeaCity Museum. Left: Charles Frederick Williams, Waves Breaking on a Rocky Shore, Watercolour. Right: Gustave Courbet (1819–77), La Vague, Oil on canvas.



*Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Yinka Shonibare,
Nelson's Ship in a Bottle, 2010
Plastic, Dutch wax-printed cotton
textile, cork, acrylic and glass
bottle.*



*Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Humphrey
Ocean, The First of England, 1999,
Oil on canvas.*



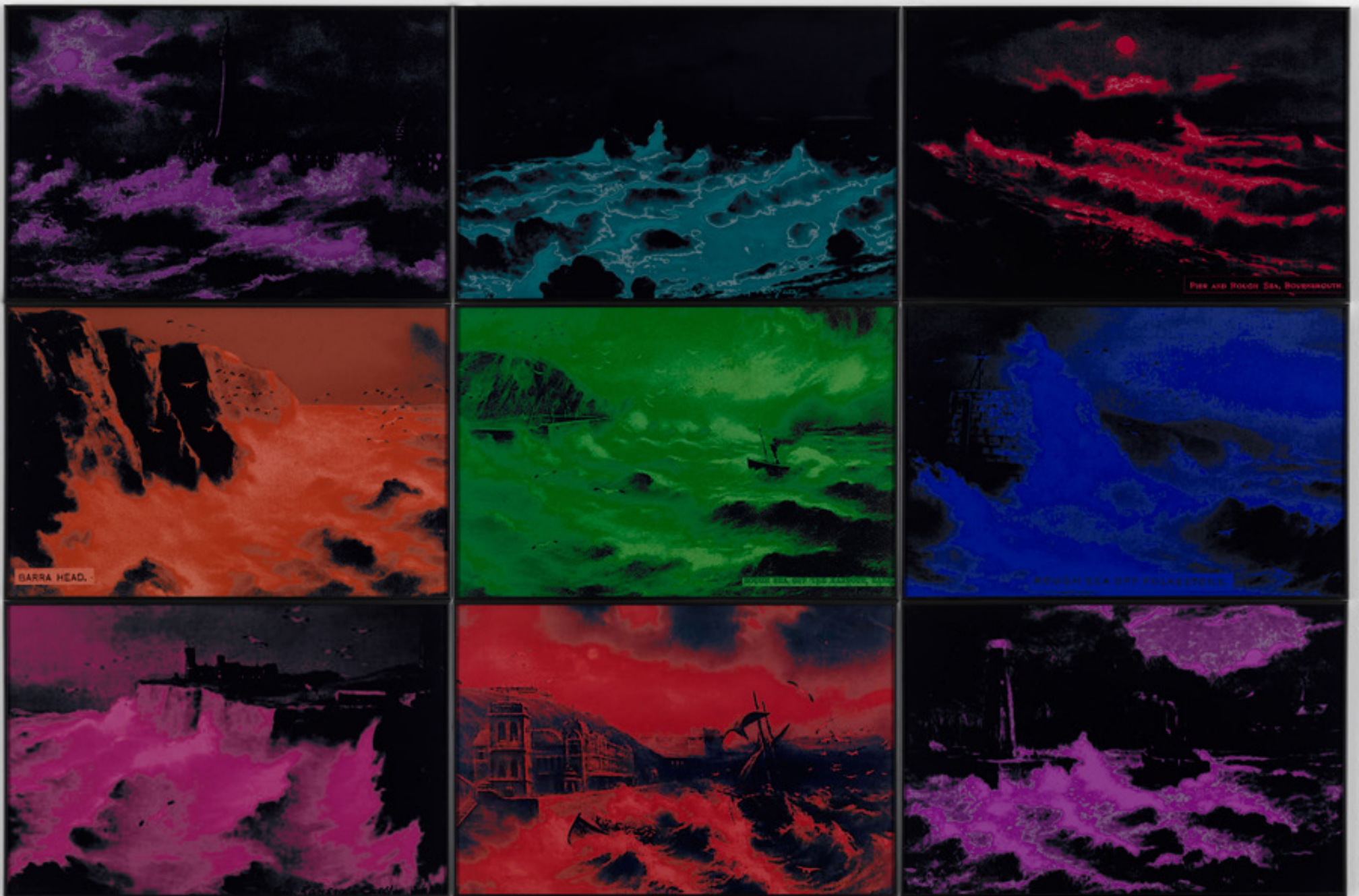
Installation shot of Ship to Shore, SeaCity Museum. James Tissot (1836–1902), The Captain's Daughter or The Last Evening, 1873, Oil on canvas. In background: Richard Long, Tide Walk, Weston-super-Mare, England, 1992, Text.



*Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Catherine Yass,
From Right to left: Lighthouse
(North North West), 2011,
Lighthouse (North), 2011, Lighthouse
(North West), 2011, Lighthouse
(North North North West), 2011,
Duratrans transparency, lightbox.*

She Lay down
Deep Beneath
The Sea

*Installation shot of Ship to Shore,
SeaCity Museum. Tracey Emin, She
Lay down Deep Beneath The Sea,
2012, Neon [aquamarine].*



Installation shot of Ship to Shore, SeaCity Museum. Susan Hiller, Nightwatch, 2009, Dry transfer archival prints (set of 9).

Powerful Tides: Historic Dockyard Chatham





*Shown previous page:
Installation shot of Powerful
Tides: 400 years of Chatham and
the Sea, The Historic Dockyard
Chatham. From Left: Tracey Emin,
Layla Curtis.*

*Installation shot of Powerful
Tides: 400 years of Chatham and
the Sea, The Historic Dockyard
Chatham. From top: Robert Dodd
(1748 – 1815)
The Royal Dockyard at Chatham,
1789 Aquatint and etching with
hand colouring. View of Chatham,
1698 Kings Manuscript 43, ff. 5v-6.*



Installation shot of Powerful Tides: 400 years of Chatham and the Sea, The Historic Dockyard Chatham. In foreground: Beatrix Nickalls (1870 – 1911) On Guard at the Nore, 1908 Oil on canvas. In background: William Lionel Wyllie (1851 –1931), The ‘Gloucester Hulk’ at Chatham, late nineteenth century, Oil on canvas.



Installation shot of Powerful Tides: 400 years of Chatham and the Sea, The Historic Dockyard Chatham. Models of Lightships. Langlands & Bell, Into the Blue, 2014, in background.



By Sir Muirhead Bone (1876 – 1953), Building HM Submarine Tradewind, 1943.

Installation shot of Powerful Tides: 400 years of Chatham and the Sea, The Historic Dockyard Chatham. Sir Muirhead Bone (1876 – 1953), Building HM Submarine Tradewind, 1943.



Installation shot of Powerful Tides: 400 years of Chatham and the Sea, The Historic Dockyard Chatham. Steffi Klenz, Concert for Maison Sirène (2014), 12 individual metallic C-Type Prints, framed in brushed steel tray frames. In background: Chris Orr RA, Rust Bucket: A Hymn to the Lightships, 2016, Lithography and engraving.

Ding, Clash, Dong, Bang, Boom, Rattle, Clash, Clink,
Bang, Clatter, Bang Bang BANG! What on earth is this!
This is, or soon will be, the Achilles, iron armour-plated
ship. Twelve hundred men are working on her now,
twelve hundred men working on stages over her sides,
over her bows, over her stern, under her keel, between
her decks, down in her hold, within her and without,
crawling and creeping into the finest curves of her lines
wherever it is possible for men to twist. Twelve hundred
hammerers, measurers, caulkers, armourers, forgers,
smiths, shipwrights, twelve hundred dingers, clashers,
dongers, rattlers, clinkers, bangers bangers bangers!

Charles Dickens, *Uncommercial Traveller*, 1868



*Installation shot of Powerful Tides:
400 years of Chatham and the Sea,
The Historic Dockyard Chatham.
Richard Wilson, Ships Opera 2nd
Draft, 2013, Ink, Graphite, Collage,
Tippex, Felt Tip, Paper.*



Installation shot of Powerful Tides: 400 years of Chatham and the Sea, The Historic Dockyard Chatham. View of Chatham, 1698, Kings Manuscript 43, ff. 5v-6.



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Studio Mothership

FRONT COVER

*Installation shot of Ship to Shore, SeaCity Museum. Yinka Shonibare, Nelson's Ship in a Bottle, 2010
Plastic, Dutch wax-printed cotton textile, cork, acrylic and glass bottle.*

BACK COVER

Installation shot of Powerful Tides: 400 years of Chatham and the Sea, The Historic Dockyard Chatham. Foreground: Eric Ravilious (1903 – 1942) A Warship in Dock, 1940, Watercolour and pencil.

