



Southampton's history and culture is fundamentally intertwined with the sea on its doorstep. The city's relationship with the sea has long fascinated the author Philip Hoare. He is an internationally renowned, award winning author who is currently Professorial Fellow in English in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Southampton.

THE LURE OF THE SEA

Positioned on the coast, Southampton's relationship with the sea and what this means for society and culture has influenced exhibitions at the John Hansard Gallery (JHG) for years.

The JHG and Philip Hoare partnership dates back many years and one early connection was in relation to the exhibition *Ship to Shore: Art and the Lure of the Sea*, shown across both JHG and SeaCity Museum in Southampton in 2014. The exhibition, curated by Professor Jean Wainwright, University for the Creative Arts, brought together works by contemporary artists alongside archival material from Southampton's heritage collections, in order to bring to life the subjects and feelings that inhabit our collective experiences and imagination in relation to the sea.

The *Ship to Shore* exhibition was followed by a publication of the same name, for which Philip wrote an essay. He also participated as a guest speaker at one of the regular poetry events that invited Southampton-based poets to present their responses to the exhibition's themes.

Philip has taken part in many events with JHG relating to these themes over the years. One

such event was a panel discussion during the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival in 2018, entitled *The City That Lost Its Sea: reconnecting Southampton with its watery past, present and future*. This discussion examined the disconnection felt by many in the city to the sea, the waterfront and the city's history and dependence on the ocean. Alongside Philip, this event brought together a number of panelists, including Professor Rachel Mills and Professor Meric Srokosz from the National Oceanography Centre (NOCs), and artist-photographer Simon Roberts. More recently, in November 2019, Philip again participated in a University festival event, this time as part of the *Hands on Humanities/Human Worlds* events held throughout the University. In an event entitled *The Haunted Sea*, Philip explored how we are all haunted by the notion of the sea, a queer place in which identities, species and culture swirl and change. Inspired by the Haroon Mirza exhibition *Waves and Forms* (detailed on page 24) that was showing at JHG at the time, Philip conjured up a personal response to the equivocal, enigmatic lure of the deep.

Upcoming collaborations between Philip and JHG are planned for this summer and

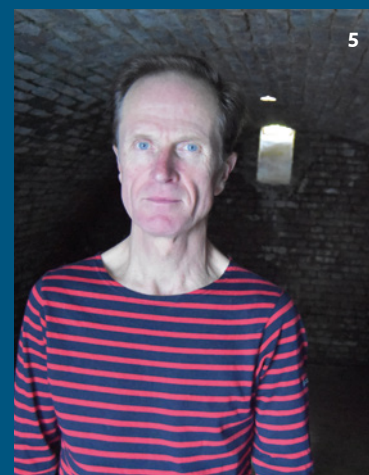
1 Linder Sterling, *Post-mortem: Yura* (2019), photomontage. Courtesy the artist and Modern Art, London. Included as part of *Mariner: a painted ship in a painted ocean* at John Hansard Gallery.

2 Derek Jarman's Prospect Cottage in Dungeness, Kent. Photo: Howard Sooley.

3 & 4 *I was a dark star always* (2018), film still. Written by Philip Hoare and directed by Adam Low. A Lone Star/John Hansard Gallery Co-Production

5 Philip Hoare in the cellar of the Forester's House, Ors. Photo: Martin Rosenbaum





Professor Philip Hoare was born and brought up in Southampton, where he still lives. He is the author of several works of non-fiction, including biographies of Stephen Tennant and Noël Coward, and historical studies including *Wilde's Last Stand*, *Spike Island*, and *England's Lost Eden*. His book *Leviathan or, The Whale* won the 2009 BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for non-fiction. His book, *The Sea Inside*, was published in 2013 and his most recent book, *RISINGTIDEFALLINGSTAR*, was published in 2017.

are to be confirmed, as Ros Carter, Head of Programme, explained: "We are currently working towards an exhibition entitled *Mariner: a painted ship in a painted ocean*, an exhibition co-organised and presented by us, The Arts Institute at the University of Plymouth, and The Edge at the University of Bath. Philip is one of the co-curators of this exhibition, along with Sarah Chapman from The Arts Institute, and artist Angela Cockayne. *Mariner* is an exhibition that explores the connection between history and the present day, and is inspired by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) highly influential poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

"By bringing together a series of new commissions and existing artworks by contemporary artists, this exhibition considers the contemporary resonance of the

poem. The exhibition also marks the 400th anniversary of the journey of the *Mayflower* in 1620 from the UK to the shores of what was to become the United States of America. Alongside *Mariner*, we will also host a focus on Philip's wider project, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner Big Read*, which will bring the poem to new audiences through artworks and recorded readings of the poem by well-known actors and cultural figures."

However, Philip's research interests extend beyond the subject of the sea. Another strand of his research and writing examines key historical figures and their personal histories. One such subject was the poet Wilfred Owen. Philip collaborated with JHG on the short film *I was a Dark Star Always*, directed by Adam Low, which premiered in 2018 to mark the 100th anniversary of Wilfred Owen's death, followed

later by the end of the First World War. The focuses for the film were the writings of Wilfred Owen and some key locations in his life, including the beach in Torquay where he swam as a child and the canal in northern France where he died in 1918, aged just 25. The Centre for Modern and Contemporary Writing, based within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, held an event at JHG which examined the film and invited Philip and the public to join them for an open discussion around its subject and themes.

Ros added: "We are delighted to be continuing our work with Philip and are also currently developing an exhibition to celebrate the work of another key figure in recent cultural history, Derek Jarman. We are planning to stage a unique exhibition dedicated to the work of Jarman which will focus on his fascination with, and relationship to, landscape. With a particular focus on Prospect Cottage, the iconic home and garden that Derek Jarman created at Dungeness during the late 1980s until his death in 1994, the exhibition will include some of the lesser known works and treasures that shed new light on the remarkable life and achievements of one of the country's most influential and important figures of the late 20th century."