

### **Ocean as Media Platform for Electronic Literature**

The ocean is a media platform. Recognizing it as such can change how we think of platform, media, and meaning. This panel takes an ecocritical approach. We understand the ocean to be a primary platform for life on Earth, encompassing 70% of our globe, and also a platform that inspires much of our digital life and literature. We take Joellyn Rock and Alison Aune's *FISHNETSTOCKINGS* as sinew connecting our diverse our critical methodologies and perspectives, as we consider how emerging knowledge from environmental humanities informs electronic literature.

**Melody Jue: "Beyond Blue: Ocean and/as Platform":** What might it look like to speculatively submerge our ideas about computational platforms in the ocean? How terrestrial is platform studies? Drawing from my book *Wild Blue Media: Thinking Through Seawater* (2020), this talk explores the valences of the "platform" in oceanic contexts, considering its media-specific meaning alongside others (oil platform, advocacy platform) and the metaphor of the platform as a flat, planar surface. I consider the affordances of platforms and oceans through a reading of the video game *Beyond Blue*, by BBC and E-line media, which presents an occasion to consider ocean health and resource extraction alongside multiple senses of "platform," from computation to environmental politics.

**Mark Marino: "Diving into the code of immersive e-lit."** From immersion in sound and image in Char Davies' *Osmose* (1995) and Ephémère (1998) to immersion in a downpour of letters in Romy Achituv and Camille Utterback's "Text Rain" (2000) to immersion in a sea of text in Stephanie Strickland and Nick Montfort's "Sea and Spar Between" (2010), artists of electronic literature have plunged readers into virtual oceans. This presentation will take a deep dive into the Processing code to explore the ways "FISHNETSTOCKINGS" immerses its participants in tides of gender, hybridity, and fantasy.

**Diana Leong: "Silhouettes and the Sea: Mediating Racial Fetishism":** From Josiah Wedgwood's abolitionist medallion to artist Kara Walker's cut-paper installations, the silhouette has occupied a singular place within the iconography of slavery and its afterlife. This style of illustration can be understood as operating within the dynamics of racial fetishism as it attempts to resolve tensions between the universal (e.g., racial blackness) and the particular (e.g., black bodies). This talk examines how "FISHNETSTOCKINGS" evokes a similar dynamic by staging oceanic entanglements between depth (e.g., immersion) and surface (e.g., silhouette) as a complement to universal/particular. By mapping these entanglements onto the mermaid's multiple forms of liminality, "FISHNETSTOCKINGS" gestures towards a reading of racial fetishism as a form of pleasure predicated on an ambivalent relationship to difference.

**Jessica Pressman: "Mermaids in Elit":** explores the role of mermaids in electronic literature, past and present, as poetic symbol and formal device. We can read the presence of mermaids as portending transformations in literature's media, signifying change in the materiality of literary production and reception. In this talk, I use "FISHNETSTOCKINGS" as exemplary of how electronic literature uses mermaids and what we can learn by diving deep into consideration of them.