



Press release August 5th, 2021

IHME 2020 Commission invites us to open our senses to the presence of marine animals

The first IHME Helsinki Commission will open to the public on Friday, August 6, 2021, at Helsinki Rowing Stadium. *Listening Through the Dead Zones*, a spatial sound installation by Norwegian artist **Jana Winderen** and **Tony Myatt**, invites you to listen to the underwater sounds produced by ocean insects, fish, crustaceans, and mammals – including humans. Over the last two decades, Winderen has used hydrophones to record underwater sounds on numerous research vessels and has now composed those sounds into a new work for IHME Helsinki.

“Jana Winderen was driven to be an artist and to the underwater world by the anxiety she has felt since childhood about the destruction of the aquatic environment. In this work, she wants to bring the communication between other species to our hearing, giving it the uninterrupted main role at the rowing stadium – a stage framed by two of the most important elements of our time: the sea and the Earth’s atmosphere. The core elements of IHME Helsinki’s work – using the means of art to touch the viewer, dialogue between art and the scientific context, and the living conditions dictated to us and all other species by the environmental crisis – are intertwined in this fine-tuned work,” says **Paula Toppila**, Executive Director and Curator of IHME Helsinki.

Winderen’s art foregrounds aquatic animals and makes audible sounds that are inaudible to the human ear in the water. The real silence of the animals only exists in the dead areas of waterways where the oxygen content has collapsed as a result of the vicious circle triggered by eutrophication, which is being amplified by climate change. Without oxygen, there is no life under water either.

The series of interviews that form part of Winderen’s project offer perspectives on the state of water bodies and the broader question of humanity’s impact on the environment. In addition to sombre topics, the interviews create hope by telling us about ways we can contribute to the well-being of the sea. The sound installation itself urges us to just sit in the seats at the rowing stadium, close our eyes, and open our ears, our consciousness and our emotions to the presence of other species.

The installation is open for public on August 6-24, 2021 every day from 10 am to 8 pm. Free entrance.

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Jana Winderen's IHME Helsinki 2020 artwork, postponed to this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is the first IHME Helsinki Commission. IHME has a previous history as the IHME Contemporary Art Festival 2009-2018. IHME's current activities combine art, science and climate work. A series of discussions and events related to the annual public artwork and IHME's values are held throughout the year in collaboration with art and science institutions.

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