

Media Release 10 July 2008

CHRIS WATSON: *Oceanus pacificus*
alt.gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Opening: Thursday 31 July 2008, 7-9pm
Exhibition: 1 – 6 August 2008

alt.gallery is pleased to announce a new installation by award-winning sound recordist Chris Watson.

Oceanus pacificus brings the sounds of the largest ocean, encompassing almost a third of our planet, into one of the UK's smallest galleries. This unique four channel sound installation is created from nighttime underwater recordings of the Pacific Ocean.

Recorded at the depth of three metres, reflecting the exact physical dimensions of the gallery space, the installation presents underwater voices, rhythms and movements rarely heard by the human ear. The ebb and flow of the Humboldt Current creates a seductive and harmonic rhythm as cold water wells up from the depths, drawing up the sounds of life.

The recordings were made on location around the Galapagos Islands 1000km off the coast of Ecuador, using a pair of Dolphin Ear Pro Hydrophones onto a NAGRA ARES-PII digital audio recorder. The four hydrophones were fixed on a square wooden rig and suspended three metres below the surface at night to capture the voices and rhythms of this hostile environment.

Chris Watson is a sound recordist specialising in natural history with a particular and passionate interest in recording the wildlife sounds of animals, habitats and atmospheres from around the world. He is interested in the quality, depth and diversity of sounds produced by water, from single drops to streams, ice sheets, glaciers, waterfalls and oceans. He has described the sounds of water as "the music of another medium".

He is one of the most prolific and versatile figures working in sound today. In 1971 he was a founder member of the influential Sheffield-based experimental music group Cabaret Voltaire and in 1981 was a member of The Hafler Trio. His sound recording career began in 1981 when he joined Tyne Tees Television. Since then he has worked with David Attenborough on BBC TV productions such as *The Life of Birds* and *The Blue Planet*. In 1998 he won a BAFTA for Best Factual Recording for *The Life of Birds*.

He has produced various sound installations, including *Whispering in the Leaves* commissioned by AV Festival 08 and Forma. From 19 July – 2 November he will be presenting the sound installation *Cima Verde* as part of Manifesta 7 in Italy.

The 7" record *Oceanus Pacificus* was released by Touch in 2007 as part of the Touch Sevens series of 7" vinyl only releases. For further information please visit www.touchmusic.org.uk/touchsevens.

For further press information and images please contact Rebecca Shatwell at rebecca@altgallery.org / 07789 305841. Interviews with the artist can be arranged.

Notes to Editors:

alt.gallery is a gallery in Newcastle upon Tyne presenting international work by artists working at the intersection of visual art, music and sound. It is curated by Rebecca Shatwell and based within alt.vinyl record shop. The gallery website is www.altgallery.org

The Wire magazine is media sponsor for the gallery see: www.thewire.co.uk

Chris Watson for more information see: www.chriswatson.net

Touch Chris Watson works closely with Touch and has released 3 solo albums and various collaborations on that label. See: www.touchmusic.org.uk

alt.vinyl is a music business based in central Newcastle upon Tyne, comprising of record store, label, online music retail and gig promotion activities. For more information see www.altvinyl.com or email info@altvinyl.com

Culture Lab – Newcastle offers a unique creative research environment and technological infrastructure for artists, scientists and researchers at Newcastle University working beyond traditional academic boundaries on collaborative interdisciplinary projects. For further information please visit the website at www.ncl.ac.uk/culturelab

Listings Information:

Chris Watson: *Oceanus pacificus*

1 – 6 August 2008

alt.gallery (entry via alt.vinyl) 61/62 Thornton Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4AW.

Tel +44 (0) 191 222 1213 / mail@altgallery.org

www.altgallery.org

Opening hours: Monday – Saturday 11am – 6pm

Admission Free

Special Events:

Chris Watson Talk

Thursday 31 July, 5.30 – 6.30pm, Culture Lab, Newcastle University, Grand Assembly Rooms, King's Walk, NE1 7RU

Chris Watson will talk about his fascination with recording underwater sounds of the ocean, the most sound rich environment on earth. The talk will include excerpts from his sound recordings.

Admission Free

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