



Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Scientific imaging reveals stunning artistic beauty of the seafloor

Technological advances in scientific imaging of the seafloor are allowing researchers to reveal stunning landscapes previously hidden at the bottom of the world's oceans.

IMAS scientist Dr Vanessa Lucieer has joined with fellow marine scientist Dr Margaret Dolan, from the Geological Survey of Norway, to catalogue captivating acoustic images of the seafloor through a new website, [Visual Soundings](#).

Dr Lucieer said seafloor images are usually studied with a scientific eye rather than from an artistic perspective, which means the breathtaking beauty of marine landscapes are often overlooked.

"We're familiar with the appearance of the Moon and even the surface of Mars is well-documented thanks to NASA's rovers, but still only five per cent of the world's oceans have been mapped in any detail," Dr Lucieer said.

"In recent years, however, new techniques such as multibeam echosounders have revolutionised scientists' knowledge of the appearance, shape and structure of the seabed.

"In doing so, they sometimes reveal startlingly beautiful glimpses of the seafloor that look more like works of art than scientific data."

Dr Lucieer said the images featured on the website include a one kilometre long feature, in the shape of a figure '9', incised by an iceberg on the seabed of the Barents Sea off Norway's north-east coast, a haunting tattoo-like pattern formed on the seabed off Malta, and a structure off the Norwegian coast that bears an uncanny resemblance to a bird's head.

"My colleague Margaret Dolan and I wanted to share the sense of wonder that we often experience when studying acoustic images.

"Through *Visual Soundings* we are sharing some of our favourite images and inviting others to contribute their own acoustic images."

Dr Lucieer, who exhibited her first works in the 2016 exhibition *Oceans of the Unknown*, said she had been keen to reveal the beauty of seafloor dynamics through an artistic avenue throughout her career as a marine spatial analyst.

The *Visual Soundings* website address is <http://visualsoundings.org>

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