Vanessa Lucieer

Through the models, sculptures and etchings in this exhibition, I wish to share with scientists, artists and the public my curiosity about the ocean and its wonders. The ocean is vast, remote and largely unfamiliar. Our efforts to define it test our ability to capture data using sound, vision or light with robotic technologies that spread our sensory reach hundreds or thousands of meters below the surface. In my work as a marine spatial analyst, I use these data to draw seafloor landscapes, often revealing their contours and structure for the first time. I try to see what the patterns of seafloor shapes and textures can tell me about the habitats and lifeforms they embrace. A perpetual challenge is to understand the scale of mapping I must choose for this relationship between the seafloor and its biology to come into focus. To explore this challenge, each of my artworks plays on the concept of scale. The ‘Kerguelen Kaleidoscope’ lends a riot of colour to divinely shaped seafloor features that emerge at different magnifications: some up close, others far away. ‘Tiny Captains in Southern Ice’ are made so small to visualise the immensity of its mission to collect ocean data. The 3-D printed models of robotic underwater vehicles highlight our growing capacity to sample the seafloor in finer detail than has ever been possible beyond depths reached by divers. Through my artworks I have tried to show how complex, dynamic and unique this environment can be. Each artwork has accompanying text, video or graphics to put the work into a scientific context and answer an important question. Why is collecting this data important for society?