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Drawing is an intrinsically human activity that traces our interactions with the world, allowing us to project, construct, imagine, describe and make sense. It is a way of thinking and doing. This occurs in many ways with the use of a range of technologies, from the humble pencil to highly sophisticated satellites and automated tracking devices. In this collaboration I have been most interested in the use of both manual and digital drawing tools used to describe the unknown maritime environment.

For me, drawing usually begins with direct observation, allowing for a very specific type of engagement and paying attention. It is an embodied process, a participation in the environment enacted through the act of making marks on a surface. It is drawing as an attempt to make sense. This project has posed a problem: how do you draw something you can’t see, such as the world beneath the waves?

My investigation began by spending time at sea, focusing on the surface and the waves as a threshold between the real and the imagined, the known and unknown. Observed, abstracted and represented views of the ocean both above and below the surface have been explored. Digital drawing tools such as Google Maps and 3D drawing models examine the speculative nature of our drawn understanding. The virtual and conceptualised influence of the Cartesian grid and digital interfaces present an assumed distanced and objective view. These interject with the embodied, personally experienced immediacy of the hand drawn. Both ways of knowing and drawing present ambiguity, uncertainty and the unknown to remind us that drawing is an inherent human way of making sense of the world and our place within it.