

Ayeshha

Harnneed

Brown

Atlantis

Print this activity or find a blank sheet of paper and a pencil.

Kunstinstituut Melly

Ayesha Hameed



I Sing of the Sea I am a Mermaid of the Trees, 2021/2022.

The Atlantic Ocean is one of the biggest bodies of water on the planet. This ocean is sometimes also being called Black Atlantic. This is because of the history of trans-atlantic slavery that the ocean carries with her. The artist Ayesha Hameed researches this history, and also the idea of the Black Atlantic. With her art works she shows us how this past still influences the way we live now. For the exhibition at Kunstinstituut Melly she also researches the history that belongs to the ocean around India. This is the Indian Ocean and the artist calls this research the *Brown Atlantic*. The art pieces that you can see in Kunstinstituut Melly are worlds you can walk through, that you can listen to and sometimes even smell. Together the art pieces are named *Brown Atlantic*.

Kunstinstituut Melly

I Sing of The Sea I am a Mermaid of the Trees

The name of this art piece is about a mermaid who lives in the deep ocean. The art piece exists out of big pieces of fabric hanging from the ceiling, that you can wade through. If you listen attentively can hear a voice that tells us a story. This is the voice of the mermaid who lives in the depths of the ocean.

1a.
Look attentively at the picture. How do you think the mermaid looks? Make a drawing of the mermaid in the box below this page.

1b.
Which name do you think fits the mermaid best? Write this down over your drawing.



I Sing of the Sea I am a Mermaid of the Trees, 2021/2022.

cut out your mermaid and save her for the last question

On the blue fabrics of the artwork *I Sing of The Sea I am a Mermaid of the Trees* there are trees pictured. The story the mermaid tells of two countries that once belonged together; India and England. Between these two countries on the bottom of the ocean lays a very long telegraph cable that connects one country to another. Telegraph was a kind of message, before there were telephones. With this cable it was possible to connect people from one country to another by telegraph, which was an electronic message. This was much faster and easier than writing a letter that had to be shipped over the water. The telegraph cable was important to England because they were afraid that the people in India would revolt and be free from England. To make the telegraph cable water-resistant the people used a lot of rubber.

A lot of the things we use in our day-to-day life are made from rubber. Like the soles of your shoes or a rubber band. Rubber is a white sap that comes from trees. If you make a cut in these trees the rubber will drip out. You can catch it in a cup and use it.

The trees you find pictured on the blue fabrics in the art piece *I Sing of The Sea I Am A Mermaid of the Trees* are rubber trees.

2a.
Can you see the cuts of which the rubber runs out?

yes / no

2b.
Circle the cuts in the picture.

Two Ships



Two Ships, 2021.

Over the Atlantic Ocean between the year 1525 and 1867 about twelve million people were taken against their will from Africa. Against your will means the people could not choose to come along but were forced. Europeans have played a big role in the selling and shipping of these enslaved African people. This trade in Europe includes Holland but also countries like Belgium, France and Portugal. The enslaved people taken from Africa had to work in countries like Brazil, the United States or Surinam. For the work they did, they did not get any pay.

The art piece in the picture is called *Two Ships*. It is so big you can walk through it. It contains large pieces of fabric that reach the ceiling. If you walk through the art work you hear a voice telling us a story. This story is about two ships that a long time ago transported cargo between Europe, Asia and The Caribbean. The cargo was sold to countries like Holland and France. The fabrics you see are painted with a very special paint. This paint you cannot buy in the shops, you can make them yourself.

Have a good look at the picture of the art piece *Two Ships*.

3. With which materials do you think the fabric is painted? Circle these.

crayon

turmeric

beets

coffee

water from the river Maas

rose petals

cloves

cinnamon

cacao

grass

The ships transported among other things coffee, cacao, and spices. These products were very loved in Europe. To grow and harvest these products a lot of people were needed. The work was hard. This work was done by enslaved people from Africa, and elsewhere, or by children born in captivity. The artist shows us with her art pieces that we in Europe are still connected with this history and that some of the problems we deal with today like natural disasters and racism are connected to this past.

A letter to the Mermaid of the Trees

In the first assignment we have drawn a mermaid, that tells us the story about the telephone cable that runs from England to India. Now we are going to tell the mermaid our story of the country you live in.

4a.
Stick you mermaid in the column on the next page.

4b.
Schrijf je naam in de brief op het vlak waar 4b bij staat.

4c.
Close your eyes and try not to think of anything. After that picture a place that is important to you. That can be for example your room or the field you always play soccer on or maybe a beautiful beach. Write down your place in the column that says 4c. Try to picture clearly how this place looks.

4d.
Now think of a color that you think fits the place. You may now colorize the page underneath with crayon or paint.

4e.
Look at your mermaid and describe to her why this place is so important to you. Write down this message in the column that says 4e.

4f.
Now try to illustrate the story of your place by decorating the space around the letter.

4f.
Make a picture of your letter and send it to activiteiten@kunstinstituutmelly.nl. We shall post your picture on the website so that everyone can admire your message to the mermaid. You can already have a look by clicking [this link](#).



I Sing of the Sea I am a Mermaid of the Trees, 2021.

Dear mermaid
of the trees,

4b. your name

,

sing about

4c. your place

. This place

is important to

me because

4e.

4a. Glue the picture of your mermaid here

4d. jouw kleur

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