

## Impact Report

EMBracing the Ocean artist-in-residence project Reporting period April 2024 - October 2025

***"The EMBracing the Ocean residency significantly reshaped my artistic and professional trajectory, transforming my identity from fashion designer to a committed multidisciplinary activist"***

- Ruwanthi Gajadeera, EMBracing the Ocean artist-in-residence

***"Art is a wonderful tool that can help us make science more accessible. The more accessible it is, the more people will understand how the world functions and become custodians for our ocean and planet"***

- Dr. Asha de Vos, Oceanswell



### Co-design process:

During her EMBracing the Ocean project artist Ruwanthi Gajadeera collaborated with marine biologist Dr. Asha de Vos ([Oceanswell](#)). They co-developed the Save Our Seas (S.O.S) project to foster public and political understanding and emotional engagement with ocean sustainability and human-ocean kinship. The exhibition uses sustainable materials and multisensory elements of scents and sounds to make ocean degradation visible and emotionally resonant through embodied ecological narratives. A fashion collection and a sustainable fashion workshop series were also developed. The work fostered a rare and meaningful exchange between art and science involving diverse artists including fragrance engineers, sound artists, and fashion designers. The emotional and sensory translation of scientific data amplified public urgency and artistic practices were sharpened by scientific rigour.

### Project outputs:

- Creation of a collection of 26 sustainable artworks that integrate scientific concepts with ecofriendly materials and use techniques including crochet and cyanotype (printing technique using sunlight).
- Creation of kaeli S.O.S capsule fashion collection merging fashion with ocean advocacy, using wearable art as a medium for storytelling.
- Collaboration with [IFF Olfactory Elements](#) to create a bespoke scent that encapsulates the emotional and ecological story of marine pollution.
- Pilot exhibition at [Sri Lanka Design Festival](#) (8 - 10 November 2024). Over 20,000 visitors attended including Sri Lankan school groups and high-level visitors (e.g. ambassadors, dignitaries and sustainability leaders).
- 'Waste to Wear' and 'Sea Change' sustainable fashion workshops at [Sri Lanka Design Festival](#) (8 - 10 November 2024) focusing on upcycling techniques and discussions on reducing marine pollution.
- Pilot runway show at [Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week](#), Sri Lanka (7 - 10 November 2024) focussing on sustainable fashion narratives and ocean conservation themes, integrating upcycled materials and zero-waste design principles. Reached 1,000 viewers in person and 1,800 online.
- Exhibition at [Queen Alexandra House](#) in London (12 March 2025) welcoming 150 arts students and key charity donors.
- [Cyanotype Exhibition and Workshop](#), [SEA Junction](#), Bangkok, Thailand (26 April 2025) with 17 participants and 50 visitors.
- [RCA SustainLAB](#) x SOS Exhibition at Hangar Gallery, Royal College of Art Battersea Campus, London (29 April - 2 May 2025) welcoming 200 visitors.
- Exhibition at the [Engage](#) area of the [European Digital Ocean Pavilion](#) at the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), Nice, France (2 - 13 June 2025) welcoming over 27,800 visitors.
- Lead artist at the [European Youth Event \(EYE\) 2025](#) at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France (13 - 14 June 2025), with 150 participants including MEP Thomas Bajada.
- Exhibition at [Royal College of Art Fashion Expo](#), London, UK (July 19 2025) with 100 visitors.

### Key impact:

- Engaged over 20,000 participants globally through exhibitions, workshops and runway shows. Key audiences included students, diplomats, scientists, parents, artists, social influencers and tourists of all ages.
- Anecdotal evidence of increased environmental commitment among event participants.
- Multiple long-term, interdisciplinary partnerships have been established including with scientific, artistic and technical collaborators, educational institutes, and socio-cultural organisations.
- Integration of methodologies on interdisciplinary ocean conservation education used in the SOS project into the Royal College of Art's [Grand Challenge](#) programme.

### Project longevity:

- Confirmed exhibition at [London Design Festival](#), September 2025.
- Expanded reach of the project to new locations including Hong Kong, Japan, India, Africa and Latin America to contribute to regional dialogues on ocean literacy.

# IMPACT IN NUMBERS

## 7 EXHIBITIONS

Showing the work

## 4 WORKSHOPS

On sustainable fashion

## 1 RUNWAY SHOW

At Mercedes Benz Fashion Week, Sri Lanka

## 48,000 VISITORS

Globally at exhibitions, workshops and runway shows

## 820 PAGE VISITS

To project webpage on EMB website

## 124 INSTAGRAM POSTS

Reaching over 25,870 accounts and 70,000 impressions

## 3 NEWS ARTICLES

In European and Sri Lankan media outlets

***"The polluted smell was particularly horrendous and this definitely helped to put things in perspective"***

- British High Commissioner to Sri Lanka

***"Creating pieces with our own hands deepened our understanding of ocean conservation and inspired us to use craft as a tool to influence others positively"***

- Sea Change Workshop participants

