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Interactions between marine living worlds and human societies: perception, representation, mediation.

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Bay of Marseille. We are in the salty waters bordering a metropolis of one million inhabitants, flanked to the north by an industrial-port complex and to the south by the Calanques National Park, at stake with massive tourism. In this liquid, shifting, unstable space, porous to the city and the rest of the world, humans, cargo ships, cables, fishes, invertebrates, and algae circulate, entangle and aggregate beneath the horizon in invisible and inaudible ways (Tsing, 2013).

What do we perceive of underwater anthropogenic pressures? How are anthropogenic pressures on marine ecosystems perceived and understood by sea users? How can we make perceptible the entanglements being constructed between human societies and marine living worlds?

Based on research conducted within the framework of the interdisciplinary project Prêshumer (CNRS-MITI), which brings together oceanographers and anthropologists around the issue of representations of the underwater space, and data from a multimodal ethnographic survey, this presentation focuses on the perception of the coastal sea by sea users in the Bay of Marseille.

This paper will also examine perceptions and representations of multispecies interactions in a context of direct and indirect anthropogenic pressures - varied domestic and industrial pollutions, exogen species invasion, mass mortality due to underwater heat waves, extension of activities increasing noise - but also in a context of nature-based programs of care and restoration.

The goal is to explore the potential of sound and image to experiment with new ways of describing pollution and disturbances in marine ecosystems, and to question their audible/invisible, visible/invisible nature for humans and other living worlds.

Attempting to adopt a “wet ontology” (Steinberg & Peters 2015) and approaching marine interactions through sounds and images, it challenges sensitive perception of space, time, human, non-human and life (Helmreich 2015).

Through methodological experimentation at sea, mobilizing hydrophones, go-pro cameras and collaborative approaches of audio and visual recordings, this paper explores how modification of perceptions at sea displaces researchers and actors and engage them in new forms of relationality (Feld 2010) with elusive living beings. It to think through saltwater, about reciprocal attachments in the marine environment and the possibility of a shared future. Methodological and

epistemological questions which will be discussed together with images and sound extracts.