

## The Invisibility of the Sea – Brigstow Institute, Bristol University

### Reflections on the artwork by project members:

'The physical, chemical, biological, historical and legislative diversity of the oceans is largely hidden. As researchers we aim to bring that hidden diversity to the fore. Rodney's work is suggestive of one of the ways that this can be achieved, through maps, such as Southern Ocean, that reveal the bathymetry of the region. Rodney also presents more abstract pieces - they make me think about how the oceans and marine life interact with our lives. Perhaps as the hidden diversity of the sea becomes more visible, we may learn to value that diversity more.'

*Dr Martin Genner from the School of Biological Sciences.*

'What Rodney's barometers beautifully capture, for me, is that our research areas are adjacent (they have all to do with the sea) but they don't quite overlap. What we see depends on the questions we ask; all our seas are different. This is partly, of course, a result of how academic institutions and training are structured. But if we really want to help the sea, and to understand it and our relationship to it, we need to try to do what Rodney's tried to accomplish in his work – to layer our thoughts, to seep into one another's disciplines, to look at the sea from more than one angle.' *Laurence Publicover, Department of English*

'By picking out the different nature of the natural deposits of sediments in the ocean around Antarctica, Rodney's work makes me think about what we're doing to change the balance, as there have been more and more reports coming out about the increasing human fingerprint on the Southern Ocean and Antarctica e.g. [Plastic pollution in the Antarctic worse than expected](#)' *Kate Hendry, School of Earth Sciences.*

'Our imagining of the sea is as a vast and powerful entity, unknowable and capricious. But Rodney's painting of Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean elicited a different feeling from me - here the sea looks strangely fragile. The blue pastels of the waters, intercut with blue-tinted planks, themselves latticed or veined with greys and whites, are evocative of ice forming on a window, something beautiful but also brittle. Centred in the painting, in stark white, Antarctica itself seems imperturbable, and I'm not sure that impression is amplified by the ambiguous ocean around it or if it is revealed also to be an illusion, that Antarctica is as fragile as the seas around it. Our oceans and the great ice sheets do change, they have changed. This image seems to be a depiction of the last ice age, when ice shelves would have extended far out into the Southern Ocean, disrupting ocean circulation and biology all over the planet. But in showing how the ocean was different in the past, it shows how it could be different in the future. For all of human history, the ocean has dictated human life. Now it is humans who are dictating the future of the oceans.' *Rich Pancost, School of Chemistry and Director of the Cabot Institute*