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ABSTRACT

Currently our oceans are at great risk of losing species and habitats due to global warming, pollution and over fishing. Marine conservationists are fighting to maintain the biodiversity in our oceans however, these efforts are futile if the global population does not acknowledge the damaging impact of their activities on the ocean. It is through awareness and understanding of marine life that humans can be more conscious of their actions.

Human interaction with the ocean is limited and often superficial. This research works towards establishing a meaningful connection between man and sea through a multitude of interactions. To achieve this in the form of a building proposal, a site in Hermanus was chosen due to pre-existing eco-tourism infrastructure which supports the cause. In this environment it is possible to create up-close encounters with marine life, in nature, providing a more intimate experience than what is already available. The proposed design, facilitating meaningful access to the ocean, includes a shark research centre and a much needed visitor centre, connected by an education centre which includes an underwater observatory. A journey through these spaces, ending in the local historic harbour, will be the source of different experiential relationships between people and the ocean.