

Bow Seat 2026 Contest Resources

Your Story, Our Ocean: How our ocean sustains, protects, and inspires us

Introduction

Welcome to the Resource Studio for the 2026 Ocean Awareness Contest, Your Story, Our Ocean: How our ocean sustains, protects, and inspires us! Explore the sub-themes of how the ocean sustains, protects, and inspires us through articles, videos, activities, and more!



Subthemes

1. Sustain
 - a. Provision
 - b. Reciprocity
2. Protect
 - a. Coastal protection
 - b. Natural disaster protection
 - c. Protection from ourselves
3. Inspire
 - a. Pop culture, historical culture
 - b. Favorite ocean characters
 - c. Biomimicry

Dive In

We challenge you to dive into this year's theme by exploring how the ocean sustains, protects, and inspires you and your community. We hope that these prompts serve jumping off points, guiding you toward further exploration! Be sure to check out our [past winners](#) and explore our broader [Resource Studio](#) for ideas and guidance.



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Subtheme: Sustain

How the Ocean Sustains Us: Explore what it means to be sustained by the ocean and to, in turn, ensure that it can nourish life for generations to come. Discover the meaning of reciprocity and the gifts the seas provide, in your community and those around you.

Provision

The ocean often provides for us in unseen or unnoticed ways, through the air we breathe and the lush ecosystems we enjoy. Reflect on how the ocean has provided for you and be encouraged to go beyond physical resources to ones that are emotional, spiritual, or cultural.

- [9 Ways You Depend on a Healthy Ocean](#) | The Nature Conservancy
- [Ocean Culture & History](#) | Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
- [WHAT DOES A CHANGING OCEAN MEAN? CULTURAL IMPORTANCE IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND COLONIALISM](#) | University of Washington
- [A Healthy Ocean for the Improvement of Human Health](#) | Ocean Panel



Reciprocity

While the ocean sustains us, it also relies on us to sustain and protect it in return. **Reciprocity**, a concept deeply rooted in the worldviews of many Indigenous cultures worldwide, emphasizes a balanced, respectful relationship between humans and the natural world. Through this view, accepting the ocean's sustenance is not a one-way transaction but an obligatory action that comes with giving back, whether through acts of stewardship or restraint in regards to resource use.

- [Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources](#) | United Nations
- [Time to give back to the ocean](#) | Pacific Community
- [10 Ways the Ocean Sustains Us \(and How We Can Protect It\)](#) | Esirom Foundation
- [Blue Economy: Sustainable Use of Ocean Resources](#) | EcolnnovaTech



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Subtheme: Protect

Just as the ocean plays a protective role by shaping coastal terrain to mitigate storm damage, it also serves as a climate buffer. Yet there is a limit to how much it can take before the balance shifts in a dangerous direction. Investigate the ways in which the ocean protects us from natural disasters, and ourselves.

Coastal Protection

Explore the many benefits of coastal protection and how communities work together with nature to mitigate natural disasters. Learn how unequal environmental wellbeing affects the state of communities lacking healthy coastlines.

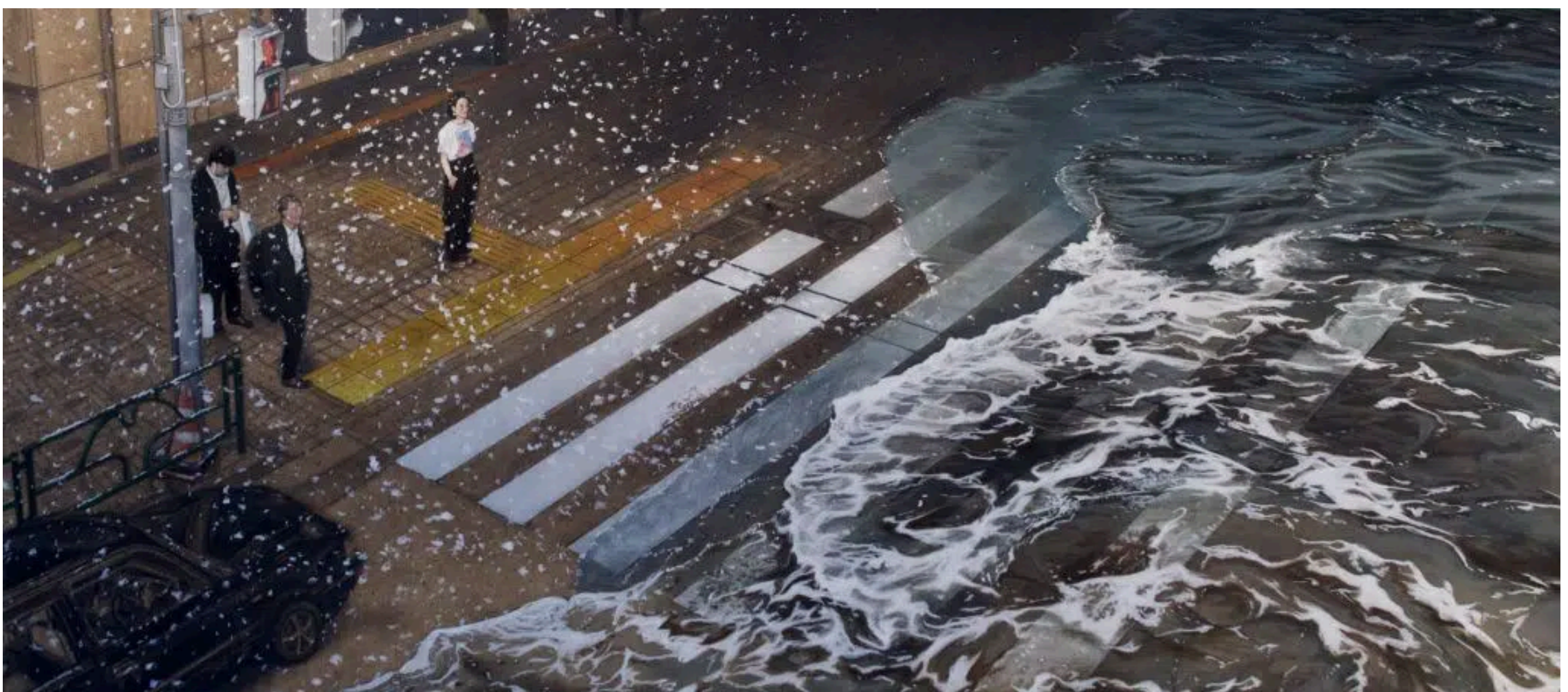
- [Mangroves for coastal defence](#) | [The Nature Conservancy](#)
- [The Importance of Mangroves](#) | [The Nature Conservancy](#)
- [COASTAL PROTECTION](#) | [The Nature Conservancy](#)
- [Nature Based Solutions for coastal protection: the role of seagrass in wave attenuation](#) | [CMCC](#)



Protection From Climate Change

The ocean serves as a crucial climate buffer in the midst of rising carbon emissions and heightened temperatures. Discover how it protects us from dangers of our own making and the limits that come with that protection.

- [How the ocean and climate change are linked](#) | [Marine Conservation Society](#)
- [Why Protect the Ocean?](#) | [Marine Conservation Institute](#)
- [The Ocean's Ingenious Climate Solutions](#) | [Susan Ruffo](#) | [TED Countdown](#)



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Subtheme: Inspire

The ocean has long been our source of awe and creativity. Its influence is present in the technology we create, the art we design, and the stories we write. Explore the many ways in which the ocean inspires us!



Pop Culture

Reflect on some of the earliest ocean-related films, books, or songs that resonate with you and why. Question how they shaped your perception of the ocean and what cultural significance they might hold.

- [5 Famous Movie Monsters Inspired by Marine Animals](#) | [Ocean Conservancy](#)
- [Diving into the myths and legends behind sea monsters](#) | [Harvard Gazette](#)
- [Why should we protect underwater cultural heritage?](#) | [UNESCO](#)

Favorite Ocean Characters

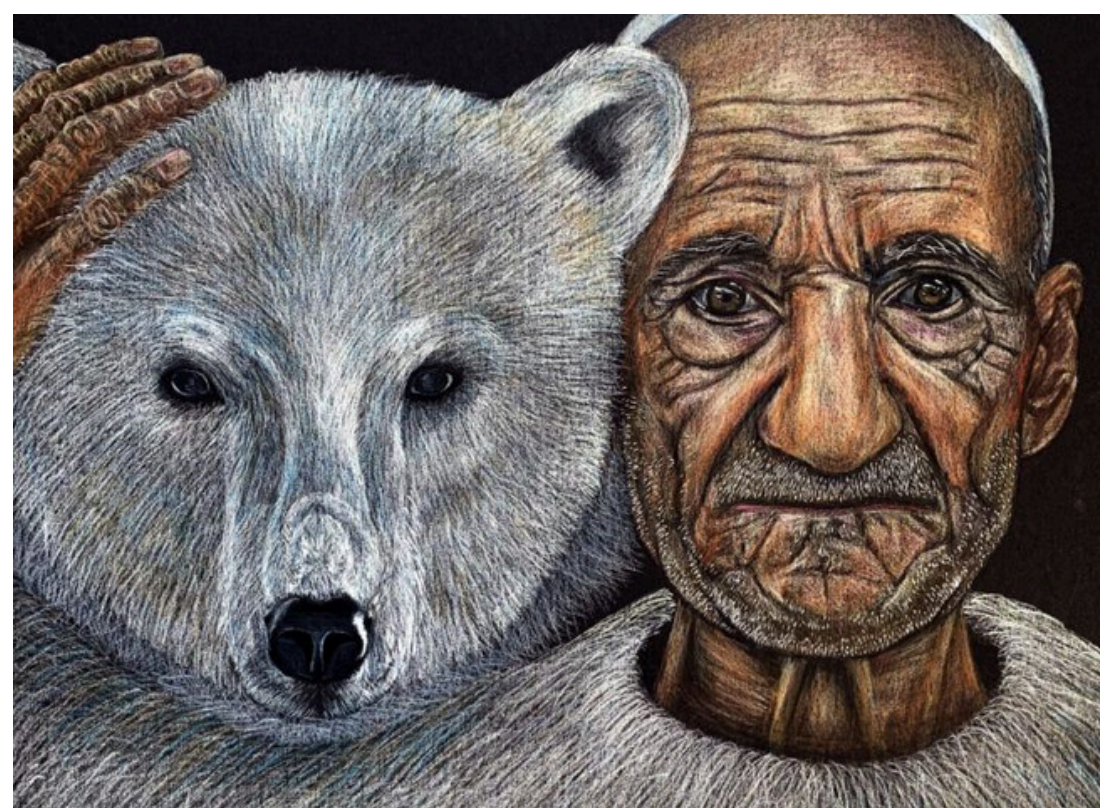
Remember some of your favorite ocean-related characters from books, TV shows, or other popular media. How are their designs and perspectives shaped by, related to, or inspired by the ocean?

- [Ocean animals and the awesome role they've played in shaping pop culture!](#) | [Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation](#)Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation
- [LITTLE MERMAID MAKING A CONSERVATION SPLASH](#) | [Te Ipukarea Society](#)
- [Unveiling the Deep: How the Ocean Has Made Waves Throughout the Media](#) | [Octane Seating](#)
- [Discover How Earth's Oceans Inspired Avatar: The Way Of Water](#) | [National Geographic](#)

Biomimicry

We owe many of our technological advancements to the ocean. It is by observing the torpedo-like shape of fish, the spiral of seashells, and much more that we have learned more about aerodynamics and intricate mathematical patterns. Explore the many ways in which the sea has inspired technology and cutting-edge science!

- [Marine biomimicry](#) | [Nausicaa](#)
- [Biomimicry of Aquatic Organisms in Engineering](#) | [Youth Stem 2030](#)
- [WORLD OCEAN WEEK: Marine Biomimicry](#) | [California State Parks' PORTScast Programs](#)



Bow Seat Online Tools

Here is a collection of useful web resources, from art tutorials to reference databases. Explore various tools for inspiration, guidance, and new perspectives!

Tutorials

- [Tutorial: Draw Realistic Waves with David Dias](#)
- [Rating The Best Free Drawing Apps for Beginners](#)
- [Medium Matters: A Journey Through the World of Artistic ...](#)
- [6 Warm-Up Drawing Exercises That Improve Line Quality](#)
- [Learn to see : Basic drawing and warm up exercises](#)



References

- [SketchFab](#)
- <https://thispersondoesnotexist.com>
- <https://www.pexels.com>
- <https://unsplash.com>
- <https://www.textures.com>
- <https://x6ud.github.io/#/>
- [Gridspective is an online page that allows you to play with perspective grids.](#)
- [art station interactive asaro head](#)
- <https://mycolor.space>

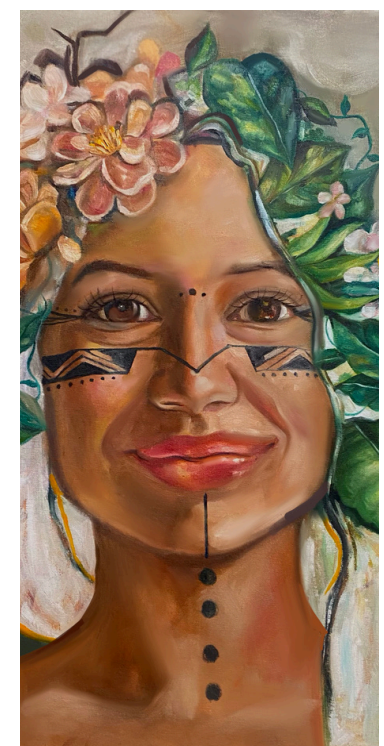
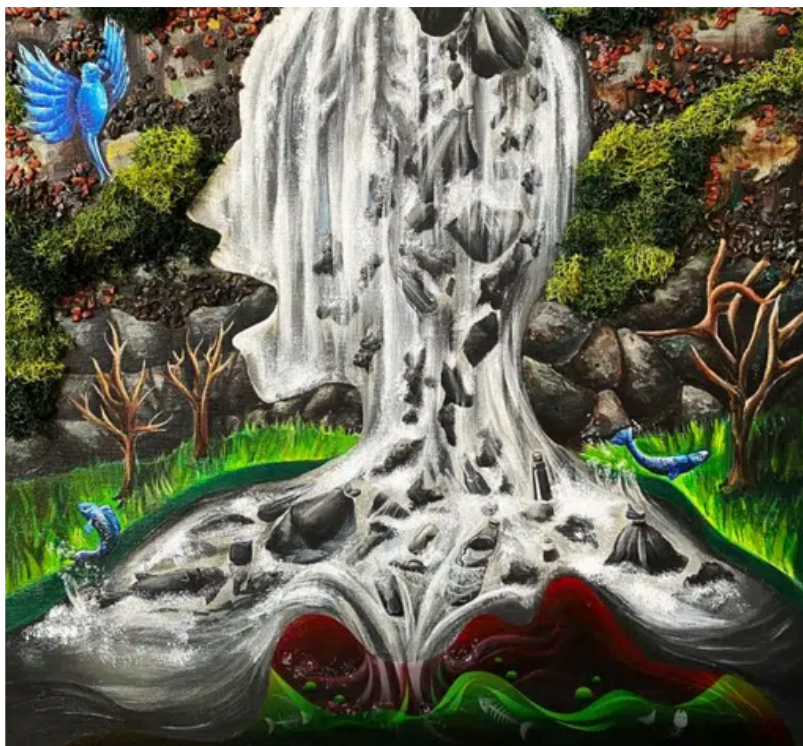
Inspiration

- [Color Palette Generator](#)
- [Animals A to Z | Monterey Bay Aquarium](#)
- <https://www.behindthename.com/names/themes>
- [Film Grab](#)
- [Mimi's Drawing Idea Generator](#)
- [Web Gallery of Art](#)
- [Search artworks | National Gallery of Art](#)
- [WikiArt.org - Visual Art Encyclopedia](#)
- [The Met Collection](#)
- [Google Arts & Culture](#)
- [Artist database](#)



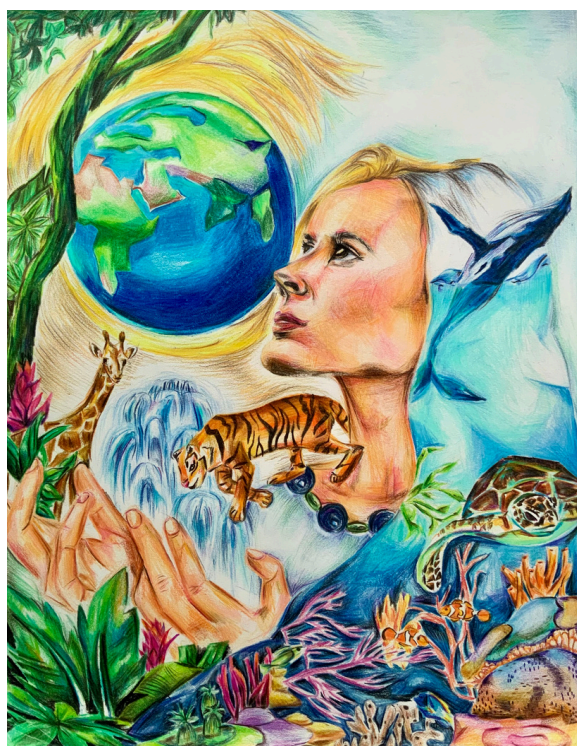
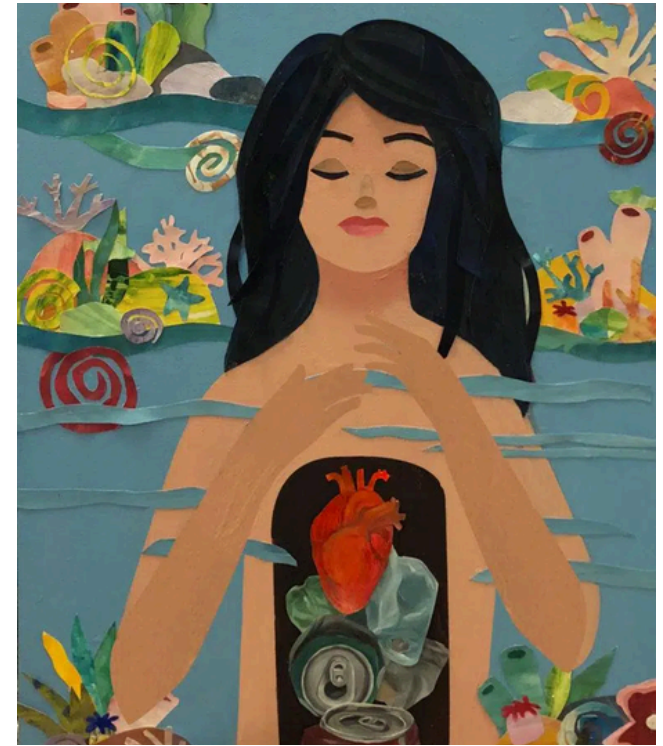
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Examples: Sustain



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Examples: Protect



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Examples: Inspire

