Dive into a new sci-fi anthology set in the world's oceans



Current Futures, a new sci-fi anthology of short stories, was published online this week in honor of World Oceans Day, taking readers deep into fantastic (and wet) futures.

Genetic editing, holograms, and underwater cities each make appearances in the 18 stories and 18 accompanying illustrations. The stories were edited by sci-fi author Ann VanderMeer, and come from authors all over the world. One author, Lauren Beukes, even wrote her story, "Her Seal Skin Coat" while in Antarctica.

The anthology was sponsored by the XPrize Foundation, a group that organizes massive competitions focused on pushing technology forward in different fields, including space exploration, robotics, artificial intelligence, among many others. Their latest award gave away over $7 million dollars to teams working on challenges related to autonomous exploration of the ocean.

The 18 writers – all women – were prompted to imagine a future in which the innovations of today have had a positive impact, and have altered humanity's relationship with the ocean.

"That doesn't mean that all the stories have to be Pollyanna utopian plots," Eric Desatnik, head of communications, at XPrize says. "But it certainly is meant to inspire and stretch people's imaginations in terms of how we might interact with our ocean in the future"

The stories cover augmented reality, floating cities, gene editing, and underwater habitats, among many other sci-fi subjects.

"The reason that we are committed to this sci-fi ocean anthology is to remind people not only how amazing the ocean is, but how unknown it is and how unexplored it is," Desatnik, who helped to create and produce the anthology, says. He hopes that the stories inspire people to look to the oceans again as a place of discovery and exploration, especially as they continue to endure environmental alterations from pollution and climate change.

"There's a lot of work to do to turn our oceans around and get on a healthy track. And the simple step of reminding people of the majesty of our ocean, and how critical it is for us to first explore and understand our ocean – I just think that is absolutely necessary, before we can tackle all these other problems," Desatnik says.

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