convex SEASCAPE SURVEY

# EXPLORING SCIENCE THROUGH ART

Artist in residence, Naomi Hart, joins our fieldwork in Algoa Bay, South Africa



**In October 2025 I boarded the research vessel 'Observer' for fieldwork in South Africa, where a team of Convex Seascape Survey researchers would be performing the first in-depth assessment of carbon storage in Algoa Bay, collecting data to inform blue carbon management practices. The brief was to concentrate on people, so most of the art is sketches and drawings of the team, which was composed of Dr Frederick Mokumo, Sabrina Sykes, Dr Ben Harris, Gail Fordham, First Mate Ferdie, and Captain Koos.**

Most of my art uses project-specific, relevant media and materials, and I wanted to try to continue this, despite the very direct, immediate nature of live action sketching. I've therefore used charcoal and graphite (both forms of carbon), Indian ink (a very traditional ink, which is made from a fine soot, so also carbon), chalk (referencing seashells) and casein paint (which has a milk protein binder, as a gentle 'nod' to the cattle and beef farming industry on land in South Africa).

I found a perch and a corner of a table (along with a spare box-lid which served perfectly as an easel) and also moved around the vessel, and sketched/drew/painted the team performing all the research tasks: from the team 'weightlifting' charging and emptying the vibrocorer, through launching and recovering the mud-grab, to the painstaking and meticulous forceps work with the sieves, which took place alongside everything else.

The fun of live-action sketching is that the subjects very rarely stand still for any time at all, so my skill comes in trying to capture them despite this, at the same time as being on a moving vessel with salt spray coating me and the paper, and wind trying to steal my work and return it to the ocean. I've tried to capture the 'feel' of the research, as well as the people involved, the team spirit and the hard work. I wanted to show the tiring, repetitive, back-breaking tasks, contrasting with the precision of careful measurements, and the care and humanity shown when working with living creatures.









I was able to arrange a 'pop-up' exhibition at the end of the research in the Institute for Coastal and Marine Research in the Ocean Sciences campus building at Nelson Mandela University. The departmental staff were incredible and, with 4 days' notice, pulled together a superb venue with three exhibition spaces. I can't thank them enough. We had over 50 people at the event and huge interest, especially from staff keen to use this approach of art-science collaboration.

I did my best to assist the researchers where possible. They were all incredibly accommodating and supportive of my work. Huge thanks to everyone in Convex Seascape Survey for supporting this trip and my continued collaboration with the project. I hope that my work plays some small part in increasing public trust in science and in raising the profile of the ocean as a nature based solution to climate change.





*Naomi Hart*

**Convex Seascape Survey artist in residence**

**www.naomi-hart.com**



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Frederick.



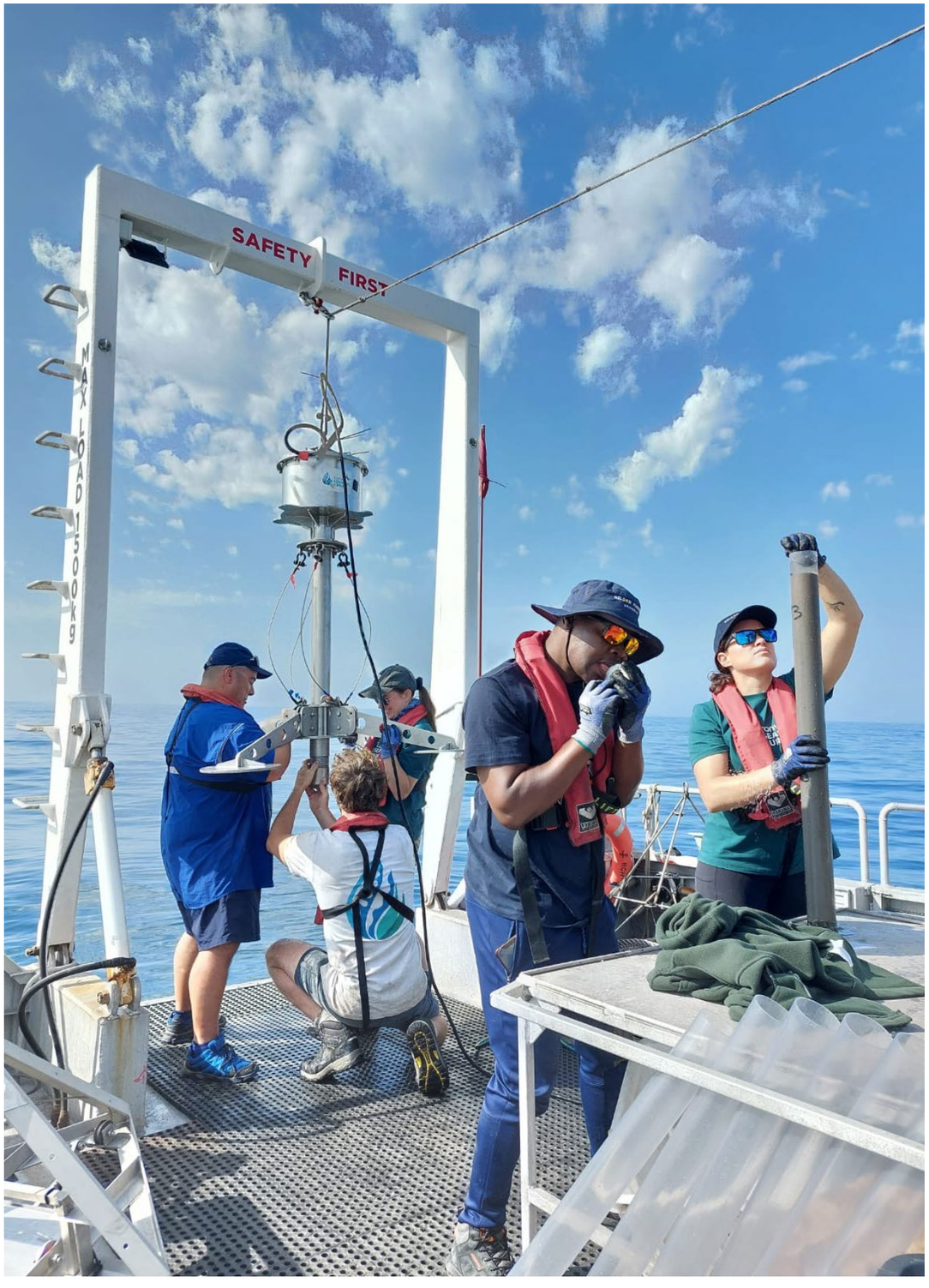

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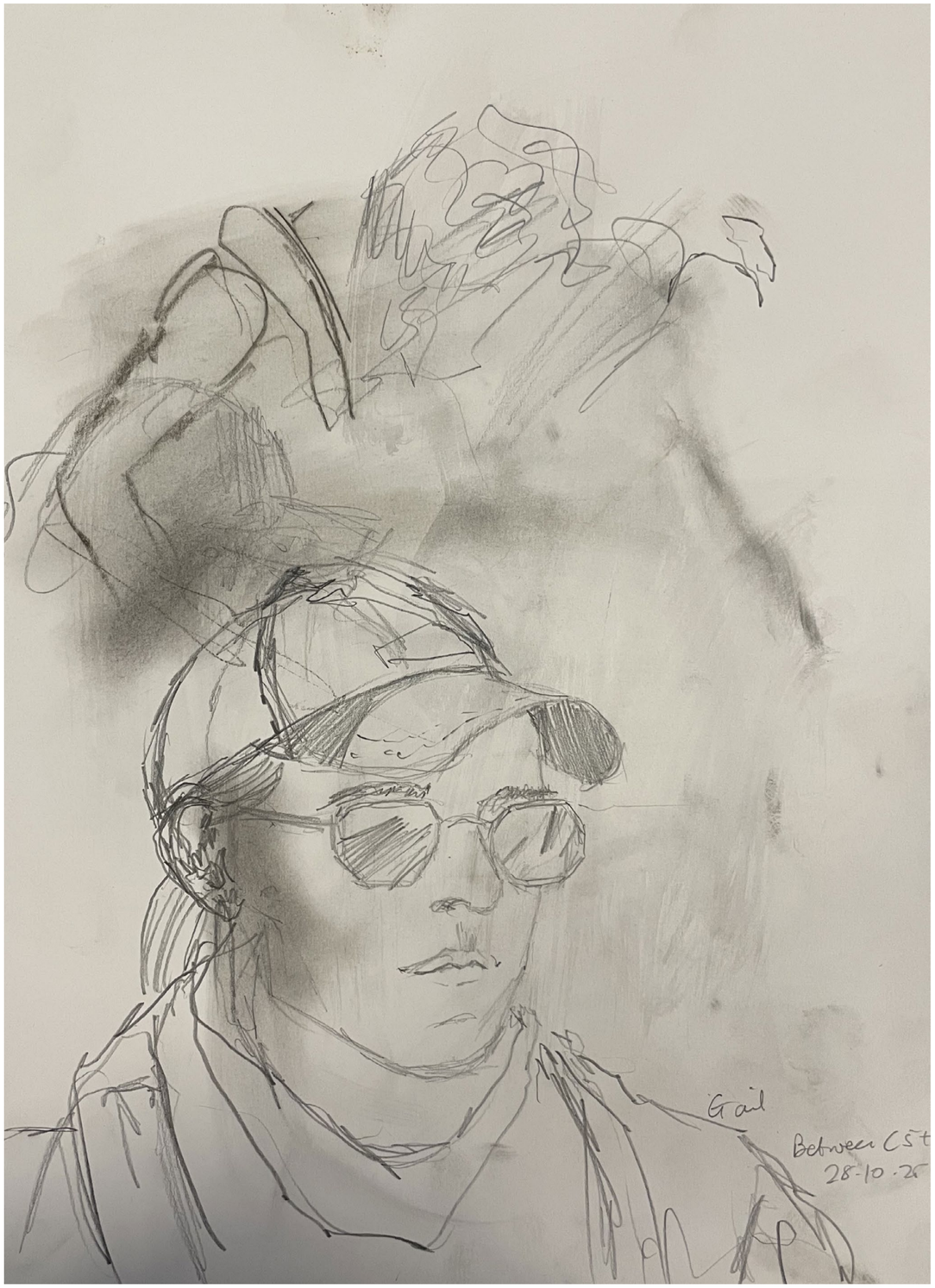


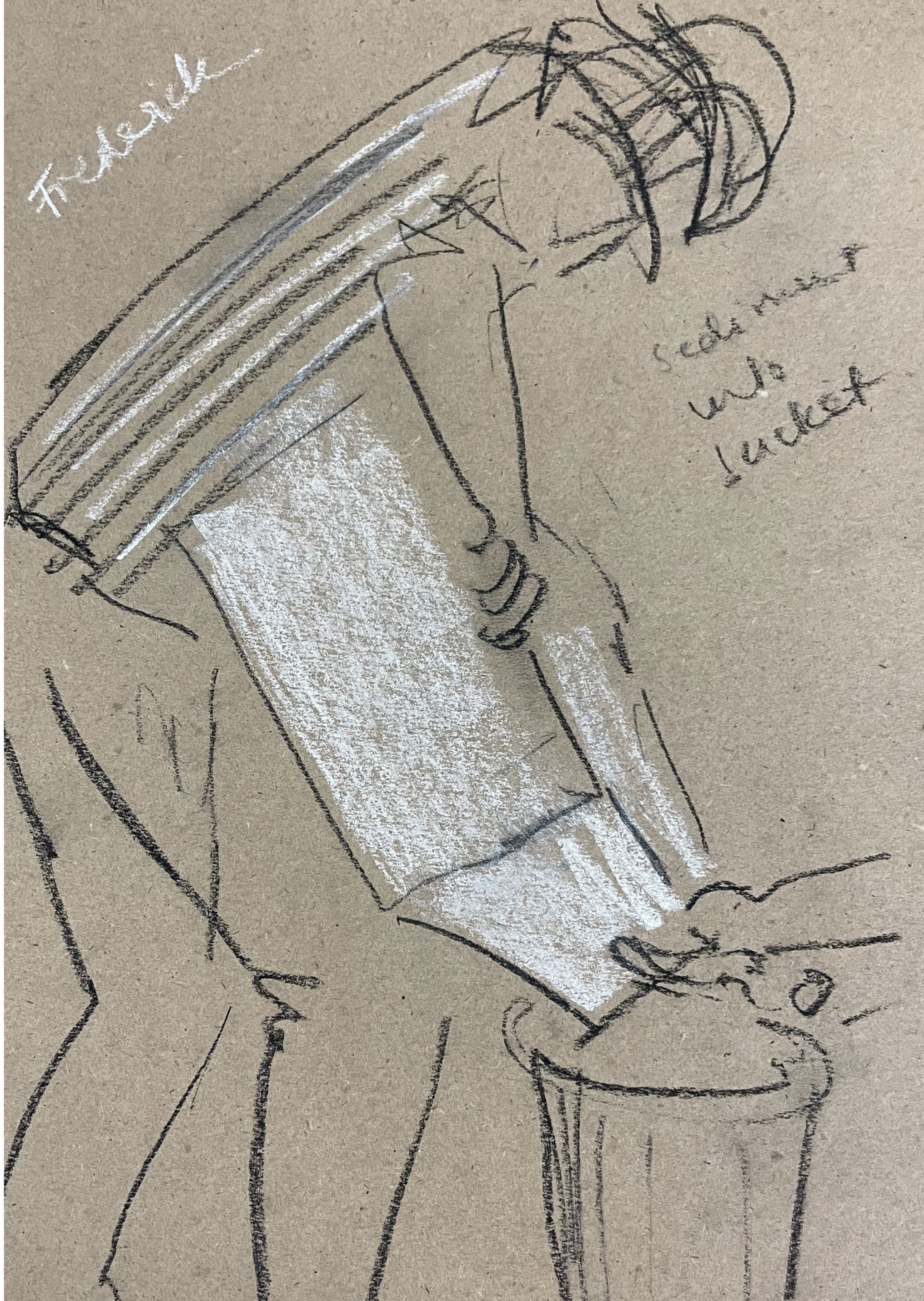

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Site A1 (alternative)









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