

The Chase – Nina Valkhoff (Audio Transcript)



Introduction

You are standing on Norfolk Street in North Shields, between Tynemouth Scouts and the Wooden Deli, to the rear of the Exchange Theatre.

The entire side of a two-story building is transformed into a vivid underwater mural by Nina Valkhoff, a Rotterdam-based artist known for celebrating flora and fauna in her work.

Visual Overview

The mural immerses you in an underwater world painted in rich shades of blue and green. The background swirls with currents and splashes of white foam, creating a sense of movement and depth.

The scene captures a dramatic chase beneath the waves, where the river meets the sea.

Main Elements

In the foreground, a sleek black cormorant glides from right to left, its feathers catching hints of blue and gold as green ribbons of seaweed twist behind it. Above, the scene erupts with movement; two gannets dive through the swirling blue-green water.

At the centre top, a herring flashes silver, green, and gold as it darts away from the turbulence, its scales glinting in the light. To the right, one gannet has already caught a herring in its beak, rising from the water with droplets scattering around it, while the second gannet plunges downward in pursuit.

The combination of darting fish, diving birds, and swirling colour creates a dynamic, energetic snapshot of life beneath the waves.

Colour Palette and Texture

The mural uses deep ocean blues, bright turquoise, and accents of white foam and green kelp. If you could touch it, the surface would feel smooth and cool, the feathers of the birds would feel sleek and silky, while the seaweed would feel soft and rubbery.

Sensory Imagination

Picture the muffled roar of water rushing past, the splash and churn as the gannet pierces the surface, and the faint crackle of bubbles rising. Imagine the sleek glide of the cormorant and the sudden dart of fish escaping into the depths.

Atmosphere

The mural feels alive with energy, a frozen moment of drama beneath the waves. It celebrates local wildlife, including seabirds and herring found in the North Sea, connecting England with the artist's home in the Netherlands.

Artist Information

Nina Valkhoff has painted murals in 15 countries over 23 years, often highlighting underappreciated species to inspire care for wildlife.

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