



CLAUDIA LOSI – ANTONIO MARRAS
Corps exquis
 Project produced on the occasion of the exhibition
 at the Royal Academy of Arts – CSM Contemporary
 Aware: Art Fashion Identity
 curated by Cathi Searle and Lucy Oria
 with Kathleen Soriano and Edith Dearyn.
 London, 2nd December 2010 – 30th January 2011

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It all started with a correspondence between friends, based on a number of shared outlooks.
 The event was given when Antonio Marras was invited to collaborate on the closing event of Claudia Losi's *Balena Project*.

The *Balena Project* draws inspiration from extraordinary stories, dating back to the last century, of a number of preserved whales, like Goliath, Jonah and Erkules, which were toured around Europe for decades as circus attractions. Furthermore, fossil bones of large cetaceans were discovered at the end of the 19th century in the hills where they were beached several geological eras ago.

It is a project in progress, started in 2004, consisting in the creation of a life-size fabric Fin Whale, 24 metres long, and made of wool fabric, fibre padding and an inflatable air chamber.

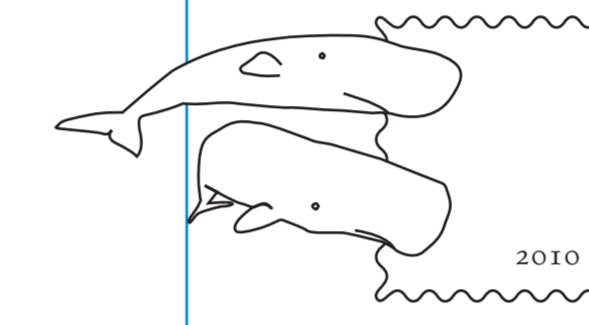
As soon as it was completed, the whale set off on her journey, a long voyage through a number of places and situations. It came to life in performances. It travelled around Italy and the other countries that hosted it. Workshops were constructed around her, involving both adults and children, with performances and meetings. It was the driving force behind a vast range of diverse experiences. During *Les Funerailles de la Baleine*, October 2010, the Fin Whale was taken apart and the materials that it was made of were recycled in new forms.

Antonio Marras designed the jackets in which the skin of the Whale was transformed. This was the closing stage of the *Balena Project*.

The jackets are lined with a fabric on which a selection of the many stories and images gathered in a hypothetical 'captain's log' (kept since the beginning of the project) were printed.

Following the complete transformation of the Whale's body, there was a further exchange of information: with a pinch of surrealism, Antonio Marras and Claudia Losi sent each other sketches, drawings and collages, calling on each other to contribute with their own interventions and additions.

If all took place in real time, on the spur of the moment, off the cuff.
 This envelope withholds the eclectic outcome of that epistolary exchange.

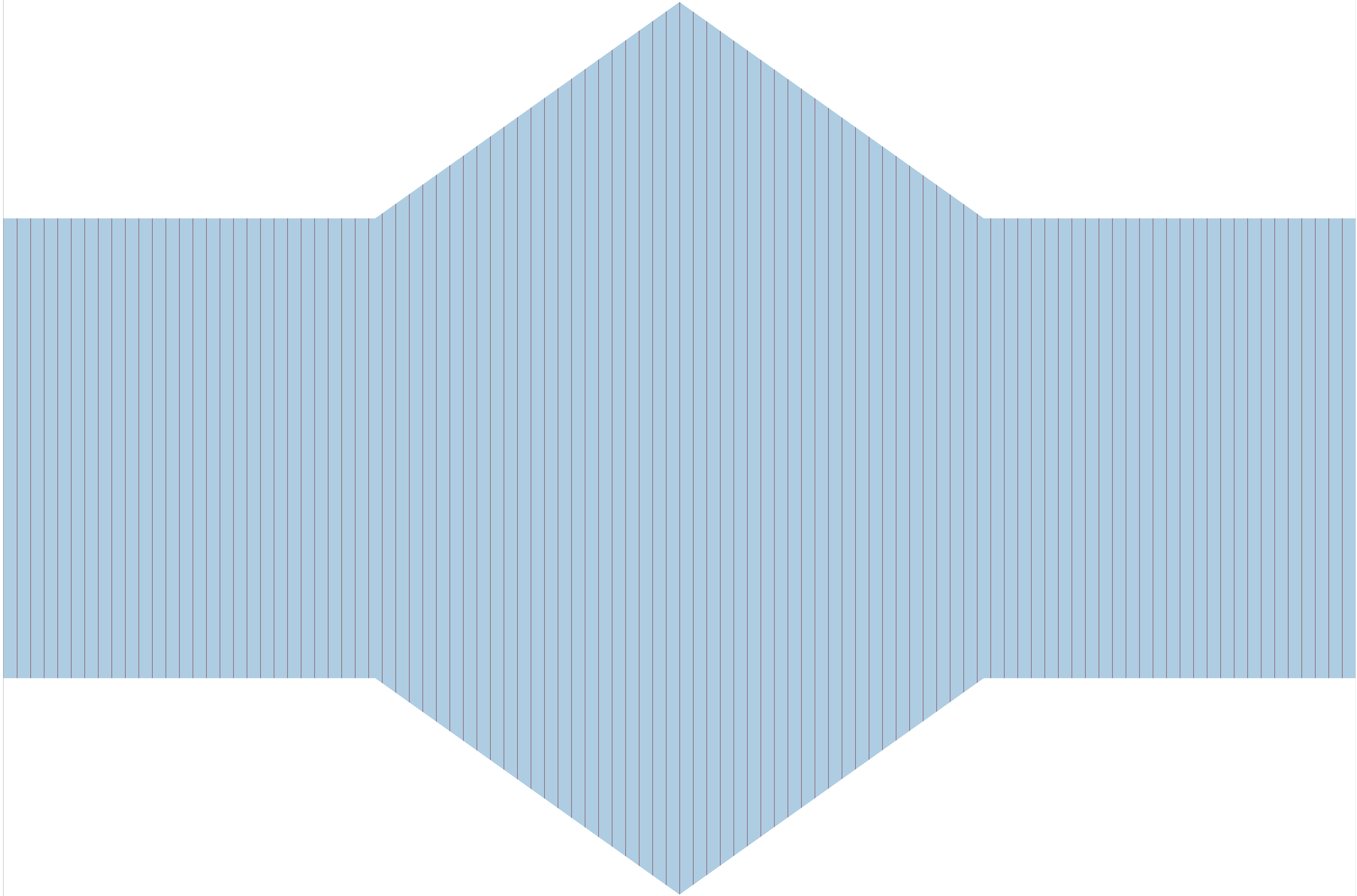


340

490

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19

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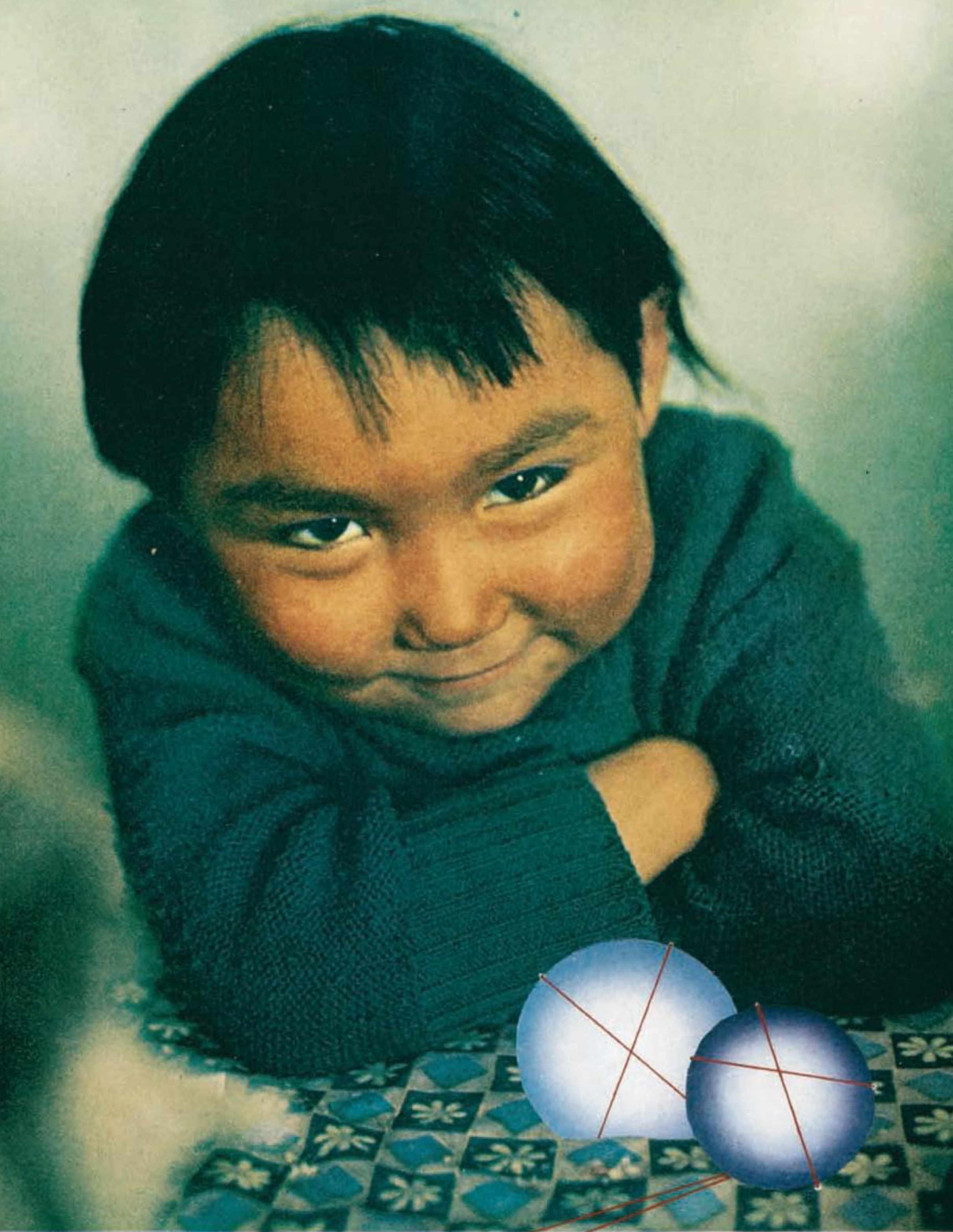


Quando la temba 'nappremuola il mondo
nel grol ninnu statti gettati come se le!



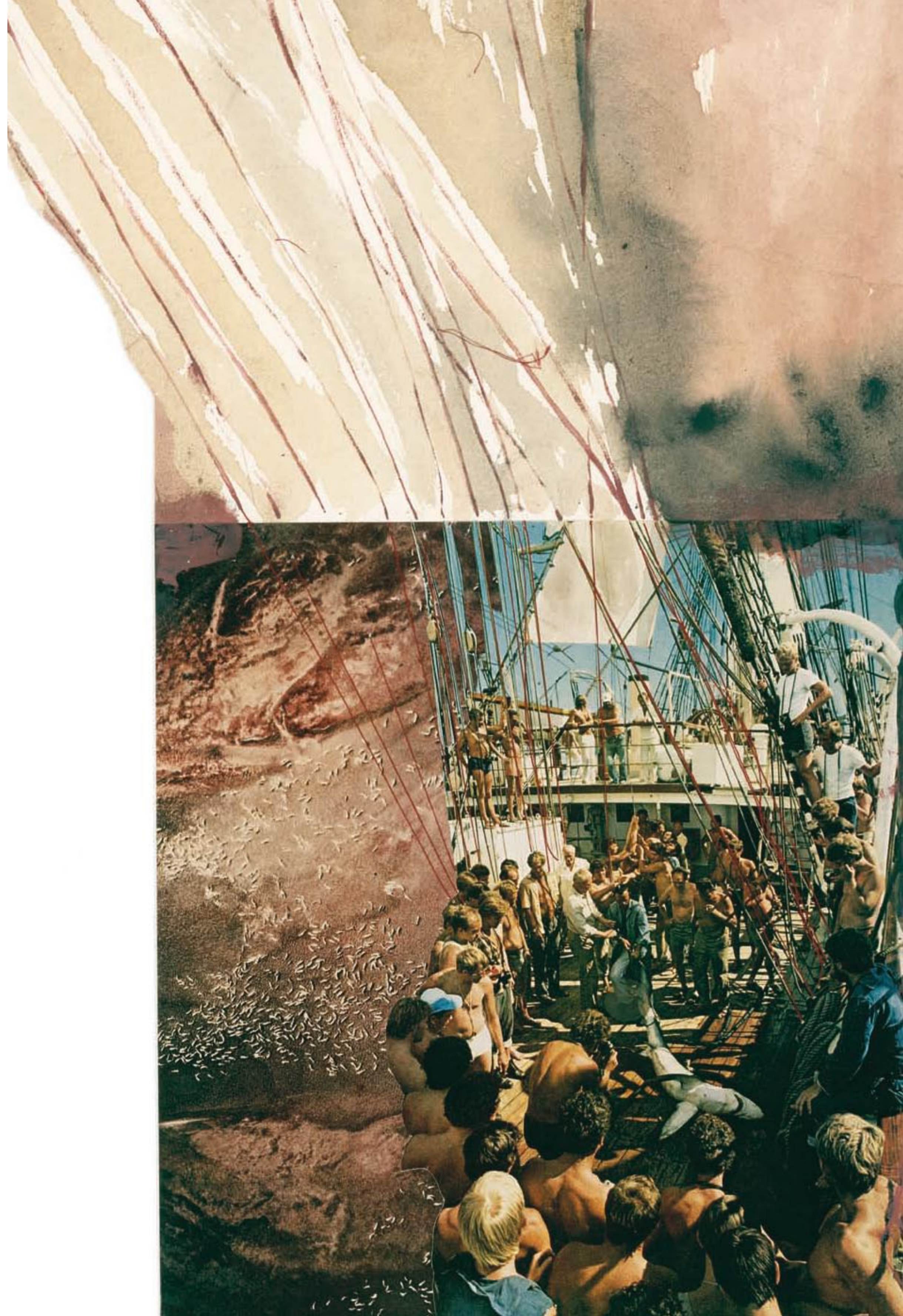
Aftermath of the hunt: Villagers of Barrow, Alaska, wielding long flensing tools, slice blubber from a bowhead whale they have just landed. Discarding much of the carcass,

they save the skin and its thin layer of attached fat called *muktuk*—considered a delicacy by Eskimos. The United States allows only aboriginal Americans to hunt whales.



For a thousand years his forebears met the Arctic on its own terms—and survived. To prevail over the new challenges that lie ahead, this child of a hunter in Siorapaluk will need all the pluck and pride that shine from his young eyes.







utiliser d'abord le recto de cette enveloppe



damaged anemone will discard it if it finds a whole one of the preferred type. It uses the anemones as weapons. Threaten a grenadier crab and it will turn toward you and wave its anemones in your direction. If you come close enough, the anemones will sting you. The weapons are very effective.

What benefit the anemone derives from all this is uncertain, because the crab also steals food from its companion. It will 'groom' its anemones, with its walking-feeding legs, removing small particles that cling to their surfaces and eating any that are edible, but it will also try to take food in the vicinity of the anemone and even to remove food from the tentacles after the anemone has caught it.

Team work of the highest order, however, is found further down the evolutionary scale among animals much simpler, or apparently so, than the crabs.

Sponges are animals, the simplest of all multicelled animals. As adults they are incapable of movement, but grow 'branches', and for this reason they were thought to be plants until closer observation of them in the eighteenth century revealed characteristics that are clearly animal, but different from the characteristics of any other group of animals. Sponges have existed for more than a billion years, but no other animals have evolved from them and they have no close relatives. They have no internal organs: no mouth, no gut, no nervous system, but are organized around a system of canals through which water passes, food particles being filtered from it and waste products added.

The origin of sponges is obscure, but one theory holds that they are derived from colonies of single-celled protozoa. The cells of which a sponge is composed perform specialist tasks, but they remain relatively independent and most of them are able to live alone. This gives the sponges remarkable regenerative powers, which can be demonstrated by passing one through a silk screen. The screen breaks the animal into minute fragments. If conditions are suitable, these fragments will recombine to form several new sponges, each individual cell moving to the position relative to the others which it occupied in the original sponge. Sponges are cultured by cutting a living sponge to pieces, attaching the pieces to blocks of concrete, and placing them in the sea to regenerate.

It seems likely, then, that a sponge is not so much an animal as a colony of single-celled, amoeba-like individuals that work together, each individual specializing for a role in the community. Some of these cells, known as 'archeocytes', are able to form other types of cells as these are needed.

There is no doubt whatever that the siphonophorans consist of such colonies. The best-known member of the order Siphonophora is *Physalia*, the Portuguese man o' war, whose tentacles may extend for several metres below the surface on which the colony floats, and can deliver a painful, even dangerous, sting.

The colony consists of hydras, animals that may exist as medusae, as polyps, or as both, at different stages in their life cycles. The medusa is a free-swimming animal shaped like an umbrella. Its mouth is situated at the centre of the concave underside and tentacles hang from the rim of the umbrella. We recognize the semi-transparent, soft-bodied medusae as jellyfish. The polyp consists of a tube, anchored by its base to a solid surface and with a mouth, surrounded by about five tentacles, at the outer end. The surface layers of both types of hydra, and especially the tentacles, contain cnidocytes, cells unique to the phylum *Cnidaria*, to which all these animals belong. The cnidocytes carry the stinging apparatus, in the form of nematocysts; there are several types of these, but they consist essentially of a thread-like tube, often barbed, that in some species contains a poison. The nematocyst is discharged explosively upon receipt of an appropriate stimulus, either completely or with one end still attached to the hydra, and its purpose is to capture food. All hydra are carnivores, and their nematocysts either entangle the

