Sea Sculptures

An artist makes a splash with some unusual sculptures.

By Sarah Rehman

These underwater sculptures rest at the bottom of the Caribbean Sea.

Many artists have their works displayed in major museums or galleries. But Jason deCaires Taylor isn't your typical artist. To see his sculptures, you'll have to dive at least 30 feet underwater!

For the past 20 years, Taylor has been creating underwater sculptures along the seabeds of the Caribbean Sea. The sculptures depict people of different ages and cultures. Some are shown holding hands. Others are gazing up at the water's surface. And some are even watching television.

While Taylor's sculptures are partly intended to provide a fun surprise for divers, they have a more important purpose. They help protect the ocean's coral reefs.

Save the Reefs

Coral reefs are colorful structures that are made by tiny creatures called coral polyps. Coral reefs can be found in warm, tropical waters and are home to many water-dwelling animals and plants.

In recent years, large fishing nets and pollution have damaged these structures and the marine life they support. In addition, tourists who dive to explore the reefs sometimes break off pieces for souvenirs.

Jason deCaires Taylor, who has been exploring coral reefs since he was a kid, hopes his sculptures will help change that. "Part of this

project is to steer people away from the natural reefs by having them explore the sculptures instead," he said.

Living Art

In addition, Taylor's sculptures are designed to become reefs themselves. The sculptures are made from a special cement that attracts coral. "The corals stick to it, they grow, and then make a different formation," Taylor says. "That in turn attracts fish and other marine life."

According to Taylor, the reef sculptures have attracted many forms of marine life. "Already, I think there are a thousand different fish living on them. There are lobsters and large schools of angel fish," says Taylor.

Making a Splash

Taylor's sculptures have been a huge splash with divers and conservationists alike. His sculpture park located off the coast of Grenada, an island country in the Caribbean Sea, was named one of the top 25 Wonders

Jason deCaires Taylor works on one of his sculptures.

of the World by the National Geographic Society. The sculptures have also inspired the local government to establish a National Marine Protected Area in the waters around the artworks. It is now unlawful to harm the corals here.

As for Taylor, he couldn't be happier with the response. "Instead of leaving my mark on the environment, the environment is leaving its mark on my work!" he says.

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