

**LANZAROTE INSTALLS THE FIRST SCULPTURES IN EUROPE’S ONLY UNDERWATER MUSEUM**

* **The installation of British sculptor Jason deCaires’ works on the Lanzarote seafloor is the beginning of the Museo Atlántico, created to protect the marine environment and due to be finished in February 2017.**
* **The sculptures, submerged on Sunday January 31st, are human figures moulded in the likeness of Canarians from Lanzarote.**
* **Along the lines of the famous vision and works and of Lanzarote artist César Manrique, which pair art and nature, the artist used materials for his sculptures that don’t harm the marine environment.**
* **The artworks, inspired by “the defence of the ocean”, will be visitable by divers of all levels and will increase the marine biomass in the area and act as a breeding site for local species.**
* **deCaires’ sculptures will be submerged on Sunday, 31st January at a depth of between 12 and 15 metres in Las Coloradas bay.**

**The Canary Islands, January 31st, 2016 –** Europe’s first underwater museum has started to become a reality with the installation of several sets of sculptures by international artist **Jason deCaires Taylor** on the seafloor in the Las Coloradas bay in Lanzarote. They will be accessible to divers and snorkelers of all levels. The project is designed to increase marine biomass and to act as a breeding site for local species in an area declared a **Biosphere Reserve** by UNESCO.

The project is part of the Museo Atlántic and will create a large artificial reef made from a series of art installations made from high-density, PH-neutral concrete that doesn’t affect the marine ecosystem or local flora and fauna. No corrosive metals and materials were used. The sculptures, which occupy 15% of the total area of 2500 square metres, recreate scenes from everyday life. The sculpted figures are modelled on Lanzarote locals who volunteered to be moulded by the artist and will be arranged to represent everyday local situations as well as humanitarian problems, such as the refugee crisis, and the relationship between nature and humans.

The artist **Jason deCaires Taylor**, internationally famous for his underwater sculpture installations in underwater museums in The Bahamas, Cancún and The Antilles, uses his work to highlight “the defense of the oceans” and locations designed as a museum dedicated to marine preservation, conservation and education; “as a vital part of a system of human values”. With his work, deCaires aim to “highlight the link between art and nature, past and present, and to transmit a level of critical thinking about the commercialisation of natural resources”. The museum has as a backdrop an island that is already an international focal point of the link between art and nature thanks to the work of Lanzarote artist César Manrique.

The first stage of the Museo Atlantico will consist of the following installations:

1. **The Rubicón:** A grouping of 35 human figures all walking towards the same destination. The pass through a doorway that represents the interface between two realities and which opens onto the Atlantic Ocean. The models used for the sculptures in this installations are all Lanzarote locals.
2. **The Raft of the Medusa:** A reflection on humanitarian crises based on the paintings of Gericáult. It represents the abandonment felt by shipwrecked sailors and highlights the link between their situation and the current refugee crisis where many people feel abandoned by society and / or a lack of humanity; A reflection on hope and loss, and also a tribute to those that have lost their lives on the journey. The shape of the boat is inspired by the craft that have arrived recently in Lanzarote from Africa.
3. **The Jolateros:** A grouping of children in local tin boats, known as *“Jolateros”*, and a reference to a local tradition that can be seen as a metaphor for a possible future for our children; The precarious nature of going to sea in a small tin boat.
4. **Content:** A couple taking a selfie invites us to reflect on the use of new technology and self-obsession. The sculpture is to be located next to The Raft of the Medusa so that the camera records a tragic moment, turning it into a “background” event worthy of capture; The brutal reality of some becomes a spectacle for others.
5. **The hybrid sculptures:** Natural fusions between nature and humanity living in harmony which also reference the rich natural vegetation of Lanzarote. The sculptures are half human, half cactus and are an important part of the botanical garden.
6. **The Photographers:** In a similar vein to the *“selfie”* couple, this piece triggers a debate about the use of new technology and voyeurism. The sculptural grouping aims to highlight the link between art and nature, past and present, and invites critical thinking around the subject of commercialisation.

**About the Canary Islands**

The Canary Islands is the place with [*The best climate in the world*](http://www.thebestclimateintheworld.com/) for enjoying exceptional holidays any time of the year. Seven different and unique islands, perfect for disconnecting from your daily routine, recharging your batteries and returning home feeling physically and mentally refreshed. The [beaches](http://www.hellocanaryislands.com/beaches), [volcanic landscapes](http://www.hellocanaryislands.com/energy-awaits-you), lively and hospitable lifestyle and the possibility of choosing from all sorts of outdoor activities, as well as a wide range of quality accommodation and leisure activities, mean that the majority of visitors repeat the experience more than once.

**About Promotur Turismo de Canarias**

Promotur Turismo de Canarias, an entity attached to the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport of the Regional Government of the Canary Islands, oversees the promotion of the Canary Islands tourism brand. Created in 2005, the main goal of this public company is to study, promote and market the huge tourist offer the Canarian archipelago affords, in conjunction with the other institutions on the islands related to the tourist sector.

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