

From 10 October 2024 to 23 February 2025. Disseny Hub Barcelona

## The exhibition ‘The ocean speaks. New ecologies and new economies of the seas’ reflects on how Barcelona and other coastal cities can redesign their relationship with the sea

- Starting with the situation in the Catalan capital, but adopting a global perspective, the exhibition analyses the challenges and conflicts facing coastal societies in the coming years due to the effects of the climate emergency.
- Some fifteen local, national and international projects from different fields, such as design, urban planning, architecture and art, depict the effects of human action on the oceans and the beings that inhabit them, propose new approaches to marine ecosystems and reimagine our relationship with them.
- The exhibition is curated by the Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub) artistic director, Jose Luis de Vicente and produced by the DHub as part of the Cultural Regatta, linked to the America’s Cup, in collaboration with Fundación Telefónica, Manifesta 15 and iGuzzini.



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From **10 October 2024 to 23 February 2025**, the exhibition *'The ocean speaks. New ecologies and new economies of the seas'* will be open at the Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub). This exhibition invites visitors to explore **the relationship that Barcelona and other coastal cities will have with the sea** in a future marked by the impact of climate change on the ocean and its lifeforms, and also the possibilities this presents for multiple future pathways. The exhibition is **produced by the DHub as part of the Cultural Regatta, linked to the America's Cup**, and is **curated by the centre's artistic director, Jose Luis de Vicente**. with the collaboration of **Fundación Telefónica, Manifesta 15 and iGuzzini**.

The starting point for the exhibition is Barcelona after the 1992 Olympic Games, when the city's seafront became a fundamental feature of the city's image. However, taking a global perspective, it looks at the **challenges and conflicts** already being seen (and predicted to become even more prevalent in the medium term) in **coastal communities**, which are home to 40% of the world's population and make up a significant proportion of our most valued land. The predicted rise in sea levels, the increasing number of adverse weather events and a growing political will to protect the seabed are **forcing us to rethink the relationship coastal cities have with the sea and the creatures that live there**, which are often unknown to humans despite the fact that we are inextricably connected to them.

The exhibition shows **the effects that human activity has on the marine environment** and calls on visitors to approach it with a new outlook, at a key political and environmental moment for the ocean. In June 2025, the French city of Nice will be hosting the UN Ocean Conference where it is hoped that the Global Ocean Treaty will be ratified, a treaty that aims to guarantee the protection of 30% of the world's oceans by 2030.

### **Fifteen projects that reimagine our relationship with the ocean**

The DHub proposal approaches these issues from a **multifaceted perspective**. With its scenic presentation, the exhibition, covering almost 900 metres, introduces us to some **fifteen projects from disciplines including architecture, technology, speculative design and urban planning**. Each of the projects offers a response to one of the challenges contemporary communities will have to face in the near future: how they interrelate with the ocean. The projects explore the current situation, put forward hypothetical future scenarios and reimagine the presence of the sea in human lives.

**Five of the projects have been created expressly for the exhibition**. The English collective **Marshmallow Laser Feast**, one of the most important names on the international digital design scene, has developed a project for the exhibition entitled *Seeing Echoes In the Mind of the Whale*, an immersive audiovisual installation that takes visitors on a journey with a whale where they get to experience the shock caused to whales by human-generated sound pollution. Also created for the exhibition is the *Cartografia Crítica de la Barcelona Submarina (Critical Mapping of Underwater*

Barcelona) by the **Institute for Postnatural Studies**, a DHub and Manifesta 15 co-production that features data and accounts of the first 500 metres off the coast of Barcelona so it can be visualised and explored. For its part, **Landlab**, the landscape architecture and urban design studio, has presented *Anatomia d'una platja (Anatomy of a beach)* for the exhibition the installation, based on a redevelopment project for La Pineda beach, affected by works at the Port of Tarragona. In the exhibition, visitors will also get to see, for the first time, an installation by architect and researcher **Marina Otero Verzier** which explores the case of Tuvalu, an island nation in the Pacific that will eventually be submerged in water and that is embarking on a project to create a digital replica of itself in the cloud. Finally, also being presented for the first time is a newly created work by **Embassy of the North Sea**, commissioned by Manifesta 15, which offers a graphic depiction of the size of the Salt Mountain of Sallent, which deposits salty water in the Llobregat River and its delta, directly impacting Barcelona's drinking water.

Visitors will also be able to see pieces of **plastiglomerate**, a new material made from a mixture of human-created plastics and natural minerals like rock and sand, **hydrophones**, devices that record and detect underwater sounds so we can hear the impact of human activity on marine ecosystems, and **biotopes** that have been installed along Barcelona's seafront to regenerate its ecosystems.

Other projects forecast the costs that will have to be met by various coastal cities if current CO2 emission levels are maintained, show the consequences of rising sea levels that some communities are already experiencing, imagine what coexistence between humans and dolphins would be like, propose installing underwater carbon capture farms in the sea and present design and construction objects made from materials found in our immediate surroundings, like salt.

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