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ART4SEA: a Mediterranean Underwater Museum on Three Islands – submitted by DAN Europe

Sculptures and art installations enrich the seabed of Ustica, Gozo and Alonissos, inviting divers to become ambassadors for the protection of the sea.



Malta, 1 October 2025 – The Mediterranean has new underwater attractions to discover thanks to ART4SEA, which has transformed the seabeds of three islands that are symbols of diving (**Gozo** in Malta, **Alonissos** in Greece and **Ustica** in Italy) into veritable open-air marine museums with 12 permanent works of art, including striking underwater sculptures.

ART4SEA was created to help people learn about the oceans and be more careful about the environment. The project, which is **co-funded by the European Union** and recognised as part of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (Ocean Decade 2021-2030), launched an international call for applications, selecting 24 artists from around the world.

During their residencies on three Mediterranean islands, the artists explored the seabed, coastline and urban spaces, drawing inspiration from local culture, history and myths. They transformed scientific data and environmental observations into physical and digital artworks. Murals, underwater sculptures, digital installations and immersive films came to life from the project, capable of informing, exciting and engaging visitors and divers, creating a deeper connection with the ocean and inspiring conservation actions.

Three installations transform the seabed into meeting places between art and the sea, offering visitors a unique and immersive experience that combines creativity and nature.

'ted at shallow depths, they are accessible to both divers and snorkellers.

Trajectories – Giacomo Rizzo (Italy) – placed underwater in Xwejni Bay, Gozo, Malta. A sculpture in the shape of a symbolic vessel, preserving the memory of the Earth while welcoming new life.

Aetas – Micol Cornali (Italy). Placed underwater in Agios Dimitrios Bay, Alonissos, Greece. A work that lies between myth and waste, denouncing ocean pollution and inviting us to rethink our relationship with the sea.

The Queen of the Corals – Davide Galbiati (Italy). Placed underwater in Cala Giacone, Ustica, Italy. A reclining female figure among the corals is an allegory of the fusion between humans and nature, and an invitation to listen to and care for the ocean again.

These works not only enhance the diving experience, but also become significant landmarks for diving and snorkelling itineraries, offering opportunities for exploration, reflection and ecological awareness.

Marine sculptures, murals, mosaics and land-based sculptures are used to transform urban and coastal spaces. These sculptures celebrate biodiversity, Mediterranean myths and the sacred relationship between humans and the sea. Examples include Calypso and Symbiosis in Gozo, Life Synchrony and Blue Diver in Alonissos, and the murals Beneath the Surface and Guardians in Ustica.

The sculptures and installations have been designed to blend harmoniously with the seabed and coastal landscapes, without negatively impacting the ecosystem. They are made from eco-friendly and recycled materials. Steel, recycled glass and non-polluting debris are used as tools for artistic expression, symbolically representing the need for sustainable practices to protect the Mediterranean.

The journey is completed by 12 digital works that can be accessed on the official ART4SEA website: virtual reality experiences, sound art and immersive videos that allow the fragility of the Mediterranean to be explored through emotional and innovative languages by anyone, diver or not.

ART4SEA was developed by a consortium of seven international partners, bringing together cultural, scientific and technological organisations. These include DAN Europe, which helped to connect the project with the diving community, strengthening the role of divers as privileged witnesses to the health and safety of the sea.

"Every dive is a testament to the beauty and fragility of the sea," says Fabio Figurella, EU Project Coordinator for DAN Europe. 'With ART4SEA, divers are not just visitors: they become ambassadors for conservation, able to tell what is happening below the surface and inspire real change.'

ART4SEA's permanent works will be a key part of the landscapes of Ustica, Gozo and Alonissos for many years to come. Divers will love the experience these islands will offer, and they will make them cultural and diving destinations like no other in the world.

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About ART4SEA

A project co-funded by the European Union, an official activity of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030). It unites art, science, and technology to promote Ocean Literacy and raise awareness about marine health. The project hosted artist residencies on three Mediterranean islands—Ustica, Alonissos, and Gozo—to transform scientific data into accessible physical and digital artworks. These creations, which include murals, underwater sculptures, VR experiences, and digital films, focus on critical themes like climate change, biodiversity loss, the sacred bond between humanity and the sea, and the need for ecological responsibility. Ultimately, the goal is to transform these islands into open-air museums, fostering a deeper, emotional connection to the ocean and inspiring real change toward conservation <https://art4sea.eu/>

ART4SEA SOCIAL MEDIA

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About DAN Europe

DAN Europe (Divers Alert Network Europe) is an international non-profit medical and research organisation dedicated to diver health and safety. Since 1983, DAN Europe has offered medical assistance, scientific research, education, and safety initiatives, while also advocating for environmental responsibility and sustainable diving practices. <https://www.daneurope.org/en/home>

DAN Europe is a proud member of the ART4SEA consortium, promoting diving safety within this multidisciplinary marine initiative.

About ART4SEA Consortium

The ART4SEA consortium gathers seven high-profile European partners selected for their multidisciplinary expertise and strong experience in the marine and cultural sectors. This cross-sectoral partnership ensures an innovative and sustainable approach to the preservation and valorisation of underwater cultural heritage, with a shared focus on the marine environment. ART4SEA develops advanced technological and project-based solutions, integrating scientific research, diving safety, cultural conservation, and sustainable local development.

Consortium partners: **3D Research (Italy):** Technological innovation, **Atlantis Consulting (Greece):** Cultural consulting, **Bashkia Vlore (Albania):** Territorial management, **CSIC – Institute de Ciencies del Mar (Spain):** Marine research, **Divers Alert Network Europe (Italy):** Diving safety, **iWORLD (Italy):** International cooperation, **Sebastiano Tusa Foundation (Italy):** Underwater archaeology.

12 Permanent and 12 Digital Artworks

<https://art4sea.eu/art>

Underwater sculptures

Trajectories – Giacomo Rizzo (Italy). Installed in Xwejni Bay, Gozo – an underwater sculpture representing a symbolic vessel that preserves the memories of Earth and welcomes new life.

Aetas – Micol Cornali (Italy). Installed in Agios Dimitrios Bay, Alonissos – an underwater sculpture merging “myth” and “waste” to raise awareness of ocean pollution.

The Queen of the Corals – Davide Galbiati (Italy). Installed in Cala Giacone, Ustica – an allegorical sculpture of the fusion between humankind and nature, depicting a reclining female figure among the corals, inviting us to rediscover listening to and caring for the ocean.

Artworks on land

Two Waves – Matlakas (Riccardo Attanasio) (Italy–UK) in Gozo. A circular mosaic symbolising the fragile balance between the vital force of the sea and human impact.

Calypso – THEIC (Camilo Nuñez) (Uruguay / Portugal) in Gozo. A large-scale mural. The legend of Calypso becomes a warning about the sea’s role as a climate actor.

Symbiosis – Riccardo Buonafede (Italy) in Gozo. A large-scale mural. The dance of a veiled female figure with a jellyfish evokes harmony between humans and nature, rediscoverable through slowness and observation.

Life Synchrony – Rame13 (Ginevra Giovannoni) (Italia) in Alonissos. A large-scale mural. The sea goddess emerges carrying a boat with a house and a monk seal, symbolising the balance between humanity and the ocean and the need to safeguard biodiversity.

Blue Diver – Anna Torre (Italia) in Alonissos. A sculpture celebrating the scuba explorer, transformed and reborn through an encounter with the sea, symbolising the profound human–ocean connection.

Chapel of Gaya – Michal Trpák (Czech Republic) in Alonissos. An imposing sculpted head in recycled steel and glass, inviting reflection on the intimate bond between humans and the ocean, and the transformative potential of waste.

Beneath the Surface – Mariana Duarte Santos (Portugal) in Ustica. A large-scale mural. By enlarging marine algae on a wall, the work makes the invisible visible. It reminds us that the sea is everywhere and must be protected.

Guardians – Silvia Gadda (Italy) in Ustica. A large-scale mural. A figure immersed in sea foam and *Posidonia oceanica* celebrates the bond between humans and the sea. The work invites reflection and action to preserve the ocean’s balance.

Mermaids Do Take Care of the Ocean – Amanda Arrou-Tea (Spain) in Ustica. A large-scale mural. A mermaid, guardian of the sea, cradles a vulnerable coral: a visual call to action reminding us of the fragility of marine life and our responsibility.