

TARA: 15 YEARS OF ARTIST RESIDENCES ON BOARD

In the four letters composing the name Tara, appear the three letters of the word art. This is hardly a mere coincidence. The French stylist agnès b. and her son Etienne Bourgois, who launched the Tara Expeditions in 2003, have always been keen to see the universes of science and art intimately linked aboard Tara – the ex-Seamaster of the *late* Sir Peter Blake, wife of the painter Pippa Blake. Tara is the name of a French schooner, 36 meters long and 10 meters wide, built with an aluminum hull for extreme conditions and leading for the last 15 years scientific missions of very high level on all the seas of the world.

Committed to the knowledge and the common interest, the Tara Ocean Foundation, a non-profit organization based in Paris and working for the ocean, the environment and research, informs and educates the younger generations – but also leaders from all continents, especially as Tara Ocean Foundation is « Special observer » at the United Nations. Tara has so far, with all her partners, conducted 11 expeditions including four major ones: Tara Arctic between 2006 and 2008, during which Tara drifted in the North Pole for 507 days; Tara Oceans, a plankton study mission between 2009 and 2013 during which Tara discovered 100,000 new marine species and more than 150 million genes, or Tara Pacific between 2016 and 2018, a mission to study coral reefs in Asia-Pacific, which led Tara to China, Hainan, Xiamen, Hong Kong and Shanghai between February and April 2018.

The goal is always the same: to study and understand the impacts of climate change and the ecological crisis on the ocean, with concrete results. These results have been published in prestigious scientific publications such as *Science* or *Nature*. The Tara Oceans mission led to a special issue of *Science* in Spring 2015 and is the subject of more than 70 scientific publications, some of them in China. Because the Tara Ocean Foundation also collaborates with Chinese scientists and institutions. The Tara Foundation has entered into a partnership with Xiamen University under the authority of Dr. Minhan Dai, Academician and Director of the State Laboratory of Marine Environmental Sciences.

The ocean, a universe of inspiration and creation

But in the spirit of Tara's entire family, science never goes without art. And the Tara Ocean Foundation is proud, today, of its relationship woven with so many artists from year to year – dozens of them, well-known or less known, such as Pierre Huyghe, Sebastião Salgado, Loulou Picasso, Malik Nejmi, Xavier Veilhan, Francis Latreille, Nicolas Floch, Marteen Stok, Christian Cailleaux, Emmanuel Regent, Ariane Michel, Benjamin Flao, Ho Rui An and many others – all boarded during artist residencies during which the marine environment has become for them a place of creation, an encounter of different worlds, towards the ocean.

At each expedition, artists (but also writers, philosophers and journalists) have always been invited on board. Since 2003, the schooner has traveled more than 450,000 kilometers in the oceans – in the ocean should we say because in reality there is only one – including in the Arctic and Antarctic. And systematically, creators and artists (selected by a jury of

personalities) from all horizons had the chance to live several weeks on board with a crew and scientists eager to carry out their research while raising awareness toward the public on the major issues of our century: from the crisis of biodiversity to climate change. This is still the case these days as Tara navigate the great rivers and seas of Europe for a study mission and an awareness campaign of Europeans on the damage of plastic pollution at sea. Once on the ground, these artist residencies give rise to countless exhibitions that are often itinerant.

Today, Tara is already preparing a new mission in the Arctic and will launch on the ice in 2022, for the beginning of the United Nations Decade of the Sciences of the Sea, a Tara Polar Station, a true international laboratory of the Arctic, which will play a vital role in our understanding of the Arctic. Until the North Pole, art will be invited on board!

For all of Tara's family, these artist residencies are a way to educate the general public about the ocean, its immense treasures and its fragility. It is a way to continue the tradition of the legendary naturalistic expeditions of the 19th century, when sailors, scientists and artists began to navigate together to share the same experience, each with their own individual mission and way of expression.

The Tara Ocean Foundation is pleased with the exhibition that pays tribute to its commitment organized in Shanghai by the Galerie Dumonteil and warmly thanks Pierre Dumonteil, Yuxin Zheng, director of the gallery in China and the curator of the exhibition Stanley Qiufan Chan. The works presented by the Galerie Dumonteil in Shanghai bear witness to the same passion that unites us to the ocean.

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