

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 04th August 2020

A Desire for the Sea – #ArelaDeMar used art, science & social media to bring the ocean to the community

Merging art & ocean science, #ArelaDeMar collaborated with local artists and researchers to connect the Iberian publics with the ocean, during and right after lock-down.

#ArelaDeMar was a social media campaign, framed around World Oceans Day 2020 (8th June), which encouraged the public to reflect on the whole lot of things the ocean provides us with, either environmentally, emotionally, or culturally.

#ArelaDeMar means desire or yearning for the sea in Galician. The campaign consisted of a Call for Collective Action on the 8th June, aimed at local communities, to answer the question “What’s your #ArelaDeMar?”. The answers would come through any type of artistic expression published in social media using the bespoke hashtag.

The action was planned and coordinated by the Institute of Marine Research (IIM-CSIC) in Vigo and the Institute of Marine Sciences (ICM-CSIC) in Barcelona, both part of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), during the previous month. This time of preparation and promotion led to [a series of collaborations with local creators](#), from YouTubers to singers, who made all kind of creations about their wishes from, and for, the ocean.

In addition, the action was extended to the rest of Spain and Portugal, translating the hashtag to Catalan, Spanish, Basque and Portuguese (#AnhelDeMar, #AnheloDeMar, #ItsasIrriika and #AnseioDeMar), and [a music video](#) was created with the public's messages and the music of the Catalan artist *L'Últim Indi*. It also involved many scientific and cultural organizations as collaborators.

“The ocean acts like a symbol. Its vastness, diversity, strength and mystery create an image in everyone’s mind with the capacity of deeply connecting with people.” - says Jaime Amaro-Blanco, one of the coordinators of the action at IIM-CSIC - “Art, in turn, makes this image easily recognisable to the public, creating a common link which unites us all. It is this link, this deep bond, which is key to foster ocean literacy, making our communities aware of how we all affect the ocean and how the ocean affects us.”

Up to the 8th June, the action managed to involve 17 artists and researchers, mainly from Galicia but also from Catalonia. These collaborations built momentum towards World Oceans Day, when 58 other people from Spanish and Portuguese communities, followed the call, expressing their desires & concerns through art. It is worth highlighting the diversity of creations the action



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received (dances, poems, songs, crochet, origami, illustration, etc) and themes mentioned (pollution, plastics, investment in science, ocean management, protection of biodiversity, etc).

The coordinating team takes pride on the result. According to Julia Castro-Fernández, also from IIM-CSIC, “more than the quantity of participants, it is the quality of the art produced, and the connections created which excite me. Here, at our Institutes, we will continue fostering these actions which bridge the gap between the public, the ocean and, therefore, our research.”

If you need any further information or seek a potential collaboration, please, contact Jaime Amaro-Blanco (Public Engagement Unit – IIM-CSIC) at jamaro@iim.csic.es.