



PHOTO EXHIBITION

« “Badu Island, a Monaco Explorations Mission” » Oceanographic Museum – 27 April to 10 July 2019

In November 2018, H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco visited Badu Island in the Torres Strait at the invitation of Alick Tipoti, an artist from the region who is internationally famous. That marked the start of a Monaco Explorations Mission totally immersed in the culture of the islanders, who advocate a balanced relationship between man and nature marked by respect. The exhibition, held at the Oceanographic Museum from 27 April, recounts this mission, the first of its kind.

As the First Head of State to visit the island, H.S.H. the Sovereign Prince, accompanied by Robert Calcagno, Chief Executive Officer of the Oceanographic Institute, spent several days with the Badulgal people in order to understand the foundations underlying a culture based on a vision of the world very different to our own. This mission has turned the spotlight on a people of the sea whose culture dates back thousands of years, where each person lives in osmosis with nature, attuned to spirits and ancestors. At the same time it has revealed the anxiety of a community faced with the erosion both of its coasts and its traditions.



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The visit of the Sovereign Prince was in response to the invitation of Alick Tipoti, a committed artist who in 2016, during the *Taba Naba* Exhibition curated by Stéphane Jacob, had created an exceptional work measuring more than 600m² for the roof of the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and unveiled a bronze, life-sized sculpture of a Dugong. Through his art, which is on display in the world's greatest museums, Alick Tipoti relates how oral culture, music, dance and visual arts interpenetrate to reveal to us a fundamental knowledge of the marine environment, knowledge which is vital if peoples are to survive. *Girelal*, reputed to be the largest linocut in the world, is on display as part of the Badu Island Exhibition. The subject of the work is the cultural ink between the natives and their spiritual ancestors, the *Muruygal*, and is composed of traditional Melanesian Zenadh-Kes drawings.

Although living in seemingly totally opposed societies, the artist and the head of State share a common vision and have joined forces in the service of the ocean. This interwoven portrait will be the subject of a documentary due for mid-2020 release.



A different approach to the ocean

We have much to learn from island communities and their relationship with the sea. These first peoples embrace a holistic vision of nature, far removed from our anthropocentric vision which places humans at the centre of the world. For them, plants, animals and humans are part of a whole, of a global sphere. H.S.H. the Sovereign Prince is particularly sensitive to the anxieties felt by these populations faced with the threats posed by planetary changes not only to their physical environment, but also to their societal future.

To bring the voice of the Ocean before the highest authorities with full knowledge of the facts, it is vital to highlight the message sent by the inhabitants of these island territories directly exposed to a changing climate. The interdependence between these peoples and their environment, the way in which they use resources, their perception of the marine world are so many avenues for reflection for our modern societies which give fuel to the message which H.S.H Prince Albert II brings before his peers.

SOME FACTS

The Torres Strait Islands

Located at a distance of 14,000 km from the Principality of Monaco, at the junction of the Coral and Arafura Seas, between Australia and Papua New Guinea, Badu Island is one of the Torres Strait Islands which together have a population estimated at seven thousand inhabitants spread over fourteen islands. Australia's main indigenous population, their history differs from that of the Aborigines, notably by their strong ethnic and cultural links to neighbouring Melanesian peoples. Named "People of the Sea", their everyday life is governed by strong interaction with marine life. Their traditions, their know-how and their survival are governed by the diversity of marine life which surrounds them, and which includes animals such as dugongs, sea turtles and sharks.

The Monaco Explorations

The Monaco Explorations are a platform dedicated to the commitment of H.S.H Prince Albert as regards knowledge, sustainable development and the protection of the Ocean. Created at the instigation of the Government of the Principality of Monaco, they bring together the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, to the Oceanographic Institute, the Monaco Scientific Center and the Yacht Club de Monaco. They lend support the actions of these institutions by conducting international missions linking scientific research, dissemination to various publics and governmental cooperation.

PRESS CONTACTS

Alexandra BARDY

Press Relation in charge

+377 93 15 36 82 | +33 (0) 6 40 61 10 43
a.bardy@oceano.org

**Institut océanographique,
Fondation Albert I^{er}, Prince de Monaco**

Magali Boussion

Communication Officer

+377 93 15 40 63 | +33 (0)6 40 61 25 43
mboussion@monacoexplorations.org

Société des Explorations de Monaco

Stéphane Jacob-Langevin AM

Agent of Alick Tipoti

+ 33 (0)1 46 22 23 20
sj@artsdastralie.com

**Galerie Arts d'Australie
www.artsdastralie.com**

www.monacoexplorations.org