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See the reef-inspired street art in Cairns

Bringing the Great Barrier Reef to Cairns streets with oversized murals, the Sea Walls Artists for Oceans project has enhanced the tropical city's streetscape.

PanpaSeed Foundation collaborated with Cairns Regional Council and a team of volunteer artists to transform otherwise drab office and apartment tower concrete walls, downtrodden car parks and other public structures with oversized

artworks. The project aims to increase awareness of ocean conservation.

It's not the first time artists have been used to draw attention to environmental issues affecting the earth's life support system. PanpaSeed's public art program has engaged over 200 contemporary artists who have created more than 300 ocean-themed murals in 17 countries since it was established in 2014.



The following are some of the best works to see on the streets of Cairns.

Artist: Cracked Ink

What: *Cos to Know*

Where: Cairns Showground, Scott Street

Dominating the entrance turnoffs at Cairns Showgrounds, the artist known as Cracked Ink (real name Simon Omerod) took an sensible approach to issues facing the ocean environment. Cracked Ink is known for his twisted, slightly disturbed characters that populate his overcast street art (pictured below).

Cracked Ink aims to highlight the challenges the oceans face, emphasising the need for education while changing human attitudes towards a more sustainable ocean and planet.

"My artwork encapsulates multiple different ocean matters including overfishing, plastic pollution, deep sea oil drilling and rising sea levels," he says.



CRACKED INK'S
CORAL BLEACHING IS
A REAL ISSUE

Artist: Claire Fenton

What: *If We Lose Our Reef, We Lose Ourselves*

Where: Cairns Corporate Tower, Labbe Street

Claire Fenton pays tribute to Aboriginal elder, activist and community leader, CGU Assoc. Professor and Great Barrier Reef champion Henrietta Marrie with a striking work that dominates the lower three floors of the Cairns Corporate Tower.

Fenton says her mural "seeks to illustrate this connectedness by concealing the vibrant colours, textures and patterns of the reef within Henrietta's silhouette. Parts are washed away or sink back into the wall to visually represent the cumulative effect of loss – if one is washed away, so too is the other."

"My artwork shows ocean issues from overfishing to plastic pollution"

Artist: Low Bros

What: *Coral Bleaching*

Where: Holloways Beach Tower, Oleander Street

German artist duo, brothers Christoph and Himm Schmidt, embraced the daunting challenge of a 78 metre-tall water tower (pictured below) as a canvas to highlight coral bleaching on fragile reef systems. Their marine creatures swim around the tower in a vibrant kaleidoscopic dash, intermittently subdued and stripped of colour.

"The work focuses on coral bleaching, a negative environmental condition brought on by human stressors such as pollution, rising sea temperatures and over-fishing," say the Low Bros.

When flying to Cairns, keep an eye out for the colourful water tower on the left side of the plane when approaching Cairns Airport.



Artist: Tim Philo

What: *It's a Matter of Time*

Where: Abbott Street

Improving an otherwise architecturally reasonable apartment block on the Cairns Esplanade opposite, Tim Philo's work (pictured above) can be seen from many blocks away. Guests checking into the new Crystalbrook Collection's Bailey Hotel will have a front-row view to Philo's coral trout at risk of overfishing as the coral sands of time tumble down an ever-diminishing egg timer.

Minimising the project's paint footprint, Philo utilised leftover paints, hues and tinting mistakes from other artists to create a work he hopes will generate a sense of urgency on the impact we have on our reefs and oceans.

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