



WAVES
of Art... Series 6

MARINE AND COASTAL LIFE

Through the Eyes of Artists

In association with

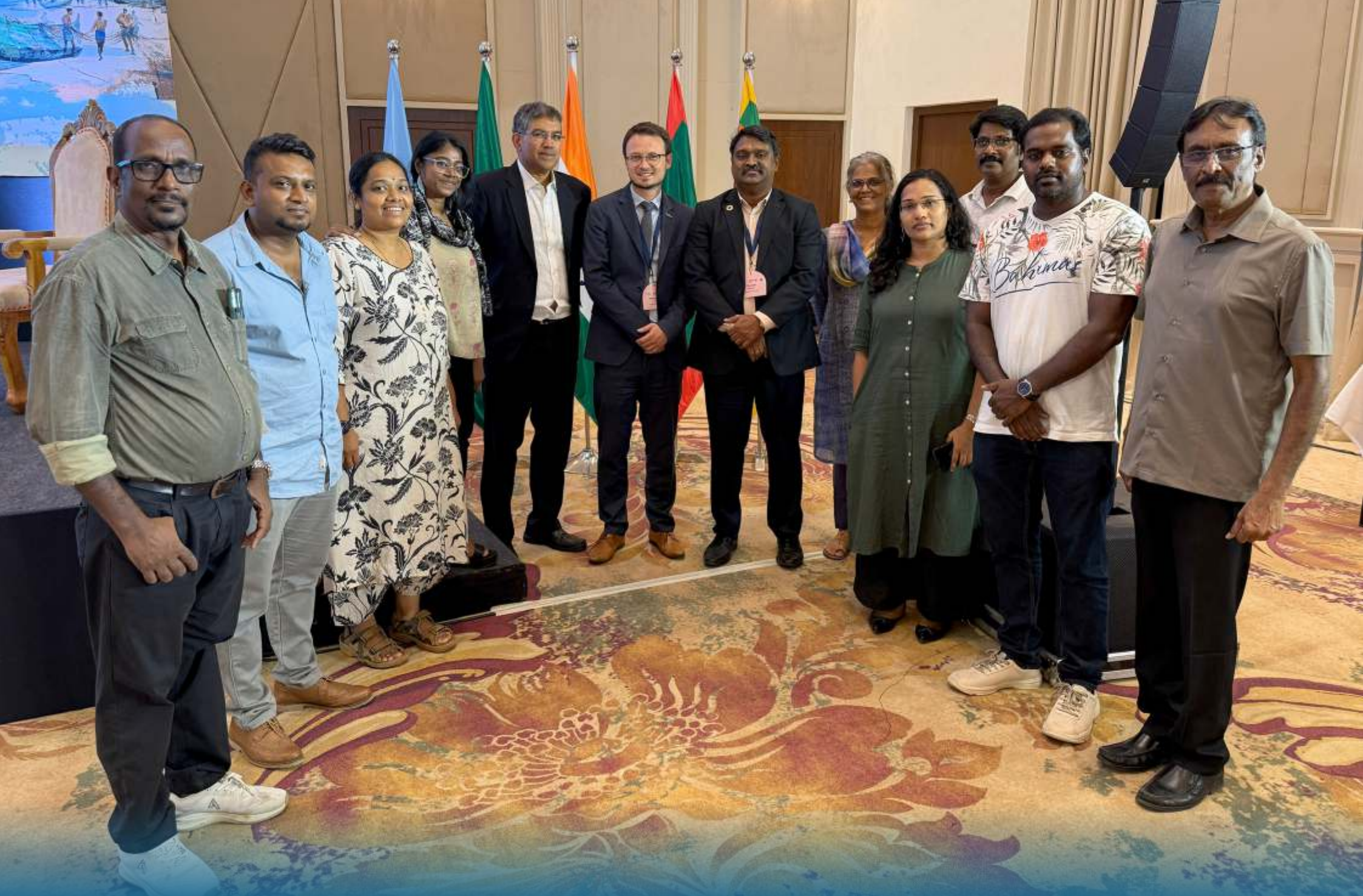


Bay of Bengal Programme
Inter-Governmental Organisation



International Institute for
Sustainable Development





Artists with delegates from BOBP-IGO, FAO and IISD



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of Art... Series 6

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Dr. S Jayaraj
Co-ordinator
Waves of Art Programme



BOBP-IGO, 2025. Marine and Coastal life - Through the Eyes of Artists, Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation, p64.

The sketches and paintings in this series included those drawn during the 'Regional Workshop on Fisheries subsidies in support of its implementation from 15-16 May 2025 at Fortune Beach Resort, Chennai. The event was organised jointly by BOBP-IGO, IISD, and RiseUp.

We thank Dr. Ahana Lakshmi for her assistance in drafting the descriptions for the art works.

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**Hon. Ramalingum
Chandrasekar**

Minister, Fisheries, Aquatic
and Ocean Resources,
Sri Lanka



Message

The sixth edition of the "Waves of Art" series, a social art initiative by the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), is a beautiful example of life in and by the sea through the eyes of artists.

We are now midway into the 'Ocean Decade', the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) proclaimed by the United Nations. The purpose of the proclamation was to stimulate action at all levels. I see this 'Waves of Art' initiative as a tangible contributor with the Bay of Bengal Programme Inter Governmental Organisation pushing for transformative action to change the state of the seas around us.

Jacques Cousteau – Film maker and Oceanographer said, "The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever." I see that the artists featured in this edition of Waves of Art have fallen into that net and the result is the focus on the vibrancy and variety of the small-scale fishing community and their daily activities apart from the rich tapestry that forms the sea's bounty.

Perhaps it is the fast life that we lead today, or the challenges that we have to constantly face every day, many of us have stopped looking around and registering our environment. At such a time, the paintings on the marine and coastal life give us clear focus, a better grip on what we are trying to do. They infuse energy into us, pushing us to preserve what we see as beautiful, pushing us to act against the ugliness of waste plastics that litter the sea. Thus, "Waves of Art Series," the collaborative effort between the BOBP-IGO, professional artists, and art enthusiasts is an important contribution in forging links between science and society.

Many of these paintings were done by the artists at a special session at the 'Regional Workshop on Fisheries subsidies in support of its implementation' from 15-16 May 2025 at Fortune Hotel, Chennai. I commend their dedication and enthusiasm and hope that this celebration of art will also help us to transform the seas around us into an environment of beauty that gives joy for ever.

(Ramalingum Chandrasekar)



Painting by Padmashri Dr. Thotatharrani

Message

The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) proudly presents "**Waves of Art**," an innovative and vibrant initiative that celebrates the intersection of art and the rich themes of fish and fisheries. This unique endeavor aims to inspire creativity and raise awareness about the vital role of fisheries and marine life in our ecosystem.

"**Waves of Art Series - 6**," is a mesmerizing showcase of art images on Marine and Coastal Life from artists from India, France and Sri Lanka.

These artworks explore the beauty of marine life through the eyes of the artists. These pieces not only celebrate the ocean's profound beauty and the creativity and cultural diversity of artists worldwide, but also serve to raise awareness about the threats the marine environment faces.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all those who have contributed to the monumental success of this initiative. Let us come together to appreciate the enchanting world of "Waves of Art Series - 6" and be inspired by the powerful messages conveyed through these beautiful works of art.

Warm regards,



(P. Krishnan)



Dr. P. Krishnan
Director, BOBP-IGO
Chennai







Dr. E. Vivekanandan
Senior Scientist

Marine and Coastal Life Need to be Conserved

Marine and coastal areas are cradle of life, including plants, animals, and microorganisms, from plankton to mangroves and coral reefs to fishes, sea turtles, sea birds and whales. They are home to trillions of tiny organisms and to the largest animals ever to have lived on Earth. Every drop of water is part of a delicate, interconnected system that supports not just marine life, but all life on Earth. Marine and coastal ecosystems and their associated biodiversity hold intrinsic value. Critical marine ecosystem services include maintenance of global oxygen and carbon cycles, production of food and energy, and sustenance of human wellbeing. The principal food source from the oceans are finfishes and shellfishes.

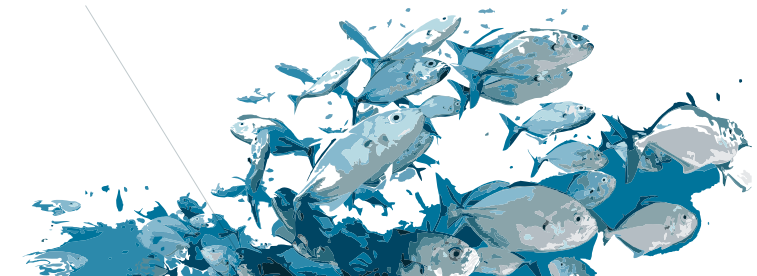
We must remember one essential truth: the ocean is *their* home, not ours. The ocean and the life therein do not belong to us and we are only outsiders. Being outsiders, we must show humility and respect.

Unfortunately, marine and coastal life are threatened by human interventions such as habitat loss and degradation, overexploitation, pollution and climate change. It is our responsibility to protect the marine and coastal life. The United Nations (UN) has listed “life below water” as its 14th sustainable development goal (SDG) that focuses on protecting and ensuring sustainability of oceans, seas and marine resources. Many kinds of government-initiated measures of conservation such as Marine Protected Area, species protection, regulations on overexploitation, controlling pollution are in place. While these are hard options, concurrently, many soft options by engaging communities are gaining momentum. Research has stressed the importance of community-

based approaches which is crucial to develop plans for protection of marine and coastal life. Awareness raising and capacity development are vital components in promoting marine conservation.

Community engagement through artwork, in addition to celebrating marine life, can significantly enhance conservation efforts by fostering increasing awareness of environmental issues. Many contemporary artists draw inspiration from the beauty and diversity of the oceans to create works that raise public awareness of the importance of protecting these environments. Through their creations, they highlight the richness of the sea while warning of its fragility. Here is where creation inspires protection. Committed artists use their work to denounce pollution, overfishing and the consequences of global warming on underwater life which is marked by a strong symbolic dimension to raise awareness and encourage concrete actions for the preservation of the oceans. Thus art and marine biodiversity can come together to defend our oceans. This encounter between artistic beauty and ecological urgency reminds us that protecting marine biodiversity is everyone's business, and that art can be a vector of change for the future. If people are exposed to a variety of artworks over the course of their lives, their consciousness shall be raised so that they are open to different perspectives and get engaged to address issues.

The ability to paint and share their vision with the world is a profound gift for the artists. Their work serves as a gentle reminder to what matters most and makes us realise that coastal and marine life is our greatest ally.









Dr. S Jayaraj
Publication Officer
BOBP-IGO

The Coastal Canvas: An Artist's Perspective on Marine and Coastal Life

The marine and coastal environment represents one of Earth's most dynamic and biodiverse regions, a realm where life thrives in a complex interplay of tides, currents, and salinity. Coastal zones – the fertile meeting grounds of land and sea – are characterized by vibrant ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, estuaries, and tidal flats. These areas serve as critical nurseries for juvenile fish, crustaceans, and shellfish, directly supporting global fisheries and the livelihoods of millions of coastal communities. The sheer productivity of these systems underpins the food chain, making them indispensable to both human welfare and planetary health.

Beyond the shoreline, the open ocean, or the pelagic zone, hosts a staggering array of life, from microscopic phytoplankton – the primary producers responsible for generating much of the Earth's oxygen – to the largest creatures on Earth, such as blue whales. Deep-sea environments, once thought to be barren, are now known to harbor unique chemosynthetic life forms that thrive independently of sunlight. This vast, three-dimensional water world is interconnected by complex migrations and deep ocean currents, making it a single, integrated ecosystem.

However, this vital marine tapestry faces unprecedented threats. Pollution, particularly plastic debris and nutrient runoff, compromises habitat health. Climate change is driving ocean acidification and rising sea temperatures, which severely stress calcifying organisms like corals and molluscs.

Protecting this resource requires global cooperation focused on sustainable

management, curbing pollution, and establishing effective marine protected areas. The health of the ocean and coast directly reflects the health of our planet; securing the future of this vibrant life is a collective responsibility for all of humanity.

Fisherfolk have developed intricate knowledge of the marine environment over generations. Their lives are governed by the rhythms of the ocean. Many communities still rely on traditional vessels like catamarans and non-mechanized boats, emphasizing small-scale, sustainable operations that minimize environmental impact. Coastal life is an intensive, non-stop cycle. Men are typically involved in the arduous task of fishing, while women often take the lead in processing, auctioning, and marketing the catch, including making dry fish. This collective effort sustains the community.

In this book, artists channel their passion for the sea, offering powerful visual interpretations of this subject. Through a diverse range of mediums – including oil, acrylic, watercolor, sketching, and digital illustration – they capture the vibrant tapestry of marine and coastal life. The artworks serve two purposes: to celebrate the ocean's profound beauty and to raise urgent awareness about the threats it faces. This collection bridges the gap between scientific urgency and public perception, demonstrating that art is a powerful tool for advocacy and reminding us that the preservation of the ocean is a collective human imperative.





Dammasiri
SRI LANKA



The marine environment was once a highly colorful ecosystem. Accordingly, this painting attempts to depict the vibrant nature of the ocean floor, as well as its complex characteristics and the diversity of fish species found within it. Various textures have been created in the painting to represent this richness and diversity.

This painting is primarily created based on the decorative patterns of the traditional Kandy (Mahanuwara) style of Sri Lanka. By incorporating the image of a fish, the artwork has been given a distinctly Sri Lankan identity. The use of red and yellow colours reflects the influence of the Kandy wall paintings.





K.C Appan
INDIA



A fleet of rays gliding over the ocean floor



Shark beware - plastics everywhere



R. Dhiyaneshwaran
INDIA



A moment of calm

Waves of Art: Marine and Coastal life



We know the fish are there!



Diana Sathish
INDIA



The sea's bounty



Françoise Dagorn
FRANCE



Françoise Dagorn is a French painter whose work is deeply inspired by the ocean and its biodiversity, shaped by twenty years spent close to the world's seas. Her art explores both the beauty and the fragility of marine life, weaving connections between the sea, the land, and humanity. Committed to the protection of the living world, she regularly takes part in initiatives dedicated to ocean conservation. Through her diverse techniques, using palette knives, fingers, nautical charts, and scientific extracts, she blends art and knowledge to create a sensory and poetic immersion. Her paintings invite viewers to travel, to feel, and to become aware of the ocean's delicate balance in the face of human impact.







Ganesha Somayaji
INDIA



Baskets of fish



Village by the sea



Geetha Shankar
INDIA



Goldfish



S Jayaraj
INDIA



Coastal life is a vibrant, non-stop cycle from dawn till dusk. Men return with their catch, immediately moving into unloading, auctioning, and transportation. Women and men remain busy, handling the fresh haul for market, while the unsold fish are swiftly processed for dry fish—a true portrait of tireless fisherfolk life.



In India's fisheries sector, women are central to the marketing and sales of fish, often taking charge of retailing in villages and markets while simultaneously managing household affairs. They acquire, transport, and sell the fresh catch, and crucially, they manage the processing, such as preparing dry fish. This vital entrepreneurial role ensures fish reaches consumers and underscores their significant economic and logistical contribution to the entire supply chain.



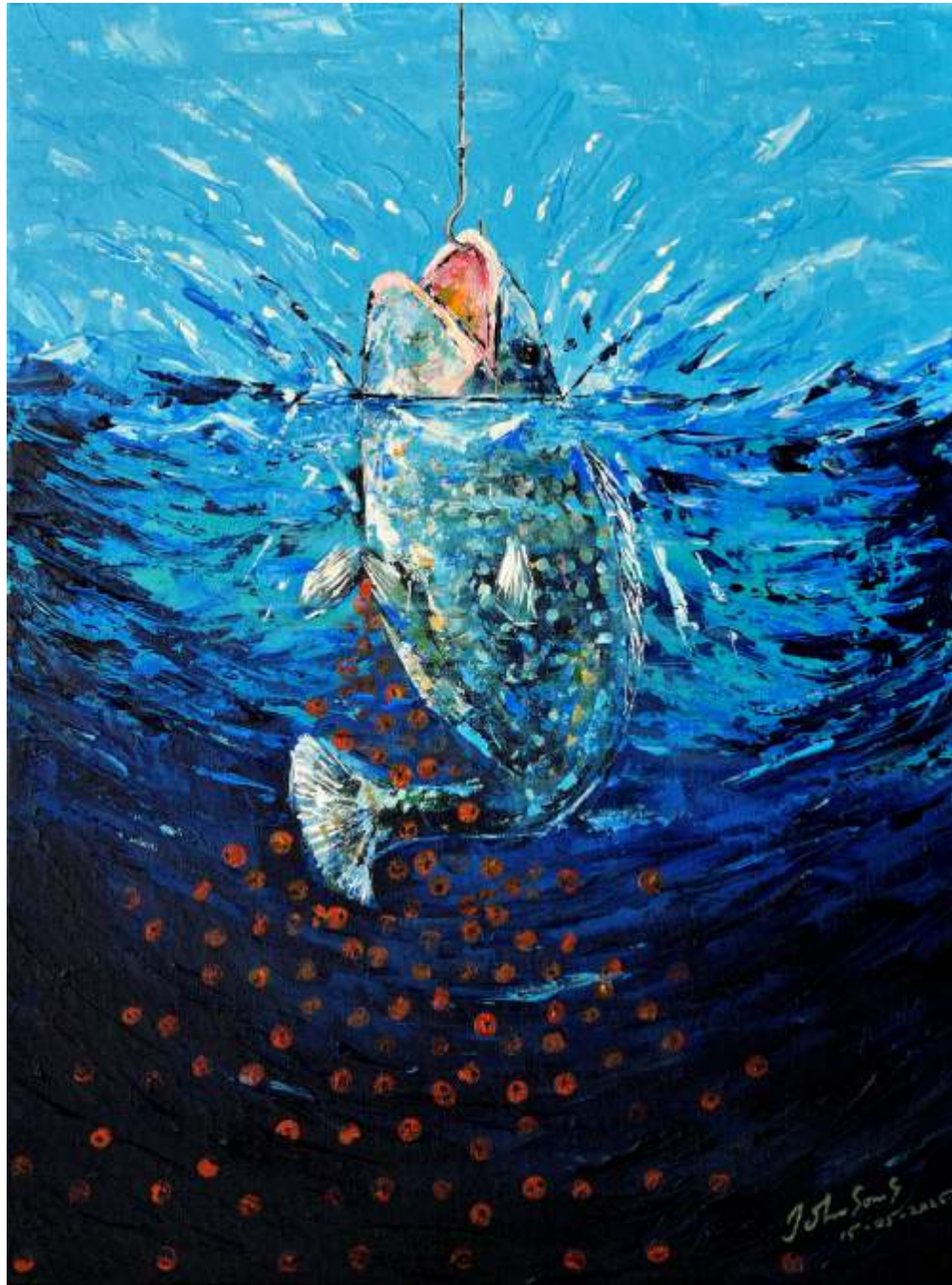
Isai Arasi
INDIA



Catch of the day



Johnson
INDIA



Hooked!



The day's catch



Kalaiselvan
INDIA



Heading ashore



Priya Elayaraja
INDIA



Fish -sisters



I dream of fish



Samuel
INDIA



A hot day by the sea





Sanghavi U K
INDIA



My refuge



Sheela Maradi
INDIA



Playing catch between fronds



Shiva Prakash
INDIA



I pray to thee





Riya Pranita
INDIA



Journey of the Fish Out of Water: A tribute to the fishing community whose lives are tied to the sea. This piece reflects their resilience amid changing markets. Through the glow of the night market, the painting captures both struggle and hope, reminding us of simple lives built on faith, resilience, and dignity. The fish at the heart of this composition symbolizes survival and carries a promise of a better tomorrow.



Suvarnaa Dheringe
INDIA



At sunrise, the ocean writes its own poem. Each wave carries courage, each net carries dreams. The fishermen walk into the unknown water every day, and return with faith in tomorrow. Every dawn, the coast wakes to the rhythm of the sea. Fishermen step into the dark waters with quiet determination, trusting the ocean, their nets, and the promise of a new day. In the glow of the rising sun, courage becomes their companion, and the waves carry stories of faith, tradition, and survival. This painting captures that moment where the human spirit and the sea breathe together.



Upuli
SRI LANKA



These two mixed media paintings are created using magazine papers and acrylic paint. They're inspired by the vibrant fish that swim around Sri Lanka's coral reefs like Parrotfish, Butterflyfish, and Wrasse capturing the colors and movement of our island's underwater world.





Wilssy Johnson
INDIA



The soothsayer



The wait



Lavanya
INDIA



The daily life of coastal fisherwomen.



Each sea creature lays thousands of eggs to multiply its kind; even if one dies, it leaves behind thousands of offspring.



Tanisha Sharma
INDIA



This watercolor artwork portrays a vibrant crab, a creative and resilient creature of the deep sea. These fascinating beings play a vital role in maintaining the ocean's ecosystem by recycling nutrients and keeping the seabed clean. Their shells, often beautifully patterned, reflect nature's artistry and adaptability. Through this painting, we are reminded of how such humble marine creatures silently sustain the balance of life beneath the waves, making the deep sea their beautiful and essential home.



This artwork highlights the importance of marine life, which forms the lifeline of many coastal communities in India. The colorful fishes depicted here may seem ordinary, yet they represent the delicate balance that sustains countless lives connected to the sea. Through vibrant hues and fluid forms, the painting celebrates the beauty and significance of these creatures. It serves as a reminder that even the smallest beings in the ocean play an integral role in maintaining the health and harmony of our ecosystem.



Ross
INDIA





Kanchi Bhargavi
INDIA



Jewels of the Ocean: Nature's Living Masterpieces



Biji K B
INDIA



Diving into the deep blue



Just keep swimming



Aisha
Dubai

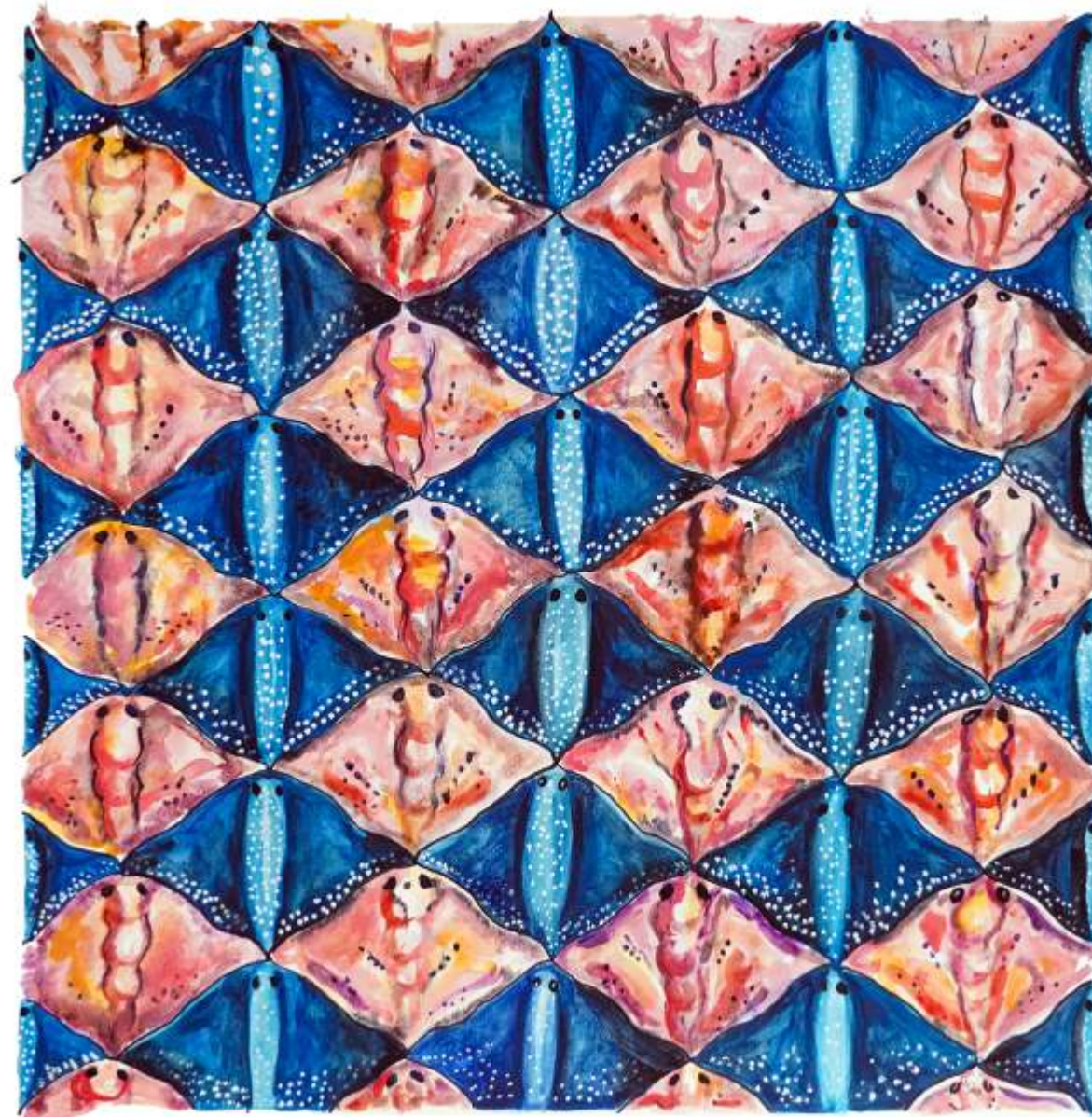




This powerful collection reflects the sorrow of a world engulfed by pollution, caused by over 8 million metric tons of plastic entering oceans yearly. Through art, I juxtapose life's former vibrancy with the current shattered environment. Each piece is a symbolic message urging us to recognize that by harming nature, we are destroying ourselves and jeopardizing the future of our shared home.



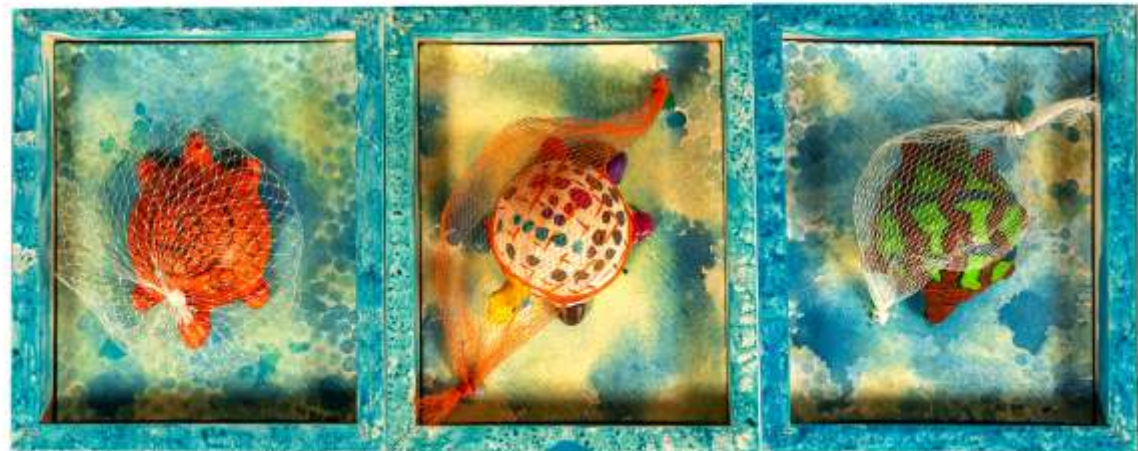
Akhil Anand
INDIA



Cant stop Losing you: If you know the song, you know the species... An Ode to Escher and to Sting and the Sting Ray species conservation. Appreciate the lovely patterns and Tessellations. In appreciation of Sting Ray conservation and its place in a marine habitat.



What does Math in Marine life mean ?
 Hexagons and spirals- The most optimum Patterns nature has created .
 Inspired by a Natgeo photo of a Turtle caught in a fishing net. This painting explores marine pollution and patterns. Ernst Haeckl the famous biologist is the spark behind the use of sea animals.





Tarika
INDIA



Overfishing: I have always been fascinated by the ocean and the plethora of life forms it contains. I watched a documentary called *Seaspiracy* and was saddened to learn that overfishing is threatening many marine creatures. I also learnt that aquaculture facilities catch small fish from the ocean and disrupt the marine food chain. In this painting of overfishing, the nets depict the caged existence of fish.



Focus on Context: I have done a painting inspired by a couplet from the Tirukkural that discusses the importance of context. To convey its meaning, I have contrasted water with earth. Just as a fish or octopus cannot survive on land, a candle or fire-crackers cannot be ignited in water. Thus, we need to be mindful of our ecological contexts, be it marine, mangroves or marshes.

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The Bay of Bengal Programme Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO), set up in 2003, was evolved from the erstwhile Bay of Bengal Programme of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) founded in 1979. The current member countries of the Organisation are Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The BOBP-IGO is a Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB), which serves as the think tank for the member countries on transboundary and contemporary regional issues concerning fisheries management, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, pollution management, livelihood and occupational safety. The IGO assists its member countries in achieving UN Decadal Targets for fisheries management, ecosystem conservation and sustainable development in the region through research-based policy advocacy, need-based capacity development and extensive community engagement programs.

BOBP-IGO is a member of the Regional Fisheries Body Secretariats' Network (RSN), coordinated by the FAO.

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Release of Waves of Art Series 5

BOBP's Social Art Publication on Decorative Art on Fish.

Mr. Ahmed Shiyam, Minister of Fisheries & Ocean Resources, Government of Maldives released the Waves of Art-5 publication on the occasion of the National Consultation on BOBLME Phase II project held at Naifaru Island, Lhaviyani Atoll, Maldives on 12th August 2024. This artistic publication comprises sketches contributed by women artists from all over the world.

www.bobpigo.org/pages/view/Waves-of-Art--5



The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is an independent think tank, which works towards creating a world where people and the planet thrive. IISD focuses on policy research in areas like economic law, energy, and water to drive sustainable solutions globally.



RISE UP is a global network dedicated to collective action for ocean protection, restoration, and equitable governance. By uniting governments, civil society, and community-based organizations, it addresses urgent ocean challenges. The focus areas of Rise Up include protecting the high seas, promoting inclusive ocean-based climate solutions, and advancing the rights of small-scale and Indigenous fishers.



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