

The Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards celebrate the innovative and impactful work of Ecsite community members. As we countdown to the 2024 Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards, this series aims to shed a light on some of the Highly Commended projects, initiatives and exhibitions submitted for the 2023 Awards.

Spotlight on Highly Commended 2023 – Pristine Seas

by National Geographic Society

In their project entitled 'Pristine Seas', the National Geographic Society collaborates with local and indigenous communities and policymakers to carry out expeditions around the world to document and protect the ocean. From Tristan da Cunha in the Atlantic Ocean to Franz Josef Land in the Arctic Ocean, National Geographic Society's efforts have had real world positive effects; helping the ocean to heal, rebound and regenerate.

In order to do this, the team at the National Geographic Society has developed plans to protect specific areas of the ocean to support biodiversity, increase resilience to climate change, and secure food supplies. To spread the word of this work, the Pristine Seas: Bringing the Ocean Back travelling exhibition helps heighten awareness on the importance of marine protected areas (MPAs).

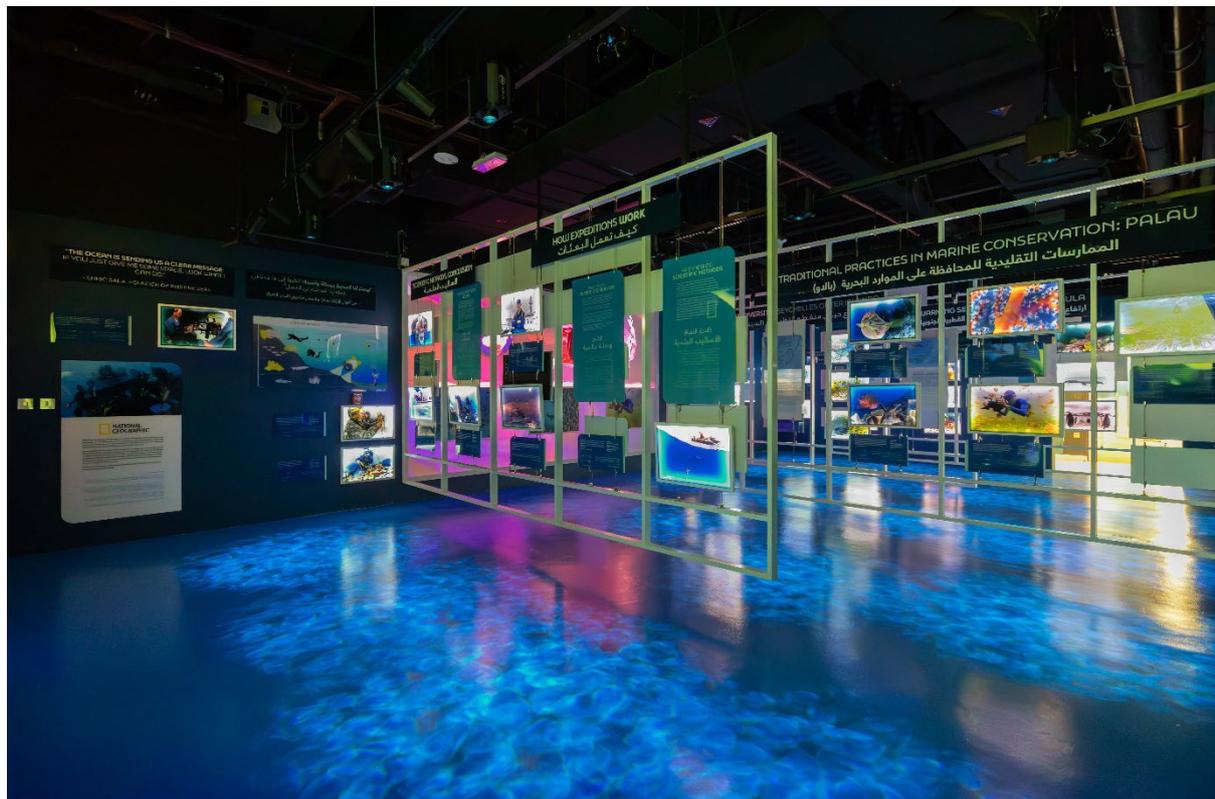
To effectively educate visitors on the work done by Pristine Seas and the importance of MPAs, the National Geographic Society emphasized inclusivity in the creation of its [travelling exhibition](#). The content in the exhibition is expressed in the first-person, allowing visitors to experience the impact and benefits of MPAs in the words of the local communities. In addition, while the exhibition was designed in Spanish and English, a version of the exhibition in Vancouver has been translated into Inuktitut and Cree, in recognition of the conservation efforts of the Inuit and First Nations Peoples in Canada. The Awards Jury was specifically impressed by the aforementioned inclusive nature of the exhibition.

And what's in store for the future of the Pristine Seas project? By 2030, Pristine Seas - together with Indigenous peoples and local communities, governments, non-profit partners, and businesses - hope to establish 40 new marine reserves and protect at least 30 percent of the ocean. If you are interested in keeping up to date with their progress, follow their story [here](#).

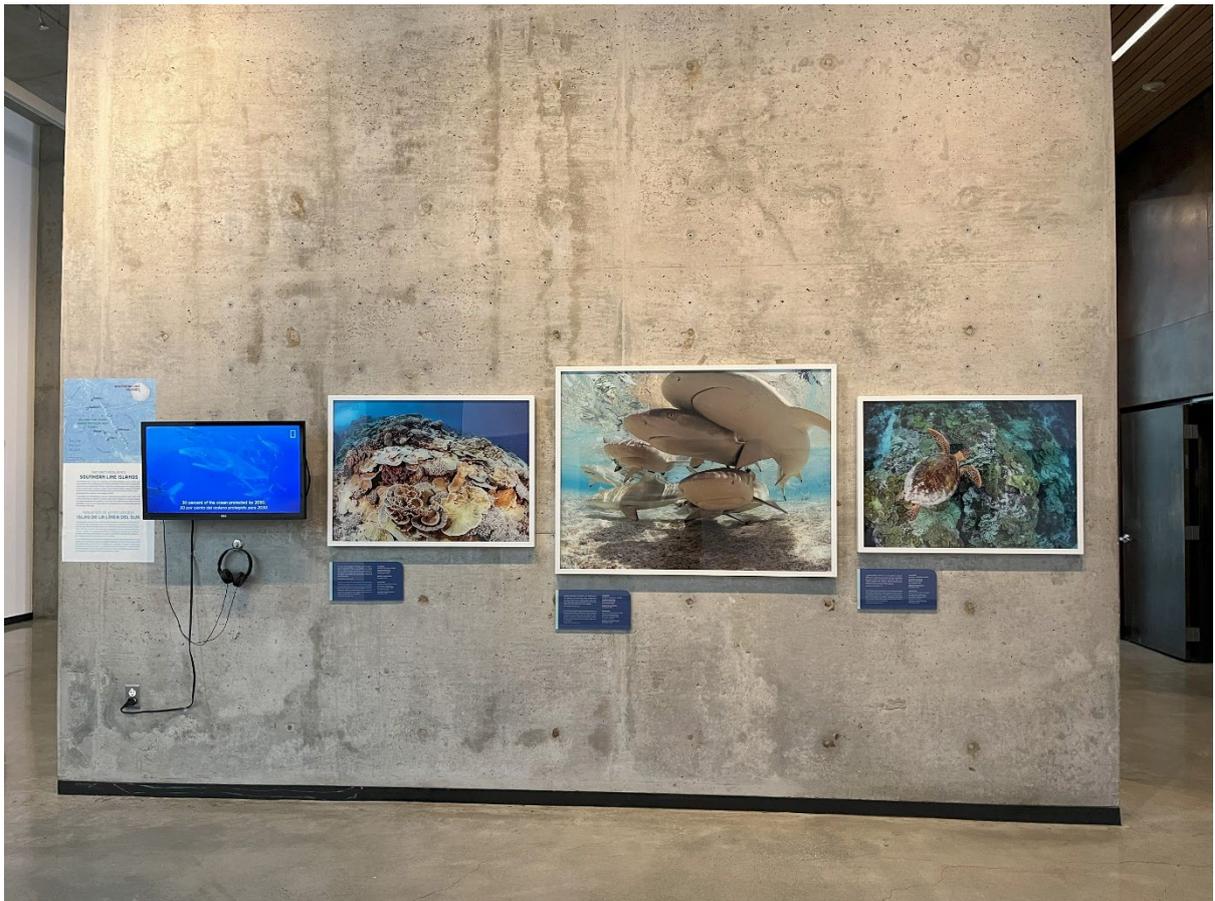
If you would like to learn more about the 2024 Mariano Gago Ecsite Awards and how to submit, please [click here](#). Submissions close 12 February 2024 and winners of the **Ecsite Excellence in Science Engagement Award** receive a certificate, trophy and one free entry to the 2024 Ecsite Conference.



Pristine Seas at The National Aquarium Abu Dhabi © Anas Allwama



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Pristine Seas at David Brower Center California © Cynthia Dombia



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