



PRESS RELEASE

ARTIST CREATES ORIGINAL MURAL ON THE PEAK TOWER TO PROMOTE MARINE CONSERVATION

Hong Kong: Mexican artist Jaime Ruiz has created an original 6 x 5 metre mural today at the iconic Peak Tower, one of Hong Kong's most popular tourist attractions, to raise awareness about unsustainable consumption of seafood products in South China.

In the mural, Ruiz depicts two critically endangered marine species that are native to Mexico: the totoaba, a large fish, which is the target of illegal fishing as a result of Chinese demand for its high-value fish-maw; and secondly the vaquita, a small porpoise, which is nearing extinction at a rapid pace due to its entrapment in nets used to illegally fish totoaba. The mural also references the Golden Coin Turtle, a critically endangered species native to Hong Kong, the last remaining city it can be found in the wild. Conservation initiatives are undertaken for this species at the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens, with the support of the Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department (AFCD) of the Hong Kong Government.

The Consul General of Mexico in Hong Kong, Damian Martinez, recognized the valuable support of many organizations in Hong Kong towards this project, particularly that of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (owner and operator of The Peninsula Hotels, The Peak Complex, and The Repulse Bay), which will undoubtedly help raise awareness about this important issue. "The Peak Tower is an iconic landmark in Hong Kong that attracts thousands of visitors each day. If only a fraction of these visitors can receive our message, we firmly believe change will happen," said Martinez.

The Consulate General of Mexico has advocated in Hong Kong to help save the two marine species depicted by the artist in the mural. The Government of Mexico has made large-scale efforts to counter the illegal fishing and trafficking of totoaba in the Gulf of California, while enhancing its cooperation with international partners such as China and the Hong Kong authorities. It has also sought to avoid the extinction of the vaquita porpoise through a private-public coalition called Vaquita CPR (vaquitacpr.org).

“The sustainability of our oceans and the survival of marine life depends on the choices we make as consumers. We must change our personal and social habits,” said Martinez.

“On behalf of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited, we are delighted to support this worthy cause and congratulate the Mexican Consulate on their steadfast efforts to raise awareness of critically endangered marine species. As part of our group sustainability efforts, we champion public art and collaborate with local artists around the world, and we work with several NGOs including WWF and Tenhoi to help identify and serve responsibly sourced seafood in our restaurants, as much as possible. This original mural project by Jaime Ruiz, which coincides with Hong Kong Art Week, offers an ideal opportunity to bring together our group’s art and sustainability objectives. We welcome visitors to view the mural at The Peak Tower over the next few months,” said Mr Martyn Sawyer, Group Director, Properties at The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels.

The mural painting is located next to the upper entrance of the Peak Tram station at the Peak Tower, and will be available to view from Thursday, November 23, 2017.

About the artist:

Jaime Ruiz was born in Oaxaca, México, in 1985. With studies in graphic design and visual arts, Jaime Ruiz deals with social issues such as the transition from rural to urban, the social and community based organization of work, citizen participation, urban expressions, cultural identity, and the long-lasting legacy of colonialism. He is also a university professor in Mexico and collaborates with different art networks and experimentation projects with various artistic subjects.

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