



Portugal Pavilion celebrates connecting the world through the Oceans with urban art sculpture

The inauguration of the sculpture by Portuguese artist Bordalo II, on October 24th, celebrates the 500 years of First World Circumnavigation

Lisbon, 20th October 2021. The Portugal Pavilion will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the First World Circumnavigation at Expo 2020 Dubai, with the inauguration of an urban art sculpture and a powerful message on ocean conservation. The ceremony will be held on Sunday, 24th of October, at 5.30pm outside the Portugal Pavilion.

The ceremony will be attended by the Secretary of State for Internationalisation Affairs, Eurico Brilhante Dias, and Portugal's Commissioner-General to Expo 2020 Dubai, Luís Castro Henriques.

The Portugal Pavilion will unveil a street art sculpture, titled "Magellan Penguins", in tribute to the explorer Fernão de Magalhães (Ferdinand Magellan), who led the first-ever expedition around the globe (1519-1522). Signed by Portuguese artist Bordalo II, the installation is made entirely from ocean plastics – collected from the seas of the countries covered by the circumnavigation – to highlight the escalating plastic waste crisis and the global threat to our planet's marine life. The art piece is a call to action, especially for younger generations, to ensure a more sustainable relationship with the ocean and its ecosystems.

The inaugural event will feature traditional dance and musical performances by Pauliteiros de Miranda (a Portuguese traditional stick dance) and musical duo with Portuguese guitar by Luísa Amaro and Gonçalo Lopes.

The Portuguese Trade & Investment Agency (AICEP) launched this initiative in partnership with Mission Structure for the Commemorations of the 500th Anniversary of Circumnavigation, a governmental entity, to highlight the cultural, scientific, and technological legacy of Magellan's historic journey.

The event also coincides with the annual United Nations Day – an opportunity to showcase Portugal's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals at Expo 2020 Dubai.

The Portuguese Pavilion is in the heart of Expo's Sustainability District. Under the theme "Portugal – A World in One Country", Portugal presents itself as a nation that once connected the world through the sea, sowing the seeds of globalization and remains to this day fully open to the world, to diversity, to each and every culture.

Concept behind the artwork – “Magellan Penguins”

The piece represents four Magellanic penguins, from one of the artist's series – “Big Trash Animals” – which can be found in Lisbon, Paris, Tallinn, Łódz, among 19 other cities on three continents.

The Magellanic Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus* - Bird of the Strait of Magellan) is named after the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, whose crew spotted it for the first time while sailing around the tip of South America in 1520. This flightless seabird inhabits the Atlantic and Pacific seas of South America, and is mainly found in Argentina, Chile, and the Falkland Islands. It is one of the many species of penguin facing serious threats to their survival. According to the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Magellanic penguin is “nearly threatened”.

The symbolic choice of animal for this sculpture not only reflects Portuguese history and values, but also embodies the signature “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future” of Expo 2020 Dubai. Bringing together Portugal, South America, and the UAE, it aims to aggregate the world in one “spot”.

About the artist

Artur Bordalo, known as Bordalo II, was born in 1987 in Lisbon, Portugal. His youth was spent in the company of his grandfather, the painter Real Bordalo, with his incessant passion for watercolors and adventures around illegal graffiti in Lisbon's underworld.

Nowadays, Bordalo II assembles and develops ideas with end-of-life material and uses it to send a message on sustainability, ecological and social awareness. Recognized worldwide for his keen artistic eye and critical conscience, he is famous for using street garbage to create stunning animal sculptures, to warn people about pollution and the effects of such waste in animals' natural habitats. According to the artist, “The idea is to depict nature itself, in this case, animals, out of materials that are responsible for its destruction”.

“Trash” has become the artist's unusual and distinctive raw material in the construction of both small and large-scale pieces, of which examples are to be found all over the world. By using discarded materials, Bordalo II also aims to highlight the materialistic and consumerist nature of modern-day societies. His works are intended, above all, as a vehicle for a universal manifesto.

More information: <https://www.bordaloii.com/>