

Bali Daily



Home Edition: Monday, June 03 2013

Images: New underwater show

BY DESY NURHAYATI ON 2013-06-03



Underwater beauty: The mermaid statue, conceptualized by Celia Gregory of The Marine Foundation and created by Balinese artist Wayan Winten, is placed at a depth of 10 meters in Jemeluk, Karangasem.

Snorkeling and diving enthusiasts can now enjoy a new underwater attraction off Jemeluk Beach in Amed, Karangasem regency.

In the shape of a mermaid, the statue will serve as an artificial structure where baby corals can attach themselves and grow.

Made of pH-neutral cement that provides substrate for coral reef and fish habitat, the statue is expected to not only speed up the recovery of the coral reef, but also to become an interesting underwater attraction.

The statue is funded by the Body Shop Indonesia, conceptualized by Celia Gregory of The Marine Foundation and brought to life by Balinese artist Wayan Winten.

Last week, local people and divers from Reef Check Foundation Indonesia, Coral Reef Alliance and The Marine Foundation, sank the statue to a depth of 10 meters.

Before sinking the statue, local residents held a blessing ceremony on the beach. Fishermen and divers worked hand in hand to tie the statue to a boat and carry it to a spot located around 30 meters off the shore.

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For the Balinese, the manusa yadnya ceremonies are carried out at various stages in their life to cleanse the soul and cement their union with god. Without the manusa yadnya rituals, the body would remain open to the many demonic influences that can cause physical and spiritual harm and be unable to progress spiritually or physically.



Team work: The local people of Purwakherti village sink the mermaid statue in the waters off Jemeluk Beach.

The underwater sculpture is part of the Art for Oceans Program by The Marine Foundation, with the aim of addressing the issue of coral reef degradation and raising awareness of the pressing need to protect the health of the oceans.

In addition to the mermaid statue, two other similar art works, in the shape of the Ganesha and Hanuman characters, were sunk in a nearby spot.



Carefully does it: Divers attempt to put the mermaid statue in the right position at a depth of 10 meters.

Several meters away from the mermaid statue, there is another unique object for snorkelers and divers, a mailbox from where they can send a postcard to their loved ones anywhere around the world.

As one of Bali's popular diving spots, Amed is now in the process of being further developed as a marine tourism destination run harmoniously with coral reef conservation, a joint effort by an environment foundation in cooperation with local people and dive operators.

Located in the southeast corner of Bali, about three hours drive from Denpasar, Amed has a landscape consisting of a series of headlands overlooking bays lined with traditional fishing boats.

— Photos by Luca Vaime of The Marine Foundation

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CONTACT

Jl. Tukad Musi VI/17 Panjer Kav. 1 Renon, Denpasar Bali
Call. 0361-265436, 265437, 265384
Fax. 0361-223690
Email: jpbali@indosat.net.id