

Press release

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PANOMETER LEIPZIG

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360° Panorama »GREAT BARRIER REEF – The magical world of the coral reef« opening on 3rd October – The hyper-realistic expedition to the mighty coral reef off the coast of Australia

From 3rd October 2015 to 15th January 2017, Yadegar Asisi's monumental 360° Panorama »GREAT BARRIER REEF – The magical world of the coral reef« will be on display in the Panometer Leipzig. On a 1:1 scale, this Panorama takes you on an expedition to the 3,500 square metres of the largest coral reef in the world off the north-eastern coast of Australia.

The Panorama of the Great Barrier Reef fits in seamlessly with the series of Yadegar Asisi's Nature Panoramas. Underlying this Panorama are the artist's fascination and wonder about the complex relationships existing in nature and the unique beauty of a fragile ecosystem. Essential for the development of coral reefs are tiny polyps, sedentary marine cnidarians living in colonies that excrete a calcium carbonate skeleton at their base – and this, in the course of hundreds of years, results in coral reefs. They offer a unique habitat for countless fauna and flora.

Since 2012, Yadegar Asisi has intensively worked on this theme: "For me, themes of nature inspire me to reflect on our role in this world. The Panorama is a very special artistic medium for creating pictures. This inspires me to such an extent as to give me the courage to tackle such complex themes as the Great Barrier Reef."

Asisi undertook several research trips to the world of corals, sponges, mussels, starfish, clownfish, turtles, rays, sharks and groupers in the turquoise-coloured waters of the Pacific Ocean, in order to carry out surface and underwater research and familiarise himself with the subject. In Port Douglas, he received support from Ben Cropp, a passionate documentary filmmaker and diver, who led him to hitherto undiscovered corners of the reef.

You experience the reef as if you were underwater yourself – the diverse submarine world of corals, marine fauna and flora is revealed with its interaction in fascinating colours and ever-changing light conditions. With the blaze of colours and richness of detail, Yadegar Asisi focuses on the uniqueness of creation contained beneath the water's surface. With a height of 32 metres and a circumference of more than 110 metres, he has created a hyper-realistic art space, which in this perfection, ideal brightness and visibility could not be experienced this way in nature.

The biggest challenge for Asisi was the construction of the underwater landscape. He had to unite the numerous facets and forms of expression present in the Australian coral reef within a Panorama, without making them appear "contrived". He created this Panorama art space entirely on his own by "compressing" the idealised elements typical of the coral reef in such a way that resulted in a perfect underwater landscape recognisable over 360°: "The low visibility under water means that a diver can only experience the incredible variety and size of the Great Barrier Reef to a limited extent. You actually

have to swim to whatever you want to see. In my new picture, a most likely very rare or even non-existent lucidity allowed me to find a way of approaching this magnificent spectacle of nature in a rather special way." Natural habitats are to be found alongside one another, which do not directly exist side-by-side in the real world, but are indeed separated by kilometres or are located at different depths of water. Asisi has combined them together to enable an all-round view of this complex habitat in a hyper-realistic Panorama artwork.

Dr. Moshira Hassan from Reef Check e.V. and biologist Mirko Wölfling from the University of Vienna provided the project with invaluable impulses and organised impressive exhibits, all of which were acquired in compliance with the Washington Convention on Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The Panorama experience is rounded off by music specially composed for the GREAT BARRIER REEF by Eric Babak as well as a background soundscape attuned to the nature and incomparable underwater atmosphere. Eric Babak, famous from international film and television productions, has been composing the accompanying music to Panoramas for twelve years.

The accompanying exhibition evolved under the aegis of Creative Director Mathias Thiel and makes use of installations to provide an introduction to the theme. Amongst other aspects, it introduces the smallest yet most important players on the reef – corals, polyps and algae. With an emotional-intuitive tour around the Panorama, the exhibition presents the fascinating habitat of the Great Barrier Reef and the complex interrelationships to be found in this ecosystem. A filmic making-of in the auditorium presents the development of the complex Panoramas and their process of creation, a period lasting several years.

The Panometer Leipzig was intentionally selected by Yadegar Asisi as the first venue to present the GREAT BARRIER REEF Panorama. This is where his renaissance of the Panorama art form began in 2003, since which time he has conducted a lively and direct dialogue with his audience: the citizens of Leipzig and the tourists to the exhibition city. This successful exchange has inspired him and ultimately resulted in all the subsequent locations both in Germany and abroad. "I would like to establish the Panometer Leipzig even more firmly as the premiere presentation venue, where new Panoramas are first shown and from where they then go out into the world. For me, Leipzig serves as a workshop where I can experiment with themes and techniques", according to Asisi.

An extensive pedagogical outreach programme on the Panorama is also available, to provide visitors with an understanding of the theme in a target-group specific manner. Within this framework, various tours, presentations, events and actions will take place (www.asisi.de).