

SUSTAINABILITY

Prada, climate artist Enzo Barracco spark conversation on stage

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*Discussions on the subject will be held around the globe. Image credit: Prada Group*

By ZACH JAMES

Italy's Prada Group is continuing its pursuit of environmental protection.

As the company's UNESCO-backed Sea Beyond preservation education program nears its fifth anniversary, it is hosting a wide-ranging series of discussions around the globe with experts and other involved parties. Since the initiative's inception, sustainability has become a sticking point among politicians, the public and private companies, with luxury aiming to be at the forefront of the movement, Prada included.

"We are at a critical moment, and we urgently need to take action," said Francesca Santoro, senior program officer at UNESCO-IOC, in a statement.

"Our behavior as human beings needs to move towards a more sustainable path," Ms. Santoro said. "Education and awareness raising are key in this endeavor and can take different forms: the lens of a camera that captures the beauty and fragility of landscapes and species at risk - threatened by the warming of the ocean, a direct consequence of the climate change - is one of these.

"Photographers are strong allies as, through their art, they can inspire everyone to contribute to this collective effort."

Ocean views

The first Prada Possible Conversation took place in New York earlier this month, with the panel including artists, executives and authorities in the field of ocean preservation.

Corresponding with the International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22, the talk saw Ms. Santoro, National Marine Educators Association (NMEA) Blue Schools Committee chair Meghan Marrero and Italian climate artist and photographer Enzo Barracco dive deep into sea-focused sustainability on a global scale.



The three-person panel discussed their respective viewpoints on the topic. Image credit: Prada Group

"I believe everyone has a duty to do something for our planet within their own capacity and skill," said Mr. Barracco, in a statement.

"I do it through photography because photography doesn't need translation."

The Prada Possible Conversation was set inside the Broadway Epicenter in the Guggenheim Museum, one of many panel venues the maison has around the world. Alongside the speaking engagement, a selection of Mr. Barracco's sea life photographs were put on display, serving as a preview for a full exhibition set to hit the Prada Aoyama Epicenter in Tokyo later this year.

Ms. Marrero's organization, the NMEA, received a donation from the group following the New York event, allowing for 16 schools in the New York tri-state area to be transformed into "Blue Schools." These special educational institutions implement ocean literacy and learning into the overarching curriculum, with special projects included to engage the children as "the next generation of stewards for our one ocean," per the brand.

Environmental push

The Sea Beyond program has been active following the introduction of a new two-year program in June 2023 ([see story](#)).



Sea Beyond will be activating globally throughout the remainder of 2024. Image credit: Prada Group

Backing this up, Prada unleashed its 2024 Re-Nylon collection in January, with 1 percent of the revenues derived from it going directly to the ocean-focused initiative ([see story](#)). In June, Sea Beyond will descend upon Venice with a two-day conference, bringing together experts, influencers and creatives to educate themselves, have important conversations, take part in workshops and witness the premiere of a documentary centered on Venetian Blue School pre-K programs.

While Prada is alone among luxury maisons in embracing the sea, greater environmental sustainability pushes are prevalent across the segment.

Across sectors, from fashion ([see story](#)) to beauty ([see story](#)), brands are taking part in protecting the natural world.