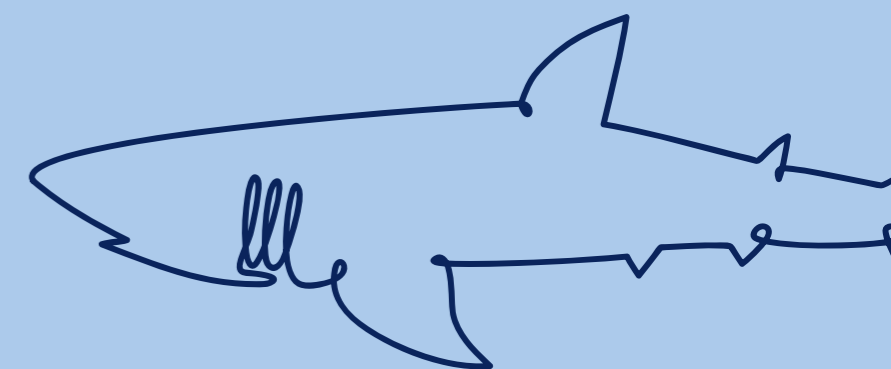
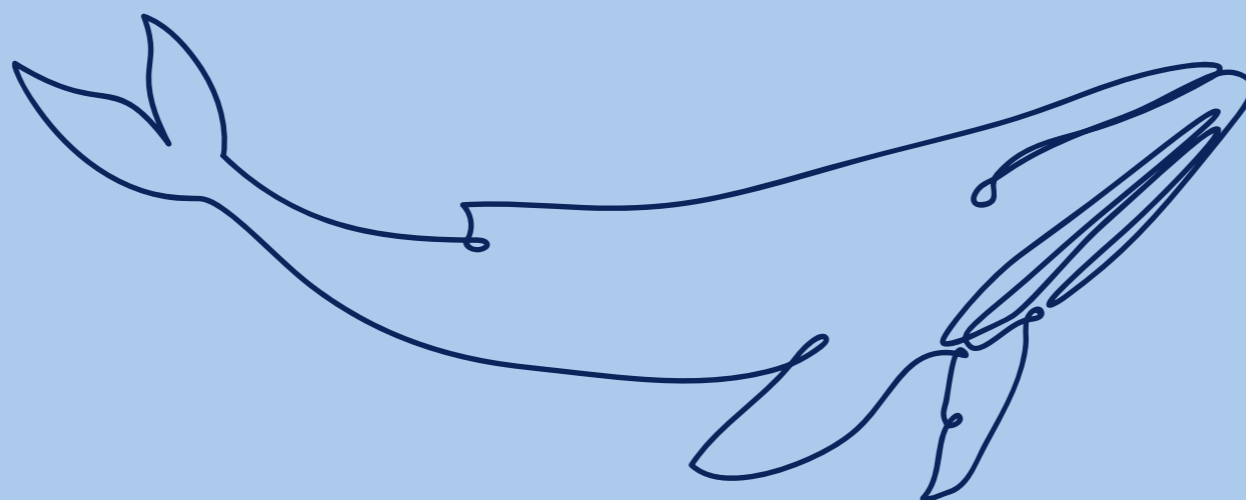


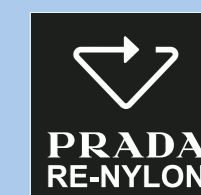
Conversations with the

# SEA BEYOND

*ers*

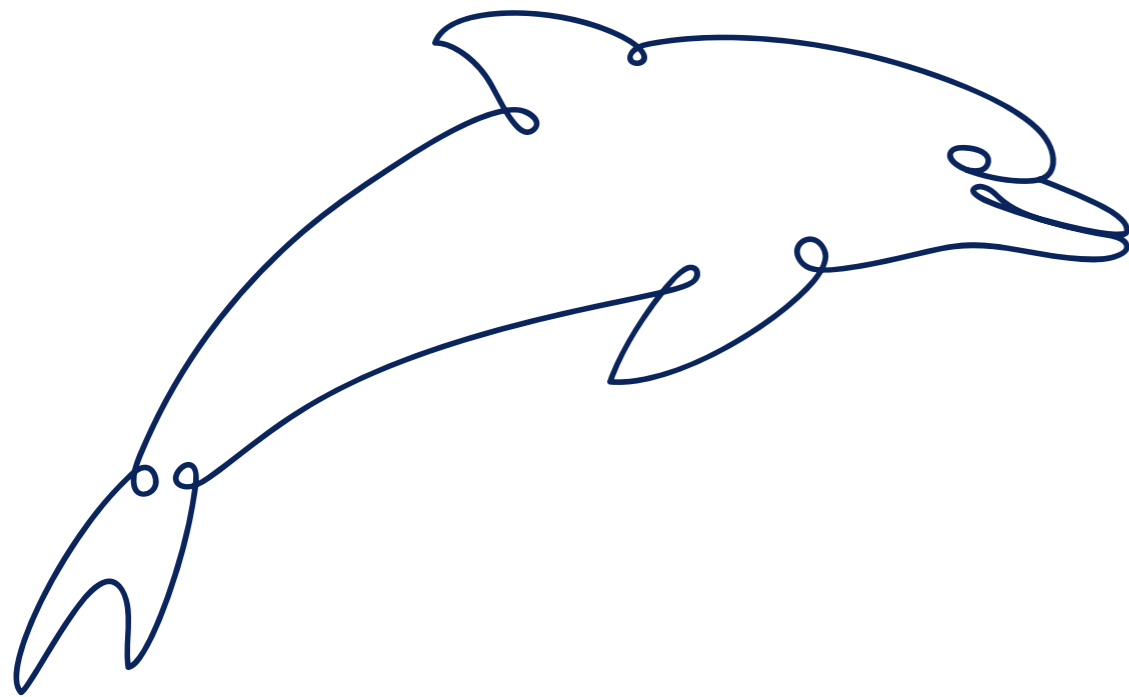


*All the conversations were conducted by Patricia Furtado de Mendonça,  
Sea Beyonder and Moderator of the award ceremony.*



# Alessandro Baricco

Contemporary writer & Public intellectual



**What are your earliest memories related to the sea?  
How would you describe your connection to the sea today  
on an emotional level?**

I was little, I was three or four and I used to spend my vacations in Liguria, in Levante, in the eastern part of the country. The sea there has a singular characteristic: you just have to take a few steps and it immediately becomes deep. I was small, I didn't know how to swim. My first memory of the sea was precisely this fear of straying too far from the shore and therefore disappearing under the water. Today I live much more at the sea than I did when I wrote *Oceano Mare*. Between the pages, one finds more of what I dreamed of than what I had actually experienced. It is the sea told as a kind of absolute place, but also far away. I am in love with the island of Procida, I have a boat... But despite everything, I remain a man of the land. For me the sea continues to be more a place of fantasy than a real place.

**What is the marine animal you most identify with, love or admire?**

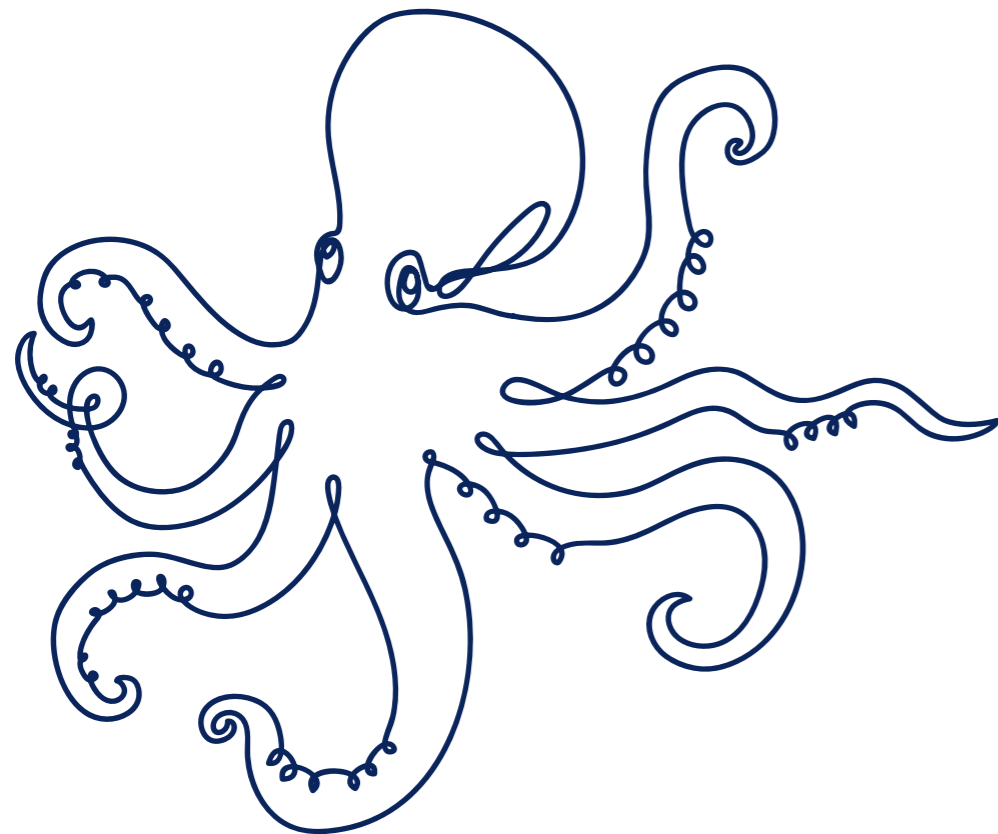
Definitely dolphins, because they're always kind of on the edge. They need to get out, to breathe. It's the same feeling that I experience in any situation or wherever I am: at some point, I need to get out and breathe.

**Today it is important for young people to turn their gaze  
and attention to the sea, even when they do not physically see it  
with their own eyes. What do you think are the greatest challenges  
for an ocean education? What advice should be given to children,  
but also to teachers and to those who develop awareness projects  
dedicated to them?**

I think sailing is a crucial experience for kids to have and it's important to make it happen whenever possible. I think it should be a crucial moment in the education of every child or young person, almost more than learning to swim. For all those kids, for example those who live in the mountains, for whom the sea is far away, I think it's important to read great sea novels. When you don't have the chance to physically see and touch the sea with your body, books give you the chance to get to know it as a legend or a fairy-tale place and to build up an instinct to defend it, not to let it die with your daily gestures.

# Fabien Cousteau

**Aquanaut, Ocean conservationist,  
Documentary filmmaker**

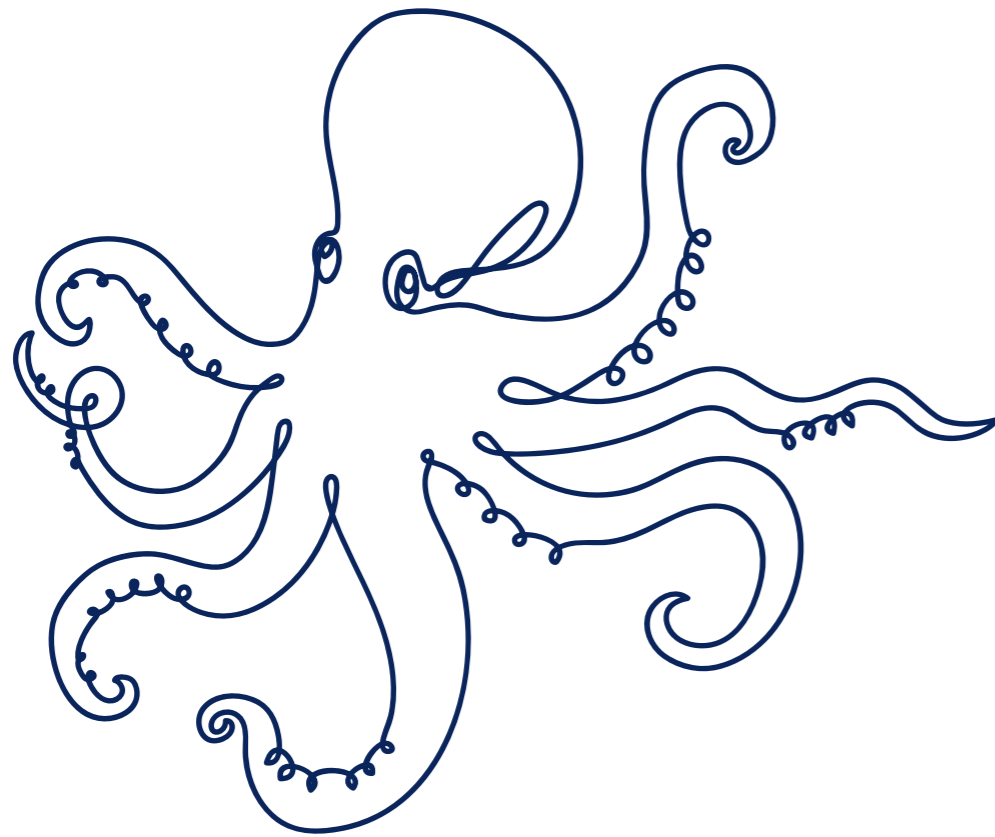


**I know the ocean, for you, is home. Which is the first memory you have related to the ocean? How can your heart express your actual relationship with it?**

I remember I was a child, set free on a beach, feeling the sand between my toes, having the sounds of the seabirds, the seagulls, above my head, and having this enormous beach to run free in any direction and being able to run around, fall, roll around in the sand, the joy of having the sun on my face, the smell of the salt ocean... All of these seemingly mundane things that now, as an adult, I see children doing. When you're first introduced to the ocean, these are monumental. They're monumental because they're paved on moments in your learning of your connection with the ocean. The ocean is just amazing: there are 3.4 billion cubic kilometers of volume of ocean and we know so little about it, yet the emotions that human beings feel towards it are a sense of well-being, belonging, connectivity and relaxation. My heart is one with the ocean, with life in general on this beautiful planet. My heart aches when I see our ocean suffering, and by that I mean the Greater Ocean, not just the water part, but all the beings that call it home. Whether it's things like microplastics or the pollution that we dump into our ocean everyday, we treat it like an endless resource and garbage can. We must feel for the ocean.

I often have many conversations regarding the ocean from an economical point of view and it annoys me because we're missing the vast majority of the picture, taking into account only the things that are tangible to the most basic aspects of what makes our society.

If you look at the intangibles, the things that are human rights, the things that are connectors to the biosphere, the things that make us possible, the climate related cycles that are generated by our ocean world here on land... these things are allowing us to exist and co-exist with all life in the universe. We have to understand this value that is intrinsic to our well-being, to the viability of our future, and we must absolutely incorporate it into our thought process. And the more we put value on this language, the more we translate it into a higher form of thinking about things, the more we value those things. With the ocean we have to think the same way, because those "resources", as we like to call them, are not infinite. And they take time to regenerate.



## Which marine animal fascinates you the most?

I would say the octopus. It represents what is the strangest, the most fascinating and maybe the most intelligent creature of our planet. It is an animal that unfortunately does not see many years of life, but within this short amount of time they exhibit an amazing adaptability, an amazing ability to learn, an amazing physical ability to do things and to problem solve in just that short amount of life. I will say this: if they were to live as long as we do on this planet, we would not be at the top of the food web. They would.

## What moves you to work with new generations, throughout all the projects developed by the Ocean Learning Center?

My grandfather said: "People protect what they love, they love what they understand and they understand what they're taught". When I was a child, I was not particularly a good student in school because I was always looking out the window for the next adventure. Growing up I realized that education is extraordinarily important, but just as important as education itself is the person storytelling, the person that is sharing that education with you. Their passion transposes and transpires and hopefully impassions the student that is listening. Through my projects, I want to be able to address today's world with the emotional and intellectual needs that today's young person needs or is stimulated by, bringing experiential learning through various platforms. With the Ocean Learning Center, I work with children and it's stunning to me to see kids who never saw the ocean, even if they are just a couple of kilometers away. They don't know what it's like; they have no experience other than what they have seen on television, on the Internet, and maybe in school. The desire to experience it first hand: this is what drives explorers, astronauts and aquanauts; this is why we want to colonize Mars or the far side of the moon and be there in person.

# Anne de Carbuccia

Environmental artist & Filmmaker



## Where does your emotional or spiritual connection to the ocean come from?

My father was from Corsica, so, obviously at a very early age, I was very connected to the sea through Corsica, who they always called "the mountain in the sea". It really is a place that has this incredibly wild nature, that is always connected or interconnected to the Mediterranean, to the ocean. My father was the publisher of Jacques Cousteau and Alain Bombard, so I grew up with their tales and their stories. Nature was engrained in me because I was exposed to it in such an extreme way through this wild island that is Corsica, but I always also associated it to something very human, that is art and culture. I think big environmental changes really started in the ocean, and having experienced all my childhood in the ocean, I really started seeing the changes earlier than a lot of other people on the planet.

## You express your environmental commitment through "Time shrines", symbolic installations to honor and capture the vanishing beauty of the planet. Are they connected to the ocean too?

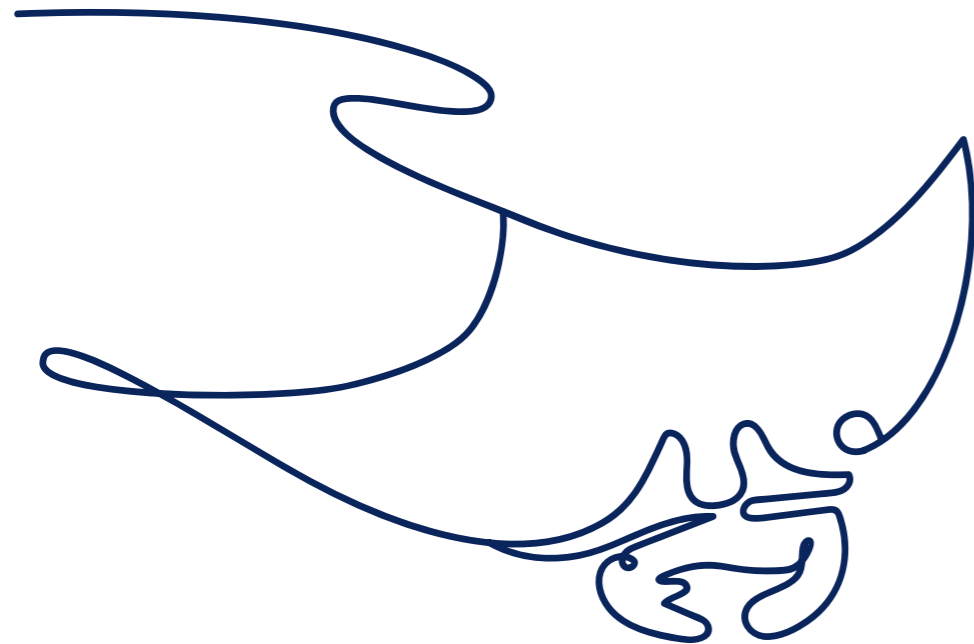
I believe Time Shrines were born through the ocean. I am an artist and realizing the big changes that were happening to our planet, I had to express that through my art. They are clearly inspired from Memento Mori and from still life painting, which is a very classical, extremely ancient form of art. Growing up with such incredible people, I developed curiosity since I was a kid. I think that's why I chose anthropology as a young woman studying in college. The Time Shrine is the result and the combination of all those different things put together: a very classical artistic background mixed with curiosity and anthropological studies. A mix which expresses my deep love, and therefore my deep anxiety for our planet.

## Is there any marine animal you feel more identified with, or that is more special to you?

I think the one that touches me the most is the turtle, because they live both on land and in the water. They come up for air, they have their babies on land, and they live underwater. I have also encountered so many underwater and you can get so close to them, because in some of these locations, they are used to human presence. I had this incredible experience with a turtle underwater. It was not only stuck in a net, but it had like a piece of toothbrush stuck in its nose, and was dying. It was just completely polluted by these things that belong to us, humans, and that was a very important moment. I will never forget that.

Kerstin  
Forsberg

Marine scientist & Social entrepreneur



## When and how did your connection with the ocean start? Why have you been channeling all your energy towards it?

Since a very early age, my parents were always focused on teaching us about the environment that surrounded us. This connection went deeper as I developed into my career. My work is science focused, but it is not about science. It's really about opening up multidisciplinary fields and connecting with different people. When I was finishing my undergrad, I started a small grassroots project on sea turtles, in northern Peru and I decided to engage others to help me. So I reached out to local youth, local fishermen, and in one month, we had over a hundred local volunteers patrolling the beaches, fishermen started reporting the sea turtles that were caught in their nets. Suddenly I was in front of this huge community project. My connection with the ocean goes beyond the incredible animals that I'm able to work with and is also linked to the communities I work with. Having that access, relationships and bonds, being able to meet so many different people; from the kids and the fishermen village, to the politicians that we worked with. That is something that the ocean has brought to me and why I'm passionate about what I do.

## Which is the animal you most identify with?

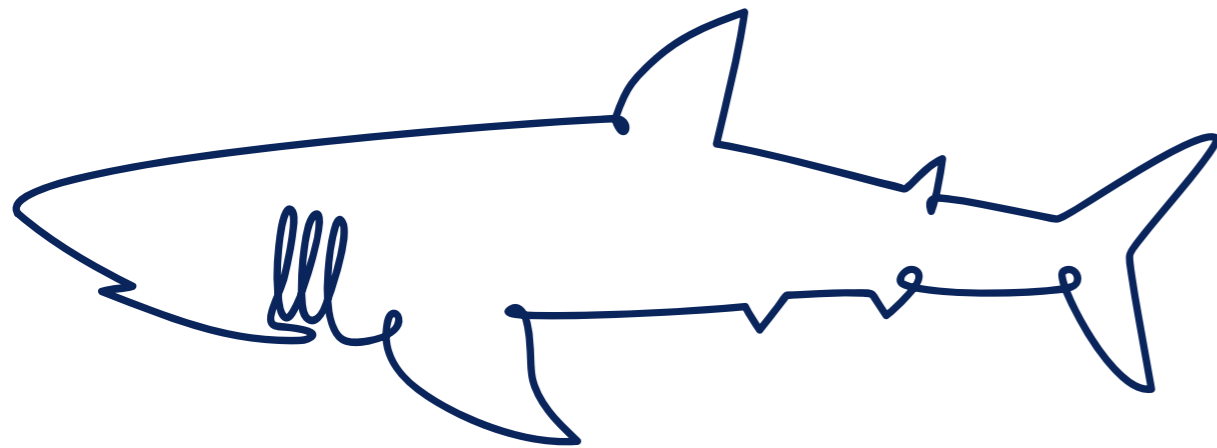
That's really hard. I love all animals. But in terms of emotional connection, I would say mantas. They are flagship species and I just really love how they are so versatile, so they can be extremely gracious, elegant, floating on top of the water or simply curious. And every night they're diving to huge depths, going down and then coming up probably just to feed... It's this kind of combination between being very calm and elegant, and then at the same time so extremely powerful.

## Which message would you share with young generations?

We all have a role to play, and we can all contribute. You don't need to be a huge PHD. Every single person, from the moment they are children, can actually make a difference and contribute. I think something that is really important, especially for kids, is to know that they can start doing changes now, in the present; they don't have to wait until the future.

Alessia  
Zecchini

World Champion Freediver



**You're now considered the "deepest woman in the world".  
What about your connection with the ocean?**

My biggest passion is freediving. When I was young, my parents brought me around Europe in very nice places connected to water and the ocean, and so I could admire this amazing world. Growing up, I just wanted to know better what I could find underwater. I think that there you can really stop your mind, be "yourself", and just admire what is under the water and the blue. There you are just watching. To me, the ocean is really important. In wintertime, I just sit in front of the sea, as a spectator to its power and what it can give me. It's hard to explain how many emotions I can feel while I'm under the water or while I'm just watching the waves.

**Is there a special animal that you feel more connected to?**

I would say sharks. They are so amazing because you have to find them, you have to go deep, you have to be really calm, and maybe they can come close to you and watch you. You have to build a relationship with them, so that you could really admire them. I love sharks so much, they are so elegant.

**Our actions are generating an impact underwater,  
and you are a witness of what is going on.  
What would you say to young generations?**

Underwater, there is a world that is dying slowly. In my trips around the world, I see we are destroying the ocean so much. In many beautiful places like the Maldives or Colombia, I see corals turning white because they are dying. And fortunately in some places like Curaçao, I could see they are planting, they are trying to restore the corals again. Young generations have to understand that it's time to do something, because we haven't much time. We need the ocean. Everything is possible: if you have a dream and you put all your effort into that dream, you really can achieve whatever you want.