CAN-063-3D Printing Coral-World's Oceans

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3D printed coral will bring reefs back to life

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Technology / **Clean Technology**

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We've been seeing evidence for years of how climate change and pollution are affecting coral reefs. The warmer waters and rising acidification have lead to **coral bleaching** and often coral death. When corals suffer, the life that depends on them is affected too.

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Coral reefs make up only 0.2 percent of our oceans, but they are home to over 25 percent of all marine fish species plus other species like sea turtles. Reefs protect shorelines from major storms and provide food and jobs to people who live near them. Essentially, coral reefs are incredibly important to both the health of oceans and well-being of humans.

There have been lots of different types of efforts for preserving and rebuilding coral reefs, most of them requiring lots of time and meticulous labor by divers, but one island in the Caribbean has found a new approach: 3D printing.

The Harbour Village Beach Club on the island of Bonaire has teamed up with ocean preservationist Fabien Cousteau, grandson of the famous Jacques Cousteau, to use the additive manufacturing technology to restore the reefs. The island and Cousteau will work together to design and print artificial corals that are identical in size, shape, texture and even chemical makeup of the native corals.

The artificial corals will attract baby coral polyps to live in and build on them as well as attract organisms that live around coral reefs like algae, anemones, octopi, crabs and fish.

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"3D printed corals can generate real change and establish real growth for reefs, one of the key attractions for visitors and divers alike in Bonaire," said Cousteau to the **Caribbean Journal**. "This technology is less labor-intensive than current coral restoration processes, creating a larger impact in a shorter amount of time."

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The team hasn't picked the exact locations for the restoration yet, but they will do the printing on the island at the Harbour Village's Ocean Learning Center, which serves as an ocean preservation think tank. They hope that this project will be a successful example for other areas around the world.

Tags: **3D printing** | **Coral Reefs** | **Cousteau** | **Technology**

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*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"….**Edmund Burke***