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## Singapore Installs World's Deepest Ocean Art At 7,000 Meters In Mariana Trench

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Screengrab from YouTube video posted by NTUsg

Singapore has become the first country to install an art gallery 7,000 meters beneath the ocean. The installation consists of three stainless steel cubes designed by Singaporean artist and architect Lakshmi Mohanbabu.

The artwork was deployed near the Mariana Trench off Japan's coast in December 2024, serving both artistic and scientific purposes.

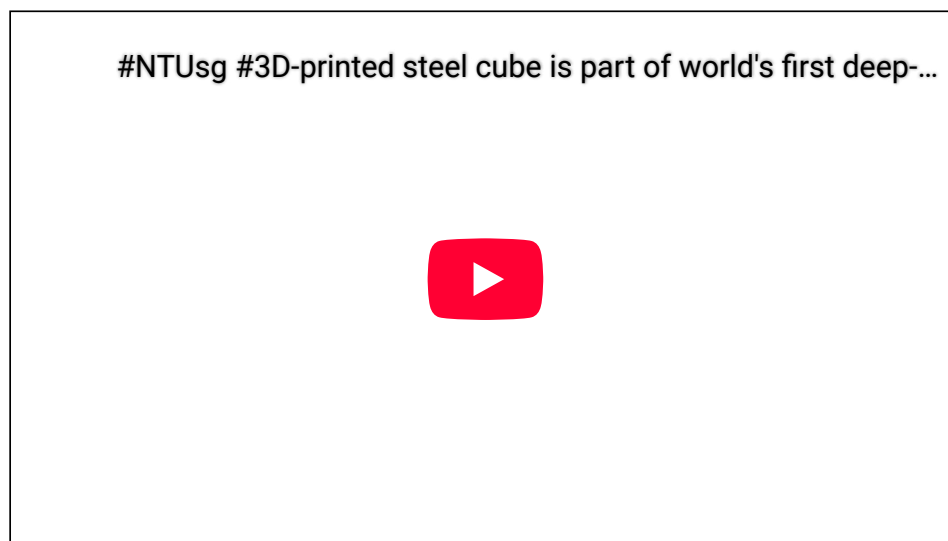
The cubes, measuring 10 cm on each side, are made from corrosion-resistant stainless steel and feature intricate designs inspired by the "Universal Language of Symbols."

Each cube displays five unique patterns-Nautilus, Primary, Secondary, Windmill, and Dromenon, symbolising fundamental human experiences such as creation, movement and time.

The project was executed by NuStar Technologies in collaboration with Japan's Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC). It is more than an artistic venture.

It plays an important role in monitoring earthquakes and tsunamis. The cubes are part of a specialised early warning seismic sensor system that tracks undersea tremors.

One of the three cubes was manufactured using a hybrid technique developed by researchers at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore.



Video Credits: NTUsg/YouTube

This method, known as Laser Patterning and Incorporation of Sheets (LAPIS), combines 3D printing with laser cutting to create ultra-thin layers of stainless steel.

The final structure, only 4mm thick, is over 70% stronger than regular steel, enabling it to withstand extreme deep-sea pressures.

Professor Lai Changquan led the research at NTU's Singapore Centre for 3D Printing. Changquan said that the project showcases the potential of

interdisciplinary innovation.

Following the success, he and his students have launched a start-up to apply the technology in the aerospace, maritime and energy sectors.

The cubes were officially installed on December 12, 2024, and incorporated into Japan's Dense Ocean Network System for Earthquakes and Tsunamis (DONET).

NuStar Technologies and JAMSTEC modified the Long-Term Borehole Monitoring System (LTBMS) by adding custom cavities and holders to accommodate the artwork.

Ultra-deep sea cameras were also deployed to capture images and videos of the installation. Mohanbabu has always been at the forefront of integrating art with scientific advancements.

In 2022, she became the first Singaporean to send artwork into space through the Moon Gallery project on the International Space Station.

Now, plans are in place to send her previous artworks to the Moon in 2025, making Singapore the first nation to have art installations both on the ocean floor and in space.

The underwater gallery was commemorated during Singapore's SG60 celebrations at Gallery ART NOW. The event was attended by NTU Board Chair Goh Swee Chen, who is also the Chairman of the National Arts Council.

Mohanbabu sees this project as a way to unite people through shared experiences. She believes that art should not be confined to walls but should explore new frontiers, whether in space or deep underwater.

The Deep Ocean Interactions Project is a tribute to communities affected by natural disasters. The cube colours, red and white, ocean blue and orange, and purple and aquamarine blue, symbolise Earth's transformation, and the mysteries of the cosmos.

The red and white cube, in particular, represents the bond between Singapore and Japan.

According to Goi Kim Kok, managing director of NuStar Technologies, this project proves that the deep ocean can serve as a space for both scientific research and cultural expression.

The installation also marks the 60th anniversary of Singapore-Japan diplomatic relations in 2025.

*Reference: NTU Singapore*

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