

# Courtney Mattison

Watch this video about Courtney Mattison

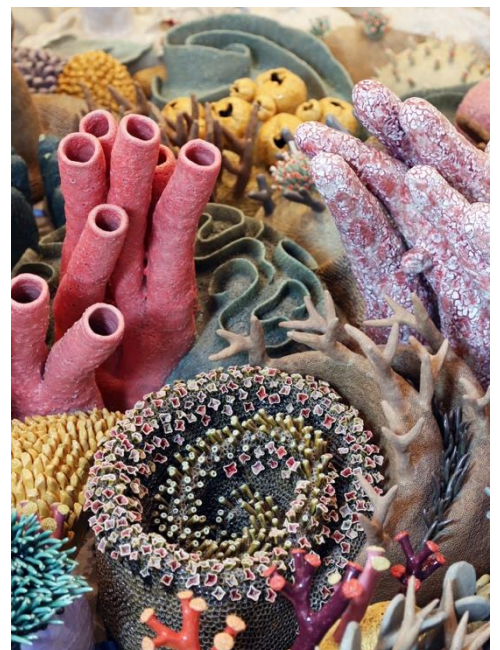
<https://courtneymattison.com/about>



Courtney Mattison is an internationally recognised artist and ocean advocate. She hand-crafts intricate and large-scale ceramic sculptural works that visualize climate change through the fragile beauty of marine life.

Her background in ocean conservation science and policy informs her art practice. Mattison received an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts degree in marine ecology and ceramic sculpture and a Master of Arts degree in environmental studies. She has had many commissions and her work has featured in many magazines.

Mattison creates enormous and intricate ceramic sculptural works inspired by the



beauty and fragility of marine life in response to human-caused threats.

Colour in her sculptures reflect the vibrant tones and textures of healthy coral, often juxtaposed against white glazes to emphasize the stark contrast of coral bleaching on reefs stricken by climate change.



Mattison describes 'when a coral reef is healthy it is like a bustling city'. Coral is home to so many types of marine life, Mattison compares coral to skyscrapers. She states that she thinks of 'degraded coral reefs as a city that's become bankrupt, creating a ghost town feel'. Mattison wants to create monuments to coral reefs and celebrate them as much as possible to give them attention through her work. When Mattison started scuba diving she developed her admiration of coral reefs and learned as much as possible about them.

A visit to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia coincided with one of the biggest coral bleaching events which she hadn't previously experienced. She could see first hand how climate change had produced ghostly white coral which motivated her to re-focus and appeal to peoples' emotions by showing the impact of coral bleaching in her work. She realised that she could impact emotion by creating artwork celebrating the beauty and fragility of the coral by producing giant templates on the floor of her studio, often starting at the centre and working out.

She uses different clay for making her installations. Porcelain is used for more fragile components, fundamental to the message of her work. She free forms building every piece by hand and uses different tool including toothpicks, forks, pens, pencils and dental tools for adding textures. She constantly invents tools for making effects. A lot of her work shows the transition, the motion and contrast from vibrant healthy coral to bleached coral. Mattison believes that coral reefs are beautiful when colourful and vibrant.

Mattison's designs often start at the centre, working out. The hand drawing is transferred to photoshop for a digitised format and for working out exactly the measurement of each piece. Installations can have hundreds or thousands of different pieces. She states that 'coral bleaching is a stark way to visualise coral bleaching. Art can shape the world and how we view it and art is a good way of communicating environmental issues. Mattison hopes her work sparks a curiosity encouraging people to learn more about coral.



