



Art, history, nature and the sea*



EARLY EVENING IN THE SCULPTURE PARK

This park-museum, located in the Gulf of Ártabro, extends throughout the headland on which the Tower of Hercules stands, including the areas known as Herminia Point, O Acorado and Cabal de Pradeira. The sculptures have been carefully positioned to create a highly suggestive sense of perspective, establishing an ongoing dialogue with the Tower. The space comprises numerous natural features, including cliffs, islets and sea caves - known locally as *furnas* - and small beaches.

The Atlantic and its relentless gusts of sharp salty wind, shape the landscape and determine flora and fauna to be found in this park. Conditions are harsh, and only the strongest, fittest and most special species will survive. After all, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

Welcome to the duel between the land and ocean.



.....
*the sea

A space where history, legend, art, nature and breathtaking scenery go hand-in-hand, offering visitors and residents alike a unique opportunity to marvel not only at the majesty of the Tower, but also the surrounding ocean and its spectacular cliffs, and admire the autochthonous flora and fauna.

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the Lighthouse

The Tower of Hercules stands on a strategic point. It was built at the end of the 1st century CE to guide ships to port, and also to act as a watchtower and an aid to navigation on trade and shipping routes. Today it is the oldest and only working Roman lighthouse in the world.

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World Heritage

The Tower of Hercules stands in a protected area of outstanding historic, environmental, natural, cultural and archaeological value, as recognised by UNESCO following its listing of the Tower and its surrounding area as a World Heritage Site.

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water



The seabed conceals vast forests of brown algae, which provide protection and a habitat for many of the fish included on the menus that form part of A Coruña's highly-acclaimed culinary tradition, including sea bass, gilt-head bream and ballan wrasse. These waters are also home to conger eels and the elusive octopus and cuttlefish. Details that the region's fishing community are familiar with, and that are also reflected in the Tower's micro-toponymy, where each name offers a clue as to the type of fishing that takes place here, with references to the species and hazards of sailing. Examples include a small inlet nestling at the foot of the Tower known as 'Punta Robaleira'. *Robalo* or *robaliza* mean 'sea bass' - a hint of what perhaps we can find there. When the weather changes, the vantage point offers the spectacular sight of playful marine mammals such as the common or Atlantic bottlenose dolphin at the entrance to tidal inlet.

land

The steep, sheer cliffs are home to sea birds and bats. The sea surrounding the park is rough and the water well-aerated, ideal conditions for the mussels and goose barnacles that turn the rocks black. The strong winds, severe swell and saline conditions determine which species are capable of adapting to this harsh environment. Vegetation in this area has evolved in order to survive: examples include thrift or sea pinks, known locally as *herba de namorar*, that carpet the ground and withstand the onslaught of the wind. Fleshy rock samphire accumulates salt and water in its leaves. There are also habitats declared to be of Community Interest by the European Union. Examples include the meadows covered in grass, gorse and heather. Not far from As Lapas beach, a small stream lined with alder and willow trees provides a habitat for small amphibians such as the Iberian painted frog, known in Galicia as the *rã das veigas*. Reptiles such as small geckos or the spectacular jewelled lacerta, the largest lizard to be found in Galicia, are also common sights.

...and air

The park is home to large numbers of birds. The most common species are sea birds such as seagulls, terns or cormorants, and waders including ruddy turnstones, dunlins, red-billed choughs and western jackdaws. Spring visitors to the area include swallows, swifts and lesser whitethroats, which can all be seen in the park in the early evening. In autumn, northern gannets, common scoters and plovers flying from northern Europe stop here to feed here and build up their strength for the long flight south and their winter migration. Small passerines find refuge among the shrubs and trees: look out for species such as dunnocks, black redstarts, European serins and the European stonechat with its distinctive call and the restless sparrows that can regularly be seen sand bathing.



1992 saw the bicentenary celebration of the reconstruction of the Tower of Hercules, linking it with its greatest claim to fame as the world's oldest working lighthouse. This was followed by archaeological excavation work and the restoration of the Tower. The findings were included in a permanent exhibition and work was also carried out to restore the surroundings. The main idea was to create an authentic outdoor museum that would completely transform the image projected by the area, including a protected area and a suburban park, conserving the flora of the Tower peninsula and Herminia Point, whilst also carrying out major improvements to the infrastructures. One of the results of this plan was the sculpture park, based on mythological symbols and legends associated with the Tower.

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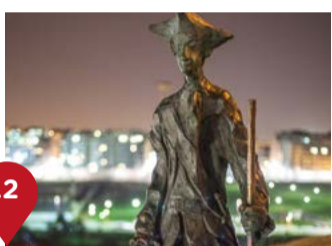


sculpture Park

TOWER OF HERCULES



1 The Doors of Hercules/1992
Francisco Leiro
(*Cambados, 1957*)
The author created the bronze doors leading into the Tower, inspired by the many legends and myths that enshroud the monument. This is one of the first examples of door sculptures in Galicia.



2 Figure of King Charles III
Pablo Serrano
(*Crivillén, 1908-1985*)
This sculpture portrays King Charles III, during whose reign the renovation of the Tower was begun. The author took his inspiration from the series entitled *Divertimentos de El Prado* (1974).



3 Breoghan/1995
José Cid
(*Ourense, 1946*)
This granite sculpture presides over the entrance to the ramp leading up to the Tower. Breoghan, the legendary Celtic chieftain, is considered a hero of Ireland and also the founder of the city of A Coruña.



4 Charon/1988-1992
Ramón Conde
(*Ourense, 1951*)
Charon, the ferryman of Hades, carried the souls of the dead across the River Styx in exchange for payment of one obolus. One of Hercules' twelve labours was to capture Cerberus, the hound of Hades, who prevented all those who entered from leaving, and Charon helped him in his quest by ferrying him across the river. Today this sculpture protects and guides visitors to the site.



5 Guitar
Pablo Serrano
(*Crivillén, 1908-1985*)
The sculptor's intention was to pay tribute to the four years that Pablo Picasso spent in the city during his childhood and incipient career as an artist. This work, an imposing iron guitar, is part of the series entitled *Guitarras o divertimentos con Picasso, la guitarra y el cubismo* ('Guitars or divertimentos with Picasso, the guitar and Cubism') created between 1983 and 1985.



6 Artabrians/1994
Arturo Andrade
(*Allariz, 1956*)
Three figures standing on low pedestals representing the three strata of society in the Gulf of Ártabro: a woman, a sailor and a warrior. Together, the three sculptures form a dialogue linking the whole and drawing in the observer.



7 Combat between Hercules and Geryon/1994
Xosé Espóna
(*A Coruña, 1955*)
Tim Behrens
(*London, 1937*)
This creation is the result of intense rivalry between the two authors. A maze-like pond mirrors the difficulties Hercules experienced in accomplishing his labours. The design features two main elements: a cudgel representing Hercules and a sword brandished by Geryon.



8 Pentacephalic Menhir/1994
Ramón Miranda
(*A Coruña, 1957*)
Cast in bronze, this sculpture stands at the base of the Tower. It is a vertical totemic menhir-shaped sculpture, featuring five carved faces, one for each continent and which could represent the civilisations that arrived by sea. The sculpture varies at each level. The concept of the totem is common to all ethnic groups, yet it also projects upwards towards the sky, symbolising the unattainable.



9 The Hydra of Lerna/1998
Fidel Goás Mendes
(*Oleiros, 1957*)
As penance for killing his children, at the Oracle of Delphi Hercules was ordered to serve King Eurystheus, who commanded him to complete twelve labours. The first was to kill the Nemean Lion and the second to kill the Hydra of Lerna, a monster with nine heads, one of which was perhaps immortal. As he cut off each head, Hercules' nephew Iolaus would burn the stump to prevent the head from growing back, placing the last one under a large stone.



10 Ara Solis/1994
Silverio Rivas
(*Ponteareas, 1942*)
A granite sculpture representing a threshold. The image of the gateway, a recurring theme in numerous cultures, symbolises the transition between elements such as life and death, light and dark, ignorance and wisdom or guilt and salvation.



11 The Custodians/1994
Soledad Penalta
(*Noia, 1943*)
This work is located on the hillside on which the Tower stands and represents the three heads of Geryon. The steel sheets blend into the surroundings, inviting observers to become part of the creative process. Within this context, the Tower represents the past yet also evokes the future. The custodians appear as silent travellers momentarily frozen in time.



12 Compass Rose/1994
Javier Correa
(*A Coruña, 1952*)
This large compass rose is comprised of a circular mosaic measuring 25 metres in diameter. It is situated at the foot of the Tower and is made of granite, slate and vitreous enamel. In addition to the large eight-pointed figure, there are references to the seven Celtic nations and the Tartessians. The blue background of the mosaic represents the fusion of the rose with the infinite ocean and horizon, creating a sense of continuity.

- The scallop, Galicia
- The skull, Tartessos
- The shamrock, Ireland
- The thistle, Scotland
- The Triskelion, Isle of Man
- The dragon, Wales
- The Holy Chalice, Cornwall
- The Ermine, Brittany



13 Shipwrecks
This area has witnessed several shipwrecks over the years. In 1976 the oil tanker Urquiola ran aground, causing a major fire and spilling 100,000 tons of crude oil. That same year the Norwegian merchant ship Rytterholm (nicknamed 'El Chino' as the only loss of life was the Chinese cook), carrying a cargo of fertilizer, sank off the coast. The sinking of the Aegean Sea occurred almost two decades later. This Greek oil tanker ran aground at the base of the Tower whilst attempting to enter the port. For years, remains of the ship could be seen encrusted in the rocks.



14 Seashell/1994
Moncho Amigo
(*A Coruña, 1952*)
A fantasised recreation of the shell of a huge mollusc, a vast horn of plenty and guardian of the sounds of the sea. This sculpture, made of corten steel, is positioned at the far end of Herminia Point in order to capture all the sea's vibrations. Freedom of movement is one of its most outstanding characteristics, forging a connection between the wind, sea and land. (*due to its exposed location, this work may be temporarily removed for repair work*)



15 Altar Stone/1895
On the rocky crag known as 'Monte dos Bicos' (Herminia Point) we find two petroglyphs: the so-called Pedra do Altar or Altar Stone, which is in a poor state of conservation due to the impact of bullets during the time this was a military zone; and the Peña de la Brújula or Pedra do Compás (Compass Stone). They feature a series of cruciform figures that in the early 20th century were considered to be prehistoric rock art. However, since the mid 20th century they have been classified as jurisdiction boundary markers, perhaps dating back to the Middle Ages.



16 The Sun Chariot/1994
Pepe Galán
(*A Coruña, 1995*)
A symbolic representation of another of the twelve labours of Hercules. In this episode the legendary hero was commanded to capture the cattle of Geryon. To do so he used the 'golden chariot' that Helios uses each night to sail eastwards. This sculpture, made up of three large pieces of steel, represents the remains of the vast vessel.



17 Hercules in the Argonauts' Ship/1994
Gonzalo Viana
(*Bilbao, 1950*)
This sculpture represents the episode when Hercules sailed with the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. Hercules appears in a low vessel made of heavy stone. Alone and kneeling, he occupies much of the ship in which far from projecting the image of a fearless warrior, he appears as a simple sailor that has recently reached the Galician coast.



18 Menhirs/1994
Manolo Paz
(*Cambados 1957*)
This set of twelve sculptures is arranged in a circle, representing the various cardinal points and their medians. Their location has converted them into a landmark visible from both the coast and the sea. The stones, which retain their formal purity, feature small gaps that create a dialogue with the landscape whilst also allowing the wind to glide through them.



19 Moorish Cemetery The House of Words
During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) this was the site of a Muslim cemetery for fighters from the Maghreb. Their mortal remains were later moved to San Amaro Cemetery, and although they were repatriated in 1957, a commemorative plaque can still be seen there today. Today the walls are decorated with texts referring to the city in Latin, Greek, Arabic, Gaelic and Spanish, which is why this site has received the name The House of Words.



20 Monument to the Executed/2001
Isaac Díaz Pardo
(*Santiago de Compostela, 1920-2011*)
This work stands in the area known as Campo da Rata in memory of those that were executed by firing squad during the dictatorship of Francisco Franco. A cartouche lists the names of those that were executed in this place, a symbol of political repression.

A historic bastion
From the 9th century onwards the Tower of Hercules was used as a watchtower and fortress. The last recorded mention of the Tower as a defence site dates back to the 16th century. In the 17th century, work started on restoring it to its original use. In 1938 two cannons were installed at the base of the tower. There were also military batteries at Herminia Point, Praderas and Durmideiras

Did you enjoy visiting the area around the Tower?