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### *Whale Shark Sculpture Nears Completion*

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**Draper, Utah** – The finishing touches are coming together at The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium, including our 40 foot whale shark! This is one of the largest whale shark sculptures in the world.

Local sculptor Stephen Kelsner was commissioned by the aquarium to concept, design and sculpt a one-of-a-kind display featuring the life-sized feeding whale shark and 4 manta rays. Stephen “Tusk” Kelsner is a long-time contributor to The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium, volunteering his time and skills as a graphic artist when the aquarium first began.

The life-sized whale shark and manta ray sculptures will be displayed in the lobby of the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium. Their presence will serve as an educational component of the ocean gallery; contributing to the Aquarium’s mission to inspire people to explore, discover, and learn about Earth’s diverse ecosystems. As the largest fish in the sea, whale sharks have an

enormous menu from which to choose. Fortunately for most sea-dwellers, their favorite meal is plankton. They scoop these tiny plants and animals up, along with other small fish, with their colossal gaping mouths.

Kelser will be available for comment about his creation at the new aquarium in Draper on Thursday.

As far as the opening goes, while we had hoped to open in December, our contractor is behind on the building, putting us behind schedule for the grand opening. We will make an announcement as soon as a firm opening date is set.

**WHAT:** One of the world's largest whale shark sculptures debuts at The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium.

**WHEN:** Thursday, January 9 at 2:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Our new location, 12033 S Lone Peak Parkway, Draper.

**WHY:** Come see our whale shark sculpture, get a sneak peek of our new building, and meet the sculpture designer, Stephen Kelser.

Media RSVP Requested.

About Stephen Kesler (aka Tusk)

"I love the process as much or more than the finished pieces. After sixteen years of tanning in front of a monitor, moving clay is a liberating move from the ever-increasing, two-dimensional/digital world I'm so accustomed to. Sculpture brings me back into the physical world. Other than fatherhood, nothing brings me more joy than working life into clay. Wildlife is something I've always loved and studied, so naturally is the subject of most of my pieces. More importantly, works I sculpt are simply something I'd want in my own personal collection."

A natural creator, Stephen has a range of talents. The great-nephew of eccentric Utah artist Florence Truelson, Stephen comes from a long lineage of artists. He has sixteen years of experience in graphic design, including the branding one of Utah's oldest and biggest breweries, Wasatch Beers. He started playing guitar at age 14 and has been a participant in multiple bands and music projects. In addition to music he loves motorbiking, and while not known to dance, he may surprise you if the right song drops.

See more of his work at [www.tusklife.com](http://www.tusklife.com) or follow him on Instagram: [www.instagram.com/stephenkesler\\_tusk](https://www.instagram.com/stephenkesler_tusk)

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