



PRESS RELEASE

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MELTING ICE / A HOT TOPIC: ENVISIONING CHANGE

THE WORLDS OF ART AND SCIENCE UNITE TO PRESENT A HISTORIC ENVIRONMENTAL EXHIBIT BRIDGING EARTH DAY AND UN WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY IN THE US

27 March 2008 – *San Francisco, USA:* After three well received international openings in Oslo, Brussels and Monaco, The Natural World Museum (NWM), in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) revealed today plans to bring their innovative and highly celebrated art exhibit, ***Melting Ice / A Hot Topic: Envisioning Change***, to The Field Museum in Chicago, opening on April 18th for Earth Day 2008.

The contemporary art show is innovatively integrated into one of the country's leading natural history museums and scientific institutions, featuring the works of 26 artists representing 10 countries. A total of 23 of pieces are in the thought-provoking exhibition including photographs, paintings, sculpture, and video installations – all focusing on climate change, specifically melting ice caps and the effect that has on all living beings.

Pieces in the exhibition include David Buckland's video *End of Ice*, which uses time-lapse photography to record a melting iceberg as it shrinks and disappears. Free Range Video's *Climate: A Crisis Averted* looks back from 2056 to celebrate the actions of citizens in 2006, who recognized the need to take action. These are just two of the many acclaimed works. NWM curator Randy Rosenberg states, "We've asked artists from around the world to focus on just one dimension: the thawing and melting of the ice caps and permafrost, and the implications for humans and other species."

The international exhibit on climate change will be hosted exclusively in the U.S. by The Field Museum, 18 April – 1 September 2008. In an effort to bridge Earth Day, on April 22nd, and World Environment Day (WED), on June 5th, the Natural World Museum will exhibit ***Melting Ice / A Hot Topic: Envisioning Change*** through the summer, highlighting the importance of raising awareness throughout the year. NWM is partnering with UNEP in their initiative to unite Earth Day with WED with a 6 week call to action for people to personally commit to living sustainable, environmentally friendly lives. UNEP and NWM hope to permanently unify these two annual celebrations from year to year, inspiring thought and action on environmental issues.

There will be a media preview for the exhibition on April 17th. Media can contact The Field Museum's public relations office at 312.665.7100 for more information and to RSVP.

Melting Ice / A Hot Topic has been widely regarded among environmentalists and artists alike. The support from international communities ensures our exhibit will directly reach over 1 million people, making our overseas openings huge successes and our Chicago opening all the more anticipated.” said **Mia Hanak, Founding Executive Director of the Natural World Museum**. “We are thrilled to be exhibiting this show at The Field Museum and to be bringing our exhibit to new audiences.”

The Field Museum is pleased to bring this traveling exhibition to Chicago, marking its involvement in the joint efforts focused on the role of art in changing behavior in order to help safeguard the environment.

“Since 1893, The Field Museum has studied and worked to conserve the Earth’s biodiversity and human cultures,” said John W. McCarter, the Museum’s president and CEO. “Today, we are increasingly involved in exploring environmental issues such as climate change in an effort to raise awareness and promote positive action.”

NWM has partnered with UNEP since 2005 through the global “Art For the Environment” initiative, a curatorial program that utilizes the universal language of art to unite people in action and thought on a broad spectrum of environmental topics. NWM has produced the traveling exhibit ***Melting Ice / A Hot Topic*** as part of the “Art For the Environment” program.

“UNEP and NWM have joined forces to generate environmental awareness through the *Art for the Environment* initiative” said **Achim Steiner, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UNEP**. “Science informs the mind, music the heart but art connects with the human spirit. We urgently need to empower all three of these essential human elements if we are to rise to the challenge and seize the opportunities for economic, environmental and social renewal glimpsed through the lens of climate change”.

The exhibit kicked off its tour in Oslo at the Nobel Peace Center during UN World Environment Day in June 2007, and then traveled to the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels, where it was exhibited into January 2008. In February 2008, the exhibit show was exhibited as part of the official programming of the 10th Special Session of UNEP’s Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum held in Monaco. His Serene Highness Prince Albert II participated in the exhibit opening and praised the Natural World Museum’s efforts in building awareness to our current climate change crisis.

The current international exhibit tour of ***Melting Ice / A Hot Topic***, sponsored by **Autodesk** - a global digital design innovation technologies leader – features renowned artists including: Subhankar Banerjee, Robert Bateman, David Buckland, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, Margaret Cogswell, Sebastian Copeland, Siobhan Davies, Era & Don Farsworth, Free Range Studio, Helen & Newton Harrison, Ichi Ikeda, Sant Khalsa, Fred Ivar Ultsi Klemetsen, Strijdom van der Merwe, Gilles Mingasson, David Nash, Lucy & Jorge Orta, Andrea Polli in collaboration with Joe Gilmore, and Dr. Pat Market, Kahn + Selesnick, David Trubridge, and Justin Young.

About the Natural World Museum (NWM): Transcending the traditional museum venue, the Natural World Museum is a mobile and global cultural institution that presents art through innovative programs to inspire and engage the public in environmental awareness and action. In order to reach broad and diverse audiences, NWM provides an innovative platform through its international curatorial program, empowering exhibit visitors worldwide with enlightening experiences to help advance local and global conservation efforts. NWM has already produced exhibits in partnership with UNEP in cities such as Algiers, Brussels, Monaco, Nairobi, Oslo, and San Francisco, with future shows scheduled in Chicago, New York, and Wellington in 2008. www.artintoaction.org

About the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): UNEP is the world's leading environmental agency and environmental arm of the United Nations, providing leadership and encouraging partnerships for conservation efforts by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations to improve quality of life without compromising that of future generations. www.unep.org

About Autodesk: Autodesk, Inc. is the world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, building and construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art digital prototyping solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are real. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about Autodesk, visit www.autodesk.com.

Admission to The Field Museum: Melting Ice / A Hot Topic is covered with basic admission to The Field Museum. Basic admission is \$14 for adults, \$11 for seniors and students with ID and \$9 for children ages 5-11. Children ages four and under and Museum members are free. Discounts are available for Chicago residents. See www.fieldmuseum.org for more information about The Field Museum.

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www.artinoaction.org/press

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