



Press Release

March 2006

The Ship: The Art of Climate Change

3 June – 3 September 2006

Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey, Kathy Barber, David Buckland, Peter Clegg, Siobhan Davies, Gautier Deblonde, Max Eastley, Nick Edwards, Gretel Ehrlich, Antony Gormley, Alex Hartley, David Hinton, Gary Hume, Ian McEwan, Michèle Noach

'We intend to communicate through artworks our understanding of the changing climate on a human scale, so that our individual lives can have meaning in what is a global problem'

David Buckland, Director, Cape Farewell

On 3 June 2006, the Natural History Museum, in collaboration with Cape Farewell present *The Ship: The Art of Climate Change*, a free, contemporary art exhibition designed to deepen our understanding of climate change. Shown in the museum's Jerwood Gallery, *The Ship* offers a unique insight into the experiences of international artists and writers who, over the past five years, have travelled to the High Arctic as part of the Cape Farewell project.

'Articles on climate change appear almost daily in the newspapers, and on television and it can appear that such issues are beyond our control,' says Bergit Arends, Art Curator at the Natural History Museum, 'This is why we are trying to use the personal experiences of renowned artists, and the creative vocabulary of art rather than science, to raise an awareness that everyone individually can help alleviate the impacts of climate change.'

Through photography, film and video, sound and painting each artwork is a personal response to the effects of changing weather patterns, disappearing ice, rising sea levels, alterations in biodiversity and the build-up of toxic chemicals in the seemingly pristine landscape of the Arctic. Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey retrieved the bones from a carcass of a Minke whale beached near Skegness last October. Creating a 6m long sculpture using the entire whale skeleton they applied a special crystallisation process encrusting the bones with alum crystals. In the gallery the sculpture will be displayed on a low bed of frosted glass. The precious fragility of the sculpture enhances the importance of the whale and how it acts as barometer in a complex marine environment. Working with fashion designer Jonathan Saunders, Siobhan Davies' has created a projection, *Endangered Species*. A tiny woman dances gracefully inside a museum display case, her movements exaggerated by a costume of long bending rods that increase in number as her dance progresses. Whilst at first they liberate by extending the boundaries of her body, the many rods eventually restrict and finally extinguish her small life form.

David Buckland exhibits his glacial ice texts, *Burning Ice*, *Sadness Melts* and *The Cold Library of Ice* alongside a giant video projection of the demise of an iceberg. Alex Hartley's photographic piece

echoes the journeys of the early Arctic explorers in describing the process of finding and naming a 'new' island; one only uncovered in the last five years by a retreating glacier. Gautier Deblonde's photo-essay documents the stark vagaries of human existence in the High Arctic. Other works include photographic representation of Antony Gormley's *Three Made Places*, an ice work created in the High Arctic and Gary Hume's *Hermaphrodite Polar Bear*. Max Eastley's soundwork of cracking, melting ice resonates eerily through the gallery.

A 16 page tabloid-sized newspaper accompanies *The Ship* with information on Cape Farewell, artists' biographies, essays on the science of climate change and a 'call to action' encouraging everyone to reduce their carbon usage. In conjunction with the exhibition will be the *Youth Climate Summit 2006: Climate Change*, a four-day conference aimed at improving awareness and inspiring advocacy in young adults (age 16–18). Key speakers include Sir David King (the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser), Elliot Morley (the minister with special responsibility for climate change) and Jonathon Porritt (Programme Director of Forum for the Future and Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission), who will also be joined by artists, scientists and policy makers exploring climate change and its social and global implications.

Cape Farewell — led by artist David Buckland — is a series of expeditions into the Arctic with artists, scientists and teachers exploring the seas that hold the key to understanding the changes in our weather patterns and climate. Their programme has included three separate journeys on the Noorderlicht schooner on which artists, scientists, educators and journalists travelled 79° North to the Svalbard archipelago, a specific website (www.capefarewell.com) and a 4-day installation entitled *The Ice Garden* in Oxford in December 2005.

Notes for editors

- Through its diverse and innovative arts programme, the Natural History Museum aims to promote the understanding and enjoyment of the natural world, communicating the Museum's science through various media. The Museum has exhibited work by different artists such as Tessa Campbell Fraser, Peter Randall-Page, Olly & Suzi and Jan Fabre, and produced performances with companies such as Forkbeard Fantasy, Scarabeus Theatre and Faulty Optic.
- Cape Farewell, in partnership with the Liverpool Museums, will exhibit as part of the Liverpool Biennial of Visual Arts, 16 September - 26 November 2006. Cape Farewell artworks shown at the Natural History Museum will tour to the World Museum, the Walker Art Gallery the John Moores University Gallery and the Maritime Museum on the Albert Dock.

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