



Press Packet

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Related Materials:

- Nancy Cohen's *Hackensack Dreaming* to be presented in the gallery at the Schuylkill Center Nov 5 – Dec. 19 (attached).
- Media only: Selected photos from the exhibition are available upon request

Climate Art & Action

Presented by Honoring the Future

With Generous Support from the Cornell Douglas Foundation

We live at a historic juncture – a time when our decisions shape human destiny. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations now reach levels unprecedented in human history. As these and other greenhouse gases accumulate and warm our Earth, glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, and growing numbers of species totter on the edge of extinction.

Our challenge is clear. We can summon the courage and creativity to rebalance our relationship with the Earth. Or we can continue half-hearted efforts to curtail our carbon footprint even as we witness that strategy failing. The repercussions of our choices, too, are clear. We can offer our children and grandchildren a better future, or our legacy can be a very bleak world.

Art can be a powerful catalyst for creative solutions to climate change: art focuses attention, compels reflection, taps creativity, and inspires innovation. So artists have increasingly expressed concern in their artwork about climate change. This exhibition presents photographs of the work of 10 pioneers of this emerging art.

Honoring the Future is a nonprofit project dedicated to harnessing the power of art to educate, empower, and engage the public on climate change. We aim to build a better world for our children and grandchildren by creating resilient, environmentally responsible, “climate smART” communities, starting with you. Please join us.

Visit www.honoringthefuture.org to learn more.

Ball, Lillian (Southold, NY)

Entrance to WATERWASH® ABC (2011). *Stone and gravel materials, natural vegetation, recycled glass pathway, and informational signs. Dimensions: over 10,000 sq. ft. © Ball 2011.*

Ball, an ecologist artist, uses nature itself as her medium and partnerships with community leaders as an integral part of her creative process. Here, she teamed with youth empowerment organization Rocking the Boat, local business ABC Carpet & Home, hydrological firm eDesign Dynamics, and Drexel University environmental engineering graduate students to create green infrastructure in the South Bronx, the nation's poorest Congressional District.

Rocking the Boat students, most of whom represent Latino, African-American, Caucasian, West Indian, Indian, Asian, South American, and African cultures, planted 8,000 native plants to create a wetlands park to detain and filter stormwater runoff. The project improved water quality, increased native habitat, provided a more natural aesthetic amenity, educated the public about wetland benefits, and helped prepare the shoreline for sea level rise and heavier rains from climate change.

Artist's Bio:

Lillian Ball is an internationally recognized environmental artist and creator of sustainable green infrastructure projects. She has created permanent public arts projects and site-specific sculptures and won fellowships and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and New York State Foundation for the Arts, among others. Her WATERWASH® ABC project earned a Citation from the New York State Assembly.

Artist's Website: www.lillianball.com

Braasch, Gary (Portland, OR)

Tuvalu (detail) (2005). *Photograph*. © 2005 Gary Braasch/*World View of Global Warming*.

In 1999, Braasch, an environmental photojournalist, began a project, “World View of Global Warming,” to show the public photographs of the rapid climate change he witnessed on assignments: “I knew as a photojournalist the power of a picture.... Seeing is believing.” The project took him to 28 nations and 7 continents, including the Polynesian island nation of Tuvalu.

Tuvalu – 10 square miles of islands and coral atolls scattered over several hundred thousand miles of Pacific Ocean – is the world’s second lowest-lying nation (after the Maldives). Its highest point is only 15’ above sea level; most of the land is only a meter above the sea.

Increasingly strong storms regularly flood neighborhoods. If our atmosphere and oceans continue to warm, the impacts – more intense tropical weather, damaged coral reefs, and rising seas – threaten to make Tuvalu uninhabitable for its 11,000 residents.

Artist’s Bio:

Gary Braasch is an environmental photojournalist who authored *Earth Under Fire: How Global Warming is Changing the World*, and launched *World View of Global Warming*, a project to photodocument climate change in China, Australia, Tuvalu, Antarctica, the Arctic and elsewhere.

His work has been published by Time, LIFE, New York Times Magazine, Discover, Smithsonian, National Geographic, Scientific American and the United Nations, among others. Awards include: Ansel Adams Award, Outstanding Nature Photographer, and One of the Forty Most Influential Nature Photographers. He is a founding member of the International League of Conservation Photographers and a Nikon "Legend Behind the Lens." He holds a Master’s degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

Artist’s Websites:

www.braaschphotography.com

www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org

Burko, Diane (Philadelphia, PA)

Detail from *Columbia Glacier Lines of Recession 1980-2005* (2011). Oil on canvas. Dimensions: 51" X 60" © Burko 2011.

Burko has been studying geological data on the world's glaciers since 2006. Some paintings in her ***Politics of Snow*** project use historical photographs as source material for depicting chronological change in glaciers over time. She also translates scientific data into visual form.

Here, she inserts lines across an overview of Alaska's Columbia glacier, one of the world's fastest changing glaciers, indicating its rapid shrinkage over time. As the glacier lost mass and thinned, mechanical forces took over and large chunks of ice began to break off ("calve") rapidly, sending an ominous "wake up" call about changes that can be set in motion by warming temperatures.

Burko says: "I want my art to be more than a painting/photograph to be appreciated – I want it to be used as a tool for social change and environmental policy, bringing attention to the urgent issues of climate change." Visit www.honoringthefuture.org/climate-smarts/artist-to-know/diane-burko/ to see the full image of this painting.

Artist's Bio:

Diane Burko's practice straddles art and science. She voyaged to the Arctic, Antarctic and glaciers in Norway, Greenland, and Patagonia, inventing visual strategies to bear witness to climate change and make it visible through paintings and prints.

Burko has lectured to the American Geophysical Union, Geological Society of America, and Academy of Natural Sciences, among other esteemed science organizations, and created art for collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Art Institute of Chicago, James A. Michener Art Museum, Woodmere Art Museum and numerous corporations. She received her BA from Skidmore College and her MFA from the University of Pennsylvania.

Artist's Website: <http://dianeburko.com>

Cohen, Nancy (Jersey City, NJ)

Hackensack Dreaming (detail) (2014). Glass, handmade paper, rubber, monofilament. Installation has two parts: a south wall, 20 x 11 x 13 feet, and a north wall, 17 x 11 x 9 feet. © Nancy Cohen, 2015.

Healthy waters can better resist extreme heat, drought, storms, and floods from climate change. But what is “health”?

Cohen’s installation explores the contradictions of “nature” in an urban environment, the Meadowlands of Secaucus, NJ. Here, a warehouse, big box store, water treatment plant, malls, the NJ Turnpike, and the New York City skyline form a backdrop to a quiet, deserted, refuse-strewn marsh. Remnant stumps of an ancient cedar forest emerge from the water – surreal, beautiful, majestic, and sad. Yet somehow plants sprout and birds gather. Fragility and strength co-exist. Nature, re-habituated to the dead trees, adapted and endures.

Immersing the viewer in the contradictions, Cohen hopes to spark reflection on our natural systems, the delicate balance they maintain to survive, how much we need them, and how heedlessly we impact them.

Artist’s Bio:

Nancy Cohen is an award-winning artist whose work has been widely exhibited throughout the United States and is represented in important collections, including Montclair Museum, Newark Public Library, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Yale University Art Gallery and Zimmerli Museum. She has completed many large-scale, site-specific projects, collaborated with scientists and poets, and received numerous press accolades. She has an MFA in Sculpture from Columbia University, a BFA in ceramics from Rochester Institute of Technology, and currently teaches at Queens College and Pratt Institute.

Artist’s Website: <http://www.nancymcohen.com>

Cortada, Xavier (Miami, FL)

Detail from “ΙΧΘΥΣ” (Ichthys)(2015). *Digital artwork created to welcome Pope Francis’ climate change message and U.S. visit. © 2015 Xavier Cortada.*

Cortada celebrates two historic milestones: Pope Francis’ recent letter – or “encyclical” – to the church, the first to focus primarily on climate change and human responsibility for the environment, and the Pope’s September visit to the U.S. to address a joint session of Congress. (The Pope will also travel to Philadelphia and to New York City, where he will speak to the United Nations in advance of December’s international climate policy negotiations in Paris.)

The image, entitled “Ichthys” from the Greek word for fish, refers to a stylized symbol of two arcs intersecting to form a profile of a fish. Early church members used this symbol, says Cortada, “to communicate with one another, build fellowship, and spread their ideas” during a time of persecution.

Cortada intends to evoke their sense of urgency and unity as models for climate action. Visit www.honoringthefuture.org/papal to see the full image.

Artist’s Bio:

Xavier Cortada is internationally renowned for collaborating with scientists to generate environmental awareness through art. His work on climate change includes *Ichthys* and “Ice Paintings” made from Antarctic sea ice and sediment while Cortada was a National Science Foundation Fellow in Antarctica. He has been commissioned to create art for the White House, the World Bank, and major museums and corporations. He has collaborated in creating murals addressing peace (Cyprus, Northern Ireland), child welfare (Bolivia, Panama), AIDS (Switzerland, South Africa), and juvenile justice (Miami, Philadelphia). He holds degrees from the University of Miami College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate School of Business and School of Law.

Artist’s Website: www.cortada.com.

Handler, Peter (North Philadelphia, PA)

Maldives Table (2009). Coconut palm plywood, anodized aluminum, gold leaf, 24"x48"x15." © Handler Studio 2015.

Handler's table acknowledges the plight of the Maldives, the world's lowest-lying country. An archipelago southwest of India, the Maldives consist of 1,190 islands, 192 of which are inhabited. Average elevation of the inhabited islands is only four feet above sea level; the highest point is less than eight feet. If sea levels rise as predicted, most of the inhabited islands – and their nearly 400,000 citizens – would need to be relocated. Australia, India, and Sri Lanka are potential destinations.

In 2009, the Maldives President and Cabinet met underwater to highlight the threat of a drowning nation. Communicating with white boards and hand signals, they signed a call for all nations to cut carbon emissions.

The gold leafed carved map in Handler's tabletop depicts the principal Maldives islands. The plywood table surface is made from coconut palm, the Maldives' national tree, and the green, white, and red of the anodized aluminum legs represent the colors of the Maldives flag.

Artist's Bio:

Peter Handler is currently creating a series of sculptural pieces collectively titled "The Canaries in the Coal Mine," drawing attention to the places and wildlife endangered by climate change. His work on this series earned him the prestigious 2015 Audubon Award for Art Inspiring Conservation. Arts Advisor for Honoring the Future, Handler is an accomplished artist who has exhibited his art furniture at numerous prestigious craft shows, including The Smithsonian Craft Show, where he won "best in show." He earned his MFA at the School for American Craftsmen at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).

Artist's Website: <http://www.handlerstudio.com>

Johanson, Patricia (Buskirk, NY)

Fair Park Lagoon (detail) (1981-86). *Site specific landscaping with native plants and gunite sculpture. Dimensions: approximately five city blocks. Collection: City of Dallas. © Patricia Johanson 2014.*

For some artists, water itself – its path and flow – forms the basis of their art. Johanson collaborated with scientists, engineers and civic leaders to transform a Dallas eyesore into the ecologically balanced Fair Park lagoon, a model for managing heavy, climate-caused rains.

The lagoon is not merely decorative; it is a functional part of the municipal flood control system. It contains a detention basin for storing and slowly releasing stormwater. The engineering is part of the aesthetic: as water levels fluctuate, they reconfigure the park.

And the lagoon teems with wildlife. Wetlands plants purify water; trees provide microhabitats and shade. Paths – sculptures really – shaped like plants, let strollers meander through nature. Humans, wildlife, and infrastructure occupy the same footprint in intimate, joyous dialog.

Artist's Bio:

Early in her career, **Patricia Johanson** was commissioned to design “artist gardens” for *House & Garden* magazine. Her 150 drawings proposed sculptural solutions to environmental problems – such as erosion, sedimentation, water conservation, flooding, sewage treatment, landfills, and habitat loss – and contained the seeds for functional, public, ecological art. Her recent large-scale projects in Nairobi, Korea, and the United States combine infrastructure with art, public access, wildlife habitat and ecological restoration. Her design for an under-highway crossing for people and wildlife in Salt Lake City won a National Endowment for the Arts competition and a Utah Governor’s Grand Achievement Award. She graduated from Bennington College and holds a Master’s in art history from Hunter College, an architecture degree from City College of New York, and an honorary doctorate from Massachusetts College of Art.

Artist's Website: <http://patriciajohanson.com>

Rockman, Alexis (New York, NY)

Detail from *Blue Storm* (2006). *Oil on gessoed paper, 51 x 75.25 in.* © Alexis Rockman 2006.

Rockman's paintings often carry serious messages about environmental degradation. *Blue Storm* is part of a series of paintings Rockman calls "Weather Drawings." Collectively, the paintings depict impacts of climate change, manifested in melting glaciers and intense storms.

Dominating these landscapes are hurricanes, fires, twisters, landslides, and dust storms – all natural phenomena likely to increase in frequency and intensity in a climate-changed landscape.

The paintings rivet our attention and, like *Blue Storm*, often juxtapose stirring natural beauty with menacing skies, harkening back to a theme that appears elsewhere in Rockman's work: our choices today dictate our future. What kind of environmental future are we crafting?

Artist's Bio:

Alexis Rockman consults with scientists and architects and travels to the far corners of the earth (Guyana, Tasmania, Madagascar, Antarctica) to gather materials and ideas for paintings which challenge us to think more deeply about human impact on the environment. His work can be found in the collections of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art, and Yale University Art Gallery, among other prominent venues. He studied at the New York Art Student's League and Rhode Island School of Design and holds a BFA from New York School of Visual Arts.

Artist's Website: <http://alexisrockman.net>

Serritella, Eric (Chapel Hill, NC)

Charred Sultry Birch Teapot (2013). Ceramic, 13" h x 12" w x 7" d. Photo by Jason Dowdle. © Serritella 2013.

Serritella's "teapot" packs three surprises in one illusory ceramic form: realistic-looking weathered wood is deceptively carved from clay. Animated branches evoke human-like personality. Sculpture disguises a functional teapot. Tattered but resilient, this *Sultry Birch* tree challenges us with both the nature of its material and the messages within.

Trees are potent bulwarks against climate change: they use carbon dioxide (a "greenhouse gas") in the air to convert sunlight and water into plant fuel and oxygen. They shade us from heat without need of air conditioning. Their roots keep water in place. They host hundreds of species of birds, bees, butterflies, and beneficial insects.

Sultry Birch shows nature's "tenacity and triumph of existence" despite human disregard. Serritella hopes "at least some will acquire new appreciations and ... choose to walk with softer steps."

Artist's Bio:

Eric Serritella left a successful sixteen year corporate marketing career to transition to a "life in clay." After studying with Taiwanese clay masters, he began focusing on the design and texture of one-of-a-kind hand-carved trompe l'oeil ceramic sculptures carved to look like birch trees and weathered logs. He draws inspiration from both the Asian art aesthetic and the purity of nature. His works are included in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Carnegie Museum of Art, and Mint Museum, among other notable venues. He graduated from Ithaca College.

Artist's Website: www.ericsserritella.com

Winokur, Paula (Horsham, PA)

Calving Glacier (2010). 33 Porcelain sections. Dimensions: 6' w x 8' d (base), variable heights to 36". Collection: Racine Art Museum, Wisconsin. © Winokur 2010.

The vast majority of earth's glaciers are melting. As the ice thins, large sections "calve" (break off), as Winokur visually depicts. Her minimalist presentation brings the scale, rapidity, and potential permanence of this massive geological transformation into sharp focus.

Her choice of porcelain – in all its "starkness" – was deliberate: "Porcelain comes from the earth pure white, strong and durable. Transformed by human hands, it can be delicate, fragile, and transparent. In that sense, it resembles glaciers – ancient towering structures made fragile by human action."

Winokur says: "Nature is so beautiful, so fragile, and so easily disturbed.... Part of my mission is to make these pieces, bring them into the gallery space, and provide an inspiration for people to reflect on how they are affecting the environment and what they can possibly do about it."

Artist's Bio:

Paula Winokur is an internationally acclaimed sculptor. Her work is in the permanent collection of 17 museums in the U.S. and abroad, including such influential venues as the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Institution's Renwick Gallery, and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. Winokur is Professor Emeritus at Arcadia University. She graduated from Temple University's Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia.

Artist's Website: www.paulawinokur.com