



PRESS RELEASE

July 31, 2008

For Immediate Release

MEDIA CONTACTS

Denise Montgomery, MCASD Director of Communication
(858) 454-3541 x116, dmontgomery@mcasd.org

Claire Caraska, MCASD Communications Coordinator
(858) 454-3541 x119, ccaraska@mcasd.org

***HUMAN/NATURE: ARTISTS RESPOND TO A CHANGING PLANET* OPENS AUGUST 17, 2008, AT MCASD DOWNTOWN**

Galleries feature new interactive spaces for further exploration; a variety of public programs announced

San Diego, CA—The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD) presents *Human/Nature: Artists Respond to a Changing Planet*, opening August 17, 2008, at the Museum's downtown Joan and Irwin Jacobs Building and 1001 Kettner galleries.

Organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA), in partnership with the international conservation organization Rare, *Human/Nature* is a pioneering artist residency and collaborative exhibition project that, for the first time on this scale, uses contemporary art to investigate the relationships between fragile natural environments and the human communities that depend upon them.

In conjunction with the exhibition, MCASD will present a variety of **public programs** and **interactive opportunities** for Museum-goers to further explore the exhibition, which will be on view at MCASD's downtown location through February 1, 2009.

This collaborative multi-year exhibition project sent eight leading artists to eight UNESCO World Heritage sites around the globe to complete mini-residencies and create new work informed and inspired by their experiences in these diverse cultural and natural regions. Featuring new commissioned works by **Mark Dion, Ann Hamilton, Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, Marcos Ramírez ERRE, Rigo 23, Dario Robleto, Diana Thater** and **Xu Bing** created in response to their travels to these threatened sites, *Human/Nature* encourages global support for the protection of cultural and biological diversity and provokes new questions regarding conservation, cultural understanding, and artistic inspiration.

Interactive Gallery Spaces

At MCASD, *Human/Nature* will be complemented by two **interactive galleries** for visitors to further investigate the exhibition's themes, concepts, and artists, as well as share their own

thoughts and ideas about the exhibition. The **Response Space** at the 1001 Kettner galleries will provide visitors with opportunities to record their responses on a floor-to-ceiling chalkboard wall and in reflective journals with question prompts. As a means of exploring the creative process, visitors also can create their own work of art in an **activity designed by artist Dario Robleto**, to be led by MCASD Gallery Guides (during gallery hours on Saturdays and Sundays; 5-7 pm Thursdays).

Robleto, a conceptual sculptor whose artistic practice is dedicated to the DJ techniques of sampling and mixing, dissects and then reconstructs such diverse items as vinyl albums, prehistoric fossils, human bones, and the relics of war into new configurations. Visitors will be able to record the sound of their own heartbeat or the heartbeat of another person, using a reel-to-reel player and stethoscope. Then, using Mason jars and a range of found materials provided by the artist, visitors will fill their jar with materials of their choice, along with the physical audio tape of their heartbeat recording. Labels also will be provided so that visitors can document the “media list” used in their project.

The **Information Lounge** in the Jacobs Building will allow visitors to delve deeper by exploring the artists’ own “personal artifacts”—personally selected ephemera, such as photos, sketches, and objects relating to their projects, culled from their *Human/Nature* residencies at the World Heritage sites; a wall-sized map with information on the sites visited; resources on the artists, art and the environment, and environmental conservation; a computer station for accessing the exhibition Web site; and a TV monitor screening looping videos that document the installation process.

Both the Response Space and Information Lounge were designed by **Tijuana-based architect Giacomo Castagnola**, and feature furniture made from sustainable, found materials—including sofas made from paper-pulp egg crates—all created by Castagnola.

Related Programs

In conjunction with the exhibition *Human/Nature: Artists Respond to a Changing Planet*, MCASD will host the following public programs. Please visit www.mcasd.org for updated program information.

Teen Workshop with Ann Hamilton

**Monday, August 11-Friday, August 15 > 10 AM – 5 PM > MCASD Downtown
\$100 Registration Fee (Fee waivers available upon application)**

Performance: Ann Hamilton

**Sunday, August 17 > 11 AM > MCASD Downtown, Jacobs Building
Free**

Teens are invited to join artist Ann Hamilton for a week-long intensive workshop, incorporating spoken word, musical, and performance art. In conjunction with Hamilton’s *Human/Nature* project informed by her residency in the Galápagos Islands, teens will work with the artist to create a poetic text—to be publicly performed and recorded, as well as

produced in a book for display at MCASD—using an inventory of words that represent where they live and their own recordings of local, natural field sounds.

The workshop will culminate in a series of performance pieces that will be performed by the participating teens and led by the artist on Sunday, August 17. The first performance will take place at 11 am on the Figi Concourse, outside MCASD's downtown Jacobs Building; the second performance will take place later in the day (time and place TBD; please visit www.mcasd.org closer to the event date for updated info).

This workshop is recommended for teens ages 13-17 years of age. For reservations or more information, please contact Elizabeth Yang-Hellewell, Youth Programs Coordinator, at 858 454 3541 x153 or eyanghellewell@mcasd.org.

TNT > Human/Nature
Thursday, September 4 > 7-10 PM > MCASD Downtown
Free (\$3 suggested donation)

TNT celebrates the exhibition's opening with an evening jam-packed with conservation-themed activities and performances (please visit www.mcasd.org closer to the event date for more details).

Field Visit with Mark Dion
Saturday, November 8 > 9 AM – 5 PM > San Diego Natural History Museum, Tijuana Estuary, and MCASD Downtown
(price TBD)*

MCASD and the San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM) are collaborating for this all-day event led by *Human/Nature* artist Mark Dion and the San Diego Natural History Museum Curator of Birds and Mammals, Philip Unitt (a specialist in subspecies identification of California birds, author of *The Birds of San Diego County*, and editor of *Western Birds*, the regional journal of ornithology for western North America). Participants will begin the day at the SDNHM for an informative discussion by Dion and Unitt on the birds of the San Diego/Tijuana region and Dion's previous work in that locale, followed by a tour of the Tijuana Estuary. Dion, who completed a site-specific project at the Tijuana Estuary as part of inSite_05, along with Philip Unitt and Estuary staff members, will talk about the Estuary's ecological habitat. Then, participants will head to MCASD's downtown location for a guided tour of *Human/Nature* led by Dion and MCASD Education staff.

*Reservations are required. Please contact Michael Muehlhausen, Public Programs Coordinator, at 858 454 3541 x198 or mmuehlhausen@mcasd.org.

Creating in Context: *Human/Nature*
Saturdays, October 11, 18, 25 > 1-4 PM > MCASD Downtown
\$40 General; \$30 Members/Students*

This three-part workshop fuses exhibition content and hands-on art-making opportunities into a single unit, encouraging adult audiences to be actively engaged with the exhibition. Over the course of three sessions, participants will learn about the exhibition's art-historical context, explore the curatorial process behind its genesis, and create their own projects in response to the exhibition.

*Reservations are required. Please contact Michael Muehlhausen, Public Programs Coordinator, at 858 454 3541 x198 or mmuehlhausen@mcasd.org.

Related Materials

MCASD's Education department will produce a **cell phone audio tour** that can be accessed by visitors' own cell phones or MP3 players. Visitors to *Human/Nature* will be given a phone number to dial on their own cell phones to begin the tour; then they can access information on individual artists simply by entering various codes on their phone's keypad. Tours will also be available for download from the exhibition's and Museum's Web site so that visitors can upload them to their MP3 players in advance; MP3 players also will be available for rent at the Museum's front desk. The audio tour will include recorded portions by artists featured in the exhibition, as well as curators, thus offering a number of "voices" to the interpretive experience.

MCASD and BAM/PFA will produce a **68-page catalogue**, featuring a joint statement from the organizing institutions; a curatorial statement; images and documentation of the artists' residencies and process of the projects; maps and information on the World Heritage sites visited; and artist commentaries about their projects. The exhibition catalogue will be published in September 2008.

An **exhibition Web site** also has been created to provide visitors with more opportunities to interact with and respond to the exhibition. The site (www.artistsrespond.org) includes artist bios and photos; image galleries documenting the artists' residencies and art-making process; interactive maps and information on the World Heritage sites visited; and artist commentaries about their projects.

Exhibition Support

Human/Nature: Artists Respond to a Changing Planet is co-organized by the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, in partnership with the international conservation organization Rare. The exhibition is supported by The Christensen Fund; the Columbia Foundation; the

National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the Nimoy Foundation; the East Bay Community Foundation; the Baum Foundation; the Rotasa Foundation; and individual donors. The project's Web site is made possible through the efforts of the Studio for Social Sculpture and the Annenberg Foundation. Dwell Magazine is the exhibition's official media sponsor.

The San Diego presentation is made possible by generous gifts from Mary Keough Lyman and Patsy and David Marino. Additional support comes from the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, the County of San Diego, the James Irvine Foundation, and Sempra Energy.

###

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY ART MUSEUM AND PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE (BAM/PFA)

The University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA) is the visual arts center of the University of California, Berkeley, and one of the largest university museums in the United States, in both size and attendance. BAM/PFA's collections contain more than 15,000 objects and 12,000 films and videos. One of the few art institutions to represent a full range of visual culture, BAM/PFA's diverse exhibition programs are characterized by themes of artistic innovation, intellectual exploration, and social commentary. The museum provides the UC Berkeley and Bay Area communities with over 15 exhibitions and more than 400 film and video screenings each year, exploring international art, both historical and contemporary.

With each major exhibition and film series, BAM/PFA places an emphasis on public education programming. Drawing on the vast academic resources of the University of California, educational programming features artists, historians, curators, and other experts. Artist involvement ranges from a single public lecture to a long-term residency.

BAM/PFA was founded in 1963, and the current facility dedicated in 1970. In September 2004, BAM/PFA launched a strategic planning process to provide a five-year road map for the institution's transition into a new building. The new museum and film archive will be located in the center of downtown Berkeley, acting as a portal to the University, and an anchor to downtown Berkeley's burgeoning Arts District.

bampfa.berkeley.edu

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SAN DIEGO

MCASD is the preeminent contemporary visual arts museum in San Diego County. MCASD serves diverse audiences through the collection, preservation, exhibition, and interpretation of art created since 1950. With a binational constituency in the San Diego/Tijuana region as well as a national and international audience, MCASD functions as a forum for the exploration and understanding of contemporary art and ideas; an art museum preserving, presenting, and interpreting art; and a laboratory for artists to experiment with new forms of visual expression.

MCASD is one museum in two distinct, complementary locations: La Jolla and San Diego. The museum was founded in La Jolla in 1941, and added a second location in downtown San Diego in 1993. In 2007, MCASD again expanded downtown, adding 11,000 s/f of new galleries in a 1915 historic railroad warehouse, redesigned by Richard Gluckman.

MCASD offers an array of educational programming for both adults and children, including a bi-monthly film series, artist talks, curator lectures, and TNT (Thursday Night Thing), which invites the community into the galleries on the first Thursday of every month for interactive art activities, live music performances, and other fun happenings.

www.mcasd.org

RARE

Rare, a U.S.-based conservation organization, works globally to equip people in the world's most threatened natural areas with the tools and motivation they need to care for their natural resources. For the last 30 years, at more than 120 sites, and in more than 40 nations, Rare has focused as much on people as on science—addressing the underlying social and economic factors that create environmental threats.

Rare's signature "Pride campaign" builds grassroots support for environmental protection by training local conservation leaders in the use of commercial marketing tactics to build awareness, influence attitudes, and change behaviors. Pride campaigns produce a groundswell of support that lead to tangible conservation successes, such as new national parks, reform legislation, or reduction of threats from forest fires or over-fishing.

Rare has been recognized by Fast Company magazine as one of the "Top 25 Social Capitalists" for the past four years, and its conservation toolkit has been embraced by many large environmental organizations, including The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Wildlife Conservation Society, and the National Audubon Society.

www.rareconservation.org