



GALLERY

530 West 25th St. 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10001



ARTISTS' PANEL: MARCH 14, 2015 5 PM

Seeing is Believing: Artists Confronting Climate Change

I think of art at its most significant, as a DEW line, a Distant Early Warning system that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it. Marshall McLuhan

From time immemorial art has functioned as a means to convince us of the existence of something we can't see. The artist has the power to circumvent verbal communication and fix images in the brain, which the mind tends to accept as reality. Since the 1960s a growing number of artists have used their work to confront threats to the environment. Now, as the scientific evidence of climate change is corroborated by increased occurrence of extreme natural disasters--hurricanes, volcanic activity, tidal waves, cyclones--artists are responding in their artwork with a heightened sense of urgency. "Seeing is Believing" is an exploration of the ways some artists have given visibility to the changes that threaten the habitability of planet earth through artworks that have the capacity to alter consciousness.

The panel will include a climatologist who will give a science-based account of global climate change as it stands today, along with a current prognosis. Each of the participating artists will describe the ways in which their work is a response to the changing environment. A general discussion will focus on the means of drawing public attention to this work in the hope of helping to foster the changes needed to reverse the present destructive course.

PARTICIPANTS

Diane Burko
Marcia Clark
Mary Frank
Cornelia Kavanagh
Eric Posmentier, Climatologist
Martica Sawin, Moderator

This event is free and open to the public.

For further information: 646 486 4730 / info@bluemountaingallery.org / www.bluemountaingallery.org

PANELISTS FOR ARTISTS CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE



Diane Burko's artistic practice is located at the intersection of art and science and is devoted to urgent issues of climate change. Her paintings and photographs document receding glaciers, bearing witness to the planet's unprecedented ice melt as she has observed it on expeditions to Greenland, Antarctica, and the Southern Patagonian Ice Field. She had an artist's residency in Svalbard in the Norwegian Arctic sponsored by the Arctic Circle and has participated in several polar expeditions, including recently as part of an educational team for "Students on Ice" in Antarctica. She has traveled to Hawaii and Iceland on a volcano project and joined a research team of geologists in Ny-alesunde the northernmost research station in the world. Burko was a participant in a symposium on how the arts can communicate science at a Geological Society of America conference in Vancouver, BC. She sees herself working in the tradition of the sublime landscape as she transforms visual and technical data into dynamic views that seem to actively represent shift and change in the earth's surface.



Artist **Marcia Clark** has worked extensively in landscapes in or close to the Arctic, including Greenland, Newfoundland, and Iceland, as well as in a solitary cabin on a rock embedded in the ice of Ruth Glacier on the slope of Mt. Denali. Early in her career she was part of the "Naturalist in Residence" program close to the Mt. Washington Observatory where she was first drawn to ice and snow covered landscapes. Although she traveled widely during the 1990s-- to Nepal, India, and Tibet, she made her first Arctic journey only in 1999, staying at Glacier Bay in Alaska. Numerous visits to the Jacobshavn Icefiord in Ilulissat, Greenland led to the presentation of her twenty three foot long painting of icebergs filling the fiord at the 2009 International Polar Weekend at the American Museum of Natural History. She has exhibited at the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Museum of the City of New York and in many solo exhibitions including "In Search of Ice" at the Albany Institute of History and Art. She has been for many years the director of the Blue Mountain Gallery, an artists' cooperative, founded in SoHo thirty-six years ago, now located in Chelsea. She returns to the Arctic Circle annually.

Mary Frank's paintings and sculptures have been the subject of many one person exhibitions in both galleries and museums, including two retrospectives at the Neuberger Museum. While there are numerous ways in which the environment is referenced in her art, on this occasion she will be speaking about her longstanding and active role in promoting the use of solar cookers in underdeveloped countries where firewood for cooking has become almost non-existent. Made of cardboard and aluminum foil and easily assembled, these cookers are now widely used in Africa and India, making it possible to prepare food without using expensive and polluting fossil fuels. Mary has raised funds and sponsored demonstrations of the cookers in use including solar-cooking lunch for reporters, in order to fill an urgent need in poorer parts of the world and to draw attention to a source of Power that is available to us without cost on a daily basis.



Cornelia Kavanagh's recent sculpture addresses the consequences of ocean acidification. The sculptures in her "Pteropod Project" are inspired by a microscopic marine animal called a *pteropod* or *sea butterfly*. At the base of the marine food web, pteropods are threatened by the rising ocean acidification caused by CO₂ emissions. Seeing their shapes as evocative of the biomorphic shapes of Miro and Arp, Kavanagh began to carve abstract interpretations of these "charismatic microfauna." Five of these sculptures are currently on display in the Smithsonian's Sant Ocean Hall in the National Museum of Natural History. Long interested in the points of intersection between art and science, Kavanagh was motivated to direct attention toward environmental issues by the 2004 tsunami when she saw giant waves as both bringers of massive destruction and awesomely beautiful shapes. The wave sculptures were followed by "Arctic Ice Melt, Moulins of My Mind," based on the tubular chutes through which glacial melt water cascades into the sea. While investigating the effect of on-rushing fresh water on marine organisms, she discovered the microscopic pteropods. Kavanagh works in stone and, more recently, in plaster for casting in bronze or aluminum. Kavanagh represented the Virgin Islands at the 2005 Venice Biennale and participated in the International Polar Weekend at the American Museum of Natural History. She has had three exhibitions at the Blue Mountain Gallery

Dr. Eric Posmentier's currently active research programs have taken him on field campaigns to the summit of Greenland, Barrow AK, and northeastern Siberia as he investigated arctic climates and gathered data for laboratory analysis and computer modeling. His earlier research ranged from ocean waves to earthquake seismology and from ocean circulation to lunar tides in the ionosphere. Among the more than seventy articles he has authored or co-authored is one of the earlier papers in which global warming was inferred from observation of the rising sea levels in the Pacific, Dr. Posmentier holds a PhD. from Columbia University and is a retired professor of physics, mathematics, and marine sciences at Long Island University. At present he is a visiting research professor at Dartmouth College.

Moderator **Martica Sawin** is a critic and art historian. Among her publications is a book on the artist and environmental crusader Alan Gussow (1930-1996). She has been a climate change activist since 2003 when she played a role in the successful effort to thwart Conoco Phillips/Trans Canada's attempt to open an LNG terminal and regassification plant in a small Maine fishing community.