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*Paper Abstract by K.A. Colorado*

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*Title and Paper:*

**An Aesthetic Dialogue on Current Questions of Polar Climate Conditions**

The purpose of my presentation is to address from the artistic point of view the relevance of contemporary art forms on polar climate concerns.

In attempts to record visual contemporary events, the artist is early on influenced by clues of his surroundings. These fundamental clues provide reference for portraying beauty, mystery, and splendor to important current topics. One of the most beautiful and mysterious topics of most importance now has become the focus for much debated dialogue – “the polar regions”. I believe these “clues” also provide our personal compass for decisions we make about our life choices. Culturally and emotionally, my compass has pointed north from the beginning. These clues emerge from my sensitivity to natural sampling and are combined with oral traditions.

Los Angeles is a case in point. Known by indigenous Indians as the “Valley of the Smoke” because of its geographic tendency toward seasonal fires and its effects on local climate, combined with the California car culture and the impact of urban sprawl, “California Atmospheric Qualities” greatly influenced my artistic direction. Local California artists have traditionally been affected by its hazy sunsets, warm weather, and diverse landscape; however, as the climate became increasingly pushed, my personal compass kept me looking north to more temperate, cleaner, cooler weather, culminating over a lifetime in my fascination for polar regions.

At some point, artistic endeavor and working in cold conditions melded together with involvement in snow sculpture. And at this time, before the explosion of concern over global warming, I was convinced by my endeavors that indeed there was an event

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horizon approaching. The responsibility to impact public opinion was a significant component of my art as well.

Taken to the extreme example, the polar conditions must represent the ultimate expression of this question. Any artist who is truly aware and cognizant of the seriousness of this topic must remain sensitive to the “earth watch” in his work, and a rich vocabulary of research, photography, literature, and historic geography can provide most materials for the artist to use in developing his answer to the polar situation. The relevancy for examination of the “Need for Coldness” and the translation through artistic manipulation is of utmost importance at this time.

For the artist who specifically attempts to portray the polar/arctic region as a fragile environment, the responsibility to address political, corporate, and local pressures must also be realized. International and government influences often can be at odds with immediate preservation approaches. The artist who is concerned, committed, and involved in polar aesthetic expression can be the first logical vanguard in the attempt at broadening public awareness. The visual message often is a sublime and subtle imprint upon public consciousness that can pay back many-fold in the future. The artist working in polar concern also has the advantage of acting as steward of the earth in general and the polar regions in particular through amplification of aesthetics in contemporary art. And recognizing censorship versus sponsorship as a way of projecting the artist’s identity simultaneously preserves the integrity of the message as well as the environmental polar-specific concern.

Now is the time for urgency to formulate an aesthetic dialogue with a sense of purpose, and for comprehensive philosophy that will be needed for the brave new world that we must face soon. Considering new alternatives and outlooks, the artist as activist can help create the positive direction through new ways of looking at polar regions.

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