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NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES BRINGS UNCONVENTIONAL EXHIBITION CONCEPT TO HOLLAND

"Conversations Los Angeles Leiden: Nature and the City" features original works by Los Angeles Artists Paul McCarthy with Raivo Puusemp, Ed Moses, Michael C. McMillen, John Outterbridge and Jon Hassell inspired by renowned collection at the Naturalis in the Netherlands



Michael C. McMillen installs *Crocodilephant* for the *Conversations* exhibition in Leiden, the Netherlands.

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County travels its new exhibition model to Leiden, the Netherlands, with a presentation featuring the work of four Los Angeles-based visual artists and one musician who have immersed themselves in the collections of the Naturalis, the national natural history museum of the Netherlands. ***Conversations Los Angeles Leiden: Nature and the City, on view through December 2006 at the Naturalis***, is an international iteration of the acclaimed Los Angeles exhibitions *Conversations: Collections, Artists, Curators* (February-June, 2005) and *Sonic Scenery: Music for Collections* (February-August, 2006), which integrated artists' perspectives into the presentation of artifacts and scientific ideas. The unconventional installations in Los Angeles and in Leiden promote new ways for visitors to experience natural and cultural history collections.

Artists Paul McCarthy with Raivo Puusemp, Michael C. McMillen, Ed Moses, John Outterbridge and composer Jon Hassell worked with Naturalis curators to create installations that address the theme "nature and the city." Employing the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County's multi-sensory exhibition model called "See/Hear," *Conversations Los Angeles Leiden: Nature and the City* offers visitors a new perspective on objects and specimens that may be familiar to them from other, more traditional display contexts. Using specimens such as the Nile

crocodile, the black-tailed godwit, the harbor porpoise and the African elephant, the artists created an innovative pairing of science and art to help visitors reach a deeper understanding of the natural world.

Fostering a synergy of ideas and resources between the two museums, *Conversations Los Angeles Leiden: Nature and the City* is the first undertaking in a larger, ongoing collaboration between The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the Naturalis to explore a new language for exhibition using the “See/Hear” model, which will be utilized in the renovations of the permanent galleries of both museums.

Paul McCarthy, curating and working on a concept developed by Raivo Puusemp, buried a favorite sculpture of his own making on the grounds of the Naturalis. The resulting work, *Burial*, reverses the process of unearthing that paleontologists and archaeologists practice. McCarthy’s with Puusemp’s work was performed on the day of the exhibition opening and documented on film for display in the exhibition. The buried sculpture resides underground as an artifact for future discovery.

With his installations *Crocodelephant* and *The Flying Dutchman*, Michael C. McMillen challenged the typical scientific approach to interpreting the living world. His inventive land and sea animals involve combining the head of a crocodile with the body of an elephant and rigging the skeletons of marine animals with handmade sails, as if they were a fleet of trading ships – referencing the maritime history of the Netherlands.

Jon Hassell’s “sound sculpture” *Magic Place (Naturalis)* features digitally transposed recordings of Dutch wildlife and Javanese gamelan, harmonizing a layered interpretation of Dutch history and culture.

Catalog and Lithographs

Published by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, *Conversations Los Angeles Leiden: Nature and the City* features statements from the artists and essays by the producers along with 81 full-color images. It also includes a DVD with a behind-the-scenes account of the exhibition, video coverage of Paul McCarthy with Raivo Puusemp’s *Burial* performance and audio of Jon Hassell’s composition. The 56-page, limited edition, hardcover catalogs are available for \$45.

Signed, limited edition lithograph prints created by the artists are also offered through the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. McCarthy, McMillen, Moses and Outterbridge

produced one print each (edition of 40), which can be purchased individually (\$1,000) or as a portfolio of four (\$3,000).

Please contact the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County at (213) 763-3418 or bsedor@nhm.org to order the catalog or prints.

Website

For more information on the exhibition, visit the *Conversations Los Angeles Leiden: Nature and the City* link at www.nhm.org.

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Museum Admission and Hours

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County is located at 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles. It is open weekdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and weekends and holidays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$9 for adults, \$6.50 for children. For more information, visit the museum's website at www.nhm.org or call (213) 763-DINO.

About the Museum

The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County serves more than one million families and visitors annually, and is a national leader in research, exhibitions and education. The Museum is L.A.'s second oldest cultural institution, the first to open its doors to the public in 1913, and has amassed one of the world's most extensive and valuable collections of natural and cultural history – more than 33 million objects, some as old as 500 million years.