

Abington Art center hosts eco-friendly program April 23



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By Missy Smith
Staff Writer

With more recent media coverage and car manufacturers promoting the latest in hybrid vehicles, there has been much conversation about how the choices we make affect our environment.

At the center of that discussion is the increase in global warming.

Abington Art Center has been a participant in that dialogue since March 4, when it opened an exhibition titled "Out of the Blue," featuring 20 artists who look at the aesthetic nature of weather, as well as its effect on our lives.

"It's a show that explores various aspects of weather, including politics and climate change," curator Lipton said. "In terms of Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami,

Above is Diane Burko's painting "Langjokull After Trip," from the Abington Art Center's "Out of the Blue" exhibition. At right is the cover of New York Times global-environment reporter Andrew Revkin's book, "The North Pole Was Here." Burko and Revkin will be at the center on April 23.

weather has been in the news a lot lately."

As part of the timely exhibit, artist Diane Burton and New York Times global-environment reporter Andrew Revkin will appear at the Abington Art Center April 23 at 3 p.m., to discuss their recent experiences in the Arctic, as well as the rapid warming that is taking place there.

Burton and Revkin will share information from two different points of view: An artist's interpretation and a journalist's investigation.

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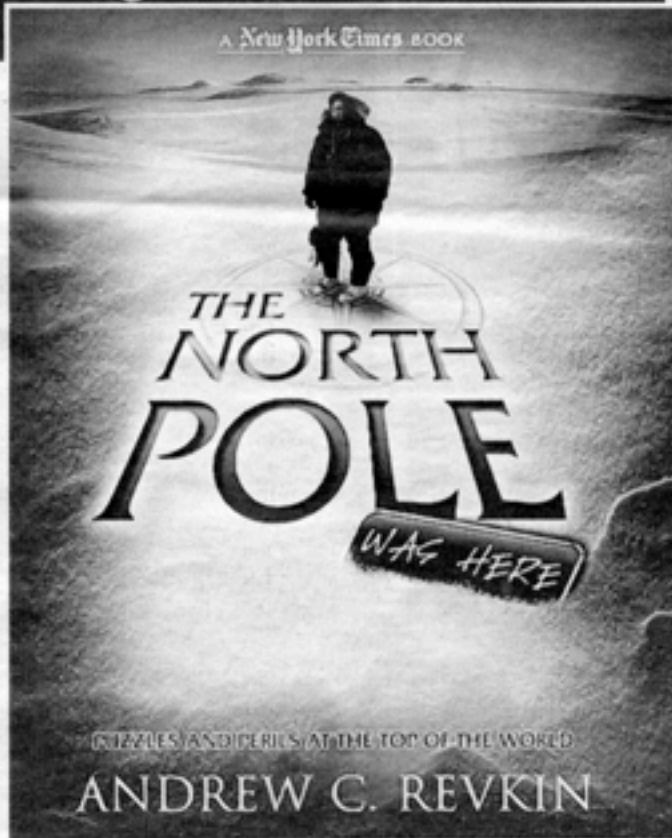
Andrew Revkin & Diane Burko

will appear, in conjunction with the "Out of the Blue" exhibition

at Abington Art Center, 515 Meetinghouse Road, Jenkintown.

Sunday, April 23, 3 p.m. Free and open to public. Info: 215-887-4882.

interpretation and a journalist's investigation.



"I think it's interesting when artists can awaken us a little bit ... make us pay attention to global warming or the changes taking place on the planet," Lipton said.

A Philadelphia painter and photographer, Burton will share photographs documenting her travels to Alaska and Iceland, which were locations of inspiration for some of her paintings.

"I'm aware of what's going on in the environment and how

threatened it is," she said. "So, I think that figures into my being attracted to these kinds of landscape situations."

Painting for 35 years, Burton said she is always seeking new adventures and looking to discover unspoiled landscapes. She has traveled to locations throughout and outside of the country, including Hawaii, the Grand Canyon, California, the coast of Normandy and France.

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"I seem to be attracted to dramatic landscape," she said. "I also enjoy being close to nature as well."

Burton interprets her environment by both surrounding herself in it and observing it from an aerial view.

"I do want to embrace and communicate the awe of these kinds of places, and I guess on a certain level, I hope that it contributes to preserving that pristine environment," she said.

Aiming to preserve the environment as well, Revkin recently spent time at the North Pole with a team of climate scientists, who are trying to determine what is causing the dramatic warming in the Arctic.

The recent trip is at the center of his book, "The North Pole Was Here,"

which is geared toward readers 10 years of age and older.

"I've been writing about climate change for 20 years, but always for adults," he said. "Now I feel that the

big changes under way in the Arctic, and in the global climate, are too important to leave only to grownups, so I decided to speak to the next generation as well. It's particularly important to do so, I feel, because it is their world that today's adults are affecting."

Revkin said global warming is an issue that spreads itself across various age groups, because the choices people make today will affect the climate for future generations. He said, for example, that greenhouse gases from smokestacks, tailpipes and burning forests emitted in the air today can stay in the atmosphere for 100 years or more.

And Revkin has already witnessed the younger generation becoming more concerned and interested in these and other issues surrounding global warming.

"I've already seen young people waking up to this, especially the 400 or 500 students and young adults who attended climate-treaty talks in Montreal in December," he said. "Some were

wearing T-shirts aimed at the negotiators that said: 'Stop asking how much it will cost you and start asking how much it will cost us.'"

During Revkin's time in the Arctic, he would send his stories to the New York Times on a satellite phone, with a dial-up connection comparable to the slowest connection in the early '90s.

Being at the North Pole made Revkin adapt to an environment without the very modern conveniences that seem to be affecting melting the ice he gazed upon.

"It is the one place I've been on the Earth where you constantly are reminded that you are on a planet and not simply at school, or cooking dinner, or driving in a car, or watching TV," he said. "Modern life sometimes makes us forget that we are small and vulnerable. And every hour or so, you remember that you are standing at the very spot around which the whole thing is rotating. ... And then you realize that human activities very far away — power plant and car exhaust, forest clearing — appear to be transforming this spot."

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