

PICTURE THIS

Celebrity photographer

Sebastian Copeland

talks to **Cheryl Woodcock**

about his bright green future.

SPORTING A STYLISH SUIT AND EASY MANNER, Sebastian Copeland is dashing in the way only a Brit can be—a Brit raised in France, that is. Copeland is a natural storyteller and he speaks with passion, painting each tale with a colorful and powerful imagery reminiscent of his stunning photos, photos that have appeared worldwide in publications including *Vanity Fair*, *GQ*, *Marie Claire*, and *Interview*.

Copeland's celebrity portraits, such as those of Elijah Wood, Kate Bosworth, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Phil Collins, and Sandra Bullock, capture the moods (whimsical, alluring, vulnerable) of his subjects while preserving that "thing" that defines them as artists. A favorite subject is Copeland's cousin, actor Orlando Bloom. Copeland and Bloom share some family similarities; both are handsome, lean, and graceful, with the kind of boyish earnestness that disarms and charms.

Copeland's youthful zeal also infuses a steadfast and fervent desire to save the planet. "We are forced to realize that Mother Earth, the nurturing force that is a part of us, has to be respected and cared for, because we cannot go on in the way that we have," he says.

Copeland is so well-regarded in the international "green" movement that he was appointed a member of the board of directors and cochair of the Los Angeles committee of Global Green USA (GG USA), the US affiliate of Green Cross International, President Mikhail Gorbachev's global environmental movement. Founded in 1993, GG USA seeks to foster a global value shift toward a safer planet by addressing three of the greatest challenges facing humanity: stemming global climate change, eliminating weapons of mass destruction, and ensuring universal access to clean drinking water as a basic human right.

The movement has gained momentum thanks to vocal support from celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio, Salma Hayek, Brad Pitt, and Ed Norton. But it's not the celebrity sheen that motivates Copeland. He explains, "It is a basic moral imperative for me to give back in the ways that I can." Copeland also believes that supporting GG USA

should be more than a private endeavor, albeit with very public "private" citizens. "We need vision in governance," Copeland says fervently.

One political figure who understands this vision, says Copeland, is Al Gore.

"*An Inconvenient Truth* should be required in the same way that we go see a doctor for a general checkup—in this case, it is your conscience giving us a checkup," Copeland insists. In his position with GG USA, Copeland is no pencil pusher; he's literally on the ground, and in the air and on the water. With a self-described "adrenaline addiction," Copeland can't stop moving. And whether he's skiing, windsurfing, rock climbing, parachuting, or scuba diving, he's never far from the edge. He applies the same enthusiasm to his work on behalf of GG USA.

In 2005, Copeland led a trip to the Arctic town of Iqaluit to raise awareness

of the Inuit people's struggle for survival and to put a human face on global warming. With the participation of Salma Hayek and Jake Gyllenhaal, the protest centered around an art project that gathered about 500 people positioned on the sea ice to spell the words "Arctic Warning." The image was photographed from the air and distributed around the world. Los Angeles aerial artist John Quigley, who has coordinated similar projects in other settings, worked with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference to execute the project.

In February 2006, Copeland joined a group of scientists and environmentalists in Antarctica on a privately operated science-research icebreaker, the *Ice Lady Patagonia*, to realize another image, again in partnership with Quigley. Shot from the air, the image showed the crew of the *Ice Lady* on a forlorn iceberg in the Gerlache Strait, spelling out "S.O.S." A collection of photographs from the trip was shown in a New York gallery in July and placed first at the 2006 International Photography Awards. The show was a preview for Copeland's upcoming book, *Antarctica—The Global Warning* (Palace Press International, Fall 2007). Additional international shows are planned.

It may not be easy being green, but it sure does look smashing on Sebastian Copeland. ★



ABOVE: Sebastian Copeland at home.
LEFT: Peterman Island, Antarctica, 2006, from Copeland's forthcoming book, *Antarctica: The Global Warning* (Palace Press International).