

Malibu

MAGAZINE

THE BLUE ISSUE

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SCALE AND LIGHT

The Photography of Sebastian Copeland

Introduction by Orlando Bloom

“I felt humbled yet connected. I was beginning to fully comprehend our position in the natural order — one in 30 million species inhabiting this planet.”

In December of 2006, my cousin invited me to go to Antarctica. I was immediately drawn to the promise of adventure, the open seas, the journey of a lifetime. And I have long dreamed of standing within this seldom-visited environment that is increasingly threatened by the way we live. As daunting as the trip seemed, I couldn't let the opportunity pass by.

My cousin Sebastian's enthusiasm is impossible to miss and incredibly contagious. He's a true adventurer, a dedicated environmentalist and passionately believes that it is entirely possible for one person to make a difference. For as long as I can remember, the environment was a great topic of conversation between us, and given Sebastian's insight and experience, I felt I had a good idea of what was really happening. The chance to see it for myself was a gift.

Having seen the pictures from his first trip to the south in 2006, I was intrigued. I wanted to know more, to experience the ice firsthand and to add to our growing list of adventures together.

But no words, conversation nor photograph could have prepared me. On Jan. 20, 2007, we left the world's most southern seaport, Ushuaia, for the three-day crossing to Antarctica. A decommissioned 1950s Norwegian coastguard icebreaker, called *The Ice Lady Patagonia*, would be our home for the next month. With its Spartan accommodations, this was no cruise ship. We lived and slept in a room that was about the size of a small, walk-in closet.

The Drake Passage is the body of water squeezed between South America and the continent of Antarctica, where the mighty Pacific and Atlantic oceans meet. These are some of the roughest seas on the planet and it's impossible to experience this precious land without steering straight through. As my cousin jokes, “It separates the men from the boys.”

Three days on these treacherous rolling seas is enough to clear anyone's head of the trappings of everyday life. There would be no communication with the outside world until our return to port, and for this I found myself unexpectedly thankful.

There aren't adequate words to describe what it's like to see an iceberg on the horizon for the first time. These towering blocks of ice are modern-day dinosaurs, nine times greater below the surface than above. They carry with them the tranquility of a land hardly known, a time forgotten. What struck me most was the deafening silence, only occasionally interrupted by the sight of a penguin, the screech of a gull or a breaching whale. This was a true natural wonderland, untouched by humans.

I felt humbled yet connected. I was beginning to fully comprehend our position in the natural order — one in 30 million species inhabiting this planet.

Life on *The Ice Lady Patagonia* research ship falls into a rhythm of shared tasks and responsibilities. But making landfall in the zodiac,

scuba diving and climbing a glacier — only to snowboard down — fulfilled many childhood dreams.

During our short stay, I can't claim to have detected the changes taking place due to global warming, but what I did see was a vibrant and powerful ecosystem that felt both majestic and incredibly fragile. It's sobering to realize that minute shifts in global temperature have such a huge impact on the balance of this place.

The idea that the way we live has such an adverse effect on the cycle of the Earth is difficult to grasp. Yet scientists around the world have unanimously agreed that the consequences of this accelerated melting of the ice is felt thousands of miles away. A hurricane in London at the end of 2007, a water shortage in Atlanta, heatwaves in New York in the fall of 2007, and changes in our seasonal crop cycle are but a few signs pointing to this shift.

It is my hope that the images Sebastian has captured so dramatically will inspire people to learn more and to appreciate what is at stake.

With this call to action, we are all invited to escape within the pages of his book, but more importantly, to appreciate what each of us can do to protect and cherish our own backyard, this remarkable environment, this Earth, our home.

Thanks and respect to my cousin.

- Orlando Bloom



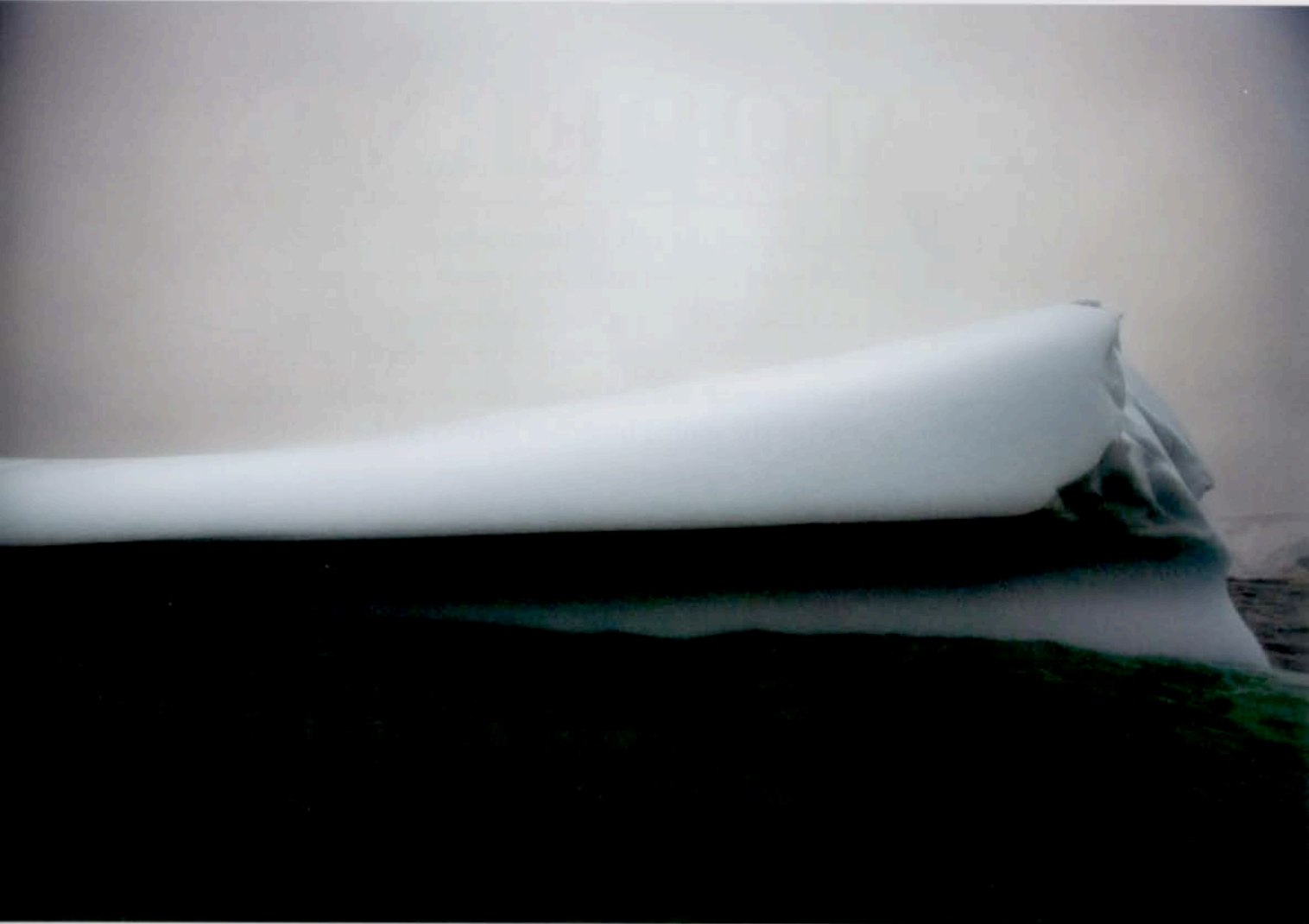
Cousins in Antarctica:

Sebastian Copeland and Orlando Bloom,
Near Port Lockroy, Antarctica, February 2007









Scale and light. That is how I will remember Antarctica. As I review six cumulative weeks' worth of intense shooting, I am awed by the raw power of nature in this surreal environment where mankind, yet again, is dwarfed by such gigantic proportions. Towering volcanic peaks plunge precipitously into the sea; glaciers nonchalantly and inexorably pour into the ocean, where chunks of ice the size of city blocks, carry their last hurrah as they float away to their inescapable fate. Trapped in frozen air bubbles are hundreds of thousands of years' worth of environmental data.

Aside from the broad areas ominously uncovered by ice and the suspiciously eroding rain, one definitely gets the sense that Antarctica holds untold amounts of geological and climatic secrets — a dynamic environment, rich in mammal and sea life, never conquered by humans.

Yet, remotely and systematically, greed and ignorance are spoiling this extraordinary place, as global temperatures threaten the ice, so crucial to the climate balance of our planet. In the last 60 years, the poles have warmed up at more than twice the rate of the rest of the world, while the Antarctica Peninsula, the area photographed in this book, has warmed by up to five times the global average. I wonder if, in the future, people will even have the privilege of witnessing what I have seen, and what will they think, then, of those generations that waited so long before taking action.

The poles hold 30 percent of the world's water, and Antarctica, 90 percent of its fresh water. Melting ice is projected to raise ocean levels

as much as 20 feet within as little as a century, threatening to displace up to 80 percent of the world's population. Within as few as 80 years, 35 percent of the world's species will disappear. Polar bears will be extinct in the north and many Penguin species will disappear in the south. And the one question that remains: What arrogance is born out of man which does not see the significance of this profound and irrevocable loss?

What better way to experience great music but to share it? The same is true of images. I am grateful for the chance to share these and for the privilege of inviting you into your world. To celebrate this magnificent landscape is also a way for me to remember how fragile and precarious it is. This is your home. Welcome to Antarctica.

-Sebastian Copeland ■

To purchase fine art prints of Sebastian Copeland's work, or for more info contact photo@seabassprod.com

