



## SEBASTIAN COPELAND

Star photographer  
turns  
environmentalist

**I**t's a long way from Los Angeles to the polar ice. What takes a photographer from the capital of the stars and beach life to the North and South Poles?

**Sebastian Copeland:** I have been involved with the ecological movement for quite some time now, though most of the time in a passive capacity, fundraising in Hollywood. Then in 2003, more or less by chance, I was aboard a ship heading for Greenland, from which I was able to witness the

endangered ecosystem with my own eyes and through my own lens. A few weeks later I was in a production meeting for a cigarette ad, talking about lighting and backdrop design. And suddenly it dawned on me: I can't go on like this any longer. I have dedicated almost 100 percent of my time to protecting the environment ever since. Photography is now just a hobby.

Your photographs in the illustrated book *Antarctica: The Global Warning* are breathtakingly beautiful.

**C:** Antarctica is a foreign, exotic place. Anyone can take awesome photos there. The landscape takes its own picture. The iceberg drifting towards the sun is a powerful metaphor – the beholder senses that this enchanted world is in danger. I believe that in order to raise people's awareness of a problem as complex and long term as this, we need to connect to their emotions and higher spirit, and say: Look! This is how beautiful planet Earth is. And you are a small part of it.

In December 2009, you attended the Copenhagen climate summit. Is mankind doing enough to stop climate change?

**C:** Of course not. In early 2009 I was on an expedition to the geographic North Pole. We walked across the ice for 700 kilometers, on the legendary route taken by the North Pole explorer Robert Peary exactly 100 years ago. In another 100 years it will no longer be possible to take this route. The ice will have disappeared by then.

What makes a guy from California want to travel to the (perhaps no longer so) eternal ice?

**C:** I like places that cannot be reached by scheduled flight. I like expeditions, the preparation, the confrontation with antagonistic nature. At the North Pole you are so far removed from Earth you might as well be walking on the moon. Thousands of square kilometers of white void. Below me the deep sea. It is both the most magnificent and the worst moment you can experience.