"White Wanderer" Exhibit in Chicago joins Seismology and Art

An exhibit sponsored by the Natural Resources Defense Council has combined the work of University of Chicago seismological scientist Doug MacAyeal with the art of Luftwerk, to produce an artistic rendition of the seismic "sounds" produced by climate change in the Antarctic. The exhibit opened with a live demonstration of seismic data acquisition, using instruments provided by IRIS/PASSCAL. The project was a collaboration with NRDC, with additional help from the University of Chicago, and was on display at Two Riverside Plaza, Chicago IL from Sept 7th – Oct 1st.

The "White Wanderer" exhibit was inspired by recent events at the Larsen C ice shelf in Antarctica, which plunged into the Weddell Sea in July 2017, changing the very landscape of the continent.

The exhibit conveyed the scale of the calving event by comparing it to the Chicago skyline.

The exhibit, along the Chicago River behind the Lyric Opera House, featured replica of the Larsen C crack, to give the public a means of comprehending the size of the chunk of ice which fell into the ocean. Two Chicago-based artists, Petra Galler (Luftwerk), also transformed seismic measurements of the seism by University of Chicago glaciologist Douglas MacAyeal into audible sounds dynamic nature of such events.
Doug MacAyeal was on hand for the opening. Video clips of Doug talking about the exhibit are available here, here and here.

Artist Petra Bachmaier of Luftwerk also attended the exhibit’s opening. A short video clip of Petra speaking about the show is available here.

An audio recording of the seismic groaning of the glacier, speeded up many, downloaded here.

Photo credit: Devi Lockwood of PRI’s The World. Read the full story here. Thanks also to Louise Lerner of the University of Chicago for the video segments.

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