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ASIA SOCIETY PRESENTS PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

RIVERS OF ICE: VANISHING GLACIERS OF THE GREATER HIMALAYA

July 13 through August 15, 2010



Left image: George H. L. Mallory, 1921, courtesy Royal Geographical Society. Right image: David Breashears, 2007, courtesy GlacierWorks.

Asia Society showcases the work of photographer and mountaineer David Breashears who, with Glacier Research Imaging Project (GRIP), has retraced the steps of renowned mountain photographers of the past century to recapture images of the Himalayan mountains and glaciers from exactly the same vantage points. *Rivers of Ice: Vanishing Glaciers of the Greater Himalaya* comprises recent photographs by Breashears, shown alongside corresponding historic images, revealing the alarming loss in ice mass over the intervening years due to climate change.

Breashears has retraced the steps of the 1921 British Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition Team, using as a guide, the photos of surveyor and photographer Major Edward O. Wheeler and amateur photographer George L. Mallory, who would later perish attempting to reach Everest's summit in 1924. Returning to the same vantage points, Breashears has meticulously recreated their shots, pixel for pixel.

“Many of the Greater Himalaya’s glaciers are in China, and the rivers that flow out these mountains and from these frozen reservoirs will help determine the fates of people from Afghanistan to the North China Plain,” says Orville Schell, Arthur Ross Director of Asia Society’s Center on U.S.-China Relations. “What the world chooses to do about climate change, will determine the fates of these glaciers and these peoples. This exhibit of

photographer and mountaineer and photographer David Breashears is a stunningly beautiful testament to what is at stake.”

Known as the “Third Pole,” the Himalaya are home to the world’s largest sub-polar ice reserves. The meltwaters of these high altitude glaciers supply crucial seasonal flows to the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Salween, Irrawaddy, Mekong, Yangtze and Yellow rivers, which hundreds of millions of people downstream depend on for their livelihoods.

Images of special note include a photograph from 1899 by Vittorio Sella, and 55-inch video displays of two gigapan photographs (ultrahigh resolution panoramic images at a size of over one billion pixels that are comprised of multiple photographs stitched together), showing extraordinary detail, and two 21 foot wide panoramas, comprised of six photographs. Additional video footage is also included in the exhibition and its accompanying website featuring interactive gigapan photographs.

Since 2007, David Breashears has been trekking and photographing in the greater Himalaya, most often to the glaciers surrounding Mount Everest, whose summit he has reached five times. His goal is no longer this highest peak, but a series of ledges and outcroppings scattered among the glaciers. His photographs reveal a startling truth: the ice of the Himalaya is disappearing. GRIP is using the power of these images to raise public awareness and shape policy focused on mitigation and adaption to the climate crisis.

Rivers of Ice is organized by Asia Society Museum in partnership with GRIP, a project of the Asia Society Center on U.S.-China Relations and GlacierWorks. To find out more about the exhibition visit www.AsiaSociety.org/RiversofIce. To learn more about GRIP, visit AsiaSociety.org/OnThinnerIce

Asia Society Museum

Founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Asia Society is a nonprofit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai and Washington, D.C. The Society seeks to increase knowledge and enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of arts and culture, policy and business, and education.

Asia Society and Museum is located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street), New York City. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Closed on Mondays and major holidays. General admission is \$10, seniors \$7, students \$5 and free for members and persons under 16. Free admission Friday evenings, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The Museum is closed Fridays after 6:00 p.m. from Independence Day to Labor Day. For more information, visit AsiaSociety.org/museum

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