

News Release

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Photo attached by: A J van de Water - CELEBRATIONS AT THE JANUARY 5TH GRAND OPENING of Laguna Beach's new Endangered Planet Gallery included a sunset bagpipe-and-drums concert on Laguna's Main Beach for gallery principals and friends, including featured artist and sculptor Chris Gutzeit (center, with hand in jeans pocket) and gallery founder Charles Michael Murray (far right), holding his son Oliver.

Chris Gutzeit "Infinite View" Art Shines at Endangered Planet Gallery Grand Opening

LAGUNA BEACH, CA — In an event-filled January 5th evening that included a bagpipe concert on Main Beach at sunset, an emotional speech and blessing ceremony by Chief David Belardes of San Juan Capistrano's Mission Indians, and a flute performance by twelve-year-old Native American composer and flute prodigy Evren Ozan, the real highlight of the grand opening at Laguna Beach's Endangered Planet Gallery was the series of six shining and illuminated new "infinite view" works by sculptor and painter Chris Gutzeit.

These new works by Gutzeit almost defy classification. Most are circular in shape, illuminated inside, and use reflective interior mirrors to create a sense of an infinite-view experience for the viewer. One piece, "Hope," uses sea urchins that seem to multiply to infinity, reflecting the artist's views on the pressing need to begin restoring natural balances, and that, by working together, there is hope for the future. Another piece, "Endangered Planet," uses rusty nails and glass shards behind a view of Earth's northern hemisphere to create a cone of vision that seems to float within the wall behind the piece, suggesting both the beauty and fragility of our planet. The largest piece, "Buddha's Head," is nearly 4-feet square, and contains an infinite view in which half-rounds of stone float like planets around Buddha into eternity, while water gently cascades down the side stone walls.

"Chris's art is remarkable," said Endangered Planet Gallery founder Charles Michael Murray. "It's really quite amazing how he is able to use such simple materials and to utilize them in ways that produce such depth, tranquility and beauty in the finished pieces, all of which are supportive of our Endangered Planet mission."

Gutzeit, who was born in Hawaii but now lives in Santa Barbara, is a painter,

(more)

sculptor and multimedia artist who is represented by Chrystiana Sailer, owner of Artist's Montage (Honolulu, Hawaii).

An estimated 150 guests attended the gallery's grand opening evening on January 5th, which coincided with Laguna's popular First Thursdays Art Walk.

First, at sunset, more than 20 Endangered Planet principals and friends, and Gutzeit and his guests, gathered on Main Beach for a bagpipe-and-drum concert by the San Clemente Scots. Dressed in traditional clothing, the bagpipers and drummers then led the gathering through downtown Laguna and up Forest Ave. to the Endangered Planet Gallery, located on the second level of The Lumber Yard. The new gallery was illuminated with Gutzeit's art and scores of candles.

San Juan Capistrano's Chief David Belardes welcomed gallery guests and blessed the gathering in a Native American ceremony. Belardes is a leader of the Juaneños Band of Mission Indians.

Evren Ozan appeared next, playing a quiet and meditative flute melody of his own composition. The 12-year-old composer and performer recorded his first CD, "Images of Winter," when he was seven, and his most recent CD release, "As Things Could Be," was recognized as "Rising Star" at the Native American Music Awards last February.

Murray then addressed the gathering, followed by a welcome from Harry Huggins, Board Member of Laguna Green Belt, Inc. who works closely with Endangered Planet on the organization's charitable contributions and environmental activities. Also attending the event was Patrick F. Baker, CEO of the Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross.

In addition to Gutzeit's art exhibition, Endangered Planet Gallery offers CDs, DVDs, videos, and books on environmental and cultural-protection topics in selections appropriate for adults and children. A portion of all sales of art and other items supports the Orange County Chapter of the American Red Cross and a variety of other charities.

The gallery is open Monday - Friday from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., but because of the special nature of Gutzeit's art, gallery owner Murray recommends that pieces be seen at night for maximum effect.

Special night viewing appointments can be made by calling Endangered Planet Gallery at (949) 497-5690. Gutzeit's "infinite view" works will appear through March 31.

Endangered Planet Gallery is located in The Lumber Yard Mall at 384 Forest Ave., Suite #13, in Laguna Beach, across the street from Café Zinc. For more information, visit the web site at endangeredplanet.org.

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