



## **The Mammoth in The Room – Exhibition Featuring Fossils Calls For Climate Action**

**NORWICH, 15 APRIL 2024** UK-based conservation charity **Explorers Against Extinction** has unveiled an exhibition calling for climate change action featuring the work of renowned artists, including world-famous Brazilian conservation photographer **Sebastião Salgado**, Britain's 'greatest living stone sculptor' **Emily Young** and Turner Prize winning artist **Richard Deacon**.

The **Extinction Collection** highlights the **devastating consequences of climate change**, including species extinction and habitat loss through time. The exhibition is being previewed at the **Palace of Westminster 15-19 April** before being exhibited around the UK, including venues in Norwich, Edinburgh and London.

The collection will be **auctioned** in Spring 2025 with funds raised helping to further the charity's work to recover key species and restore ecosystems around the world.

**Ten works** form the centrepiece of the collection. They feature **fossils and artefacts from Happisburgh**, the home of Explorers Against Extinction in Norfolk. Happisburgh is likely to be **one of the first UK communities lost to coastal erosion**. The sand cliffs are being eaten away by the North Sea revealing clues about the ancient landscape, including fossilised hominid footprints that date to the end of the Early Pleistocene, around 950-850,000 years ago, making Happisburgh the oldest known site of human occupation in the UK.

Ancient pine cones are preserved in the sediments, revealed by storms. The teeth of Steppe and Southern mammoth can all be found on the beach along with flints used by *Homo Antecessor*. These species were made extinct by **historic climate change** as the land flooded.

Richard Deacon's sculpture, Long in the Tooth, is one of the works to feature Happisburgh fossils. Deacon, who is deeply concerned about the accelerating impacts of climate change said: "The four teeth describe a considerable stretch of time. They stand in for something that is now missing. Their disappearance was, in part, the consequence of climate change and of rising and falling sea levels, the evidence for which is powerfully present on the Norfolk Coast. I put the four teeth onto four cut and polished seven-sided granite blocks. The pairing was perfect - celebratory yet with all the stately grace of granite memorials."

Other contributing artists with work inspired by Happisburgh include **David Nash, Eleanor Lakelin, Peter Randall-Page, Julian Stair, Jon Foreman, Andy Goldsworthy, Michael Pinsky, and Conrad Shawcross**. Their beautiful organic sculptures using wood, stone, clay, and artefacts from Happisburgh reinforce the **exhibition's central themes of time, change and loss**.

Trustee Sara White said: "The exhibition provides a tangible way to travel through time and understand how climate change causes extinction. The difference is that extinction today is largely caused by human activity, and we can do something about it."

Other artworks in the collection are rooted in the **present-day** and remind the viewer that the stakes are high, featuring **changing landscapes and vanishing species** from polar bears to tigers. Dramatic black and white imagery by international photographers **Michael Kenna** and **Sebastião Salgado** heighten the elegiac tone set while **Daniel Betra's** aerial image of the Hvita River in Iceland, heavy with sediments from melting glaciers, is an explosion of

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colour along with **Emma's Swift's** fiery oil painting. The Orangutan, a Critically Endangered species at the centre of Swift's work, looks indignant as his forest goes up in smoke.

Other contributors include **Richard Mosse, Gary Hodges, Mark Adlington, Sophie Green,** and **Beverly Joubert.**

*For further information please visit [explorersagainstextinction.co.uk](http://explorersagainstextinction.co.uk) or contact Trustee, Sara White: [sara@realworldconservation.org.uk](mailto:sara@realworldconservation.org.uk)*