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Museum Koenig Bonn

“Planet or Plastic?” - National Geographic photo exhibition in Bonn

The Leibniz Institute for Biodiversity Change (LIB), Museum Koenig Bonn, shows the traveling exhibition "Planet or Plastic," presented by the National Geographic Society in collaboration with Museum Koenig Bonn and Expona, from September 29, 2022, through April 16, 2023. The exhibition builds on National Geographic's multi-year global initiative to reduce the amount of single-use plastic entering the oceans. The use of this synthetic material has revolutionized daily life: in medicine, transportation, packaging, electronics, and even clothing. Yet despite its usefulness and comfort, an exorbitant amount of plastic products are often discarded inappropriately, with some 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste going unrecycled. 70 powerful images by renowned photographers from around the world, as well as infographics and videos, highlight the need for a balance between the use of this material and the protection of our environment. In this way, the exhibition enables a profound discussion of the topic.

193 countries agreed at the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi in March 2022 to initiate an agreement against plastic pollution of the environment. The National Geographic exhibition "Planet or Plastic?" shows that it is high time for this.

The pollution of the environment and oceans with plastic waste has increased dramatically over the past 50 years. According to a study conducted by the Alfred Wegener Institute in Bremerhaven on behalf of the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF), the amount of microplastics in the oceans is expected to quadruple by 2050. According to the European Parliament, the total weight of all plastic waste in the world's oceans is currently already around 150 million tons. So plastic dependency has long developed into a global problem.

“Plastic pollution is one of the most important global environmental challenges of our generation,” says Kathryn Keane, vice president of public programming at the National Geographic Society. “But it's an issue we can all do something about. This exhibition informs us about how we got to this point, shows the scope of the problem and how everyone can be a part of the solution. National Geographic has committed to reducing our reliance on single-use plastics. We hope that after visiting the exhibition, visitors around the world will join us in this commitment.”

"With the National Geographic exhibition "Planet or Plastic" we can make the serious consequences of the use of plastic clear to a broad public and hope to move many people to take action to reduce the amount of plastic waste", explains Prof. Bernhard Misof Director General of the LIB.

Can't do without plastic

"Planet or Plastic?" builds on National Geographic's multi-year global initiative to reduce the amount of single-use plastic entering the oceans. The exhibit tells the story of plastic from its invention just over a century ago to its mass consumption today.

It's not about generalized plastic bashing. Quite the opposite. In many areas of life, we can no longer cope without plastics. They have revolutionized medicine and made space travel easier - but they also extend the shelf life of

fresh food, make it possible to supply clean drinking water to those who don't have it, and save lives in airbags or helmets. It's definitely something that shouldn't be forgotten.

Yet despite its usefulness and convenience, an exorbitant amount of plastic products is improperly disposed of, with approximately 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste not being recycled. The waste has been found in oceans from the Arctic to Antarctica and from the surface to the ocean floor. Marine animals have ingested it or become trapped in it.

Conscious handling is required

So what is it all about? Clearly, it's about the right, conscious use of plastic. About solutions and answers to a number of urgent questions. The exhibition "Planet or Plastic?" polarizes. And that's a good thing. With 70 powerful images by renowned photographers from around the world, as well as infographics and videos, it shows the need for a balance between the use of this material and the protection of our environment. In this way, the exhibition facilitates a profound discussion on the subject.

But not only that: "Planet or Plastic?" shows very clearly what we can all do to reduce the use of products made of single-use plastic in the future, to reuse, recycle and dispose of them. Often there are alternatives. Research is well on its way there, and many manufacturing companies are rethinking.

"PLANET OR PLASTIC?" is a traveling exhibition of the National Geographic Society and is presented in collaboration with Museum Koenig Bonn and Expona.

More information: <https://www.nationalgeographic.de/video/tv/planet-or-plastic-die-spitze-des-eisbergs>

An exhibition from  **NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC**

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About the National Geographic Society

The National Geographic Society is a nonprofit organization dedicated to showing and protecting the wonders of our world through science, research, education programs, and storytelling. Since 1888, the National Geographic Society has continued to redefine the possibilities of exploration through courageous people and innovative ideas. Over the years, more than 14,000 working grants have been awarded on all seven continents. Through its educational programs, the National Geographic Society reaches three million students annually. Its exhibitions, stories, and content captivate visitors worldwide. www.nationalgeographic.org

About the LIB

The LIB is dedicated to researching biodiversity and its changes, the results of which are disseminated to the wider society in an educational manner. In order to better understand the current mass extinction of flora and fauna, researchers are looking for connections and causes of – often – man-made changes. The goal is to develop solutions for the preservation of ecosystems and species in order to maintain the basis of current life.

About the Leibniz-Association

The Leibniz Association combines 96 independent research institutes. Their focus ranges from the natural, engineering, and environmental sciences to the humanities and the business, space, and social sciences. The Leibniz institutes focus on relevant social, economic, and ecological issues. They perform knowledge-oriented and applied research (also among the cross-disciplinary Leibniz research alliances), are or support scientific infrastructures, and offer research-based services.



Caption: Prof. Dr. Bernhard Misof, General Director of the LIB, at the opening of the exhibition.
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Caption: “Planet or Plastic?” National Geographic photo exhibition at the Museum Koenig Bonn.
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