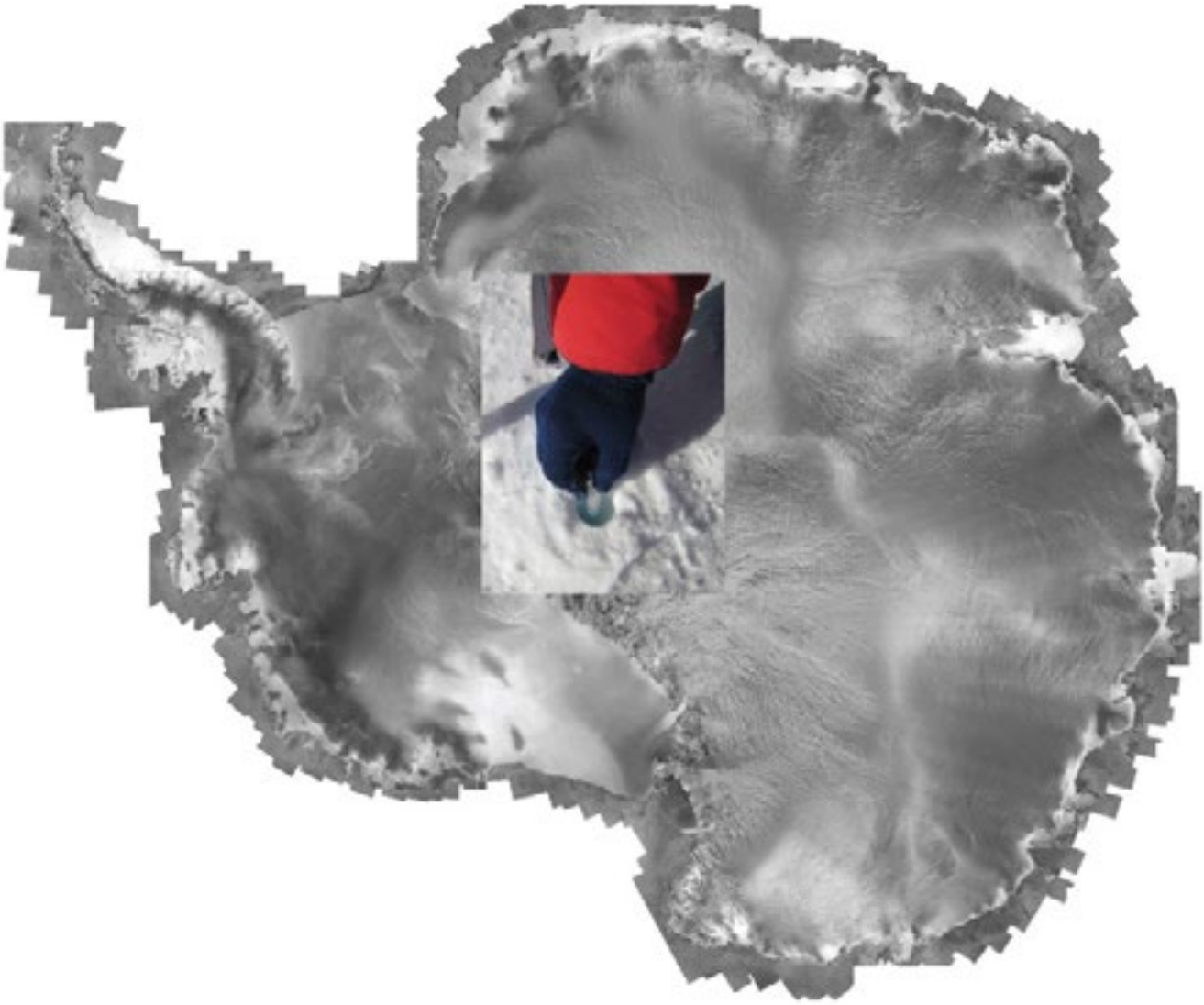

SOUTH POLE INSTALLATIONS

XAVIER CORTADA

SOUTH POLE INSTALLATIONS

XAVIER CORTADA

1956 90°S (Antarctica)
Construction crews arrive at the South Pole

1957 47°50'N 66°03'E
(Soviet Union, launched from Baikonur) Sputnik, the first satellite to orbit Earth, is launched into space

SOUTH POLE INSTALLATIONS

XAVIER CORTADA

CARTA

...has ... shown ... Supreme Court, Miami City Hall) and cultural institutions (Miami Art Museum, Museum of Florida History). Major collaborative art projects include International AIDS murals in Switzerland and South Africa, peace murals in Northern Ireland and Cyprus and child welfare murals in Bolivia and Panama.

Miami Dade College

ART GALLERY SYSTEM

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1958 48°52'N 02°20'E (France)
Pan Am's transatlantic 707 flight lands in Paris, jet age begins

1959 32°47'N 96°48'W (United States)
Microchip is invented

1960 11°21'N 142°12'E (Pacific Ocean) Trieste dives to the bottom of the Mariana Trench: 35,813 feet

1961 47°50'N 66°03'E (Soviet Union, launched from Baikonur) Yuri Gagarin is first man in space

1962 42°22'N 71°04'W (United States)
Rachel Carson's Silent Spring is published

THE MARKERS

Cortada planted 51 different colored flags on the moving ice sheet that covers the South Pole. Each flag stood 10 meters apart, marking where the geographic South Pole stood during each of the past 50 years (when humans first inhabited the South Pole). Each flag displayed the coordinates of the location on Earth where an important event took place during that year.

The South Pole

On December 14, 1911, Norwegian Roald Amundsen was first to reach the South Pole. The geographic South Pole is located near the center of the Antarctic ice sheet at an altitude of 2800 meters. The ice sheet covering the Pole is moving at about 10 meters per year toward the Weddell Sea (along the 60 degree West meridian). Each year, staff at the South Pole station reposition the South Pole "marker" to compensate for the movement of the ice.

On October 31, 1956, Lt. Shinn landed the first plane, "Que Sera Sera," at the South Pole. Three weeks later, on November 20, 1956, the first South Pole station construction crew arrived.

On January 4, 1957, the Navy Seabees crew turned the completed station over to a team of nine scientists, nine support professionals (e.g.: a doctor, a cook) and a dog who wintered over and officially opened the base to scientific exploration.

The Markers Installation: 1956-2006

On January 4, 2007, on the 50th anniversary of the opening of the South Pole station, Miami artist Xavier Cortada arrived at the South Pole and planted 51 differently-colored flags along a 500-meter stretch of a moving ice sheet. The last flag was planted where South Pole stood in 1956, when the Pole became permanently inhabited. The first, where the South Pole stands fifty years later.

Each flag is marked with its respective year, and with the coordinates of a place on Earth the artist selected as important in "moving the world forward" during that year (e.g.: 1957 is Sputnik, 1963 is the March on Washington, 1969 is the Lunar Landing, 1997 is the Kyoto Accord) while scientists worked in the South Pole.

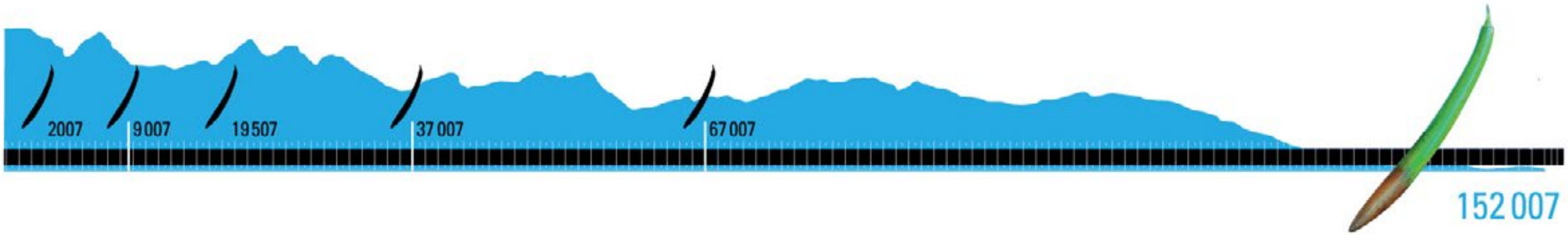
1963 38°53'N 77°02'W 38°53'N
(United States)
March on Washington for Civil Rights

1964 40°43'N 74°00'W
(United States)
Beatlemania sweeps America

1965 23°08'N 82°22'W (Cuba)
Freedom Flights for Cuban refugees begin

1966 28°40'N 77°13'E (India)
Indira Gandhi elected first woman prime minister of India, the world's largest democracy

1967 33°55'S 18°22'E
(South Africa)
First human heart transplant



150,000-YEAR JOURNEY

Cortada planted an ice replica of a mangrove seedling on the moving ice sheet that blankets the South Pole. Embedded in the ice, the seedling will move 10 meters a year in the direction of the Weddell Sea, 1400 km away. In 150,000 years, the seedling will arrive at the coastline and theoretically set its roots.

150,000-YEAR JOURNEY

At the geographic South Pole, Cortada planted an ice replica of a mangrove seedling on the ice sheet that moves approximately 10 meters a year along the 60°W meridian.* In this work, the Miami artist used the 3 km thick glacial ice sheet that covers the continent as an instrument to mark time.

Embedded in the moving glacier, the "seedling" is sliding downhill in the direction of the Weddell Sea, almost 1,500 km away. The "seedling" has begun its 150,000-year journey towards the coastline, where it can eventually (theoretically) set its roots.

The 150,000-Year Journey uses the terrain of the South Pole to address a sociological concern of the artist: the travails of an immigrant's journey --- the displacement, the solitude, the struggle to simply integrate oneself into society.
In a more universal way, the 150,000 Year Journey explores humankind as it evolves through time.

It will take almost 150,000 years for this art piece to be completed. What will our world look like then?

Through the "150,000-year Journey," the artist invites viewers to reflect on our role on this planet. Juxtaposing geological time frames with human time frames (e.g., the fifty year history of human presence in the South Pole captured in "The Markers" project), Cortada reaffirms the notion that we are merely custodians who should live in harmony with nature during the brief time we are here.

** The "seedling" was a replica because foreign species cannot be introduced into the continent. As such, the artist created an ice sculpture using a mold made from an actual red mangrove seedling from Miami's Biscayne Bay. Cortada poured water from a deep South Pole well into the mold, where it froze into ice.)*

1968 55°45'N 37°35'E (Soviet Union)
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed in Moscow, London and Washington, D.C.

1969 28°24'N 80°36'W (United States, launched from Cape Canaveral) The Eagle lands on the moon

1970 13°06'N 59°37'W (Barbados)
Ra II crosses Atlantic in 57 days

1971 37°21'N 121°16'W (United States)
Microprocessor is invented

1972 39°55'N 116°25'E (China)
Nixon visits China

0° European Sea Sturgeon
(Acipenser sturio)

180° Steller's Sea Lion
(Eumetopias jubatus)

15° E Black Rhinoceros
(Diceros bicornis)

165° W Swordfish
(Xiphias gladius)

30° E Eastern Gorilla
(Gorilla beringei)

150° W Blue Whale
(Balaenoptera musculus)

45° E Ring-tailed Lemur
(Lemur catta)

135° W Sea Otter
(Enhydra lutris)

60° E Imperial Eagle
(Aquila heliaca)

120° W Peary Caribou
(Rangifer tarandus ssp. pearyi)

75° E Asian Elephant
(Elephas maximus)

105° W Wolverine
(Gulo gulo)

90° E Asian Buffalo
(Bubalus bubalis)

90° WAmerican Crocodile
(Crocodylus acutus)

105° E Giant Panda
(Ailuropoda melanoleuca)

75° W Red Wolf
(Canis rufus)

120° E Leatherback Turtle
(Dermochelys coriacea)

60° W Amazonian Manatee
(Trichechus inunguis)

135° E Tiger
(Panthera tigris)

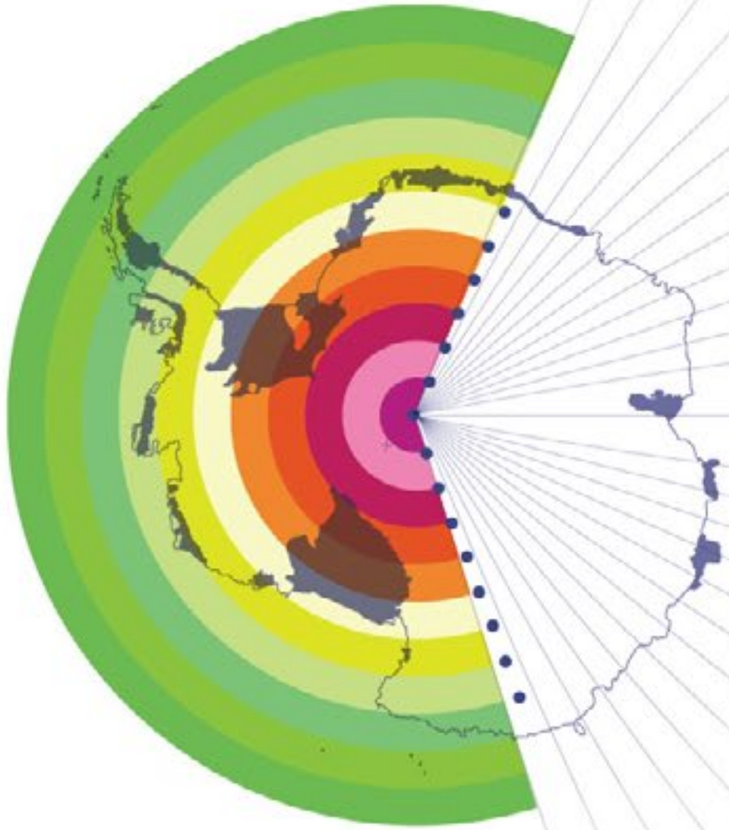
45° W Maned Three-toed Sloth
(Bradypus torquatus)

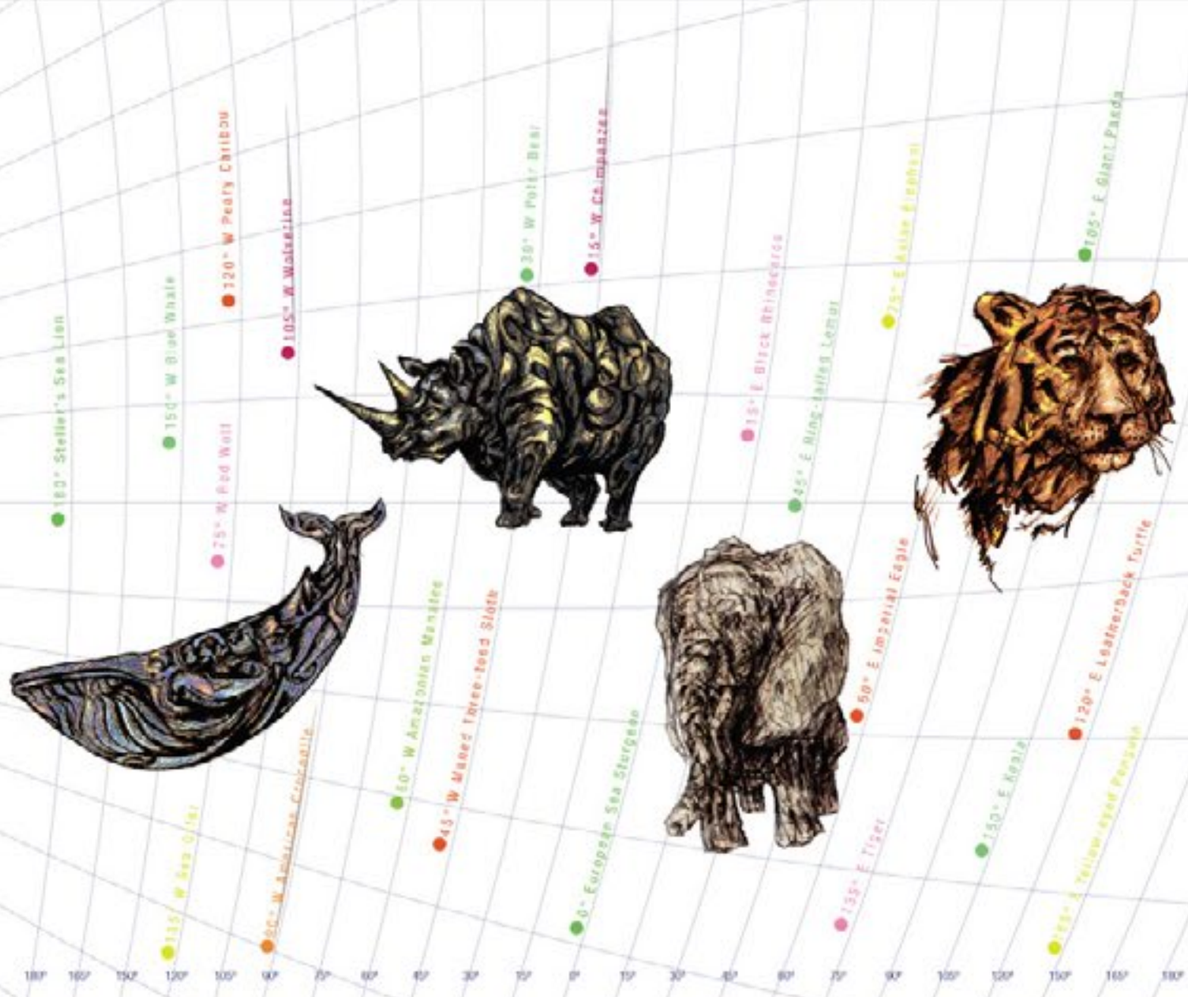
150° E Koala
(Phascolarctos cinereus)

30° W Polar Bear
(Ursus maritimus)

165° E Yellow-eyed Penguin
(Megadyptes antipodes)

15° W Chimpanzee
(Pan troglodytes)





ENGANGERED WORLD

Cortada planted 24 flags around the South Pole to warn of the imminent threat to Earth's biodiversity. Diluting his acrylics with melted Antarctic sea ice, the artist painted the scientific name of an endangered species on each flag, as well as the longitude of the habitat in which it struggles for survival.

1973 33°86'S 151°22'E (Australia)
Sydney Opera House is built

1974 08°59'N 40°10'E (Ethiopia)
Skeleton of "Lucy," our 3.2 million year old ancestor, is discovered

1975 19°24'N 99°09'W (Mexico)
United Nations convenes First World Conference on Women

1976 28°24'N 80°36'W
(United States, launched from Cape Canaveral)
Viking I and II land on Mars

1977 01°43'N 44°53'E (Somalia)
Smallpox eradicated from Earth

LONGITUDINAL **INSTALLATION**

Cortada placed 24 shoes in a circle around the South Pole, each serving as a proxy for a person affected by global climate change in the world above. He placed the shoes inches apart along the respective longitudes where these individuals live, conceptually diminishing the distance between them.

1978 53°33N 02°07'W (England) First test tube baby born

1979 40°01'N 105°16'W (United States) Ten indepen-dent living centers were founded across the US for persons with disabilities

1980 54°23'N 18°40'E (Poland) Solidarity strikes across Poland

1981 41°08N 73°42'W (United States) IBM launches personal computer

1982 50°50'N 0°08'W (England) Whale hunting moratorium enacted

0° Spain:
"There may be a move of wineries into the Pyrenees in the future."
Xavier Sort, technical director of Miguel Torres Wineries.

15°E Switzerland:
"Losses to insurers from environmental events have risen exponentially over the past 30 years, and are expected to rise even more rapidly still."
Pamela Heck, Insurance Industry Expert.

30°E Zimbabwe:
"We used to be able to grow everything we want but that has all changed."
Matsapi Nyathi, Grandmother.

45°E Turkey:
"We are helpless. We're trying to rescue trapped people while also trying to evacuate flood waters that have inundated hundreds of houses."
Muharrem Ergul, Mayor, Beykoz district of Istanbul.

60°E Iran:
"More than 90 percent of our wetlands have completely dried up."
Alamdar Alamdari, environmental researcher, Fars Province.

75°E Maldives:
"In the worst case scenario, we'll have to move."
Foreign Ministry spokesman Ahmed Shaheed.

90°E Tibet (China):
"The Sherpas of Khumbu may not know everything, but they are suffering the consequences of the people's greed. We mountain people should be careful and take precautions. If we don't save Khumbu today our fresh water will dry up and the problem will be impossible to solve in the future."
Ngawang Tenzing Jangpo, the Abbot of Tengboche monastery.

105°E Borneo (Indonesia):
"There's been no rain, it's horrible. The governor's office has instructed schools and offices to close until further notice."
Hidayat, government official.

120°E Philippines:
"The disaster covered almost every corner of this province - rampaging floods, falling trees, damaged houses. It happened very rapidly and many people did not expect this because they haven't experienced mud flows in those areas before."
Fernando Gonzalez, governor of Albay province.

135°E Japan:
"It's no exaggeration to say that Japan faces a critical situation when describing the rapid decline of marine supply in its domestic waters that is linked to seaweed loss. Tengusa (seaweed) provides food for marine species."
Tomohiro Takase, head of the fisheries department at the Hachijojima municipality.

150°E (Great Barrier Reef) Australia:
"In 20 years' time, bleaching is highly likely to be annual and that will cause shallow-water corals to be in decline. We need to start working out how we can help people who rely on it for their income. It's really quite a stunning fact."
Ove Hoegh-Guldberg, director of the Centre for Marine Studies at the University of Queensland.

165°E Micronesia:
"We have nowhere to go."
Ben Namakin, Environmental Educator.

180° Tuvalu:
"Tuvalu is the first victim of global warming."
Koloa Talake, former prime minister.

165°W Niue:
"Yesterday morning we woke up to a scene of so much devastation, it was just unbelievable. Cyclone Heta was just so fast, furious and ruthless."
Cecelia Talagi, Government Secretary.

150°W Alaska:
"We are at a crossroads ... Is it practical to stand and fight our Mother Ocean? Or do we surrender and move?"
Shishmaref Mayor Edith Vordenstrasse.

135°W Yukon (Canada):
"The weather is really unpredictable and the ice freezes much later and breaks up earlier. There are more incidents of hunters falling through the ice."
Kik Shappa, Hunter, Grise Fiord, Canada.

120°W Nunavut (Canada):
"Our cultural heritage is at stake here. We are an adaptable people. We have over the millennium been able to adapt to incredible circumstances. But I think adaptability has its limits. If the ice is not forming, how else does one adapt to seasons that are not as they used to be when the whole environment is changing underneath our feet, literally?"
Sheila Watt-Cloutier, president of the circumpolar conference.

105°W Colorado (USA):
"In Colorado, climate change means less snow, less water, more wildfires, less biodiversity and less economic opportunity, as there is less water available for development."
Stephen Saunders, president, Rocky Mountain Climate Organization.

90°W Nicaragua:
"I closed my eyes and prayed to God."
Hurricane Mitch survivor Mariana Gonzalez.

75°W Peru:
"I tell my wife the day that mountain loses its snow, we will have to move out of the valley."
Jose Ignacio Lanmani, farmer, Urubamba Valley.

60°W Argentina:
"The flooding has forced us to redesign routes. We thought it would be for a short period of time, but it has been almost six years."
Carlos Avellaneda, manager of a trucking company.

45°W Brazil:
"I am very frightened. One thing goes wrong, and the entire system follows."
Jair Soutto, Mayor of Manaquiri.

30°W Greenland:
"They tell us that we must not eat mattak [whale blubber], but this is all we know. Eating Inughuit food makes us who we are, and anyway we have nothing else to eat!".
Tekummeq, Town of Qaanaaq.

15°W Mauritania:
"We are only eating one meal a day. When there is not enough food, it is the young and the old that get fed first."
Fatimitu Mint Eimou, Bouchamna.

Cortada stood at the 0 degree longitude, the prime meridian, and walked clockwise around the world, stopping at each of the 24 shoes to recite statements made by individuals on the effects of global climate change in their respective communities.

1983 41°54'N 12°27'E
(Vatican City)
Pope John Paul II retracts the ban on Galileo

1984 37°19'N 122°02'W
(United States)
Apple Macintosh launched

1985 09°02'N 38°42'E (Ethiopia)
Live Aid concerts raise millions to reduce famine

1986 14°37'N 121°00'E
(Philippines) Corazon Aquino leads People Power to end Marcos regime in the Philippines

1987 39°46'N 86°09'W
(United States)
Anti-depressant Prozac is introduced

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