



U.S. Antarctic Program, 2004 – 2005

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ARTISTS AND WRITERS PROGRAM



Underwater photographer Norbert Wu, a participant in NSF's Antarctic Artists and Writers program, documents McMurdo Sound's unique ecosystem in photographs and text on his web site and in the HDTV film *Under Antarctic Ice*, aired on PBS television in 2003 (<http://www.norbertwu.com/>). (Photo courtesy of Norbert Wu.)

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Overview

The National Science Foundation's (NSF's) Antarctic Artists and Writers Program makes it possible for the humanities (painting, photography, writing, and history) to be part of the U.S. Antarctic Program. Artists and writers work at U.S. stations and camps, often with science groups but sometimes on their own, to create works that portray the region or the activities that take place there.

The Antarctic Artists and Writers Program contributes to NSF's goal of advancing discovery while disseminating results broadly to enhance scientific and technological understanding. The program helps record the Nation's antarctic heritage, responding to White House direction that the U.S. Antarctic Program support the range of U.S. interests in the region. Application procedures are available on the NSF web site at www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm, and a list of past participants can be found at www.nsf.gov/od/opp/aawr.htm.

The selection process for the Artists and Writers Program is comparable to the one for science projects in that a peer-review panel meets at NSF annually to evaluate the applications; this panel's advice heavily influences the selections. The applicants who are chosen receive field support (including air travel from the United States), but no direct NSF funding. The program, while intended mainly for U.S. citizens, considers requests from artists and writers who live in other Antarctic Treaty nations but whose applications demonstrate that their works will reach a significant U.S. audience. The application deadline for participation in the 2006–2007 austral summer season will be 1 June 2005.

Mission Antarctica.

Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

Mr. Arthus-Bertrand plans to take aerial photos that will be used in several ways: first, they will be part of the Earth from Above project, which includes an exhibit that will tour the United States (with stops in Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York, among other cities). Second, they will be incorporated into the Altitude Photographic Library, one of the world's largest collections of aerial photographs. Third, they will be part of a book. Finally, European magazines such as *Stern*, *Paris Match*, and *El Pais* are interested in using them to accompany reports on the region. The photos would be accompanied with texts written by environmental scientists. (W-217-M)

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Antarctic anthology.

Susan Fox Rogers.

Ms. Rogers will assemble an anthology of writings on life in Antarctica as experienced by researchers, explorers, artists, and others who have spent a significant amount of time on the ice. To make this anthology a well-rounded representation of the people and experiences in the U.S. Antarctic Program, she will travel extensively (to South Pole and McMurdo Stations, to several field camps, and possibly to one of the research vessels) to meet and interview possible contributors.

She also intends to visit those sites that will be described in this collection (or comparable ones): the McMurdo Dry Valleys, a remote camp (which can then serve as a representative of other remote camps), and the South Pole. Such experiences will help her shape the collection and provide the background to edit the personal essays that will be included. She will record, transcribe, and edit the stories of those who cannot write down their experiences. The final product, a book-length collection of personal essays, will offer an intimate portrait of life on the continent. (W-218-M)

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End as beginning: An American antarctic imaginary.

Elena Glasberg.

Ms. Glasberg will gather material for a manuscript on U.S. antarctic fiction, history, and material culture. Her focus is the interplay of ice and human culture both historically and today, so she will interview people on their previous knowledge of Antarctica and ask them how they discovered it in their own lives and in their professional lives. Was it through popular culture, in school, or elsewhere? What archives, images, and presuppositions do people have, and how do they affect people? How do they shape people's encounter with the place and thus the place itself?

She will visit South Pole Station and deep field sites, Black Island, and Palmer Station. She will engage in as many activities as possible to experience the range of historical, iconic polar activities in the company of the people who live and work there. (W-219-M)

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Time, place, and imagination: Images and poems from Antarctica.

Judith E Nutter.

Ms. Nutter plans to study what happens in, and to, the mind when a person finds himself or herself in an extreme landscape: That is, what narratives and images does the mind produce out of its experience and understanding of such landscapes, whether they are physical or emotional?

She will produce a series of poems and visual images that will be published and exhibited together. She will explore the myths and realities of Antarctica through words and visual images in an attempt to arrive at a deeper understanding of its abiding hold on the human imagination. This work will be created in response to the antarctic landscape as well as to the history of Antarctica and the internal landscapes of the people who are

drawn to work there. She writes both lyric (meditative, personal) and narrative poems, and her previous visual work has been done primarily in pastels. However, she intends to capture the starkness and grandeur of the landscape in watercolors, a more ethereal medium.

She plans to travel with grantees in their fieldwork whenever possible and sail on the research ship *Laurence M. Gould*, especially if it goes to Palmer Station via the Gerlache and Bransfield Straits. She also plans to stay overnight in a tent at Old Palmer Station and possibly at Janus or DeLaca Island, or at another location. (W-220-P)

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***Vast Active Living Intelligence System:* Photographing the South Pole.**

Connie Samaras.

Ms. Samaras will photograph the new Amundsen-Scott Station under construction at the South Pole from a number of vantage points, both inside and outside, to underscore the space between life support architecture and extreme climate. She plans to juxtapose seemingly disparate views within the same frame (reflections, indoor and outdoor lighting, interior spaces against landscape) to underscore the sometimes contradictory intersections of technology, culture, nature, and time unique to the Antarctic. The title of the series—*Vast Active Living Intelligence System*—is borrowed from science fiction writer Philip K. Dick.

Another objective is to depict the intersection of the real and virtual worlds, that is, the impact of the influx of communications and new technologies on scientific investigation and community life at the station.

With their permission, she will photograph a range of subjects—scientists, construction workers, support personnel, and so on—and, whenever possible, will accompany them to nearby sites. She also hopes to take aerial shots from the cockpit of the plane at arrival and departure and aerial views of the South Pole itself.

Before she leaving for Antarctica, she will talk with engineers and construction personnel to refine her ideas and contact the Ferraro Choi architectural firm to familiarize herself with the concepts that went into formulating their design.

Her work—most recently urbanscapes of Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and New York—has been extensively exhibited both nationally and internationally. Her antarctic project will also be widely exhibited, as well as published in various catalogs and journals. Moreover, because this project is essentially a documentary mapping the significant architectural and historical changes at the South Pole, she plans to donate some of the images and negatives to the archives of the National Science Foundation (and/or the Smithsonian photographic archives). (W-221-S)

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Antarctica—The Biography of a Continent.

Gabrielle Walker.

Ms. Walker will be doing research for a science book titled *Antarctica—The Biography of a Continent*. This narrative, nonfiction book will be written for a lay audience and will weave together descriptions of science, places, and people in Antarctica. The idea is to get at the personality of the continent through the eyes of researchers, through vivid descriptions of the different environments in which they work, and through what antarctic science tells us about the continent and its place in the world.

The book will be divided into four parts: past, present, future, and afterlife. It aims to give readers a good sense of the variety of the landscape and the many different kinds of science that are being done. To that end, she hopes to visit a range of different field environments and join scientists involved in different kinds of research. Later in the season, she also hopes to join a scientific cruise and visit some sites run by European programs, notably the British Antarctic Survey's Rothera Station. (W-223-M)

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