



the new children's museum

## news release

**For immediate release**

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### **ART AND SCIENCE INTERSECT ON FEBRUARY 6 AT BIRCH AQUARIUM, PANEL DISCUSSION IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM AND TRASH EXHIBITION**

*Speakers include Miriam Goldstein, Chief Scientist on Scripps Environmental Accumulation of Plastic Expedition (SEAPLEX); Artist Margaret Wertheim of Institute for Figuring (IFF); and Dr. Nigella Hillgarth*

January 16, 2012 — San Diego — The issue of trash will be explored both scientifically and through an artistic lens at an upcoming event at [Birch Aquarium](#) at Scripps in partnership with [The New Children's Museum](#) (NCM). **TRASH: Art + Science Intersect** was organized in conjunction with NCM's current exhibition, *TRASH*, and features a panel discussion, wine and hors d'oeuvres, and a chance to see the exhibitions on view at Birch Aquarium. The event takes place Monday, February 6, 2012 from 6:00-8:00pm.

"We are delighted to partner with our colleagues in the science community at Birch Aquarium and Scripps Institution of Oceanography to create a unique opportunity to learn, discuss, and reflect on the critical issue of trash," said Julianne Markow, Executive Director & CEO of The New Children's Museum. "This presentation is part of an ongoing series of events and collaborative discussions focused on the connections among art, science, creativity, and innovation."

"Scripps' recent research expedition SEAPLEX — Scripps Environmental Accumulation of Plastic Expedition — uncovered startling information about the problem of plastic in the North Pacific Gyre that we want to continue to make accessible to the public. We are pleased to partner with The New Children's Museum on this event, particularly as it relates to their current exhibition with its environmental theme," said Dr. Nigella Hillgarth, Executive Director of Birch Aquarium at Scripps.

The latest museum-wide exhibition at The New Children's Museum, [TRASH](#), features the work of 12 artists from around the globe focused on the kid-friendly and timely topic of trash. *TRASH* empowers kids to take the lead in their families on talking about environmental and social issues, such as landfills, waste disposal and "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch."

#### **TRASH: Science + Art Intersect**

Presented by Birch Aquarium at Scripps and The New Children's Museum

**Monday, February 6, 2012**

**6:00 – 8:00pm**

Birch Aquarium at Scripps  
2300 Expedition Way  
La Jolla, CA 92037

Event is free of charge. RSVP online or call 619 795 1721.

6pm — Wine and hors d'oeuvres, networking, and an opportunity to explore the aquarium.

7pm — Panel discussion and dialogue with Margaret Wertheim, Institute For Figuring; Miriam Goldstein, Chief Scientist on the Scripps Environmental Accumulation of Plastic Expedition; and Nigella Hillgarth, Executive Director of Birch Aquarium at Scripps. Special remarks by Julianne Markow, Executive Director & CEO of The New Children's Museum.

### **Panelist Biographies**

**Dr. Nigella Hillgarth** is executive director of Birch Aquarium at Scripps, the public exploration center of world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. She is a distinguished zoologist who came to the institution in 2002 from her position as executive director of Tracy Aviary, the nation's largest bird park, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Nigella is passionate about helping to shape the public's perception of science and the environment.

**Miriam Goldstein** is a PhD graduate student in biological oceanography at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Her current focus is the abundance and ecological effects of plastic debris in the North Pacific Gyre, specifically the impact of plastic debris on marine invertebrates. In August 2009, she served as chief scientist on the Scripps Environmental Accumulation of Plastic Expedition (SEAPLEX), a 20-day expedition to study accumulation of plastic debris in the central Pacific.

**Margaret Wertheim** is an artist and co-founder of The Institute For Figuring (IFF), a non-profit educational organization based in Los Angeles. Inspired by research into the devastating impact of plastic trash on the world's oceans, IFF has developed exhibitions for art galleries and science museums around the world since its inception in 2003. In 2005, Margaret and her sister Christine created the *Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef*, which has been exhibited internationally. IFF's *Midden* is currently on view at The New Children's Museum, as part of its current exhibition *TRASH*.

### **SEAPLEX**

A thousand miles off California, the North Pacific Ocean Gyre contains one of the largest ecosystems on Earth--but it may be in danger from a deluge of accumulated plastic trash. Dubbed "The Giant Pacific Garbage Patch," the debris at the center of the North Pacific Ocean has the potential to damage marine life and alter the biological environment. Though this issue has recently received popular media attention, there was little scientific information available on the composition, extent, and effects of the debris. The small pieces of plastic that make up most of the material are not detectable by satellites or airplanes. Researchers requiring detailed scientific sampling must use ships capable of traveling to this remote region.

From August 2-21, 2009, a group of doctoral students and research volunteers from Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego embarked on an expedition aboard the Scripps research vessel *New Horizon* exploring the problem of plastic in the North Pacific Gyre. The Scripps Environmental Accumulation of Plastic Expedition (SEAPLEX) focused on a suite of critical scientific questions. How much plastic is accumulating, how is it distributed, and how is it affecting ocean life? With their new results the researchers hope to provide critical, timely data to policy makers and combine Scripps' long tradition of Pacific exploration with focus on a new and pressing environmental problem.

The first scientific results from the voyage, released in July 2011, offer a stark view of human pollution and its infiltration of the "Giant Pacific Garbage Patch." Evidence of plastic waste was found in more than nine percent of the stomachs of fish collected in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre. Based on the evidence, Scripps scientists estimate that fish in the intermediate ocean depths of the North Pacific ingest plastic at a rate of roughly 12,000- to 24,000 tons per year.

Further results are expected to be published in 2012.

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### **ABOUT BIRCH AQUARIUM AT SCRIPPS**

Birch Aquarium at Scripps is the public exploration center for the world-renowned Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. Perched on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the aquarium features more than 60 habitats of fish and invertebrates from the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest to the tropical waters of Mexico and beyond. An interactive museum showcases research discoveries by Scripps scientists on climate, earth and ocean science and features five dozen interactive elements. Accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Birch Aquarium has an annual attendance of more than 405,000, including 45,000 school children. To learn more, visit [aquarium.ucsd.edu](http://aquarium.ucsd.edu).

### **ABOUT THE NEW CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

The New Children's Museum is a dynamic new model of a museum that provides inventive and engaging art experiences that are meaningful to children and families. NCM brings families together in a rich educational environment that fosters creativity — blending elements of art museum, children's museum, and community center.

A non-profit institution funded by admissions, memberships, and community support, the Museum stimulates imagination, inquisitiveness and innovative thinking by exhibiting participatory works of art by contemporary artists and providing a venue for art making and play. Serving all ages, from toddler to teen, NCM inspires new ways to see the world through the language of art. To learn more, visit [thinkplaycreate.org/pressroom](http://thinkplaycreate.org/pressroom).