

L.A. just got a whole lot cooler

Cool Globes takes on climate change. by Debra Pickett



Young and old are captivated by the Cool Globes



“I had a
dream
 where we
 help the
world”

—Katie Abrams, Age 5

Each Cool Globe has been decorated by an artist or group to convey a different message about what ordinary citizens can do to combat global warming.

Remember the globe from your elementary school classroom?

Chances are, the details of it spring immediately to mind: its orderly pastel patchwork of countries, the weighty feel of its golden plastic base, the pleasant sound it made as it spun.

Globes are uniquely compelling objects, reducing the world to a manageable size but, at the same time, bringing us face to face with the staggering smallness of our own hometowns.

A new public art exhibit, titled “Cool Globes: Hot Ideas for a Cooler Planet,” brings 60 super-sized globes to Exposition Park later this month. And these artistically crafted fiberglass globes, each one five feet in diameter and six and a half feet tall, offer up every bit of wonder found in those old grade school desktop models and more.

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There’s one globe that’s pale green and studded with chrome-plated tire pressure gauges, created by artist Derric Clemmons to remind people that a well-maintained car can be up to 20-percent more fuel efficient than one that isn’t regularly serviced. And the deep blue one, festooned with a clothes line bearing air-dried laundry, reflects artist Thom Cicchelli’s take on how wash day can be made more energy efficient.

The Cool Globes make their debut on Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22, with a special ribbon-cutting ceremony in Expo Park’s Rose Garden at 11:00 a.m. and will be on display through July.



PHOTO BY ARMY.ARCH@FLICKR.COM



Before arriving in Los Angeles, the globes were unveiled in Chicago in the summer of 2007. Since then, the exhibit traveled from Washington D.C. to San Francisco and San Diego, drawing crowds of visitors, young and old.

"One of the most notable things about the Cool Globes was the way they attracted the attention of young people, particularly teenagers" says Holly Shimizu, Executive Director of the United States Botanic Garden, where the globes were displayed last summer. "They are a very provocative way of getting a message out to people who don't necessarily respond to a traditional museum display."

California Science Center President Jeff Rudolph anticipates a similarly enthusiastic response from Angelenos, whom he hopes will not only enjoy the beautiful public art installation but also take seriously its message. Rudolph, instrumental in bringing the exhibit to Expo Park, says, "This exhibit aligns with our mission to raise awareness and to educate the public on current science. Through the medium of art, Cool Globes focuses attention on global climate change in an inspirational way that we hope will stimulate discussion and promote solutions."

Councilwoman Wendy Greuel is another key player. "We're excited to bring Cool Globes to Los Angeles this April," she says, "We're launching the exhibit on Earth Day, to highlight that we all need to do our part to green Los Angeles. Cool Globes will help engage and educate Angelenos about what we can all do to protect our environment, while provid-

ing beautiful artwork throughout the city."

The founder and chair of the Cool Globes project, Wendy Abrams agrees that the installation's blend of art with an environmental message is well suited for Los Angeles. "L.A. is all about the arts, creativity and environment," Abrams explains. "If people have loved this in other cities, I can just imagine the response in L.A. They have really been so far ahead of the rest of the country on the issue of climate change."

Abrams, a mother of four from suburban Chicago, often characterizes herself as "just a mom who cares about the planet." She still remembers the moment, now ten years ago, when she read a news article about global climate change and its potentially catastrophic effects. Her youngest children, twins Katie and Jacob, were newborns and the thought of them inheriting such a challenge was overwhelming.

"I remember turning to my husband and crying," she says.

Until then, she recalls, "I'd always sort of trusted that our government would take care of things...I figured if something was that important, our government would handle it or the scientists would handle it. It was somebody else's problem. But reading this made me realize this was my problem too. And I needed to be part of the solution."

Opposite Page: Cheryl Steiger's globe in front of the Capitol Building, Washington D.C. **This Page:** Cool Globes by Amy Lowry and Derric Clemmons at the Field Museum, Chicago. Lee Strickland's Cool Globe in Chrissy Field, San Francisco.

“I think that was the tipping point. We moved from ‘Is it real?’ to ‘So what do we do about it?’”

—Wendy Abrams, Cool Globes Founder



This page: President Bill Clinton with Wendy Abrams, Nora Gainer of Cool Globes and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, at the US Green Build conference in 2007. **Opposite page:** a woman stops to read the text on Andrea Harris' globe in Chicago.

Abrams threw herself into environmental activism, quickly learning all she could about global warming and applying the skills she'd acquired in a career in advertising and marketing to her cause.

The Cool Globes project, inspired in part by the Cows on Parade exhibit that had its U.S. debut in Chicago, grew out of a commitment Abrams offered up while attending a 2005 conference held by the Clinton Global Initiative. Sponsored by former president Bill Clinton's non-profit foundation, the New York City gathering brought together current and former heads of state, business leaders, academicians and other bigwigs. The aim was to come up with programs in several key areas, including combating climate change. Each participant was asked to commit in writing to a personal action plan.

Abrams, whose name appeared on the conference guest list between Jordan's King Abdullah and Northern Ireland's Gerry Adams, jokes that she was “the token nobody.” But she took her commitment seriously and began sketching out the details for what would become Cool Globes.

The national attitude about climate change was shifting, Abrams notes. In preparing for the Chicago opening of Cool Globes, she girded herself for plenty of criticism, expecting at least a few howls of protest from those who didn't believe global warming was a real, and dangerous, man-made phenomenon. But just a few months before the globes were put on display, the Academy Award winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, with Al Gore, went into wide release.

“I think that was the tipping point,” Abrams says. “We moved from ‘Is it real?’ to ‘So what do we do about it?’”





Just two years later, more than a hundred fiber-glass globes were on display on Chicago's lakefront museum campus. And the exhibit was a sensation.

"I never expected that this would be something that millions of people would turn out to see," Abrams says now. "And I certainly never imagined it would go on a national tour."

But project sponsor Toyota, well-known for its leadership in producing hybrid vehicles, offered the opportunity to take the show on the road and Abrams couldn't refuse, particularly when shipping company EA Logistics pledged to keep the globes moving with zero carbon footprint.

Above: San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom (right) and Toyota Senior Vice President Pat Pineda (left) unveil artist Carrie Nardello's globe at the San Francisco opening in Golden Gate Park.

EA Logistics

EA Logistics is a freight forwarder that began its green journey when it signed on as Cool Globes' sponsor.

"The CG project was our aha moment. We saw each globe and the message it delivered, and it really motivated us to take our emissions seriously," says Mike Ellis, CEO.

EA started with finding ways to reduce emissions. They implemented anti-idling regulations at their warehouse and with their drivers. At the same time they limited drive speeds, because fuel economy drops off massively when you exceed 60 mph. For the emissions EA can't reduce, it purchases reforestation carbon offsets to absorb emissions over time. EA purchases them at no charge to the client and even sends them the offset receipt to provide transparency.

"Not only has it been a good business move, but we're glad to prove to our customers there is a less damaging option for them that doesn't cost more. We wouldn't have gotten there without Cool Globes energizing our minds to find solutions and take action in our own business," says Ellis.

PHOTO BY: LIZA MATHEWS



“ The Toyota promise is a commitment to
improving
 life for our customers & neighbors
 while respecting the
earth's
 resources. ”

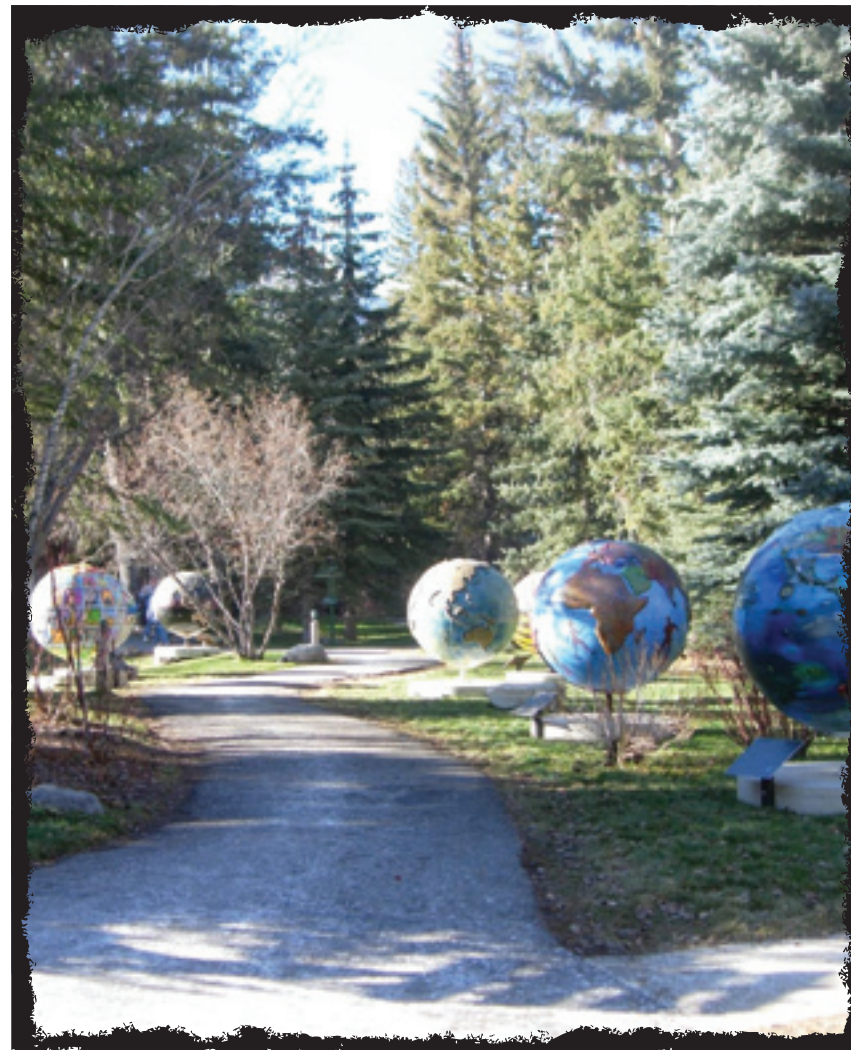
—Jim Lentz, President, Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A.

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— PRESENTED BY **TOYOTA**

“One night, as I was walking down the path, the light was fading and it was starting to snow. I saw a man in a wheelchair, just sitting still. So I stopped to see if he was okay. It turned out he was just looking at one of the globes. They have that way of captivating you.”

—Jaime Redford, Chair, Redford Center at Sundance Preserve



This page: Globes line the walking path at the Sundance Resort in Utah
Opposite Page: Top Left: Wendy Abrams and Chevy Chase at the Washington D.C. opening. Top right: Robert F Kennedy Jr. speaks at the 2007 Cool Globes gala in Chicago. Bottom: In 2007, Chicago Bears players Brian Griese, Kyle Orton, Desmond Clark, John Gilmore and Hunter Hillenmeyer showed up to support the Cool Globes auction, run by Helyn Goldenberg (far right) of Sotheby's.



“Few challenges facing America & the world are more urgent than combating climate change”

—Barack Obama, November 2008



This page: In 2007 then Senator, Barack Obama, who lent his name to the Cool Globes Advisory Board, signs a mini-globe with his quote.

Local artists Angela Briggs and Lauri Burrier are among the Los Angeles artists creating globes. Briggs, who often incorporates “found objects” into her sculptural works, is calling her globe “Eyes on Recycling.” She says, “Long before the reduce, reuse and recycle campaigns became an environmental cry, I was already picking, sifting, sorting through a treasure trove of ‘trash,’ using found materials to incorporate into my work.”

Burrier, a Culver City painter, is using her globe to offer tips on how to “Green Your Gardens.”

Architect Louie Tomaro, working in partnership with Manhattan Beach Brownie Troop #8505, is creating a globe to represent the positive impact that green architecture can have in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Two other globes are being produced by almost entirely student led efforts, one based at Manual Arts High School and the other at the afterschool program A Place Called Home Community Center in South Central. Local artist Shepard Fairey is also contributing artwork to the cause.

Though the main exhibit will be at Expo Park, a few globes will appear in other locales, including Santa Monica Pier, the Hollywood & Highland shopping center, the Creative Artists Agency building in Century City, the Beverly Hills Public Library, Staples Center and Van Nuys Civic Center.

In addition to the large outdoor exhibits, a special series of Mini Cool Globes has been designed or autographed by a diverse group of people speaking out to promote solutions to global warming. These smaller globes will be on display inside the Natural History Museum, California African American Museum, California Science Center and the Creative Artists Agency building in Century City. They feature contributions from celebrities such as Kobe Bryant, Robert Redford, Dave Winfield and Oprah Winfrey lending their voices to the national conversation about climate change.

PHOTO BY DAVID HELFAND



a place called home...

When I first heard about the idea for Cool Globes from Jill Goldman, APCH board member, I didn't get it," confesses Thyonne Gordon, Executive Director of A Place Called Home Community Center, I said, 'I don't know if this is our issue.'"

After all, Gordon says, the kids attending after-school programs at this small haven from the tough streets of South Central tend to have more immediate life concerns than global climate change. But, she says, when she began to ask some of the students what they thought about the idea of creating a big sculpture to educate others on the topic of global warming, she received a surprising number of enthusiastic responses.

"We, the staff, decided we had to do this so the students could educate us," she says.

About a dozen kids started working on

the project, researching climate change and discussing solutions that might make interesting themes for their globe.

"I was kind of blown away by their conversations," says Gordon. "I was thinking in terms of how you might clean up our alleyways or get some more green space in our community. But they were thinking about the melting polar ice cap – truly global."

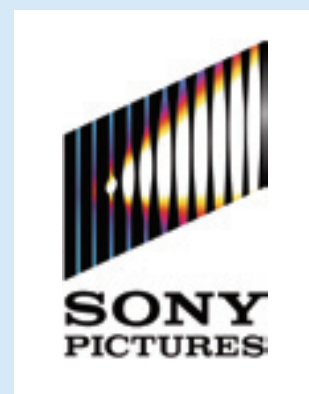
Led by the center's resident artist Bernyce Talley, the students have been hard at work on the globe they've titled "Less Than Zero," a reference to the need to reduce carbon emissions.

"The kids come in, and they know they have to get their homework done to get a chance to work on the globe," Gordon says, "so they're very focused. They've forfeited other activities because this is so important to them."

PHOTOS BY CAROLYN ROGUE

“The best thing about the exhibit is that you walk away with a call to action...but the solutions are tangible and within reach, things everybody can do.”

—Christine Belgrad



Sony Pictures invites you to an earth day celebration

earth day 2009 wednesday, april 22, 11 a.m. exposition park

(in the rose garden)

for more information go to coolglobes.com

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Cool Globes is working with the Los Angeles Unified School District to coordinate field trips to the exhibit for students and is providing lesson plans, including science experiments, art projects and a reading list, to teachers who wish to bring Cool Globes themes to their classrooms.



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About Sempra Energy Foundation

The Foundation was founded on the principle that it can make a difference by creating innovative partnerships in our communities to produce sustainable and responsible change.

“We are dedicated to investing in creative ideas and innovative approaches that can result in high-impact change. We’ve been very impressed with the substantial influence the Cool Globes project had on students in San Diego, and now Los Angeles school children will experience the same wonder and awe from the globes while learning about solutions to global warming.”

— Frank Urtasun, Director, Sempra Energy Foundation