

Moments of Inspiration, A Lifetime of Action

— ARC —  
— OTTIC RE —  
— REFLEC —  
— MOTIONS

Luka Tomac & Christy Hehir



photo by Sue Flood

Doug Allan is an award winning freelance wildlife and documentary cameraman, who specialises in marine mammals underwater in remote locations, particularly the polar zones. He's been involved with over 60 films and series in his 30 year career, and has worked for Discovery, National Geographic, BBC and many others. His photographic awards include five BAFTAs and four Emmys. He has twice won the underwater category in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition and was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's Cherry Kearton Medal for his wildlife images — <http://dougallan.com/>

## FOREWORD BY DOUG ALLAN

It's 25 years since I first visited the Arctic, and I remember back then hearing the voices of disquiet from the Inuit. Taqtu had taken me onto the sea ice to look for polar bears. While we sheltered in his flapping tent during one blizzard, he spoke of how the old patterns of weather were beginning to break down. The sea ice was breaking up earlier, refreezing later. The Inuit world was altering, becoming less predictable, and more unstable.

Here was a man who had lived his life in the Arctic, whose ancestors had done so for millennia before him. I listened, feeling the strength of his emotions, the depth of his concern. His connection with his land and his passion for his way of life were clear.

It's the same voice I hear in this book. But it's coming now from younger people, experiencing the Arctic for their first time. It too is a voice of compassion, insight, sensitivity and determination. Their words, allied with the hauntingly evocative images, give this book its personality, encompassing a strength and honesty that together make it greater than the sum of its parts.

We know that climate change is the most important issue facing our planet today. Nowhere is this more visible than in the Arctic. Receding glaciers, thinning sea ice, fewer polar bear cubs, earlier flowering of the plants – the evidence is everywhere. And we know that when we change the vastness of the Arctic, we change the entire world.

This book has been written by people willing to assume their individual responsibility towards nature and wildlife. Please stay true to your principles that you eloquently express here. Show, teach, offer knowledge to others - and the desire to protect will surely follow. We need the politicians and leaders of industry in particular to learn to open their minds to the world beyond their balance sheets.

Everyone involved with this book - from conception, to participation, to creation - should be proud of it.

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Our second landing today was to visit an old mining outpost established in 1906 by Mansfield. By 1906 he had convinced stock traders in London that Svalbard was in fact a mystical island of pink marble, located in the far north and that he did indeed mine the marble. However, neglecting to consider frost shattering caused by the cold, his shipments of perfect marble quickly turned to rubble before arriving in Europe. Nevertheless he persevered for some years but had to abandon the camp to the elements shortly thereafter. Standing at the camp today is surreal. A law here on Svalbard prohibits the removal of natural or human items left here pre-1946. Consequently the elements have been allowed to slowly and seasonally ravage the remains of the camp. Located next to a small bay, the remains of a wooden crane stand derelict but remarkably intact, perched on a low limestone slab overhanging the bay. In contrast, all that remains of one of the main huts is a solid cast iron aga complete with a kettle and various implements. Scattered around lies the remains of the hut, its wood silvered and shriveled with exposure to the sun and constant freeze thawing; in addition to metal piping, wire and old equipment. Further up the hill you can find old mining equipment and carts, written on the side in big bold letters: "Made In Leicestershire". For me what this scene illustrates is just how temporary and ephemeral humans are and how much slower, more powerful and relentless natural forces are — *Sam Lee-Gammage, UK*



In places, the rock face is clad with swirling, squawking colonies of kittiwakes, looking like a bee swarm on slow-mo, and sounding like the cacophony of a stock market trading floor – buy – sell – buy – sell – kitty – wake – kitty – wake.

The birds are actually named after this sound — *Sam Lee-Gammage, UK*



Standing on the deck alone at a time when my eyes should long have been shut. Looking out as grey clouds, glowing like a soft bathroom light, met the sheet metal ocean and endless pack ice, in a silver or yellowy light. Sounds were crisp and infrequent. As the ice parted and the ocean rippled, diffraction patterns spread repeatedly in all directions on that windless morning. I stood there in silence, truly appreciating the meaning of peacefulness and wilderness — *Sam Lee-Gammage, UK*

Today carbon guilt is setting in, meaning we no longer feel entirely comfortable boasting about our overseas holidays. I hope the future of travel will have a purpose, with not only our own needs in mind, but also those of the destination — *Christy Hehir, UK*





Impressed by endless landscapes, I tried to imagine how it was to travel through ice worlds more than a century ago, taking part in expeditions that lasted for years, when no one knew what really lies up 'north'. My personal hero of that time is Fritjof Nansen; explorer, diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize winner. He and his crew decided to surrender themselves to the ice. Nansen had a theory that if they let ice trap their famous boat 'Fram', the ice drift would bring them close to the North pole. He soon realised that at this speed they would need five years to reach the pole. Therefore, Johansen, one of his crew members and Nansen decided to continue their epic journey on a dog sledge. They reached 86°14' N, the farthest north reached at that time. Their return home was also one of the most impressive journeys of all time — *Luka Tomac, Croatia*

An aerial photograph of the Arctic region showing a vast expanse of dark, open water interspersed with numerous icebergs of various sizes and shapes. The icebergs are bright white, contrasting sharply with the dark water. The sky is a pale, overcast grey, and the horizon is visible in the distance. The overall scene conveys a sense of a cold, desolate, and rapidly changing environment.

The change which the Arctic is currently undergoing is a realisation of the damage we have already done and continue to inflict on the natural environment. I believe that the inspiration and innovation needed to address climate change and its detrimental impacts on our planet, are in our hands; only humans need to be pushed to invest in the future of sustainability now. As we all know the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second best time is now, but often we need a push to make this happen — *James Ross Treacher, England*



In the Arctic, a quote my brother once told me kept appearing in my thoughts that says something to the effect of 'The more you learn, the more you realize how little you know.' The Arctic was a learning experience, understanding the ecology, geology and biology around us and networking with like-minded people, learning about their stories and efforts in their communities. The Arctic reminded me to always be curious and that discovering new understanding is an intriguing process — *Marina Sophia Flevotomas, Greece*