

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences

New Exhibition by Susan Middleton to Open at NAS

WASHINGTON – Marine invertebrates make up more than 98 percent of the known animal species in the ocean, yet they remain elusive to most of us. Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences (CPNAS) presents a photography exhibition that offers a rare glimpse into their mysterious world, “Spineless: Portraits of Marine Invertebrates,” by San Francisco-based nature photographer Susan Middleton. The exhibition opens Feb. 15, 2017, and will remain on view through June 23, 2017, at the National Academy of Sciences.

Middleton blends science and art to reveal the hidden beauty and remarkable biodiversity of sea creatures without backbones. The result of seven years of fieldwork across the Pacific Ocean, and showcasing the photographic techniques Middleton has developed over the past three decades, this exhibition presents portraits of rarely or never-before-seen ocean dwellers. She visually isolates each creature she photographs to best capture its individual character and to spotlight the dazzling natural blueprints inherent in the marine invertebrate realm of life. From a juvenile Pacific Giant Octopus, to the Widehand Hermit Crab, Middleton’s images open our eyes to both the fragility and the resiliency of these species.

“I try to convey that sense of intimacy through the photograph,” writes Middleton in her artist statement. “Since I can only hint at the complexity, intricacy, and mystery of what I photograph, I concentrate only on the creature by removing all visual distractions and any trace of context. I attempt to reveal what is implicit through the explicit while inspiring curiosity and reverence for the unseen.”

Susan Middleton is an acclaimed photographer, author, and lecturer specializing in portraiture of rare and endangered animals, plants, sites, and cultures. The recipient of a Guggenheim fellowship in 2009, for many years she was the chair of the department of photography at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, where she is currently a research associate. Her photographs have been exhibited worldwide in fine art and natural history contexts and are represented in the permanent collections of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Gallery of Art. She is the author of *Evidence of Evolution* and *Spineless: Portraits of Marine Invertebrates, The Backbone of Life*.

“Spineless” will be on exhibit at the National Academy of Sciences building, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. The galleries are open weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. A photo ID is required and there is no charge. Watch a video about the exhibition at <https://youtu.be/cv7U8IUFRLO>. Middleton speaks at CPNAS’ D.C. Art Science Evening Rendezvous on May 18. For more information, visit www.cpnas.org.

Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences sponsors exhibitions, the D.C. Art Science Evening Rendezvous salon, theatrical readings, and other events that explore relationships among the arts and sciences. For more information, visit www.cpnas.org. The National Academy of Sciences is a private, nonprofit institution that recognizes achievement in science by election to membership, and -- with the National Academy of Engineering and the National Academy of Medicine -- provides science, technology, and health policy advice to the federal government and other organizations.

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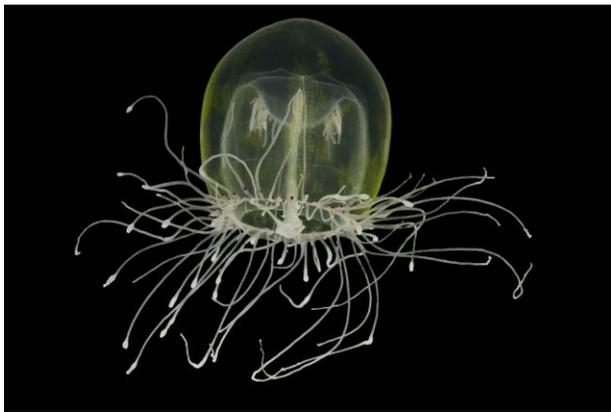
Press images:



Stubby Squid, archival pigment print, 24 x 24 inches



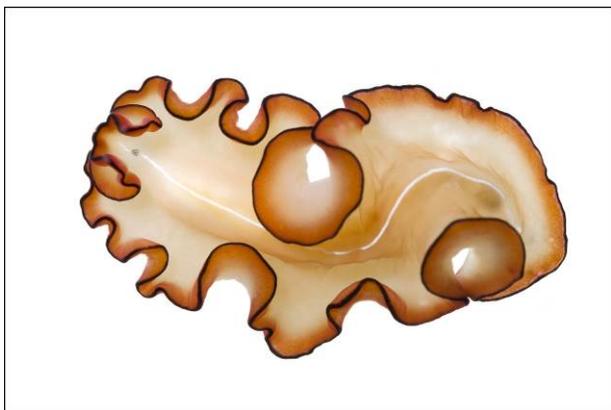
Lion's Mane Jelly, archival pigment paper, 20 x 24 inches



Red-eye Medusa, archival pigment print, 20 x 24 inches



Three-lined nudibranch, archival pigment print, 30 x 37 inches



Orange-rimmed Flatworm, archival pigment print,
24 x 36 inches



Opalescent Nudibranch, archival pigment print,
19 x 24 inches

For print-quality images, contact Alana Quinn, 202-334-2415, aquinn@nas.edu

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