Fragile Legacy is bringing Cornell University’s comprehensive collection of over 570 antique glass sea creatures to vivid life, involving millions of viewers in a voyage to understand changes in our ocean over the last 150 years. The project offers an unprecedented opportunity to share understanding and concern for the marine environment with audiences of the arts, science and history.

High Definition video shot for the project will be crafted into modules covering each of the major invertebrate groups, in locations including the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific and Indo-Pacific. We will compare and contrast the vitality of these places now to what it was at the turn of the last century. The glass time-capsule provided by the Blaschkas will be the point of departure for these voyages, following Drew Harvell, noted marine biologist and curator of Cornell’s Blaschka collection, on a quest to see how the glass menagerie of the Blaschkas have fared in changing seas.

While each module will be built as a stand-alone product, for use online and in screenings in affiliation with project sponsors, they will also be designed for combination into a long-form film for presentation in museums, aquariums and theaters. This will exponentially increase the longevity and impact of the media as it is strategically combined with a book and museum exhibits of the glass.

Leopold Blaschka (1822–1895)
and
Rudolf Blaschka (1857–1939)

To Be Narrated by Ted Danson

To most, Ted is known for TV and movie acting roles, but for those in the conservation movement, he is more famous for his work as a passionate ocean advocate and spokesman. The son of an archaeologist and anthropologist, Ted grew up understanding that cultures leave an imprint on the Earth and that some legacies are indelible, for better or for worse.

In the last two decades, Ted’s stellar acting career has been complimented by his staunch ocean advocacy, appearing in public service announcements, appealing to donors and testifying to the government on the condition of our oceans. He currently sits on Oceana’s Board of Directors where he and his wife, actress Mary Steenburgen, continue to fight for our oceans’ behalf.

Drew Harvell is a professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University, where she teaches courses in Marine Ecosystem Sustainability, Marine Invertebrate Biodiversity and Conservation Oceanography. Drew is widely recognized for her work on marine sustainability and health and is lead PI on an NSF-funded Research Coordination Network Ecology of Marine Infectious Diseases. The current focus of Drew’s laboratory group is on the ecology of coral resistance to disease. A sub theme of this work includes evaluating the impacts of a warming climate and marine reserves on marine ecosystems in Mexico, Hawaii and Indonesia. She has been a sabbatical fellow at National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis and is a senior scientist at The Kohala Center, Hawaii.

David Owen Brown works worldwide as a producer/cameraman specializing in marine and aquatic issues. His work has aired on NBC, CBS, A&E, CNN, Discovery Channel and National Geographic Television. As a member of the Cousteau team, David participated in filming expeditions with vessels Calypso and Alcyone, exploring above and below water environments globally. Recent work includes DVD’s Signals for Survival and Sea of Sound, and developing the concept and imaging for Ocean Bound, a NOAA-sponsored traveling museum exhibit. As a 2012 recipient of a National Audubon/Toyota Together Green Fellowship, he developed and produced BASELINE, designed to integrate underwater video, audio and metadata to collect information on changing aquatic habitats.

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