The Forms: Four Worlds

is an immersive digital exhibition of animations that trace the evolution of image-making through a journey that begins with humanity’s early shaping of stone tools and fans out, as cultures rise and fall, across the ancient worlds of Mesoamerica, Europe, the Middle East and Indian Asia. The journey culminates with the intricate temples, cathedrals and mosques of the late Middle Ages.

The animations are created from high-resolution images of artifacts, art objects and architectural details photographed in museums, churches, caves, temples and archaeological sites. Each animation contains dozens if not hundreds of images. A single animation may reunite artifacts scattered around the world.

*The Forms: Four Worlds* is a magical experience where gallery exhibits come to life in the dark and ancient artworks reveal themselves as they begin to move and breathe. These animations give children of the digital age a new portal into static art of the past, and provide insights even for those deeply familiar with these objects.

After experiencing the large-scale morphing animations in a darkened gallery space, viewers can dive deeper into history and context through interactive learning stations where they can see each object in detail and explore who made the objects, when and how they were made, where the objects are today and where they were found, including whether looted or archaeologically discovered. Maps and timelines help visitors explore parallels and differences across cultures and over time.

*The Forms: Four Worlds* will be a garden of forking paths, a labyrinth of glowing and ever-changing forms. There will be over 5 hours of digital animations for visitors to explore, on displays ranging from tablets to large screen arrays and wall-high projected environments. The sound, like the visuals, will be designed as a coherent tapestry, evolving harmoniously as the visitor makes his or her own way through the animation-filled spaces.
The Forms: Four Worlds highlights hundreds of museums and cultural sites around the world. We have taken over 30,000 photographs so far, working in collaboration with organizations including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Getty Museum, the British Museum, the Royal Ontario Museum, as well as museums and departments of antiquities in Cyprus, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Iran, Lebanon, Mexico and more. Additional photography is planned in 30 countries.

The Forms: Four Worlds is a non-profit project of cultural collaboration. The photographs are shared with each museum, and the animations are provided to museums with no exhibition fees. The animations are intended specifically as gallery installations and will not be shown on television or other commercial means. The 30,000 photographs are organized into a database, allowing advanced searches by time period, culture, location, material, subject and other criteria. This database will be available for research and education.

This project is created by Night Fire Films, producers of award-winning documentary and animated films exploring art, religion, anthropology and the history of science, including the feature films Proteus (2004), Breaking the Maya Code (2008) and Out of the Maya Tombs (2014). Director David Lebrun, Producer Rosey Guthrie and Producer/Lighting Designer Amy Halpern are developing The Forms: Four Worlds along with audio, video and interactive media professionals and a distinguished Board of Advisors, which includes scholars and museum directors:

Naman Ahuja - Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University  
Adolph H. Borbein - Professor Emeritus, Freie Universitaet Berlin  
Kerry Brougher - Founding Director, Academy Museum of Motion Pictures  
Gudrun Bühl - Director, Dumbarton Oaks Museum  
Michael D. Coe - Charles J. McCurdy Professor Emeritus, Yale University  
Linda Duke - Director, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art  
Viola König - Director, Ethnology Museum of Berlin  
Roberto Ontañón-Peredo - Director, Prehistory and Archaeology Museum of Santander  
Colin Renfrew - Senior Fellow, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Univ. of Cambridge  
Alexa Sekyra - Head, Scholars Program, Getty Research Institute  
Karl Taube - Professor University of California, Riverside  
Margarete van Ess - Scientific Director, Orient Department, German Archaeological Institute

Below are private links to the project website for The Forms: Four Worlds. Please do not share these links, as this project is a work-in-progress.

To view a 4-minute Trailer and 20-minute Project Presentation/Virtual Tour: www.fourworlds.info
For Sample Animations: www.fourworlds.info/sample-animations
For Sample Interactive Materials: www.nightfirefilms.org/tlatilco

For more information and any questions, please contact:
Director David Lebrun at davidlebrun@mac.com or Producer Rosey Guthrie at roseyguthrie@mac.com