

MEDIA RELEASE

Box 1020, 107 Tunnel Mountain Drive
Banff, Alberta, Canada, T0L 0C0
communications@banffcentre.ca
www.banffcentre.ca

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Mountaineering Legend Reinhold Messner to Speak at Banff Mountain Summit

One of the world's most famous mountaineers and a member of the European Parliament, Reinhold Messner, will be a featured speaker at next week's Banff Mountain Summit. Messner will be part of the Summit's Sunday, October 27 opening event: *Extreme Landscape: A Celebration in Word and Image*.

Reinhold Messner has been climbing since he was five years old. Growing up in the South Tyrol, Messner and his younger brother Günther shared a helmet as they taught themselves to climb. By the age of twenty, Messner had climbed most of the hardest routes in the Dolomites and the Western Alps and had begun to formulate his philosophy of clean climbing. Despite Günther's death on their first visit to the Himalaya, he continued his dedication to lightweight alpine-style mountaineering.

Throughout his 50-year mountaineering career, Messner redefined the possible. In 1978 he bent the accepted boundaries of the human body, summiting Everest without supplemental oxygen—arguably the greatest alpine feat of all time. He went on to climb all 14 of Earth's 8,000-meter peaks—the first person to do so.

In recent years, Reinhold Messner has become absorbed with lightweight polar expeditions – traversing Greenland from top to bottom, traveling with a single companion across the Antarctic continent via the South Pole, and skiing across the frozen Arctic Ocean to the North Pole. He has written some 30 books and is accorded near film star status in Germany, Italy, and Austria. Messner has been a member of the European Parliament since 1999.

His presentation at the Banff Mountain Summit will focus on how mountain and polar environments reshape the inner landscapes of those who travel through them. Also on the program that evening will be world-champion hoop dancer Alex Wells, and a presentation by ethnobotanist Wade Davis and photographer Chris Rainer entitled *Cultures on the Edge*. *Extreme Landscape: A Celebration in Word and Image* takes place at 8 p.m. Sunday, October 27 in the Eric Harvie Theatre at the Banff Centre. Tickets for the event are \$18 and can be purchased by calling 1-800-413-8368, 1-403-762-6301.

Banff Mountain Summit 2002 runs from October 27 to 29. The Summit celebrates the inspiration of extreme environments and the challenges to these environments through three days of performances, exhibitions, presentations and conversations. Featured speakers and performers include Reinhold Messner, Yvon Chouinard, Gretel Ehrlich, Rick Ridgeway, Wade Davis, Will Gadd, Alex Wells, and many others.

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For more information contact:

Debra Hornsby, Marketing and Communications Manager, Mountain Culture, The Banff Centre
Box 1020, Banff, Alberta T1L 1H5, Canada
phone: 403-762-6446 fax: 403-762-6277 email: debra_hornsby@banffcentre.ca
www.banffmountainfestivals.ca

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