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**Envisioning the Sixth Extinction with Elizabeth Kolbert**

The Pulitzer-prize winning author discusses her latest book  
October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at Tempe Center for the Arts

TEMPE, AZ, Sept 19, 2016 – Over the last half-billion years, there have been five mass extinctions, when the diversity of life on earth suddenly and dramatically contracted. Scientists around the world are currently monitoring the sixth extinction, predicted to be the most devastating extinction event since the asteroid impact that wiped out the dinosaurs. This time around, the cataclysm is us.

On Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7 pm, Pulitzer-prize winning author and journalist Elizabeth Kolbert will present her latest work *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*. In this exclusive lecture, Ms. Kolbert will demonstrate how human beings have altered life on the planet in a way that no species has and why the sixth extinction is likely to be mankind's most lasting legacy. Blending natural history, scientific analysis and reporting from the field into one richly detailed narrative, Kolbert takes an abstract ecological crisis and makes it real, compelling us to rethink our ideas about responsibility, agency and what it means to be human.

“Elizabeth Kolbert's work in communicating the very real, near future set in motion by our devastating presence on this planet is immensely powerful and necessary,” states Piper Center Assistant Director Angie Dell. “We are truly honored to welcome her as a distinguished visiting writer to ASU.”

After the lecture, Ms. Kolbert will take questions from the audience. A brief reception will follow the event. Refreshments will be provided as well. The lecture will take place at the Tempe Center for the Arts (700 W Rio Salado Pkwy, Tempe, AZ 85281) and is open to the public and free. Individuals are encouraged to register in advance at <http://asukolbert.eventbrite.com>.

Elizabeth Kolbert has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* since 1999. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Vogue*, and *Mother Jones*, and has been anthologized in *The Best American Science and Nature Writing* and *The Best American Political Writing*. Her latest work, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize in General Nonfiction, was a *New York Times* 2014 Top Ten Best Book of the Year and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle awards for the best books of 2014.

Kolbert's presentation is part of the Imagination and Climate Futures Initiative, an interdisciplinary partnership between the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing, the Center for Science and the Imagination and the Walton Sustainability Solutions Initiatives that explores how imagination, storytelling and the arts can merge with scientific inquiry to shape humanity's response to climate change and create global solutions for the future. More information about the partnership is available online at <https://climateimagination.asu.edu/>.

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