

# PROSPECTUS

MAY 1, 2009



## Worldwide Insurance Trust

### Worldwide Hard Assets Fund (Initial Class Shares)



These securities have not been approved or disapproved either by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or by any State Securities Commission. Neither the SEC nor any State Commission has passed upon the accuracy or adequacy of this prospectus. Any claim to the contrary is a criminal offense.



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VAN ECK WORLDWIDE INSURANCE TRUST IS A REGISTERED INVESTMENT COMPANY (THE “TRUST”), COMPRISED OF FIVE SEPARATE SERIES. THIS PROSPECTUS PERTAINS TO ONE SERIES OF THE TRUST: WORLDWIDE HARD ASSETS FUND (THE “FUND”). OTHER SERIES (WORLDWIDE BOND FUND, WORLDWIDE EMERGING MARKETS FUND, WORLDWIDE MULTI-MANAGER ALTERNATIVES FUND AND WORLDWIDE REAL ESTATE FUND) ARE OFFERED IN SEPARATE PROSPECTUSES. VAN ECK ASSOCIATES CORPORATION SERVES AS INVESTMENT ADVISER (THE “ADVISER”) TO EACH SERIES OF THE TRUST.

THE FUND OFFERS THREE CLASSES OF SHARES: INITIAL CLASS, CLASS R1 AND CLASS S SHARES. THIS PROSPECTUS PROVIDES INVESTORS WITH RELEVANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE INITIAL CLASS SHARES. SEPARATE PROSPECTUSES OFFER INFORMATION REGARDING THE FUND’S CLASS R1 AND CLASS S SHARES. THE FUND’S SEPARATE SHARE CLASSES HAVE DIFFERENT EXPENSES; AS A RESULT, THEIR INVESTMENT PERFORMANCES WILL DIFFER. INVESTORS SHOULD CONSIDER WHICH CLASS IS BEST SUITED FOR THEIR INVESTMENT NEEDS.

THIS SECTION INCLUDES A PROFILE OF THE FUND; ITS INVESTMENT STYLE AND PRINCIPAL RISKS; HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE; PERFORMANCE MEASURED AGAINST A RELEVANT BENCHMARK; HIGHEST AND LOWEST PERFORMING QUARTERS; AND EXPENSES.

## OBJECTIVE

The Worldwide Hard Assets Fund seeks long-term capital appreciation by investing primarily in “hard asset” securities. Income is a secondary consideration.

## PRINCIPAL STRATEGIES

Under normal conditions, the Fund will invest at least 80% of its assets (including net assets plus any amount of borrowing for investment purposes) in securities of “hard asset” companies and instruments that derive their value from “hard assets”.

Hard assets consist of precious metals (including gold), base and industrial metals, energy, natural resources and other commodities. Hard assets also include real estate. A company will be considered to be a hard asset company if it, directly or indirectly, derives at least 50% of its revenues from exploration, development, production, distribution or facilitation of processes relating to hard assets.

The Fund’s investment management team seeks to purchase equity opportunities, using a disciplined and flexible investment methodology focused on value. Candidates for the portfolio are identified through the development of expected returns on the hard assets equity sector, commodities, and their respective underlying companies. The Fund’s policy of investing at least 80% of its assets in hard assets may be changed by the Board of Trustees without a shareholder vote, although shareholders will be provided with a 60 days’ notice of any such change.

The Fund may invest without limitation in any one hard asset sector and is not required to invest any portion of its assets in any one hard asset sector. The Fund will invest in securities of companies located throughout the world (including the U.S.). However, there is no limit on the amount the Fund may invest in any one country, developed or underdeveloped. The Fund may invest in securities of companies in any range of capitalization.

The Fund’s investments include common stocks, preferred stocks (either convertible or non-convertible), securities issued by other investment companies, rights, warrants, direct equity interests in trusts, partnerships, convertible debt instruments, and special classes of shares available only to foreigners in markets that restrict ownership of certain shares or classes to their own nationals or residents.

The Fund may also invest in derivative instruments whose value is linked to the price of hard assets, to gain or hedge exposure to hard assets and hard assets securities. Such hard assets-linked derivative instruments may include notes, futures, options and swap agreements.

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The remaining 20% of the Fund's assets may be invested in other securities and derivative instruments, including notes, options, futures and swap agreements that are not linked to or backed by hard assets; forward and spot currency exchange contracts; and investment-grade debt securities and asset-backed securities, such as collateralized mortgage obligations (CMOs) and other mortgage and non-mortgage asset-backed securities.

The Fund may make short sales as a defensive technique to hedge existing positions or market risk in an amount of up to 10% of its net assets. The Fund may also write covered call options on portfolio securities to the extent that the value of all securities with respect to which covered calls are written does not exceed 10% of the Fund's net asset value.

The Fund may invest up to 20% of its net assets in securities issued by other investment companies (excluding money market funds), including open end and closed end funds and exchange traded funds ("ETFs"), subject to limitations under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the "1940 Act"). Such investments are commonly used as a practical means by which the Fund may participate in, or gain rapid exposure to, certain market sectors, or when direct investments in certain countries are not permitted. Shares of closed end funds and ETFs may trade at prices that reflect a premium above or a discount below their net asset value. The Fund may invest in investment companies which are sponsored or advised by the Adviser and/or its affiliates (each, a "Van Eck Investment Company"). However, in no event will the Fund invest more than 5% of its net assets in any single Van Eck Investment Company. To eliminate duplication of fees, the Adviser will offset the advisory fee it charges to the Fund by the amount it collects as an advisory fee from the Van Eck Investment Company as a result of the Fund's investment.

The Fund may borrow for liquidity or investment purposes, provided that the amount of borrowing is no more than one-third of the net assets of the Fund plus the amount of the borrowing.

The Fund may take temporary defensive positions in anticipation of or in an attempt to respond to adverse market, economic, political or other conditions. A defensive posture is designed to protect the Fund from an anticipated decline in the markets in which the Fund invests, but could have the effect of reducing the benefit from any market increase.

## **PRINCIPAL RISKS**

There is no assurance that the Fund will achieve its investment objective. The Fund's share price and return will fluctuate with changes in the market value of the Fund's portfolio securities. Accordingly, an investment in the Fund involves the risk of losing money.

The Fund is subject to risks associated with concentrating its investments in hard assets and the hard assets sector and can be significantly affected by events relating to hard assets and the hard assets sector including international political and economic developments, inflation, and other factors. The Fund's portfolio securities may experience substantial price fluctuations as a result of these factors, and may move independently of the trends of industrialized companies.

The Fund is also subject to the risks associated with investments in hard assets-linked and other derivative instruments, including notes, swaps, futures, options and currency exchange contracts.

In addition, the Fund is subject to risks associated with investments in debt securities, including asset-backed securities, CMOs and debt securities rated below investment grade ("junk bonds").

The Fund may also be subject to the risks associated with investments in small or mid-capitalization companies; investments in other investment companies; and making short sales.

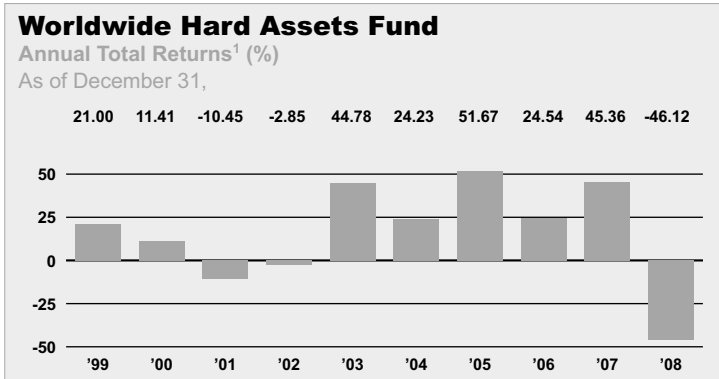
The Fund's investments in foreign securities involve risks related to adverse political and economic developments unique to a country or a region, currency fluctuations or controls, and the possibility of arbitrary action by foreign governments, including the takeover of property without adequate compensation or imposition of prohibitive taxation.

The Fund is classified as a non-diversified fund under the 1940 Act, which means that the Fund is not required to invest in a minimum number of different securities, and therefore is subject to non-diversification risk. The Fund's overall portfolio may be affected by changes in the value of a small number of securities.

Because the Fund may borrow to buy more securities and for other purposes, it is subject to the risks associated with leverage. Leverage exaggerates the effect of rises or falls in prices of securities bought with borrowed money, and entails costs associated with borrowing, including fees and interest.

An investment in the Fund should be considered part of an overall investment program, rather than a complete investment program. For more information about these risks, see the "Additional Investment Strategies" section.

The chart below shows the historical annual total returns of Van Eck Worldwide Hard Assets Fund Initial Class shares. This information provides some indication of the risks of investing in the Fund by showing changes in the Fund's performance from year to year. Past performance does not indicate future results. These returns do not reflect charges at the separate account level and if those charges were reflected, the returns would be lower than those shown.



During the period covered, the Fund's highest quarterly return was 24.57% for the quarter ended 9/30/05. The lowest quarterly return was -36.96% for the quarter ended 9/30/08.

<sup>1</sup> Initial Class Inception Date: 9/1/89.

The table below shows how the average annual returns of the Fund's Initial Class shares compare with those of a broad measure of market performance. Fund and index performance are shown with dividends reinvested. Past performance is not necessarily an indication of how the Fund will perform in the future. These returns do not reflect charges at the separate account level and if those charges were reflected, the returns would be lower than those shown.

<b>Worldwide Hard Assets Fund</b>			
Average Annual Total Returns			
As of December 31, 2008			
	<b>1 Year</b>	<b>5 Year</b>	<b>10 Year</b>
<b>Initial Class<sup>1</sup></b>			
Return Before Taxes	-46.12%	12.93%	12.05%
S&P <sup>®</sup> North American Natural Resources Sector Index (reflects no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes) <sup>2</sup>	-42.55%	8.95%	8.36%
S&P <sup>®</sup> 500 Index (reflects no deduction for fees, expenses or taxes) <sup>3</sup>	-36.99%	-2.19%	-1.38%

<sup>1</sup> Initial Class Inception Date: 9/1/89.

<sup>2</sup> The S&P<sup>®</sup> North American Natural Resources Sector Index is a modified capitalization-weighted index which includes companies involved in the following categories: extractive industries, energy companies, owners and operators of timber tracts, forestry services, producers of pulp and paper, and owners of plantations.

<sup>3</sup> The S&P<sup>®</sup> 500 Index consists of 500 widely held common stocks, covering four broad sectors (industrials, utilities, financial and transportation). It is a market value-weighted index (stock price times shares outstanding), with each stock affecting the index in proportion to its market value.

The S&P<sup>®</sup> North American Natural Resources Sector Index and S&P<sup>®</sup> 500 Index are unmanaged indices and include the reinvestment of all dividends, but do not reflect the deduction of the fees, expenses or taxes that are associated with an investment in the Fund. The Indices' performance is not illustrative of the Fund's performance. Indices are not securities in which investments can be made.

This table shows certain expenses you may incur as an investor in the Fund, either directly or indirectly. The Adviser may sometimes waive fees and/or reimburse certain expenses of the Fund. These expenses do not reflect charges at the separate account level and if those charges were reflected, the expenses would be higher than those shown. The total annual fund operating expenses listed below are based on the average net assets of the Fund for its fiscal year ended December 31, 2008. To the extent that the Fund's average net assets decrease over the Fund's next fiscal year, such expenses can be expected to increase because certain fixed costs will be spread over a smaller amount of assets.

<b>Worldwide Hard Assets Fund</b>	
Annual Fund Operating Expense (% of Net Assets)	
	<b>Initial Class</b>
Management Fees	0.88%
Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses (AFFE) <sup>1</sup>	0.01%
Other Expenses	0.11%
<b>Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses (including AFFE)<sup>2, 3</sup></b>	<b>1.00%</b>

<sup>1</sup> "Acquired fund fees and expenses" reflect the estimated amount of the fees and expenses incurred indirectly by the Fund through its investments in underlying funds.

<sup>2</sup> For the period May 1, 2009 through April 30, 2010, the Adviser contractually agreed to waive fees and reimburse certain operating expenses (excluding interest, dividends paid on securities sold short, trading expenses, taxes and extraordinary expenses) to the extent Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses exceed 1.20% of average daily net assets. The agreement to limit the Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses is limited to the Fund's direct operating expenses and, therefore, does not apply to AFFE, which are indirect expenses incurred by the Fund through its investments in underlying funds.

<sup>3</sup> The Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses in the fee table may differ from the expense ratios in the Fund's "Financial Highlights" because the financial highlights include only the Fund's direct operating expenses and do not include fees and expenses incurred indirectly by the Fund through its investments in underlying funds (i.e., AFFE).

**EXPENSE EXAMPLE**

The following table is intended to help you compare the cost of investing in the Fund with the cost of investing in other mutual funds. The example assumes that you invest \$10,000 in Initial Class shares of the Fund for the time periods indicated and then redeem all your shares at the end of those periods. The example also assumes that your investment has a 5% return each year and that the Fund's operating expenses remain the same. The illustration is hypothetical. These expenses do not reflect charges at the separate account level and if those charges were reflected, the expenses would be higher than those shown. Although your actual expenses may be higher or lower, based on these assumptions your costs would be:

1 year	\$ 102
3 years	\$ 318
5 years	\$ 552
10 years	\$1,225

OTHER INVESTMENTS, INVESTMENT POLICIES, INVESTMENT TECHNIQUES AND RISKS.

THE PERCENTAGE LIMITATIONS RELATING TO THE COMPOSITION OF THE FUND'S PORTFOLIO APPLY AT THE TIME THE FUND ACQUIRES AN INVESTMENT. A SUBSEQUENT INCREASE OR DECREASE IN PERCENTAGE RESULTING FROM A CHANGE IN THE VALUE OF PORTFOLIO SECURITIES OR THE TOTAL OR NET ASSETS OF THE FUND WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED A VIOLATION OF THE RESTRICTION.

## ASSET-BACKED SECURITIES

**Definition** Represent securitized pools of consumer loans and other assets unrelated to mortgages.

**Risk** Asset-backed securities are subject to the risks associated with other debt securities. The asset backing the security may lose value, thereby making the security less secured. In addition, they are subject to the risk of prepayment, which is the possibility that the principal on the underlying loans may be paid earlier than expected, requiring the Fund to reinvest the proceeds at generally lower interest rates. Generally, prepayments will increase during a period of falling interest rates and decrease during a period of rising interest rates. The rate of prepayments also may be influenced by economic and other factors. Rates of prepayment that are faster or slower than expected by the Adviser, could reduce the Fund's yield, increase the volatility of the Fund and/or cause a decline in net asset value.

## BORROWING; LEVERAGE RISK

**Definition** Borrowing to invest more is called “leverage.” The Fund may borrow from banks provided that the amount of borrowing is no more than one third of the net assets of the Fund plus the amount of the borrowings. The Fund is required to be able to restore borrowing to its permitted level within three days, if it should increase to more than one-third as stated above. Methods that may be used to restore borrowings in this context include selling securities, even if the sale hurts the Fund’s investment performance.

**Risk** Leverage exaggerates the effect of rises or falls in prices of securities bought with borrowed money. Borrowing also costs money, including fees and interest. The Fund expects to borrow only through negotiated loan agreements with commercial banks or other institutional lenders.

## COLLATERALIZED MORTGAGE OBLIGATIONS (CMOs)

**Definition** These securities are backed by a group of mortgages. CMOs are fixed-income securities, rated by agencies like other fixed-income securities; the Fund invests in CMOs rated A or better by S&P® and Moody’s. CMOs “pass through” payments made by individual mortgage holders.

**Risk** CMOs are subject to the risks associated with other debt securities. In addition, like other asset-backed securities, CMOs are subject to the risk of prepayment. Please refer to the “asset-backed securities” section above for other risks. The asset backing the security may lose value, thereby making the security less secured. Issuers of CMOs may support interest and principal payments with insurance or guarantees. The Fund may buy uninsured or non-guaranteed CMOs equal in creditworthiness to insured or guaranteed CMOs.

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## COMMODITY-LINKED DERIVATIVE SECURITIES AND STRUCTURED NOTES

### **Definition**

The value of a commodity-linked derivative investment generally is based upon the price movements of a physical commodity (such as energy, mineral, or agricultural products), a commodity futures contract or commodity index, or other economic variable based upon changes in the value of commodities or the commodities markets. The Fund may seek exposure to the commodity markets through investments in leveraged or unleveraged commodity-linked or index-linked notes, which are derivative debt instruments with principal and/or coupon payments linked to the value of commodities, commodity futures contracts or the performance of commodity indices. These notes are sometimes referred to as “structured notes” because the terms of these notes may be structured by the issuer and the purchaser of the note.

### **Risk**

The Fund’s investments in commodity-linked derivative instruments may subject the Fund to greater volatility than investments in traditional securities. The value of commodity-linked derivative instruments may be affected by changes in overall market movements, commodity index volatility, changes in interest rates, or factors affecting a particular industry or commodity, such as drought, floods, weather, livestock disease, embargoes, tariffs and international economic, political and regulatory developments. The value of structured notes will rise or fall in response to changes in the underlying commodity or related index of investment. These notes expose the Fund economically to movements in commodity prices. These notes also are subject to risks, such as credit, market and interest rate risks, that in general affect the values of debt securities. In addition, these notes are often leveraged, increasing the volatility of each note’s market value relative to changes in the underlying commodity, commodity futures contract or commodity index.

## COMMODITY RISK

**Definition** The Fund may invest in securities and financial instruments that derive their value from commodities, including industrial metals, gas and other energy products, natural resources and other commodities.

**Risk** The Fund's investment exposure to the commodities markets may subject the Fund to greater volatility than investments in traditional securities. The commodities markets may fluctuate widely based on a variety of factors. These include changes in overall market movements, domestic and foreign political and economic events and policies, war, acts of terrorism, changes in domestic or foreign interest rates and/or investor expectations concerning interest rates, domestic and foreign inflation rates and/or investor expectations concerning inflation rates and investment and trading activities of mutual funds, hedge funds and commodities funds. Prices of various commodities may also be affected by factors such as drought, floods, weather, embargoes, tariffs and other regulatory developments. Many of these factors are very unpredictable. The prices of commodities can also fluctuate widely due to supply and demand disruptions in major producing or consuming regions. Certain commodities may be produced in a limited number of countries and may be controlled by a small number of producers. As a result, political, economic and supply related events in such countries could have a disproportionate impact on the prices of such commodities. Because the Fund's performance is linked to the performance of highly volatile commodities, investors should consider purchasing shares of the Fund only as part of an overall diversified portfolio and should be willing to assume the risks of potentially significant fluctuations in the value of the Fund's shares.

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## DEBT SECURITIES; CREDIT AND INTEREST RATE RISK

**Definition** Debt, or fixed-income, securities may include bonds and other forms of debentures or obligations. When an issuer sells debt securities, it sells them for a certain price, and for a certain term. Over the term of the security, the issuer promises to pay the buyer a certain rate of interest, then to repay the principal at maturity. Debt securities are also bought and sold in the “secondary market”—that is, they are traded by people other than their original issuers.

**Risk** All debt securities are subject to two types of risk: credit risk and interest rate risk. Credit risk refers to the possibility that the issuer of a security will be unable to make interest payments and repay the principal on its debt. Interest rate risk refers to fluctuations in the value of a debt security resulting from changes in the general level of interest rates. When the general level of interest rates goes up, the prices of most debt securities go down. When the general level of interest rates goes down, the prices of most debt securities go up.

## DEFENSIVE INVESTING

**Definition** A deliberate, temporary shift in portfolio strategy which may be undertaken when markets start behaving in volatile or unusual ways. A Fund may, for temporary defensive purposes, invest a substantial part of its assets in bonds of the U.S. or foreign governments, certificates of deposit, bankers’ acceptances, shares of money market funds, high grade commercial paper, and repurchase agreements. At such times, a Fund may have all of its assets invested in a single country or currency.

**Risk** “Opportunity cost”—i.e., when a Fund has invested defensively in low-risk, low-return securities, it may miss an opportunity for profit in its normal investing areas. A Fund may not achieve its investment objective during periods of defensive investing.

## DERIVATIVE SECURITIES AND STRUCTURED NOTES

### **Definition**

Derivatives are financial instruments, such as swaps, options, warrants, futures contracts, currency forwards and structured notes, whose values are based on the value of one or more indicators, such as a security, asset, currency, interest rate, or index. The Fund may use leveraged or unleveraged index-linked notes, which are derivative debt instruments with principal and/or coupon payments linked to the value of a specific index. These notes are sometimes referred to as “structured notes” because the terms of these notes may be structured by the issuer and the purchaser of the note.

### **Risk**

Derivatives are subject to a number of risks, such as potential changes in value in response to market developments or as a result of the counterparty's credit quality and the risk that a derivative transaction may not have the effect the Adviser anticipated. Derivatives also involve the risk of mispricing or improper valuation and the risk that changes in the value of a derivative may not correlate perfectly with the underlying indicator. Derivative transactions can create investment leverage and may be highly volatile. Many derivative transactions are entered into “over the counter” (not on an exchange or contract market); as a result, the value of such a derivative transaction will depend on the ability and the willingness of the Fund's counterparty to perform its obligations under the transaction. If a counterparty were to default on its obligations, the Fund's contractual remedies against such counterparty may be subject to bankruptcy and insolvency laws, which could affect the Fund's rights as a creditor (e.g., the Fund may not receive the net amount of payments that it is contractually entitled to receive). A liquid secondary market may not always exist for the Fund's derivative positions at any time.

For a complete discussion of the kinds of derivatives in which the Fund may invest, and of their risks, please see the SAI.

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## DIRECT INVESTMENTS

**Definition** Investments made directly with an enterprise through a shareholder or similar agreements—not through publicly traded shares or interests. Direct investments may involve high risk of substantial loss. Such positions may be hard to sell, because they are not listed on an exchange and prices of such positions may be unpredictable.

**Risk** A direct investment price as stated for valuation may not be the price the Fund could actually get if it had to sell. Private issuers do not have to follow all the rules of public issuers. The Board of Trustees considers direct investments illiquid and will aggregate direct investments with other illiquid investments under the illiquid investing limits of the Fund.

The Fund will not invest more than 10% of its total assets in direct investments.

## EMERGING MARKETS SECURITIES

**Definition** Securities of companies that are primarily located in developing countries. (See “Foreign Securities,” below, for basic information on foreign investment risks.)

**Risk** Investments in emerging markets securities are exposed to a number of risks that may make these investments volatile in price or difficult to trade. Political risks may include unstable governments, nationalization, restrictions on foreign ownership, laws that prevent investors from getting their money out of a country and legal systems that do not protect property rights as well as the laws of the U.S. Market risks may include economies that only concentrate in a few industries, securities issues that are held by a few investors, limited trading capacity in local exchanges, and the possibility that markets or issues may be manipulated by foreign nationals who have inside information.

## FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSACTIONS

**Definition** The money issued by foreign governments; the contracts involved in buying and selling foreign money in order to buy and sell foreign securities denominated in that money.

**Risk** Foreign currencies shift in value against U.S. currency. These relative price swings can make the return on an investment go up or down, entirely apart from the quality or performance of the investment itself. The Fund enters into various hedging contracts to buy and sell foreign currency, including futures contracts (see “Derivative Securities and Structured Notes,” page 16).

## FOREIGN SECURITIES

**Definition** Securities issued by foreign companies, traded in foreign currencies or issued by companies with most of their business interests in foreign countries.

**Risk** Foreign investing involves greater risks than investing in U.S. securities. These risks include: exchange rate fluctuations and exchange controls; less publicly available information; more volatile or less liquid securities markets; and the possibility of arbitrary action by foreign governments, including the takeover of property without adequate compensation or imposition of prohibitive taxation, or political, economic or social instability. Foreign accounting can be different—and less revealing—than American accounting practice. There is generally less information available regarding foreign issuers than U.S. issuers, and foreign regulation of stock exchanges may be inadequate or irregular. Foreign securities also may have varying tax consequences (see the section entitled “Taxes” in the SAI).

Some of these risks may be reduced when the Fund invests indirectly in foreign issues through American Depositary Receipts (ADRs), European Depositary Receipts (EDRs), American Depositary Shares (ADSs), Global Depositary Shares (GDSs), and other securities which are traded on larger, recognized exchanges and in stronger, more recognized currencies.

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Russia: The Fund invests only in those Russian companies whose registrars have contracted to allow the Fund's Russian sub-custodian to inspect share registers and to obtain extracts of share registers through regular audits. These procedures may reduce the risk of loss, but there can be no assurance that they will be effective.

## INDEXED COMMERCIAL PAPER

**Definition** For hedging purposes only, the Fund may invest in commercial paper with the principal amount indexed to the difference, up or down, in value between two foreign currencies. The Fund segregates asset accounts with an equivalent amount of cash, U.S. government securities or other highly liquid securities equal in value to this commercial paper.

**Risk** Principal may be lost, but the potential for gains in principal and interest may help the Fund cushion against the potential decline of the U.S. dollar value of foreign-denominated investments. At the same time, this commercial paper may provide an attractive money market rate of return.

## INDUSTRY CONCENTRATION

**Definition** The Fund will normally invest at least 80% of its assets in securities of "hard asset" companies and instruments that derive their value from "hard assets".

**Risk** Concentration of investments in a single sector or industry may make a Fund more volatile than funds which are more diversified.

## LACK OF RELIABLE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**Definition** Emerging markets securities issuers are subject to different disclosure requirements than those of issuers in developed countries.

**Risk** There may not be available reliable financial information which has been prepared and audited in accordance with U.S. or Western European generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards.

## LOANS OF PORTFOLIO SECURITIES

**Definition** The Fund may lend its securities as permitted under the 1940 Act, including by participating in securities lending programs managed by broker-dealers. Broker-dealers must collateralize (secure) these borrowings in full with cash, U.S. government securities or high-quality letters of credit.

**Risk** If a broker-dealer breaches its agreement to pay for the loan, to pay for the securities or to return the securities, the Fund may lose money.

## LOW RATED FIXED-INCOME SECURITIES ("JUNK BONDS")

**Definition** Low rated fixed income securities include debt securities, foreign and domestic, rated "below investment grade" by ratings services as well as non-rated fixed income securities.

**Risk** These securities are also called "junk bonds." In the market, they can behave somewhat like stocks, with prices that can swing widely in response to the health of their issuers and to changes in interest rates. They also bear the risk of untimely payment. By definition, they involve more risk of default than do higher-rated issues.

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Additionally, evaluating credit risk for non-U.S. debt securities involves greater uncertainty because credit rating agencies throughout the world have different standards, making comparisons across countries difficult. The market for international, non-investment grade debt securities is thinner and less active than that for higher-rated securities, which can adversely affect the prices at which securities are sold. In addition, adverse publicity and investor perceptions about international, non-investment grade debt securities, whether or not based on fundamental analysis, may be a contributing factor in a decrease in the value and liquidity of such securities.

## MARKET RISK

**Definition** Market risk is a risk common to the entire class of assets. An investment in the Fund involves “market risk”—the risk that securities prices may go up or down. The value of investments may decline over time because of economic changes or other events that impact large portions of the market.

**Risk** Markets tend to run in cycles with periods when prices generally go up, known as “bull” markets, and periods when stock prices generally go down, referred to as “bear” markets. Stock prices may decline over short or even extended periods not only because of company-specific developments but also due to an economic downturn, a change in interest rates or a change in investor sentiment. Similarly, bond prices fluctuate in value with changes in interest rates, the economy and in the case of corporate bonds, the financial conditions of companies that issue them. In general, bonds decline in value when interest rates rise. While stocks and bonds may react differently to economic events, there are times when stocks and bonds both may decline in value simultaneously.

## MARKET TIMING OF THE FUND

**Definition** An attempt to predict future market directions, typically by examining recent price, volume or economic data, and investing based on those predictions.

**Risk** Although the Adviser uses reasonable efforts to deter short-term trading that may be harmful to a Fund, commonly referred to as “market timing,” the Adviser can give no guarantees that it will be able to detect or prevent shareholders from engaging in short-term trading. If the Adviser is unable to detect and prevent harmful short-term trading, a Fund may incur additional expenses, the Fund’s portfolio management process may be disrupted and long-term shareholders may be disadvantaged.

## NON-DIVERSIFICATION RISK

**Definition** Non-diversified funds may invest in fewer assets or in larger proportions of the assets of single companies or industries.

**Risk** Greater concentration of investments in non-diversified funds may make those funds more volatile than diversified funds. A decline in the value of those investments would cause the Fund’s overall value to decline to a greater degree.

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## OTHER INVESTMENT COMPANIES

### **Definition**

The Fund may invest up to 20% of its net assets in securities issued by other investment companies (excluding money market funds), including open end and closed end funds and ETFs, subject to limitations under the 1940 Act. The Fund may invest in Van Eck Investment Companies. However, in no event will the Fund invest more than 5% of its net assets in any single Van Eck Investment Company. To eliminate the duplication of fees, the Adviser will offset the advisory fee it charges to the Fund by the amount it collects as an advisory fee from the Van Eck Investment Company as a result of the Fund's investment.

### **Risk**

Any investment in another investment company is subject to the underlying risks of that investment company's portfolio securities or assets. For example, if the investment company holds common stocks, the Fund would be exposed to the risk of investing in common stocks. In addition to the Fund's fees and expenses, the Fund will bear its share of the investment company's fees and expenses. ETFs involve risks generally associated with investments in a broadly based portfolio of common stocks, including the risk that the general level of market prices, or that the prices of securities within a particular sector, may increase or decline, thereby affecting the value of the shares of the ETF. Shares of closed-end funds and ETFs may trade at prices that reflect a premium above or a discount below the investment company's net asset value, which may be substantial in the case of closed-end funds. If investment company securities are purchased at a premium to net asset value, the premium may not exist when those securities are sold and the Fund could incur a loss.

## PARTLY PAID SECURITIES

**Definition** Securities paid for on an installment basis. A partly paid security trades net of outstanding installment payments—the buyer “takes over payments.”

**Risk** The buyer’s rights are typically restricted until the security is fully paid. If the value of a partly-paid security declines before a Fund finishes paying for it, the Fund will still owe the payments, but may find it hard to sell and as a result will incur a loss.

## PORTFOLIO TURNOVER

**Definition** The Fund may engage in active and frequent trading of its portfolio securities. The Financial Highlights Table at the end of this Prospectus shows the Fund’s portfolio turnover rates during recent fiscal years.

**Risk** A portfolio turnover rate of 200%, for example, is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of its securities two times during the course of the year. A high portfolio turnover rate (over 100%) could result in higher brokerage costs.

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## PRECIOUS METALS RISK

**Definition** Gold, silver, platinum and palladium in the form of bullion and coins which have no numismatic (collectable) value. There is a well-established world market for precious metals.

**Risk** Precious metals prices can swing sharply in response to cyclical economic conditions, political events or the monetary policies of various countries. In addition, political and economic conditions in gold-producing countries may have a direct effect on the mining and distribution of gold, and consequently, on its price. The vast majority of gold producers are domiciled in just five countries: South Africa, the United States, Australia, Canada and Russia. Under current U.S. tax law, the Fund may not receive more than 10% of its yearly income from selling precious metals or any other physical commodity. That law may require a Fund, for example, to hold precious metals when it would rather sell, or to sell other securities when it would rather hold them—both may cause investment losses or lost opportunities for profit. The Fund also incurs storage costs for bullion and coins. In addition, gains realized upon a sale or other disposition of precious metals is subject to federal income tax at a current rate of 28%, which is higher than the rate generally applicable to long-term capital gains.

## REAL ESTATE SECURITIES RISK

**Definition** The Fund may not invest in real estate directly but may (i) invest in securities of issuers that invest in real estate or interests therein, including interests in real estate investment trusts, REITs, (ii) invest in mortgage-related securities and other securities that are secured by real estate or interests therein, and (iii) hold and sell real estate acquired by the Fund as a result of the ownership of securities. The Worldwide Hard Assets Fund may invest more than 50% of its net assets in real estate securities.

**Risk** All general risks of real estate investing apply to REITs (for example, illiquidity and volatile prices), plus special risks of REITs in particular.

## REPURCHASE AGREEMENTS

**Definition** In a repurchase agreement (a “repo”), the Fund acquires a security for a short time while agreeing to sell it back at a designated price and time. The agreement creates a fixed rate of return not subject to market fluctuations. The Fund enters into these agreements generally with member banks of the Federal Reserve System or certain non-bank dealers; these counterparties collateralize the transaction.

**Risk** There is a risk of a counterparty defaulting on a “repo,” which may result in the Fund losing money.

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## SHORT SALES

**Definition** In a short sale, the Fund borrows an equity security from a broker then sells it. If the value of the security goes down, the Fund can buy it back in the market and return it to the broker, making a profit. The Fund may also “short-against-the-box”, which is a short sale of a security that the Fund owns, for tax or other purposes. The Fund may engage in short sales as a defensive technique to hedge their existing position(s) and/or market risk, and only in an amount up to 10% of their respective net assets.

**Risk** If the value of the security goes up, then if the Fund does not hold this security, the Fund will have to buy it back in the market at a loss to make good on its borrowing. The Fund is required to “cover” its short sales with collateral by depositing cash, U.S. government securities or other liquid high-quality securities in a segregated account.

## SMALL AND MEDIUM CAPITALIZATION COMPANIES

**Definition** Companies with a market capitalization below that of the top 200 companies by market capitalization principally traded in the U.S. These companies may have limited product lines, markets or financial resources or depend upon a few key employees.

**Risk** Investments in securities of small and medium-sized companies involve greater risk than is customarily associated with investing in more established companies. These companies’ stocks may be more volatile and less liquid than the stocks of more established companies. These stocks may have returns that vary, sometimes significantly, from the overall stock market.

## WHEN-ISSUED DEBT SECURITIES

**Definition** Debt securities that trade before issuance, but are delivered and paid for some time on or after issuance.

**Risk** Principal and interest of a when-issued security may vary during the period between purchase and delivery so that its value, when the Fund takes possession of it, may be different than when the Fund committed to buy it. The Fund will maintain reserves of cash, U.S. government securities or other liquid high quality securities in a segregated account to offset purchases of when-issued securities.

## PORTFOLIO HOLDINGS INFORMATION

Generally, it is the Fund's and Adviser's policy that no current or potential investor, including any Fund shareholder, shall be provided information about the Fund's portfolio on a preferential basis in advance of the provision of that information to other investors. A complete description of the Fund's policies and procedures with respect to the disclosure of the Fund's portfolio securities is available in the Fund's SAI.

Limited portfolio holdings information for the Fund is available to all investors on the Van Eck website at [www.vaneck.com](http://www.vaneck.com). Information regarding the Fund's top holdings and country and sector weightings, updated as of each month-end, is located on this website. Generally, this information is posted to the website within 30 days of the end of the applicable month. This information generally remains available on the website until new information is posted. The Fund reserves the right to exclude any portion of these portfolio holdings from publication when deemed in the best interest of the Fund, and to discontinue the posting of portfolio holdings information at any time, without prior notice.

FUND MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING A DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVISER, THE PORTFOLIO MANAGERS, THE CUSTODIAN, AND THE TRANSFER AGENT. HOW THE FUND SELLS SHARES TO INSURANCE COMPANY SEPARATE ACCOUNTS. FUND EXPENSES AND TAX TREATMENT OF THE FUND.

## 1. MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND

### INVESTMENT ADVISER

Van Eck Associates Corporation, 335 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017 is the Adviser to the Fund. The Adviser has been an investment adviser since 1955 and also acts as adviser or sub-adviser to other mutual funds, alternative investments, pension plans and other investment accounts.

John C. van Eck and members of his immediate family own 100% of the voting stock of the Adviser. As of December 31, 2008, the Adviser's assets under management were approximately \$8.1 billion.

### THE ADVISER, THE FUND, AND INSURANCE COMPANY SEPARATE ACCOUNTS

The Fund sells shares to various insurance company variable annuity and variable life insurance separate accounts as a funding vehicle for those accounts. The Fund does not foresee any disadvantages to shareholders from offering the Fund to various insurance companies. However, the Board of Trustees will monitor any potential conflicts of interest. If conflicts arise, the Board may require an insurance company to withdraw its investments in one Fund, and place them in another. This might force the Fund to sell securities at a disadvantageous price. The Board of Trustees may refuse to sell shares of the Fund to any separate account. It may also suspend or terminate the offering of shares of the Fund if required to do so by law or regulatory authority, or if such an action is in the best interests of Fund shareholders. The Adviser and its affiliates act as investment manager of several hedge funds and other investment companies and/or accounts (the "Other Clients"), which trade in the same securities as the Trust. These Other Clients may have investment objectives and/or investment strategies similar to or completely opposite of those of the Fund. From time to time such Other Clients may enter contemporaneous trades with those of the Fund, which implement strategies that are similar to or directly opposite those of the Trust. The Adviser will maintain procedures reasonably designed to ensure that the Fund is not unduly disadvantaged by such trades, yet still permit the Other Clients to pursue their own investment objectives and strategies.

A discussion regarding the basis for the Board's approval of the investment advisory agreement of the Fund is available in the Fund's semi-annual report to shareholders for the six months ended June 30, 2008.

#### FEES PAID TO THE ADVISER

The Fund pays the Adviser a monthly fee at the annual rate of 1.00% of the first \$500 million of average daily net assets, 0.90% on the next \$250 million of average daily net assets and 0.70% of average daily net assets in excess of \$750 million. This includes the fee paid to the Adviser for accounting and administrative services.

#### INVESTMENT TEAM—PORTFOLIO MANAGER

##### WORLDWIDE HARD ASSETS FUND

The Worldwide Hard Assets Fund is managed by a team of investment professionals. Current members of the team are:

**Derek S. van Eck.** Mr. van Eck joined the Adviser in 1993. Mr. van Eck has overseen a team of investment professionals that includes specialists in hard asset sectors and in the emerging markets since 1998. He serves as portfolio manager for this Fund. He is also a portfolio manager of another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Charles T. Cameron.** Mr. Cameron joined the Adviser as the Director of Trading in 1995. He currently serves on the investment team for this Fund and another mutual fund advised by the Adviser. He is also a portfolio manager for another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Joseph M. Foster.** Mr. Foster joined the Adviser in 1996 as a precious metals mining analyst. He currently serves on the investment team for this Fund and another mutual fund advised by the Adviser. He is also a portfolio manager for another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Samuel L. Halpert.** Mr. Halpert joined the Adviser in 2000. He currently serves on the investment team for this Fund and another mutual fund advised by the Adviser. He is also a portfolio manager for another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Geoffrey R. King.** Mr. King joined the Adviser in 2007 as a research associate specializing in exploration and production, refining, drilling and alternative energy markets. He currently serves on the investment team for this Fund and for another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Gregory F. Krenzer.** Mr. Krenzer joined the Adviser in 1994 as a trader. He currently serves on the investment team for this Fund and another mutual fund advised by the Adviser. He is also a portfolio manager for another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Charl P. De M. Malan.** Mr. Malan joined the Adviser in 2003 as a precious metals and base metals mining analyst. He currently serves on the

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investment team for this Fund and another mutual fund advised by the Adviser. He is also a portfolio manager for another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

**Shawn Reynolds.** Mr. Reynolds joined the Adviser in 2005 as a senior energy analyst. He currently serves on the investment team for this Fund and another mutual fund advised by the Adviser.

The SAI provides additional information about the above Portfolio Managers, their compensation, other accounts they manage, and their securities ownership in the Fund.

### THE DISTRIBUTOR

Van Eck Securities Corporation, 335 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (the “Distributor”), a wholly owned subsidiary of Van Eck Associates Corporation (the “Adviser”), has entered into a Distribution Agreement with the Trust for distributing shares of the Fund.

The Distributor generally sells and markets shares of the Fund through intermediaries, including insurance companies or their affiliates.

The Distributor may pay certain intermediaries, out of its own resources and not as an expense of the Fund, additional cash or non-cash compensation as an incentive to intermediaries to promote and sell shares of the Fund and other mutual funds distributed by the Distributor. These payments are commonly known as “revenue sharing”. The benefits that the Distributor may receive when it makes these payments include, among other things, placing the Fund on the intermediary’s sales system and/or preferred or recommended fund list, offering the Fund through the intermediary’s advisory or other specialized programs, and/or access (in some cases on a preferential basis over other competitors) to individual members of the intermediary’s sales force. Such payments may also be used to compensate intermediaries for a variety of administrative and shareholders services relating to investments by their customers in the Fund.

The fees paid by the Distributor to intermediaries may be calculated based on the gross sales price of shares sold by an intermediary, the net asset value of shares held by the customers of the intermediary, or otherwise. These fees, may, but are not normally expected to, exceed in the aggregate 0.50% of the average net assets of the Fund attributable to a particular intermediary on an annual basis.

The Distributor may also provide intermediaries with additional cash and non-cash compensation, which may include financial assistance to intermediaries in connection with conferences, sales or training programs for their employees, seminars for the public and advertising campaigns,

technical and systems support, attendance at sales meetings and reimbursement of ticket charges. In some instances, these incentives may be made available only to intermediaries whose representatives have sold or may sell a significant number of shares.

Intermediaries may receive different payments, based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, reputation in the industry, sales and asset retention rates, target markets, and customer relationships and quality of service. No one factor is determinative of the type or amount of additional compensation to be provided. Financial intermediaries that sell Fund's shares may also act as a broker or dealer in connection with execution of transactions for the Fund's portfolios. The Fund and the Adviser have adopted procedures to ensure that the sales of the Fund's shares by an intermediary will not affect the selection of brokers for execution of portfolio transactions.

Not all mutual funds pay the same amount to the intermediaries who sell their mutual funds. Differences in compensation to intermediaries may create a financial interest for an intermediary to sell shares of a particular mutual fund, or the mutual funds of a particular family of mutual funds. Before purchasing shares of the Fund, you should ask your intermediary or its representative about the compensation in connection with the purchase of such shares, including any revenue sharing payments it receives from the Distributor.

#### **THE CUSTODIAN**

State Street Bank & Trust Company  
225 Franklin Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

#### **THE TRANSFER AGENT**

DST Systems, Inc.  
210 West 10th Street, 8th Floor  
Kansas City, MO 64105

#### **INDEPENDENT REGISTERED PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRM**

Ernst & Young LLP  
Five Times Square  
New York, New York 10036

#### **COUNSEL**

Goodwin Procter LLP  
One Exchange Place  
Boston, Massachusetts 02109

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## 2. TAXES

The Fund qualifies, and intends to continue to qualify, as a “regulated investment company” under the Internal Revenue Code (the “Code”). As such, the Fund will not pay federal income tax to the extent that it distributes its income and capital gains.

The Code requires funds used by insurance company variable annuity and life insurance contracts to be adequately diversified in order to enjoy tax deferral privileges. The Fund intends to invest so as to comply with this provision.

For information concerning the federal income tax consequences to holders of the underlying variable annuity or variable life insurance contracts, see the accompanying prospectus for the applicable contract.

## 3. HOW THE FUND SHARES ARE PRICED

The Fund buys or sells its shares at its net asset value, or NAV, per share next determined after receipt of a purchase or redemption plus applicable sales charge. The Fund calculates its NAV every day the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) is open, as of the close of regular trading on the NYSE, which is normally 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time.

You may enter a buy or sell order when the NYSE is closed for weekends or holidays. If that happens, your price will be the NAV calculated as of the close of the next regular trading session of the NYSE.

The Fund may invest in certain securities which are listed on foreign exchanges that trade on weekends or other days when the Fund does not price its shares. As a result, the NAV of the Fund’s shares may change on days when shareholders will not be able to purchase or redeem shares.

The Fund’s investments are generally valued based on market quotations. When market quotations are not readily available for a portfolio security, or in the opinion of the Adviser do not reflect the security’s fair value, the Fund will use the security’s “fair value” as determined in good faith in accordance with the Fund’s Fair Value Pricing Procedures, which have been approved by the Board of Trustees. As a general principle, the current fair value of a security is the amount which the Fund might reasonably expect to receive for the security upon its current sale. The Fund’s Pricing Committee, whose members are selected by the senior management of the Adviser, is responsible for recommending fair value procedures to the Board of Trustees and for administering the process used to arrive at fair value prices.

Factors that may cause the Fund to use the fair value of a portfolio security to calculate the Fund's NAV include, but are not limited to: (1) market quotations are not readily available because a portfolio security is not traded in a public market or the principal market in which the security trades is closed, (2) trading in a portfolio security is limited or suspended and not resumed prior to the time at which the Fund calculates its NAV, (3) the market for the relevant security is thin, or "stale" because its price doesn't change in 5 consecutive business days, (4) the Adviser determines that a market quotation is inaccurate, for example, because price movements are highly volatile and cannot be verified by a reliable alternative pricing source, or (5) where a significant event affecting the value of a portfolio security is determined to have occurred between the time of the market quotation provided for a portfolio security and the time at which the Fund calculates its NAV.

In determining the fair value of securities, the Pricing Committee will consider, among other factors, the fundamental analytical data relating to the security, the nature and duration of any restrictions on the disposition of the security, and the forces influencing the market in which the security is traded.

Foreign securities in which the Fund invests may be traded in markets that close before the time that the Fund calculates its NAV. Foreign securities are normally priced based upon the market quotation of such securities as of the close of their respective principal markets, as adjusted to reflect the Adviser's determination of the impact of events, such as a significant movement in the U.S. markets occurring subsequent to the close of such markets but prior to the time at which the Fund calculates its NAV. In such cases, the Pricing Committee will apply a fair valuation formula to all foreign securities based on the Committee's determination of the effect of the U.S. significant event with respect to each local market.

Certain of the Fund's portfolio securities are valued by an outside pricing service approved by the Board of Trustees. The pricing service may utilize an automated system incorporating a model based on multiple parameters, including a security's local closing price (in the case of foreign securities), relevant general and sector indices, currency fluctuations, and trading in depositary receipts and futures, if applicable, and/or research evaluations by its staff, in determining what it believes is the fair valuation of the portfolio securities valued by such pricing service.

There can be no assurance that the Fund could purchase or sell a portfolio security at the price used to calculate the Fund's NAV. Because of the inherent uncertainty in fair valuations, and the various factors considered in

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determining value pursuant to the Fund's fair value procedures, there can be significant deviations between a fair value price at which a portfolio security is being carried and the price at which it is purchased or sold. Furthermore, changes in the fair valuation of portfolio securities may be less frequent, and of greater magnitude, than changes in the price of portfolio securities valued by an independent pricing service, or based on market quotations.

## 4. SHAREHOLDER INFORMATION

### FREQUENT TRADING POLICY

The Board of Trustees has adopted policies and procedures reasonably designed to deter frequent trading in shares of the Fund, commonly referred to as "market timing," because such activities may be disruptive to the management of the Fund's portfolio and may increase Fund expenses and negatively impact the Fund's performance. As such, the Fund may reject a purchase or exchange transaction or restrict an insurance company's contract holder from investing in the Fund for any reason if the Adviser, in its sole discretion, believes that such contract holder is engaging in market timing activities that may be harmful to the Fund. The Fund discourages and does not accommodate frequent trading of shares by contract holders.

The Fund invests portions of its assets in securities of foreign issuers, and consequently may be subject to an increased risk of frequent trading activities because frequent traders may take advantage of time zone differences between the foreign markets in which the Fund's portfolio securities trade and the time as of which the Fund's net asset value is calculated ("time-zone arbitrage"). The Fund's investments in other types of securities may also be susceptible to frequent trading strategies. These investments include securities that are, among other things, thinly traded, traded infrequently, or relatively illiquid, which have the risk that the current market price for the securities may not accurately reflect current market values. The Fund has adopted fair valuation policies and procedures intended to reduce the Fund's exposure to potential price arbitrage. However, there is no guarantee that the Fund's net asset value will immediately reflect changes in market conditions.

Shares of the Fund are sold exclusively through institutional omnibus account arrangements registered to insurance companies and used by them as investment options for variable contracts issued by insurance companies. Such omnibus accounts allow for the aggregation of holdings of multiple contract holders and do not identify the underlying contract holders or their activity on an individual basis. Certain insurance companies have adopted policies and procedures to deter frequent short-term trading by their contract

holders. The Fund may rely on an insurance company's policies and procedures, in addition to the Fund's techniques, to monitor for and detect abusive trading practices. The Fund reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to allow insurance companies to apply their own policies and procedures which may be more or less restrictive than those of the Fund. Contract holders are advised to contact their insurance company for further information as it relates to their specific contracts.

In addition to the foregoing, the Fund requires all insurance companies to agree to cooperate in identifying and restricting market timers in accordance with the Fund's policies and will periodically request contract holder trading activity based on certain criteria established by the Fund. The Fund may make inquiries regarding contract holder purchases, redemptions, and exchanges that meet certain criteria established by the Fund. There is no assurance that the Fund will request such information with sufficient frequency to detect or deter excessive trading or that review of such information will be sufficient to detect or deter excessive trading effectively. Furthermore, an insurance company may be limited by the terms of an underlying insurance contract regarding frequent trading from restricting short-term trading of mutual fund shares by contract owners, thereby limiting the ability of such insurance company to implement remedial steps to deter market timing activity in the Fund.

If the Fund identifies market timing activity, the insurance company will be contacted and asked to take steps to prevent further market timing activity (e.g., sending warning letters, placing trade restrictions on the contract holder's account in question, or closing the account). If the insurance company refuses or is unable to take such remedial action, a determination will be made whether additional steps should be taken, including, if appropriate, terminating the relationship with such insurance company.

Although the Fund will use reasonable efforts to prevent market timing activities in the Fund's shares, there can be no assurances that these efforts will be successful. As some insurance companies' contract holders may use various strategies to disguise their trading practices, the Fund's ability to detect frequent trading activities by insurance companies' contract holders may be limited by the ability and/or willingness of the insurance companies to monitor for these activities.

For further information about the Fund, please call or write your insurance company, or call 1-800-826-2333, or write to the Fund at the address on the cover page.

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#### IV. FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

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The financial highlights table is intended to help you understand the Fund's Initial Class of shares financial performance for the past five years. Certain information reflects financial results for a single Fund share. The total returns in the table represent the rate that an investor would have earned or lost on an investment in the Fund (assuming reinvestment of all dividends and distributions). The information has been audited by Ernst & Young LLP, the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, whose report, along with the Fund's financial statements are included in the Fund's annual report, which is available upon request. Total returns do not reflect charges at the separate account level and if those charges were reflected, the returns would be lower than those shown.

## WORLDWIDE HARD ASSETS FUND

### FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

For a share outstanding throughout each year:

	INITIAL CLASS SHARES				
	YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31,				
	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
<b>Net Asset Value, Beginning of Year</b>	\$ 41.19	\$ 32.71	\$ 27.73	\$ 18.36	\$ 14.84
<b>Income (Loss) from Investment Operations:</b>					
Net Investment Income (Loss)	0.11	(0.02)	0.06	(0.01)	0.08
Net Realized and Unrealized Gain (Loss) on Investments	(16.53)	12.94	6.64	9.45	3.50
<b>Total from Investment Operations</b>	<b>(16.42)</b>	<b>12.92</b>	<b>6.70</b>	<b>9.44</b>	<b>3.58</b>
<b>Less:</b>					
Dividends from Net Investment Income	(0.11)	(0.05)	(0.02)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Distributions from Net Realized Capital Gains	(5.91)	(4.39)	(1.70)	—	—
<b>Total Dividends and Distributions</b>	<b>(6.02)</b>	<b>(4.44)</b>	<b>(1.72)</b>	<b>(0.07)</b>	<b>(0.06)</b>
<b>Redemption Fees</b>	<b>—(c)</b>	<b>—(c)</b>	<b>—(c)</b>	<b>—(c)</b>	<b>—(c)</b>
<b>Net Asset Value, End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 18.75</b>	<b>\$ 41.19</b>	<b>\$ 32.71</b>	<b>\$ 27.73</b>	<b>\$ 18.36</b>
<b>Total Return (a)</b>	<b>(46.12)%</b>	<b>45.36%</b>	<b>24.54%</b>	<b>51.67%</b>	<b>24.23%</b>
<b>RATIOS/SUPPLEMENTARY DATA</b>					
Net Assets, End of Year (000)	\$541,777	\$1,031,487	\$642,822	\$424,017	\$190,206
Ratio of Gross Expenses to Average Net Assets	0.99%	1.01%	1.13%	1.17%	1.20%
Ratio of Net Expenses to Average Net Assets (b)	0.99%	1.01%	1.13%	1.17%	1.20%
Ratio of Net Investment Income (Loss) to Average Net Assets	0.28%	(0.09)%	0.17%	(0.03)%	0.54%
Portfolio Turnover Rate	76%	94%	78%	52%	60%

- (a) Total return is calculated assuming an initial investment of \$10,000 made at the net asset value at the beginning of the period, reinvestment of any dividends and distributions at net asset value on the dividend/distribution payment date and a redemption on the last day of the period. The return does not reflect the deduction of taxes that a shareholder would pay on Fund dividends/distributions or the redemption of Fund shares.
- (b) Excluding interest expense, the ratio would be 1.00% for the year ended December 31, 2007. The ratio for all other years shown would be unchanged if any interest expense incurred during those years was excluded.
- (c) Amount represents less than \$0.005 per share.

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For more detailed information, see the Statement of Additional Information (SAI), which is legally a part of and is incorporated by reference into this Prospectus. Additional information about the Fund's investments is available in the annual and semi-annual reports to shareholders. In the Fund's annual report, you will find a discussion of the market conditions and investment strategies that significantly affected the Fund's performance during its last fiscal year.

- Call Van Eck at 1.800.826.2333, or visit the Van Eck Web site at [www.vaneck.com](http://www.vaneck.com) to request, free of charge, the annual or semi-annual reports, the SAI, or other information about the Fund.
- Information about the Fund (including the SAI) can also be reviewed and copied at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Public Reference Room in Washington, DC. Information about the operation of the Public Reference Room may be obtained by calling 1.202.551.8090.
- Reports and other information about the Fund are available on the EDGAR Database on the SEC's Internet site at <http://www.sec.gov>. In addition, copies of this information may be obtained, after paying a duplicating fee, by electronic request at the following e-mail address: [publicinfo@sec.gov](mailto:publicinfo@sec.gov), or by writing the SEC's Public Reference Section, Washington, DC 20549-0102.

Shares of the Fund are offered only to separate accounts of various insurance companies to fund the benefits of variable life policies and variable annuity policies. This Prospectus sets forth concise information about the Trust and Fund that you should know before investing. It should be read in conjunction with the prospectus for the Contract which accompanies this Prospectus and should be retained for future reference. The Contract involves certain expenses not described in this Prospectus and also may involve certain restrictions or limitations on the allocation of purchase payments or Contract values to the Fund. In particular, the Fund may not be available in connection with a particular Contract or in a particular state. See the applicable Contract prospectus for information regarding expenses of the Contract and any applicable restrictions or limitations with respect to the Fund.

Van Eck Worldwide Insurance Trust  
335 Madison Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

**[www.vaneck.com](http://www.vaneck.com)**

REGISTRATION NUMBER 811-05083