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City of Charleston, SC, Offers Works by J Henry Fair

The City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs is presenting *On the Edge: From Combahee to Winyah*, at City Gallery, through Mar. 6, 2018. This intricate bird's eye view of the southern coastlines features the work of American photographer and South Carolina native, J Henry Fair. An artist's talk will be held on Mar. 4, 2018, at 2pm.

On the Edge highlights the current and future consequences of expansion on the South Carolina shoreline. Fair will create an aerial panorama of the entire coast that will wrap the walls of the City Gallery, punctuated by large format photographs of locations along the seaboard. Contrasting the unparalleled beauty and miles of undeveloped waterfront with explosion of development along the coast, Fair stimulates a dialog evaluating the risks of unsustainable living, showing the most impacted and hidden landscapes from an unexpected perspective.

Comprising less than 10% of land area, today coastal counties house 39% of our population, and are responsible for 45% of GDP, a concentration that is projected to increase. As population density increases, putting greater demand on infrastructure, projected storm-related damage to those systems will require more repair and replacement. Natural shoreline features such as beaches, sand dunes, marshes and mangroves act as buffers to weather systems, while man-made structures fare less well in storms and require expensive repair.

The history of Charleston is interwoven with personal narratives about the hurricanes which have savaged it over the years. Combined with ocean rise, the impact of these storms will go beyond catastrophic to devastating. Logically, preparedness construction and modification should begin now for coastal infrastructure. However, due to the great scope and expense of these projects, and the lack



Work by J Henry Fair

of political agreement on the nature and extent of climate change impacts, many of these adaptations will inevitably be too little and too late, ultimately resulting in the abandonment of low lying coasts.

On the Edge is an aerial photographic documentation of the coast of South Carolina. The idea is to create a "portrait" of the state's littoral areas. Though it is impractical to photograph every meter and every structure, it is certain the coast will change significantly over the coming decades, and knowing what exists now is the first step to planning the future.

In 2000, a red-eye flight from California sparked J Henry Fair's interest in aerial photography when he spotted an unsettling and captivating scene from his window: a sinuous river, with smoke stacks along its banks, pumping stacks of clouds into the sky. Hoping to recreate this view, he rented a Cessna from New Orleans and requested a flight over "Cancer Alley," an industry heavy area between the city and Baton Rouge. In the years since, Fair has continued to travel the country and beyond tracking oil production aluminum and more from the windows of airplanes hoping his art can bring change to the lifestyles of others and himself.

The New York photographer is best known for his *Industrial Scars* series, in

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which he researches our world's most egregious environmental disasters and creates images that are both stunning and horrifying. Fair describes his photographic work as a catalyst. Fair recalled, "My pictures should make something happen, whether it's saving 100 acres of precious wildlands in the middle of suburbia, or illustrating for Steinway the making of their instruments, the photographs affect the world in a larger way."

Fair has been featured in the Columbia Museum of Art exhibit *Eyes on the Edge*. The series consists of inaccessible areas Fair wandered as a child, now crowded by houses with docks, large condominiums and muddled traffic. He has served as Artist-in-Residence at some of the nation's top educational institutions for art and environmental studies, including Dartmouth College, Colorado College,



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Vanderbilt University, and most recently Swarthmore College. Additionally, Fair maintains an active lecture schedule, in which he presents photographic symposia to audiences in the US and abroad.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings, call the gallery at 843/958-6484 or visit (www.charleston-sc.gov/citygallery).

The deadline each month to submit articles, photos and ads is the 24th of the month prior to the next issue. This will be Feb. 24th for the March 2018 issue and Mar. 24 for the April issue. After that, it's too late unless your exhibit runs into the next month. But don't wait for the last minute - send your info now. And where do you send that info? E-mail to (info@carolinaarts.com).



William Halsey

Halsey - McCallum Studio

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