

# Looking Back at Earth: Contemporary Environmental Photography from the Hood Museum of Art's Collection

**HOOD**  
MUSEUM OF ART  
[www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu](http://www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu)

News Release | Contact: Nils Nadeau, Communications and Publications Manager | (603) 646-2095 | [nils.nadeau@dartmouth.edu](mailto:nils.nadeau@dartmouth.edu)

**For Immediate Release  
June 2012**

## **Hood Museum of Art Summer Exhibition Features Environmental Photography**



The portrayal of humans' impact on the earth has been a significant area of exploration for many contemporary photographers. The first unforgettable image of earth from space, taken by the Apollo 8 astronauts in 1968, revealed the fragility and beauty of the planet and soon became the signature image of an emerging environmental movement. What followed was a renewed interest in photographing endangered wilderness and landscapes as well as the irrevocable alterations to the Earth's environment. The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College is proud to present *Looking Back at Earth: Contemporary Environmental Photography from the Hood Museum of Art's Collection*, an exhibition of this compelling work that also celebrates the building of a collection area for a teaching museum; it runs from July 7 through August 26, 2012.

The Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College is proud to present *Looking Back at Earth: Contemporary Environmental Photography from the Hood Museum of Art's Collection*, an exhibition of this compelling work that also celebrates the building of a collection area for a teaching museum; it runs from July 7 through August 26, 2012.

Professors from a number of college departments have already taught with most of its twenty photographs by sixteen accomplished photographers in the museum's study-storage classroom. "The Hood Museum of Art is deeply committed to this teaching process, and we continue to explore new and creative ways for our visitors to have transformative encounters with original works of art in our classrooms and galleries," said Michael Taylor, director of the museum.

The exhibition was co-curated by Katherine Hart, Associate Director and Barbara C. and Harvey P. Hood Curator of Academic Programming, and Hood curatorial Mellon Special Project Intern Chanon (Kenji) Praepipatmongkol, a Dartmouth College junior. Kenji, a comparative literature major, first became involved with the Hood as a sophomore when he was part of a non-curricular museum course titled Museum Collecting 101 that introduced a group of students to the acquisitions process in an art museum and ultimately chose a work by environmental photographer J Henry Fair to add to the Hood's collection. The Hood is delighted to welcome J Henry Fair to campus on Tuesday, July 17, for his artist lecture titled "Industrial Scars: The Art of Activism."

*Looking Back at Earth* also resonates remarkably well with the ongoing spring–summer exhibition *Nature Transformed: Edward Burtynsky's Vermont Quarry Photographs in Context*. Whereas Burtynsky's works comment on the specific impact of quarrying on the environment, finding sublime and at times outright magnificent beauty in these profound human interventions, the photographers in *Looking Back at Earth* take a more direct (though no less stunning) approach. Co-curator Kenji Praepipatmongkol observes, "Contemporary

# Looking Back at Earth: Contemporary Environmental Photography from the Hood Museum of Art's Collection

**HOOD**  
MUSEUM OF ART  
[www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu](http://www.hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu)

News Release | Contact: Nils Nadeau, Communications and Publications Manager | (603) 646-2095 | [nils.nadeau@dartmouth.edu](mailto:nils.nadeau@dartmouth.edu)

environmental photography helps us to imagine new ways that we might relate to the Earth that go beyond either romantic awe or lament.”

The majority of the photographs on display are by artists and documentary photographers who are deeply concerned with drawing attention to pressing environmental problems including sustainability, climate change, and pollution. These images do not often explicitly elucidate these issues but instead shed light and draw attention to landscapes that have been threatened or adversely affected by the actions of governments, corporations, and individuals. Taken together, they overturn the romanticized notion of nature, forming instead a kaleidoscopic archive that documents the complexity of disparate but interconnected natural, human, and industrial ecosystems today.

This exhibition evolved out of the expressed interest of Dartmouth undergraduates in the issues raised by the practice and products of environmental photography, and environmental studies students contributed to a series of panels on exhibition themes. The exhibition’s thematic categories include consumption and waste, industrial impact, density, Arctic tracts/ks, sustainable versus unsustainable, and powering the future. Courses that have featured works from this exhibition include an environmental studies writing course offered by Terry Tempest Williams, a geography course on qualitative methods in which students looked at the different ways images provide narrative and a sense of place, and a studio art photography course. The Hood Museum of Art hopes to commence a long and fruitful tradition of teaching with these kinds of objects with the exhibition of this core grouping and is confident that the public will find them as engaging as Dartmouth’s students.

## **About the Hood:**

The mission of the Hood Museum of Art, as a teaching museum, is to create an ideal learning environment that fosters transformative encounters with works of art. This dynamic educational and cultural facility houses one of the oldest and largest college collections in the country, with more than 70,000 objects acquired since 1772. Among its most important works are six Assyrian stone reliefs that date from around 900 BCE. The collection also presents art from other ancient cultures, the Americas, Europe, Africa, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and many more regions of the world. The Hood seeks to inspire and educate through direct engagement with richly diverse works of art, and offers ongoing highlights displays from its permanent collection, special exhibitions and publications, an online collections database, and a wide array of programs and events for visitors of all ages. Entry to the museum and virtually all museum programs is free and open to everyone.

**Image caption:** J Henry Fair, *Arsenic and Water*, March 2009, C-print. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College: Purchased through a gift from the Krehbiel Foundation; selected by Dartmouth College students who participated in the Hood Museum of Art spring 2011 seminar Museum Collecting 101; 2011.26. © J Henry Fair