

STORM KING ART CENTER

STORM KING PRESENTS *INDICATORS: ARTISTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE* FEATURING WORKS BY MORE THAN A DOZEN ARTISTS THAT EXPLORE THE CHANGING CLIMATE

On view from May 19 through November 11, 2018



Left: Mary Mattingly, *Along the Lines of Displacement: A Tropical Food Forest*, 2018. Paurotis palm, ponytail palm and coconut palm, 60 x 50 x 22 ft. Courtesy the artist and Robert Mann Gallery. Photograph by Jerry L. Thompson. Right: Jenny Kendler, *Birds Watching*, 2018. Reflective film mounted on aluminum on steel frame, 6 ft. 6 in. x 40 ft. x 24 in. Courtesy the artist. Photograph by the artist.

Mountainville, NY, June 4, 2018—**Storm King Art Center** presents *Indicators: Artists on Climate Change*, an exhibition featuring artworks by 17 artists including one artist collective. Works included in the exhibition explore the impacts of the changing climate in ways that incorporate scientific, cultural, and aesthetic perspectives. Artists will reveal how the acts of making and viewing art differ in both approach and effect from research, advocacy, or reportage on this multifaceted subject. Both indoor and outdoor installations, including pieces newly created for the exhibition at Storm King, will illuminate the threats of a changing climate to our biological world and to humanity. *Indicators* provides artists with a platform from which to reflect on the topic of climate change by creating works that can command attention for difficult subjects and catalyze creativity, ideas, and solutions.

John P. Stern, President of Storm King, says, “From its founding in 1960, Storm King has prioritized environmental projects including land conservation, reclamation of industrial sites for sensitive landscaping for art using native plants, and preservation of wildlife habitat corridors in the Hudson Valley. This exhibition features artists whose site-sensitive and site-specific works resonate with Storm King’s mission and history of environmental stewardship and that further the dialogue between art and nature while also speaking to broader issues that affect regional, national, and global ecological health.”

The organizers of the exhibition are Nora Lawrence, Curator; David Collens, Director and Chief Curator; and Sarah Diver, Curatorial Assistant, who collaborated closely with artists to develop their ideas and proposed projects for the exhibition. Participating artists include: **David Brooks, Dear Climate, Mark Dion, Ellie Ga, Justin Brice Guariglia, Allison Janae Hamilton, Jenny Kendler, Maya Lin, Mary Mattingly, Alan Michelson, Mike Nelson, Steve Rowell, Gabriela Salazar, Rebecca Smith, Tavares Strachan, Meg Webster, and Hara Woltz.**

“With its mission to foster the bond between art, nature, and visitors, Storm King’s 500-acre setting offers a stunning backdrop for an exhibition of this kind, one that explores new ways for the public to understand the effects of climate change and, hopefully, take action to help curb its advances,” explains Lawrence.

Many artists have created new, site-specific works that use Storm King’s unique landscape and location to examine the challenges and repercussions of this global issue. Although united by this overarching theme, works included in *Indicators* span a variety of media and represent a wide spectrum of interpretations, perspectives, and ideas related to climate change.

For his newly created work, *Permanent Field Observations*, artist **David Brooks** (b. 1975) has identified several natural elements found throughout Storm King’s peripheral wooded areas to cast in bronze. Brooks cast objects, like rotting tree stumps, tangles of roots, acorns perched atop emerging rocks, and other naturally occurring minutia, and installed the bronze renditions back in their original locations next to the objects from which they were cast, where they will remain permanently affixed in place. These elements that were chosen for their compositional sensibility are, in his words, “ephemeral sculptural situations that act as veritable ready-mades.” Brooks is interested in the relationship between geologic and human timelines; hence, the bronze-cast elements will be in-situ forever, like fossils detailing this climate moment for future generations and species. A map on view in the Museum Building gallery plots the precise locations of these fossilized field observations, which visitors can use to perform their own search for the objects. This project reveals the frustration involved in looking for something difficult to apprehend, like climate change itself.

Dear Climate (2014–ongoing) is a creative-research project that hacks the aesthetics of public information posters and guided meditation podcasts to shift ways of thinking and feeling about the climate. In *General Assembly*, their first outdoor installation, Dear Climate chose to create a rhythmic and ceremonial procession of flags, reminiscent of those at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and place it around Storm King’s tram circle. The series of banners that invite visitors to reconsider their relationships to species life and climate change. Dear Climate envisions these twenty flags as enacting a call and response: the black flags posit current problems, and the white flags respond with creative solutions. Dear Climate is: Marina Zurkow, Una Chaudhuri, Fritz Ertl, and Oliver Kellhammer.

A sculpture by **Mark Dion** (b. 1961) is situated near the pond in Storm King’s South Fields, comprising a weathered wooden cabin filled with the trappings of a scientific lab station. Recently featured in Prospect.4 New Orleans, the work is entitled *Field Station for the Melancholy Marine Biologist*. A lifelong collector, Mark Dion has accumulated imagined belongings of a marine biologist for this structure, which is intended to be experienced only voyeuristically, through the windows and doors. Dion asks viewers to enter the workday of a marine biologist, whose daily collection, study, and interpretation of a natural world threatened by climate change may leave him or her with a sense of despair. Once installed at Storm King, the contents of the “lab” will reflect the ecology of the surrounding area, highlighting Dion’s practice of appropriating archaeological and scientific methods to question authoritative knowledge about our environments.

Selections from *The Fortunetellers*, a multimedia project by **Ellie Ga** (b. 1976), are on display inside in the Museum Building. The project centers on the artist’s experience as a crewmember aboard the ‘Tara,’ the second boat in recorded Arctic history built to withstand the pressure of

pack ice for years at a time. A reflection of her five-month expedition near the North Pole, the project constructs a visual narrative of Ga's experience as a resident artist alongside the climate scientists and fellow crew aboard the ship, as they collected data to measure and contribute to a future understanding of the Arctic pack ice. The details Ga chooses to highlight are rich with larger symbolism. Ga and the crew aboard the Tara were themselves obsessed with their own future: how long they would keep drifting and when they would get back home. Tarot cards (an element of the installation reminiscent of the ship's name) signify the uncertainty of this future, and the lines of a palm reading conjure up the image of prematurely cracking ice.

Artist and environmental activist **Justin Brice Guariglia** (b. 1974) presents a group of topographical works inside the Museum building, featuring aerial imagery of landscapes affected by human activities including mining and agriculture. Guariglia's surprisingly beautiful images incorporate traditional art materials and precious metals—including copper, gold, and platinum—that have been abraded with power tools. Guariglia also debuts a large outdoor work entitled *Ecologisms (Highway Sign 1.0)*, a solar-powered traffic sign that displays three-line ecological aphorisms written by the philosopher Timothy Morton, whose work lies at the intersection of object-oriented thought and ecological studies. These ominous but often amusing slogans point to the complicity of mankind in changes to the planet.

Allison Janae Hamilton (b. 1984), a New York-based visual artist, created a new work entitled *The peo-ple cried mer-cy in the storm*, comprising a towering stack of tambourines on an island in one of Storm King's ponds. The installation was inspired by "Florida Storm," a 1928 hymn written by Judge Jackson about the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926, as well as accounts of the 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane, referenced in Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Both storms devastated the state of Florida, the latter killing thousands of black migrant workers who were buried in unmarked mass graves. The work contemplates how climate-related disasters can expose existing social inequities and how affected communities contend with this twofold devastation. A performance will activate the installation at Storm King, involving musicians presenting a soundscape arranged by Hamilton and inspired by the original "Florida Storm."

Jenny Kendler (b.1980), Chicago-based artist and current artist-in-residence with the Natural Resources Defense Council, drew inspiration for her site-specific commission, *Birds Watching*, from researching local species of birds present in the Hudson Valley. This "flock" of one hundred colorful, reflective birds' eyes, fabricated in the same fashion as street signs, mimics the experience of seeing the glowing reflection of an animal's eyes at night. Each eye depicts a bird species considered threatened or endangered by climate change, creating a portrait of what may disappear in fifty years' time, according to a recent study by the Audubon Society. Kendler emphasizes ideas of reflectivity and reciprocal vision, reminding us that birds are also sentient beings capable of looking back at us, and highlights the responsibility of human beings to live harmoniously within a larger ecosystem.

Brooklyn-based artist **Mary Mattingly** (b. 1978) expands upon her past investigations into issues of sustainability, climate change, and displacement to create *Along the Lines of Displacement: A Tropical Food Forest*. For this project, tropical fruit trees—coconut palms, a ponytail palm, and others—were brought from Florida to Storm King and installed as if they were a living sculpture. This project uses the language of architectural follies, presenting something unfamiliar and unexpected in a particular environment—in this case even creating the possibility that people might be able to go harvest a palm tree in upstate New York. Mattingly's work offers a visible

demonstration of the reverberations of climate change within Storm King's environment by transforming the landscape and, as Mattingly has explained, the work allows visitors to "think about what potentials the future of Upstate New York might have in a way that I think will be both unnerving and sad, but also potentially promising of different ways of living and being."

Mike Nelson (b. 1967), a British artist best known for his labyrinthine architectural installations, presents a work inside the Museum Building entitled *80 Circles Through Canada: The Last Possessions of an Orcadian Mountain Man* (2013). Informed by his friend and collaborator, the artist and mountaineer Erlend Williamson, the piece comprises a large set of driftwood shelves laden with Williamson's last possessions before falling to his death in the Scottish Highlands. The reverse of the structure acts as a screen on which to project 80 transparencies of discarded stone fire circles, found and documented between Banff and Vancouver in 2012-13. The exhibition at Storm King marks the first time this work has been shown in the United States.

A New York-based artist of Puerto Rican descent, **Gabriela Salazar** (b.1981) incorporated her family's history as coffee growers into a built environment in dialogue both with post-hurricane temporary shelters erected in the Caribbean and the *semilleros* used to protect young coffee seedlings. The installation features a tent structure draped with a blue tarp over a platform of cinderblock forms made from both concrete and compressed coffee grounds. Throughout the course of the exhibition, Salazar will exchange select concrete blocks for blocks made of coffee grounds, which will slowly disintegrate. These precarious blocks will leave a new and ever-shifting imprint upon the space, reiterating its impermanence. Salazar's project raises difficult questions regarding the use of concrete, a material that is vital to climate-change-related hurricane protection and building, yet whose manufacture is also one of the largest sources of carbon emissions in the world.

New York-based artist **Tavares Strachan** (b. 1979) interrogates the narratives, histories, and myths surrounding the Arctic as well as its vulnerability to today's changing climate. In 2013 Strachan traveled to the North Pole, re-creating U.S. Naval Commander Robert Peary's "discovery" of it in 1909. That early expedition was greatly indebted to the skills and talents of African American explorer Mathew Henson and four Inuit guides, although they were given no significant credit for their pivotal roles. When completing his own trek in the Arctic, the artist carried a flag (on view in Storm King's indoor galleries) made by his mother, referencing the one planted by Peary upon his arrival at the North Pole. In his panoramic photograph *Standing Alone*, Strachan points out the irony of putting any such permanent marker at what is now widely considered a conceptual rather than fixed point, since the ice shelf covering the North Pole is constantly shifting and often moves several miles within minutes. Addressing the slippage between fact and fiction and the tendency of historical narratives to exclude certain figures, the artist draws parallels among the ambiguity surrounding Henson's role in the historic expedition, the questionable authenticity of his own performance of this journey, and misinformation surrounding the discussion on climate change as a whole— notions captured simply in a neon sign declaring *Sometimes Lies Are Prettier*.

Artist **Hara Woltz** (b. 1971) presents *Vital Signs*, an interactive weather station whose nine elements refer to the disappearance of Arctic ice and the way scientists study its decline in a shifting climate. The shape of each element recalls the storage tubes used to house ice core samples collected by paleoclimatologists to study climate history. Changes in color and height make visible the accelerated increase in dark oceanic water due to climate change, which results in further melting of arctic ice sheets—a phenomenon called the Arctic amplification effect. *Vital*

Signs invites visitors to engage with the collection of data, and to experience the temperature differentials between the dark and light areas as well as the volumetric change representing melted ice. The instrument at the top of the pole gathers real-time climate data.

Artist **Maya Lin** (b. 1959) has long taken climate change as a critical inspiration for her artistic production. The display she created for Storm King's exhibition, titled *The Secret Life of Grasses*, includes three ten-foot-tall tubes, each housing a single stalk of prairie grass and making its entire structure—from root to tip—visible. The clear tubes demonstrate the extensive root systems shared by the types of native grasses that have been reintroduced into Storm King's landscape over the past twenty years. Beyond the visual appeal of these intricate natural pathways, Lin is interested in the path forward that native grasses suggest: "The ability of these root structures to absorb carbon points to a potential solution to climate change—namely by restoring our soils and grasslands and by reforming our ranching and agricultural practices, we could not only improve food production, make our soils more resilient and able to stand longer periods of drought . . . but we could significantly reduce climate emissions, and restore biodiversity."

Midstream at Twilight, a single channel video by research-based artist **Steve Rowell** (b. 1969), traces pipelines and transit pathways of a material called petroleum coke (or petcoke), a particularly destructive and insidious form of petroleum that has since been barred from production in the United States—in part due to the artist's film. The work begins in Alberta, Canada, and, using drone footage, moves south into the Midwestern United States and then to Los Angeles, from where petcoke was shipped for sale to China and other nations. Rowell opens the film with a definition of twilight: "a period or state of obscurity, ambiguity, or gradual decline," and has described the film as depicting "a fossil fuel industry in decline."

Rebecca Smith (b. 1954)'s *Maquette for Weather Watch* is one of a series of sculptures the artist created in response to novelist Margaret Atwood's climate-focused trilogy *MaddAddam*. In Atwood's apocalyptic landscape, disasters resulting from climate change have devastated the livable areas of Earth, and the characters in the novels bear witness to extreme environmental collapse. Smith envisions her work as a depiction of the sole structure to survive in the books' radically disrupted setting. The base is made of mycelium, a sustainable material made with mushroom fiber, produced by Ecovative, a company outside of Albany, New York.

For his video *Wolf Nation*, **Alan Michelson** (b. 1953) has transformed found footage of red wolves, a critically endangered indigenous species, into a vibrant meditation linking their eradication with that of the Munsees, the Lenape people known as the Wolf Tribe, whose ancestral territory included the land of Storm King Art Center. The artist draws upon the Native tradition of wampum belts—sashes woven of white and purple shell beads carrying solemn messages. Michelson's video, accompanied by a haunting soundtrack by White Mountain Apache musician and composer Laura Ortman, offers a contemporary, digital version of a wampum belt, affirming an indigenous worldview and espousing solidarity across species.

Meg Webster (b. 1944) has created a living sculpture on Museum Hill titled *Growing Under Solar Panels*, which will change and grow throughout the exhibition's season. Working in collaboration with Storm King's landscaping team, she has incorporated native plants and wildflowers that eventually will be replanted across Storm King's land. Solar panels generate electricity that then powers a watering system that draws from nearby pools. For the artist, the panels themselves also have a proud sculptural presence. This project is patterned after the work of Stephen Herbert, professor of agronomy at the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, University of

Massachusetts, Amherst, in collaboration with David Marley of Hyperion Systems, a company that specializes in large-scale solar power production. By lifting solar panels high and leaving ample space between them, Herbert and Marley found they could achieve improved plant growth compared with growing in the open. Working closely with these two scientists has allowed Webster to imagine a new iteration of her lifelong artistic project, which stems from a deep devotion to environmental preservation as well as her “driving need to make a garden.”

Exhibition Catalogue

The illustrated exhibition catalogue will include texts on each work in the exhibition; often in the artists’ own words. It will also include an essay by Curator Nora Lawrence, which will speak to larger themes of works in the exhibition, and reflect on the importance of an exhibition of this nature at Storm King. The catalogue will be available in the Storm King Museum Shop and online beginning June 2018.

About Storm King Art Center

Widely celebrated as one of the world’s leading sculpture parks, Storm King Art Center has welcomed visitors from across the globe for over fifty years. Located only one hour north of New York City, in the lower Hudson Valley, its 500 acres of rolling hills, woodlands, and fields of native grasses and wildflowers provide the setting for a collection of more than 100 carefully-sited sculptures created by some of the most acclaimed artists of our time, including Alice Aycock, Mark di Suvero, Andy Goldsworthy, Zhang Huan, Maya Lin, Richard Serra, Joel Shapiro, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.

Storm King’s 2018 season runs from April 4 through December 8, 2018. For more information, visit: www.stormking.org.

Join the conversation on social media by mentioning **Storm King Art Center** and using the hashtag #StormKingIndicators when posting.

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Media Contacts:

Meg Huckaby / FITZ & CO / mhuckaby@fitzandco.com / 646.589.0928

Meg Blackburn / FITZ & CO / mblackburn@fitzandco.com / 212.620.7390

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