



SUN VALLEY CENTER
FOR THE ARTS
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SUN VALLEY, ID 83353

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Mirage: Energy, Water and Creativity in the Great Basin

June 12–August 23, 2019
Sun Valley Center for the Arts



Center hours & location:
Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm
Sats in Jul & Aug, 11am–5pm
191 Fifth Street East, Ketchum, Idaho

Sun Valley Center for the Arts
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COMPANY OF FOOLS

110 N. Main Street, Hailey, Idaho
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Mirage is supported in part by the
National Endowment for the Arts and the
Robert Lehman Foundation.
The exhibition will travel to the
Boise Art Museum in 2020.

Cover:
Laura McPhee, *Tire Shop, Cherry Creek, Nevada*, 2017, archival pigment print,
courtesy the artist and Gail Severn Gallery, Ketchum

Introductory Panels: clockwise from bottom right:
Cedra Wood, *Slow Growth (Cave Lint Monsters, Lehman Caves)*, 2019,
acrylic on panel, courtesy the artist

Fazal Sheikh, *39°24'41"N / 112°46'24"W, Remains of barrack foundations and
communal area, Topaz War Relocation Center for Japanese-American internees,
outskirts of Delta, Utah, October 13, 2017*, pigment print,
© Fazal Sheikh, courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York

Laura McPhee, *Sparklers, Spiral Jetty, Gunnison Bay, Great Salt Lake, Box Elder
County, Utah, 2004*, archival pigment print,
courtesy the artist and Gail Severn Gallery, Ketchum

Mailer Panel:
Andrea Zittel, *Wall Sprawl #4 (Las Vegas, Next to Nellis Air Force Base)*, 2011,
inkjet on J15 Blueback paper, © Andrea Zittel, courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles



The Great Basin is a vast expanse of land covering much of the American West, with its rivers draining internally rather than to the sea. Its boundaries circumscribe parts of Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and California, and nearly all of Nevada. *Mirage* uses the idea of a closed watershed system as a metaphor for thinking about this uniquely dynamic landscape as a source of regenerative power: a place of resource extraction and renewable energy; a place that has long generated creativity (including Land Art works); and a place of shifting boundaries, as cities expand while a National Monument abutting the Great Basin faces reduction.

The Great Basin is also a place of contradictions: home to multiple ecosystems and topographies, it is now largely arid but was once an inland sea. Despite the fact that it holds vast stretches of open, unoccupied land, the Great Basin is a place of mystery and obscurity. Its scale allows artists, corporations and government agencies to do things there they can't do elsewhere.



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MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Inspired in part by her great-grandmother's work as an itinerant schoolteacher in mining towns throughout Nevada, the photographs in **Laura McPhee's** project *Desert Chronicle* approach the history of the Great Basin on both geologic and human scale. From images of abandoned towns to photographs of contemporary gold mines and wind farms, her work considers the human relationship to the landscape of the Great Basin as a place of reinvention, exploitation and renewal.

Photographer **Emmet Gowin** has made aerial photographs throughout the western United States that illuminate the human impact on the landscape. One body of photographs records the scarred and cratered landscapes of the Nevada Test Site, the site of more than 900 nuclear tests. His images also reveal the long-term effects of other human activities on the surface of the Great Basin's landscapes.

Artist **Fazal Sheikh** has collaborated with writer Terry Tempest Williams on *Exposure*, which emerged in response to the recent decision to significantly reduce two National Monuments in Utah. One of these is Grand Staircase-Escalante, currently defined by the Great Basin's boundary on its northern edge. Photographs from this project and related work are part of the exhibition.

The exhibition includes new work by painter **Cedra Wood**. The Center commissioned Wood to travel throughout the Great Basin, investigating ecological concepts through hyper-realistic imagery that often incorporates fantasy. She

found inspiration for her new works at sites that reveal the extremes in topography and environment within the Great Basin.

Painter and printmaker **Frances Ashforth** contributes new work about the Great Basin watershed that draws on her deep interest in the human relationship to water. Her monotypes' lyrical beauty reflects her conservationist impulses. The prints in the exhibition respond to two distinct sites—Oregon's Ana River/Summer Lake area and Utah's Bear River/Antelope Island.

Other work in the exhibition considers the Great Basin as a site of creative energy—a place where artists have been able to pursue projects they couldn't realize elsewhere. **Andrea Zittel** was one of the founders of High Desert Test Sites near Joshua Tree, California, a place for artistic and cultural experimentation that has hosted projects by numerous artists. The exhibition includes a painting by Zittel paired with *Wall Sprawl* wallpaper generated from aerial photographs of development in the Great Basin's deserts.

For Land Artists working in the 1970s, the Great Basin offered the opportunity to execute large-scale projects in remote landscapes relatively untouched by development. Vast open spaces and inexpensive real estate allowed **Nancy Holt** and **Robert Smithson** to create works outside (and far from) the traditional institutional structures of the art world. *Mirage* includes Holt's film *Sun Tunnels* and Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*, both made during their work on their earthworks of the same name. Alongside these works are a series of related exhibition prints.

Opening Celebration and Panel Discussion

Thu, Jun 13, 5pm

FREE at The Center, Ketchum

Join us as we celebrate the opening of *Mirage*. Festivities begin at 5pm, followed by a panel discussion:

Is Landscape Still Relevant in 21st-Century Art?

A Discussion with Jim Ballinger, Peter Hassrick and Frances Ashforth

Thu, Jun 13, 6pm

FREE at The Center, Ketchum

Join two esteemed museum directors and exhibition artist Frances Ashforth in a discussion that explores landscape in 21st-century America. At this moment, when many contemporary artists work in nontraditional media, why does artwork that responds to landscape continue to resonate? How does the trajectory of landscape art mirror the time in which it is made?

Jim Ballinger served as Director of Phoenix Art Museum for 33 years. Peter Hassrick is former Director of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West and the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. Painter and printmaker Frances Ashforth has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions throughout the U.S.

Photographing the Great Basin: A Conversation with Emmet Gowin, Laura McPhee and Fazal Sheikh

Tue, Jul 9, 6pm

FREE at The Community Library, Ketchum

Join The Center for a conversation with three internationally known photographers about their work in the Great Basin. What drew these celebrated artists to spend time in the region? How has each used photography to tell complicated stories about the environment and ecosystems of the Great Basin, and about the intersection of governmental agencies, corporations and individuals on its landscapes?

Evening Exhibition Tours

Thu, Jun 27 and Thu, Aug 15, 5:30pm

FREE at The Center, Ketchum

Enjoy a glass of wine as you tour the exhibition with The Center's curators.

Gallery Walks

Fri, Jul 5 and Fri, Aug 2, 5–7pm

FREE at The Center, Ketchum

In conjunction with *Mirage*, Gail Severn Gallery presents:

Tony Foster Watercolour Diaries: Great Basin & Copper Basin

Jun 14–Jul 29

Opening Celebration: Fri, Jun 14, 5:30–6:30pm

Artist Chat: Sat, Jul 6, 10am

Gail Severn Gallery, Ketchum

Tony Foster Watercolour Diaries pairs works inspired by the vast landscapes of the Great Basin with intimate works made in Idaho's Copper Basin. The exhibition includes, as Foster writes, "a large-scale pair of paintings documenting a hazardous hike across Death Valley in 1991, and time spent in the White Mountains in 1993—Great Basin's lowest and highest points respectively," as well as newer works that document "a few weeks camping, exploring and painting a small part of the world that has become like a second home to me."



Images, left to right, top to bottom:
Frances Ashforth, *Ana River 4*, 2018, Akua and Charbonel ink on Arches 88, courtesy the artist

Emmet Gowin, *Subsidence Craters and the Yucca Fault, Looking North on Yucca Flat, Nevada Test Site*, 1996, gelatin silver print, © Emmet and Edith Gowin, courtesy Pace/MacGill Gallery, New York

Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970, Great Salt Lake, Utah, Collection of Dia Art Foundation, Photography: Gianfranco Gorgoni; © Holt/Smithson Foundation and Dia Art Foundation, Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Nancy Holt, *Sun Tunnels*, 1973-76, Great Basin Desert, Utah, Collection Dia Art Foundation with support from Holt/Smithson Foundation, Photography: Nancy Holt; © Holt/Smithson Foundation and Dia Art Foundation, Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Andrea Zittel, *Prototype for Billboard at A-Z West: Body in Space with Object #1*, 2011, AC plywood, Polyurethane, matte acrylic paint, © Andrea Zittel, courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Tony Foster painting in the Copper Basin of Idaho, Summer 2018. Photo by Rowan Halkes. Courtesy of Foster Art & Wilderness Foundation



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