

# Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum  
Busch-Reisinger Museum  
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

## Press Release

### The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts Awards Grant to Harvard Art Museums for Fall 2021 Photography Exhibition *Devour the Land*



Joshua Dudley Greer (American, b. 1980), *TNT Storage Igloo N6-B, Point Pleasant, West Virginia*, 2012. Archival pigment print. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Richard and Ronay Menschel Fund for the Acquisition of Photographs, [2019.345](#).  
© Joshua Dudley Greer; image courtesy of the artist.

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The Harvard Art Museums have been awarded a \$100,000 grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts to support the upcoming Fall 2021 exhibition *Devour the Land: War and American Landscape Photography since 1970*. The exhibition will be the first to address the unknown and often unexpected ways habitats and well-being in the United States are affected by American warfare and the military-industrial complex. The grant, which was announced as part of the Warhol Foundation's [Fall 2020 grants program](#), provides general support for the project. *Devour the Land* is organized by the Harvard Art Museums and will include a catalogue and robust public programming.

With more than 130 works across 7 thematic groupings, the exhibition illustrates the national footprint of the military on the environment, the wide range of industries directly related to these activities, and the

human impact of and responses to this activity. The exhibition finds its historic roots in the Civil War era, with images that show the devastation left by troops who were instructed by General William Tecumseh Sherman to ransack farms and indiscriminately set fires to eliminate the transportation and industrial infrastructure that sustained the Confederate Army. “We have devoured the land,” he declared. While recognizing its links to a trajectory that originated in the 19th century, *Devour the Land* begins with the 1970s, a dynamic period for environmental activism and photography, and includes a concentration of works from the 1980s onward by an international roster of 53 artists.

“We are grateful to The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts for their generous support of *Devour the Land*,” said Martha Tedeschi, the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums. “Photographs, for their part, are often described as bearing witness, a kind of silent and objective reportage on events both public and private. The artists featured in *Devour the Land*, however, remind us that photographs are usually anything but passive documentation; they are an active invitation to look beyond the surface at what is unseen, a call to attention and at times a call to action.”

The photographers represented range from professional photographic artists and photojournalists to lesser known and emerging photographers, including Robert Adams, Federica Armstrong, Sheila Pree Bright, Robert Del Tredici, Joshua Dudley Greer, Terry Evans, Lucas Foglia, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Sharon Gilbert, Ashley Gilbertson, David T. Hanson, Stacy Kranitz, Jin Lee, Freda Leinwand, Elaine Mayes, Susan Meiselas, Richard Misrach, Barbara Norfleet, Oscar Palacio, Mark Power, Eli Reed, Jeff Rich, Sim Chi Yin, Sharon Stewart, Robert Toedter, Stephen Tourlentes, Alex Webb, and Will Wilson. *Devour the Land* showcases photographers involved in grassroots environmental movements and who address the intersection of issues of militarism, land use, land management, and public health. Moreover, the project highlights the people of color whose communities are often overlooked in environmental photography. Because these are the very communities that bear the most direct environmental effects of our militarized landscape, race is an inescapable consideration in this study.

The majority of works slated for the exhibition come from the permanent collections of the Harvard Art Museums, with many recently acquired. Additional works will be on loan from other Harvard University repositories, North American public institutions, and private collections.

“We are very pleased to support the Harvard Art Museums and the exhibition *Devour the Land: War and American Landscape Photography since 1970*. Its attention to historic and contemporary intersections of photography and environmental destruction frames a new and important consideration of both the reverberations of military aggression and the power of photography to capture and shift them,” said Rachel Bers, Program Director of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. “The exhibition exemplifies the foundation’s belief that visual artists make vital contributions to social, political, and cultural conversations, opening new pathways of thought and action.”

*Devour the Land* is curated by Makeda Best, the Richard L. Menschel Curator of Photography; she joined the Harvard Art Museums in 2017. In addition to publishing widely in scholarly journals and catalogues, she is author of a recently released book on Civil War–era documentary war photography, *Elevate the Masses: Alexander Gardner, Photography and Democracy in Nineteenth-Century America* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020). Her previous exhibitions at Harvard include *Time is Now: Photography and Social Change in James Baldwin’s America* (2018) and *Crossing Lines, Constructing Home: Displacement and Belonging in Contemporary Art* (2019), which she curated with Mary Schneider Enriquez, the Houghton Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

As Best explains: “These works evince a number of concerns, often operating simultaneously and including: communicating the physical and ecological realities of these landscapes; developing approaches that convey the meaning and impact of invisible or diffuse pollutants and toxins; and raising

awareness about economic fallout and racial injustice as integral aspects of landscape. The images ask us to consider the ‘costs’—to life, society, our collective well-being, and to nature.”

*Devour the Land* will be on display September 17, 2021 through January 16, 2022 in the Special Exhibitions Gallery at the Harvard Art Museums. The accompanying illustrated catalogue will present a range of voices at the intersection of art, environmentalism, militarism, photography, and politics, including an essay by Abrahm Lustgarten, senior environmental reporter for ProPublica. The publication is also enhanced by two poems by award-winning poet Ed Roberson and interviews with several of the foremost contemporary artists working in the landscape photography tradition: Sheila Pree Bright, Terry Evans, Ashley Gilbertson, David T. Hanson, Stacy Kranitz, Jin Lee, Richard Misrach, Barbara Norfleet, and Oscar Palacio.

In addition to the grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, *Devour the Land* is supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Publication Funds; the Bolton Fund for American Art, Gift of the Payne Fund; the Rosenblatt Fund for Postwar American Art; and the John R. and Barbara Robinson Family Fund for Photography.

### **About The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts**

In accordance with Andy Warhol’s will, the mission of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts is the advancement of the visual arts. The foundation manages an innovative and flexible grants program while also preserving Warhol’s legacy through creative and responsible licensing policies and extensive scholarly research for ongoing catalogue raisonné projects. To date, the foundation has given over \$218 million in cash grants to over 1,000 arts organizations in 49 states and abroad and has donated 52,786 works of art to 322 institutions worldwide. [warholfoundation.org](http://warholfoundation.org)

### **About the Harvard Art Museums**

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, comprising three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on Asian art, Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern art, and Islamic and later Indian art. Together, the collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation’s premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States. The Harvard Art Museums have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies. [harvardartmuseums.org](http://harvardartmuseums.org)

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