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National Weather Biennale Announces Judges, Deadlines

NORMAN, OKLA. – A new international biennale offering $25,000 in prizes for weather in art has announced a final awards jury in the fields of modern art, meteorology and art museums. The National Weather Center and the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art at the University of Oklahoma, as well as the Norman Arts Council, announced the launch of the National Weather Center Biennale in April. The deadline for entries is Oct. 1.

Prizes totaling $25,000 will be offered to the top winners. An overall prize of $10,000 will be awarded to one work for Best in Show, with $5,000 given to the first-place winners in three categories: painting, works on paper and photography.

After an initial selection by a jury made up of members from each of the participating organizations, 100 final works will be judged by three guest jurors. The final jurors are Christoph Heinrich, the Frederick and Jan Mayer Director of the Denver Art Museum; Spencer Finch, an American artist specializing in glass and light installations; and Jacqui Jeras, a broadcast meteorologist, formerly of CNN.

“An amazing panel of guest judges is very appropriate for this amazing collaboration and the first of its kind: a national juried art exhibition about weather,” said Ghislain d’Humières, director of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. “We are extremely pleased to be working with renowned professionals in three important fields directly related to this project. Their prominence in their respected areas of expertise is a reflection of the quality of art we expect artists all over the world to enter in the biennale.”
The National Weather Center Biennale officially began Earth Day, April 22, with a website designed for online registration and art uploads at www.nwcbiennale.org. The biennale is open to artists of any nationality over the age of 18. Artists may enter up to three original works in any combination of categories. The entry fee is $25 for the first entry and $10 for each subsequent entry. Registration closes Oct. 1. Works selected for an exhibition to be held in 2013 will be notified in late 2012.

Since joining the Denver Art Museum in the fall of 2007, Heinrich has moved quickly to develop a robust program for the museum’s modern and contemporary collection. Before joining the Denver Art Museum, Heinrich served as chief curator for contemporary art, collections and exhibitions at the Hamburg Kunsthalle in Germany. During his 13-year tenure, he organized more than 50 exhibitions, 18 of which were major loan exhibitions from around the world. As a museum professional, his exhibitions have touched on a diverse range of subjects and artists from Andy Warhol to Francis Bacon and from Claude Monet to Vincent van Gogh.

Heinrich attended the Universitat Wien in Vienna, where he studied art history and dramatics. He earned his master of arts and doctoral degrees at the Ludwig-Maximilian-Universitat Munchen. Additionally, Heinrich has published exhibition catalogs and dozens of articles and reviews for catalogs, journals and magazines about contemporary art and ideas.

Finch studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, Hamilton College in New York and Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, and has exhibited internationally. His major 2007 solo exhibition, What Time Is It On The Sun?, at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art was accompanied by a monograph with essays by Susan Cross and Daniel Birnbaum. Finch was included in the Making Worlds exhibition at the 2009 Venice Biennale. His solo exhibition, My Business, with the Cloud, was displayed at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., in 2010.

Finch’s recent public projects include an installation for the High Line in New York City, and the Glass Facade Design for the Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore. His work is held in museum collections, including the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Jeras reported for CNN from 1999 to 2012 and recently took a new assignment. Over the past nearly 15 years, she has dedicated a significant amount of time covering natural disasters. During Hurricane Katrina, Jeras spent 84 hours on the air covering the hurricane and its aftermath. She helped CNN win a Peabody
Award in 2005 for cumulative coverage of Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill.

Jeras earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism and mass communication from Iowa State University’s Greenlee School of Journalism and received a Certificate of Broadcast Meteorology from Mississippi State University. In 2007, she received the Mark Trail Award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. She holds seals of approval from the National Weather Association and the American Meteorological Society and is the current chair of the National Weather Association Broadcast Committee.

“We are honored by our three judges,” said Berrien Moore, director of the National Weather Center. “They bring an artistic sensitivity and breadth with an appreciation of the magic of our planet and its weather. Importantly, all three understand the world of communication and the importance of images.”

Moore also is the dean of the OU College of Atmospheric and Geographic Sciences, vice president of Weather and Climate Programs, and Chesapeake Energy Corporation Chair in Climate Studies.

The biennale’s exhibition of selected works, including the prize winners’, will open to the public Earth Day, April 22, 2013, at the National Weather Center and will close June 2, 2013. Additional information about the exhibition is available on the website and the biennale’s Facebook and Twitter pages.

Alan Atkinson, an art instructor at OU, serves as the exhibition curator and part of the initial selection committee.

“It is exciting to see the different approaches that different artists are taking to the subject,” Atkinson said. “We are seeing everything from fairly straight representational work to abstract and non-objective interpretations of weather as an experience that influences all of us.”

Joining Atkinson as initial jurors will be Moore and Erinn Gavaghan, executive director of the Norman Arts Council.

“We are so fortunate to have both a world renowned art museum and the National Weather Center as part of the University of Oklahoma in Norman,” Gavaghan said. “This is such a wonderful opportunity for the arts community here to work with these two superb institutions who are bringing the worlds of arts and science together for this truly unique biennale exhibition.”

The initial judges will select 100 works from the submitted art entries for the exhibition. The three guest jurors will then select the winning pieces from each of the three categories, as well as the Best of Show prize, from the initial 100 selected works.
Completed in 2006, the 244,000-square-foot National Weather Center building is the anchor of a unique research and learning community that includes the nation’s largest academic meteorology program; five National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research, operations and support organizations; and more than a half dozen private weather and weather technology-related companies – all located within a few hundred yards of each other on the OU Research Campus in Norman, Okla. The central space for the exhibition will be the 9,600-square-foot atrium with gallery lighting and full security.

The National Weather Center’s website is www.nwc.ou.edu. Additional information about the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art is available online at www.ou.edu/fjjma and the Norman Arts Council’s website is www.normanarts.org.

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**IMAGE CUTLINES**

Three final guest judges have been announced to jury the new National Weather Center Biennale, which opened the call for entries in April. $25,000 in prizes will be awarded in three categories, plus a Best of Show. The deadline for entries is Oct. 1. The biennale is open to the public.

Tony Abeyta (Navajo, b. 1965)
*Storm from the South*, 2011
Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.
On loan from a private collector.