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National Weather Center Debuts Art Biennale, Prizes for Weather in Art

NORMAN, OKLA. – How does weather affect the artistic muse? The National Weather Center at the University of Oklahoma teams up with the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and the Norman Arts Council to explore the theme of weather in art with the National Weather Center Biennale – the first national juried exhibition featuring art about weather. The biennale officially begins Earth Day, April 22.

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.

“Art reflects the human relationship with the environment and particularly with weather,” said Berrien Moore, director of the National Weather Center. “Lightning bolts and cloud imagery in Native American pottery, the skies and atmospheres of Georgia O’Keeffe, the Clearing Storm, Sonoma County Hills of Ansel Adams; weather vibrates through art. We are delighted to invite artists to the first National Weather Center Biennale: art’s window on the impact of weather on the human experience.”

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

The National Weather Center Biennale is open to artists of any nationality over the age of 18.
Registration begins April 22 on the biennale’s official website at www.nwcbiennale.org. Artists may enter up to three 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.

The 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.

“The University of Oklahoma’s mission of education is clearly reflected both in the quality of art and programming at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and in the global integrity and technological advances of the National Weather Center,” said Ghislain d’Humieres, director of the FJJMA. “The National Weather Center Biennale unites visual art with weather in a truly unique, interdisciplinary collaboration supported by OU President David L. Boren.”

Alan Atkinson, an art instructor at OU, will serve as the exhibition curator and part of the initial selection committee. Joining Atkinson as initial jurors will be Moore and Erinn Gavaghan, executive director of the Norman Arts Council. The initial judges will select 100 works from the submitted art entries for the exhibition.

Three nationally renowned guest jurors representing national meteorology, contemporary art museums and current artists 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. These judges will be announced at a later date on the biennale’s website.

“It is easy to see how the weather influences peoples’ daily lives, but art often exerts a more subtle influence,” said Atkinson. “It makes sense to combine them in a venue that will underscore the ways that both art and weather shape our humanity.”

Completed in 2006, the 244,000-square-foot National Weather Center building is the anchor of a unique research and learning community including 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 University of Oklahoma 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.
“This is an exciting institutional partnership that represents a great opportunity for artists from around the world to examine the forces of nature at the very point where they impact the human experience, through the agency of weather,” said Atkinson.

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**

The National Weather Center at the University of Oklahoma announces the upcoming opening of a new national art biennale on Earth Day, 2012. The juried art competition explores the impact of weather on humanity through three forms of media: photography, works on paper and painting. 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.