PETROCHEMICAL AMERICA: PROJECT ROOM
PRESENTED BY
THE POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART
September 2 - December 19, 2014

The Pomona College Museum of Art presents the traveling exhibition *Petrochemical America: Project Room* on view from Sept. 2 to Dec. 19. A public reception will be held on Saturday, Sept. 6, 5-7 p.m.

*Petrochemical America* represents a unique collaboration between photographer Richard Misrach, one of the most influential and prolific photographic artists of his generation, and landscape architect Kate Orff, a visionary designer who thinks deeply about connecting our shared landscape with public health, environmental, and ecological imperatives. The exhibition, organized by the Aperture Foundation, brings into focus the industrialized landscape of the Mississippi River Corridor that stretches from Baton Rouge to New Orleans—a place that first garnered attention as “Cancer Alley” because of unusually high reports of cancer and other diseases in the area.

The exhibition reveals traces of their collaborative process and features Misrach’s haunting photographs of the region and Orff’s Ecological Atlas, a series of visual narratives, or “throughlines.”

Misrach’s 1998 and 2010 photographs, taken along 150 miles of the lower Mississippi River, investigates the historical, socioeconomic and environmental conditions that characterize the region. Kate Orff’s “throughlines” are speculative drawings that use research and data mapping to uncover the ways petrochemical resource extraction impacts communities along the “Chemical Corridor” and beyond.

The dialogue between photograph and drawing begins to unpack complex economic and ecological forces that have shaped this landscape, mapping cycles of extraction and transformation from the scale of the neighborhood, to the region and the globe. Ultimately, this joint enterprise offers an expansion of both disciplines and a richly researched and concretely visualized study of the petrochemical industry and American culture, which has become intricately intertwined with its output.

Los Angeles born, Richard Misrach helped pioneer the 1970's renaissance of color photography and large scale presentation practices that are widespread today. Best known for his ongoing series, *Desert Cantos*, a multi-faceted approach to the study of place and man’s complex relationship to it, he has worked in the landscape for over 40 years.
His work has been widely collected and exhibited with one-person exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Centre Pompidou, Paris, among others. A mid-career traveling survey was organized by the Houston Museum of Fine Arts in 1996. His photographs are held in the collections of most major institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

He is the recipient of numerous arts awards including four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 2002 he was awarded the Kulturpreis for Lifetime Achievement in Photography by the German Society for Photography, and in 2008 the Lucie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Fine Art Photography.


Kate Orff is an associate professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation and the founder of the Manhattan-based landscape architecture and urban design studio, SCAPE, which combines research and practice to reimagine the ecological and cultural potential of the urban landscape. Her work weaves together sustainable development, design for biodiversity, and community-based change.

Orff’s 2010 exhibition at New York’s Museum of Modern Art, Oyster-itecture, imagined a living, protective reef as part of a ground-up community process and an ecologically revitalized New York harbor. This initiative recently received a $60 million implementation grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Rebuild by Design Program for a necklace of “Living Breakwaters” in the Outer Harbor. Orff’s books include Gateway: Visions for an Urban National Park. She was named a United States Artist Fellow in 2012 and a member of the National Academy by the National Academy of Design in 2013. Her TED talk on “Reviving New York’s Rivers,” may be accessed at http://www.ted.com/talks/kate_orff_oysters_as_architecture. Professor Orff will speak at the symposium PetroLA on October 11 http://www.pomona.edu/museum/events/2014/oct-10-petro-la.aspx.

The exhibition is accompanied by the symposium PetroLA, Oct. 10 & 11, which will explore the regional impact of the production, refining, and consumption of oil and gas on Southern California.

Symposium Schedule:
Friday, Oct. 10, 7 p.m.
Screening of a student documentary on air pollution currently in production under the direction of Travis Wilkerson and the Pomona Media Guild.

Saturday, Oct. 11
9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Topics and Presenters:

• *Petrochemical America: Picturing Cancer Alley*, Kate Orff, SCAPE founding principle and associate professor of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Columbia University
• *The Santa Barbara Oil Spill*, Roderick Frazier Nash, America's foremost wilderness historian, author of books including *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, and professor emeritus of Environmental Studies at U.C. Santa Barbara
• *History of the Los Angeles Oil Industry*, Nancy Quam-Wickham, professor of history, CSU Long Beach
• "Air Pollution and Fracking in the Southland," Aaron Katzenstein, climate and energy program supervisor, South Coast Air Quality Management District
• Damon Nagami, senior attorney and director of the National Resources Defense Council Southern California Ecosystems Project
• Convener: Char Miller, W.M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis at Pomona College and the author of 10 books including *Public Lands, Public Debates: A Century of Controversy* and *On the Edge: Water, Immigration, and Politics in the Southwest*

The PetroLA symposium will be held in the Pomona College Rose Hills Theatre (Smith Campus Center, 170 E. Sixth St., Claremont, CA). It is sponsored by: Pomona College Environmental Analysis Program, Pomona College Museum of Art and the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability at Pitzer College.

The publication *Petrochemical America*, with photographs by Richard Misrach and Ecological Atlas by Kate Orff, has been recently re-released in soft cover and is available for purchase [http://www.aperture.org/](http://www.aperture.org/). It received an ASLA Honor Award and was selected by the American Institute of Graphic Design (AIGA) as one of the best books of 2012.

*Petrochemical America* has been made possible, in part, with support from Lee Walls, Jr. and the Turner Foundation. The presentation of *Petrochemical America* at Pomona College and the symposium PetroLA are part of the Elemental Arts Initiative at Pomona College, a four-year arts-based academic initiative supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont, CA, and is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Sunday, from 12-5 p.m. and Thursday evenings from 5-11 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit [www.pomona.edu/museum](http://www.pomona.edu/museum).

The Pomona College Museum of Art houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serving as a gallery for the display of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th- and 16th-century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th-century American Indian art and artifacts; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings, and photographs.