

“America's Endangered Coasts”

Photographs by John Ganis

March 18- April 8, 2017

Opening Reception: 7-10pm, Saturday March 18 2017

Artist's talk: 7pm, Thursday March 30 2017

Panel Discussion: Saturday April 8, 2017. Title, speakers and time to be confirmed.

Related event: 5-8pm, Tuesday March 23, *“Photography for Social Change,”* a conference at the College for Creative Studies, moderated by John Ganis, and featuring Wendy Ewald, Vince Cianni, Carlos Diaz and William Valicenti

Background

John Ganis's long-term project *“America's Endangered Coasts”* is a pioneering and thought-provoking photographic survey of coastal areas of the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the United States that are threatened by rising sea levels.

Climate change science often presents itself to the public as a procession of numbers (parts per million CO₂, global surface temperature rise, and so on), and physical mechanisms (the greenhouse effect, melting of the polar ice-caps, etc.). Terrifying as the implications of these measurements and predictions are, they have not been sufficient to tip public opinion over into an overwhelming call for action. As the distinguished climatologist James E. Hansen states in the opening line of his essay for Ganis's book - *“Somehow scientists cannot make the public understand the slow motion tragedy that is unfolding.”*

Ganis's highly detailed, but rarely spectacular, images are each pointedly accompanied by the site's elevation above sea-level. In this way he creates a shared numeric basis with the science of sea level rise. But Ganis's photos also look in a different direction; by focusing on, as he says, *“the unsustainable and seemingly endless development of barrier islands and other fragile coastal environments,”* they *“underscore the absurdity of our current state of denial when it comes to climate change and sea level rise.”*

The exhibition *“America's Endangered Coasts,”* is, of course, centered on the art of John Ganis's photography. But like Ganis's project, it will similarly look out in two directions - to the science of climate change and the physical consequences it predicts for coastal areas, and to the social and psychological mechanisms that sustain our current state of denial with respect to the environment.

John Ganis Biography

Veteran photographer and educator John Ganis's work has appeared in magazines such as *Aperture* and *Fotografia*, exhibitions at institutions such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Center for Creative Photography, and in books by writers such as Lucy Lippard and Liz Wells. His photographs are in collections such as the The Art Institute of Chicago and The Brooklyn Museum of Art, and he has been the recipient of numerous awards including the Harold Jones Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Arizona in 2008. As a young man, Ganis studied with legendary figures such as Lisette Model, Larry Fink, Todd Walker and W. Eugene Smith. He is currently a Professor at the College for Creative Studies

where he teaches fine art photography and is involved in efforts to develop an interdisciplinary concentration in sustainability.