



Connecting, Communicating, & Engaging Communities in Our Watersheds: Public Art Exhibitions in Environmental Crisis

© Rina Faletti

UC Merced • International Water History Association
Art Responds (www.art-responds.com)
Napa County Watershed Symposium
May 16, 2019

- Curating art exhibitions about environmental crisis
- One of the strongest ways I have discovered for creating a true connection between art, watershed and environment
- Makes a difference in the ways people learn and talk about the environment
- Looking at art while talking about tough issues can be unifying, opens conversations in new ways.

- Art Historical Background
- Yosemite and the Hetch Hetchy Valley ground both water and conservation history in California
- Western landscapes inspired American landscape painters
- 19th and early 20th century notions of “West” and “frontier” as well as of weather, concepts of irrigation and watersheds led to new ideas of landscape utility and beauty.











Water & the Pastoral Garden

Built Landscapes
for Industrial Waterworks
in the 20th century

- Ideas of pastoral, beautiful and sublime landscapes reflected religious ideals, classical architecture, and references to ancient engineering as ways human built environments could be beautiful, divine and natural simultaneously
- 19th and early 20th century waterworks architecture was inspired by these ideals to create public utility architecture that was utilitarian and beautiful at the same time



**Sunol Water Temple, 1910
Spring Valley Water Company
(San Francisco's Water Supplier, 1860-1934)**



Sunol Water Temple, 1910. Willis Polk, Architect. Spring Valley Water Company (San Francisco Water Supply, 1860-1934)



**Pulgas Water Temple, 1939. Terminus for San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct.
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), water supplier 1934-present**

Pulgas Water Temple, 1939
(Detail)

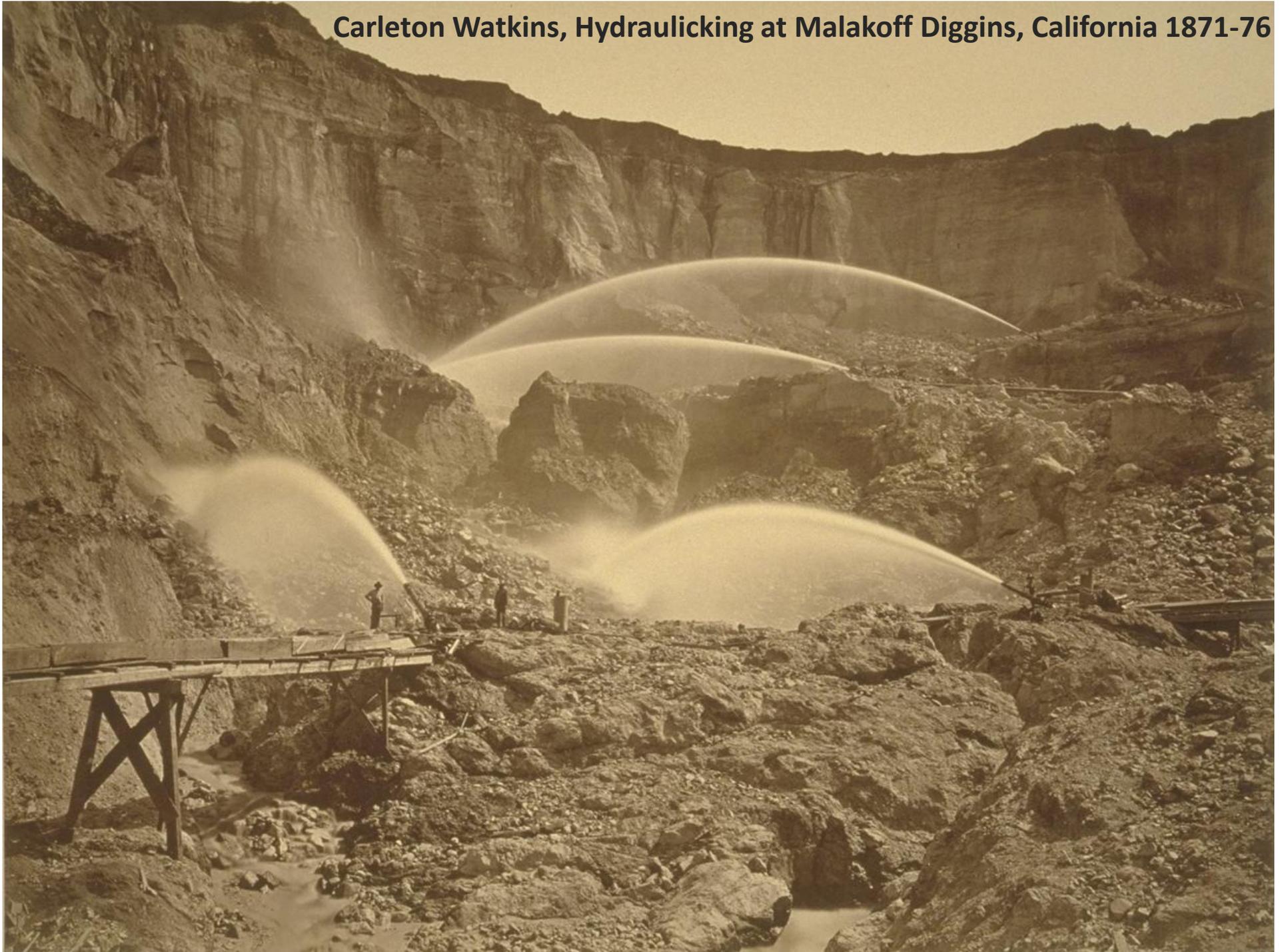


Industrial Waterworks & Photography:

Tightrope of “Utility” and “Beauty”

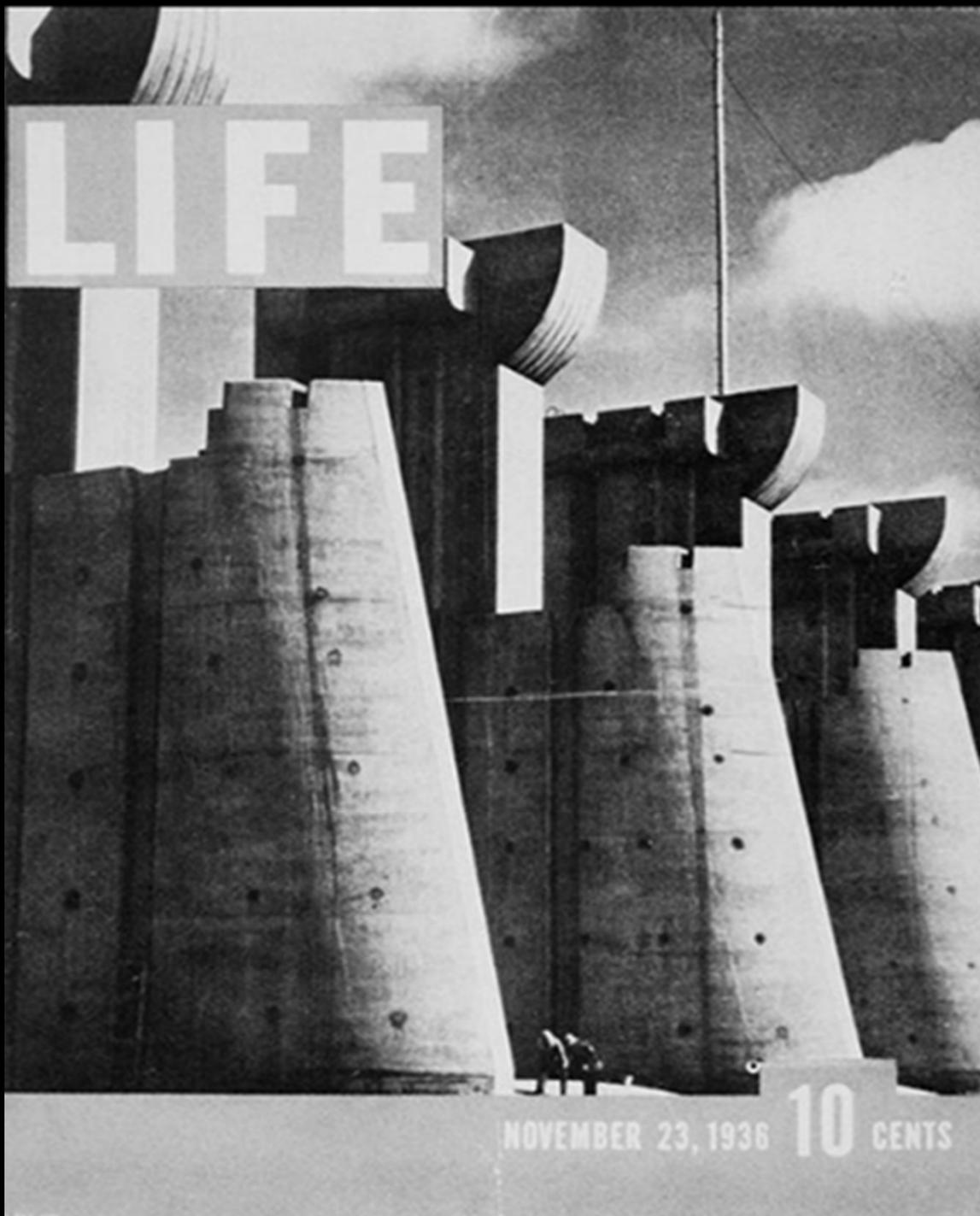
- Early modernist photography from the late 19th century began to present industrial landscapes as awe-inspiring examples of human ingenuity harnessing nature
- From hydraulic mining to dams and water conveyance systems, famous photographers through the Great Depression and New Deal art, photography and public works building projects presented a new modern aesthetic revealing a cultural values that contrasted human and nature, utility and beauty.

Carleton Watkins, *Hydraulicking at Malakoff Diggins, California 1871-76*

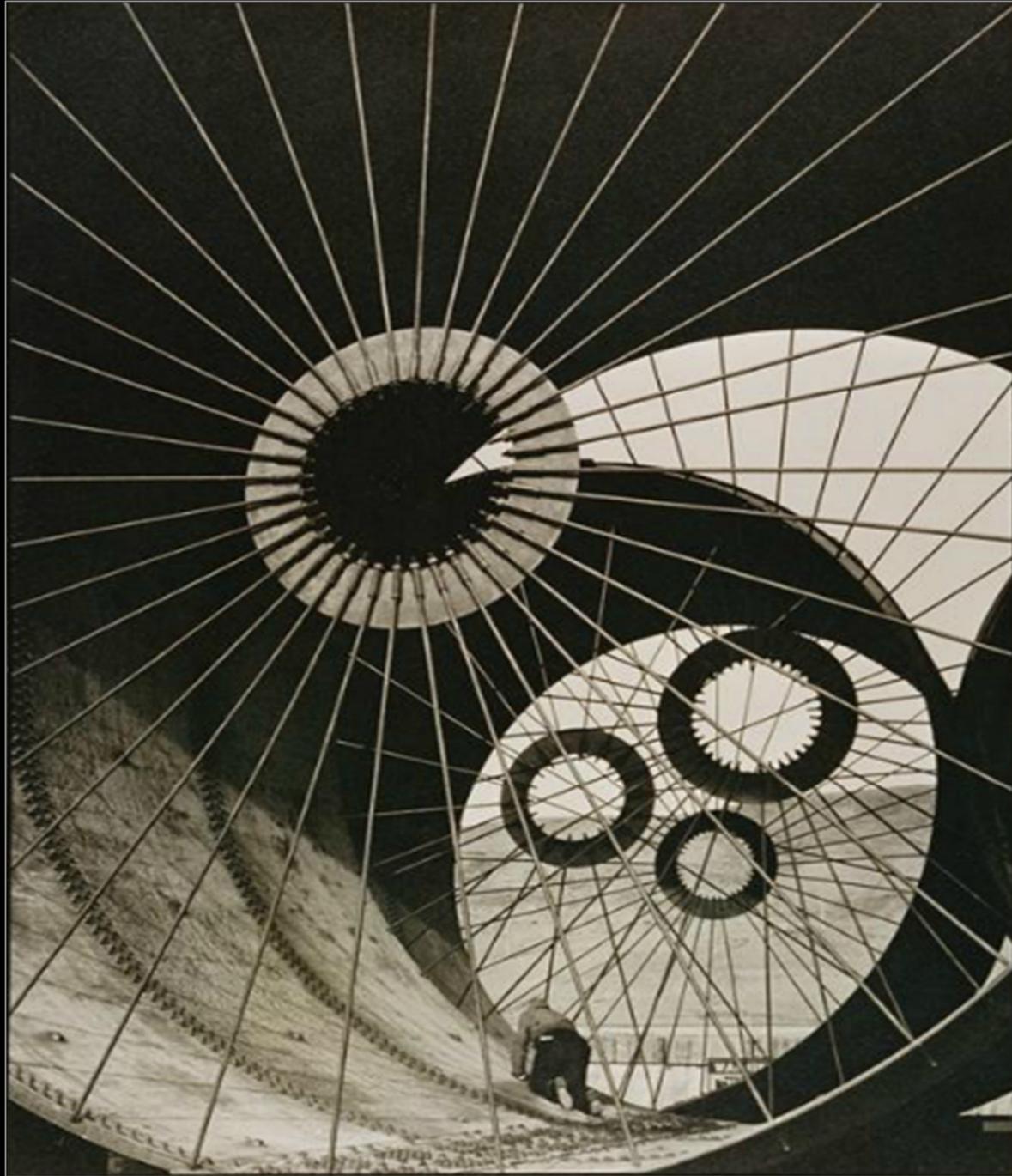


Horsepower as intersection of human, nature & machine
Merced County canal, Central Valley, California, late 19th century





Margaret
Bourke-White
Ft. Peck Dam, NY
First cover of
Life Magazine



Margaret
Bourke-White
Wind Tunnel
Utility as beauty
1936

Art, Water & Fire in California:

Public Art Exhibitions

Responding to Environmental Crisis

THE BRIDGE IS HISTORY: WATER AND THE HUMANITIES

Public Conference and Museum Exhibition

The Merced County Courthouse Museum | 21st and N Streets, Merced

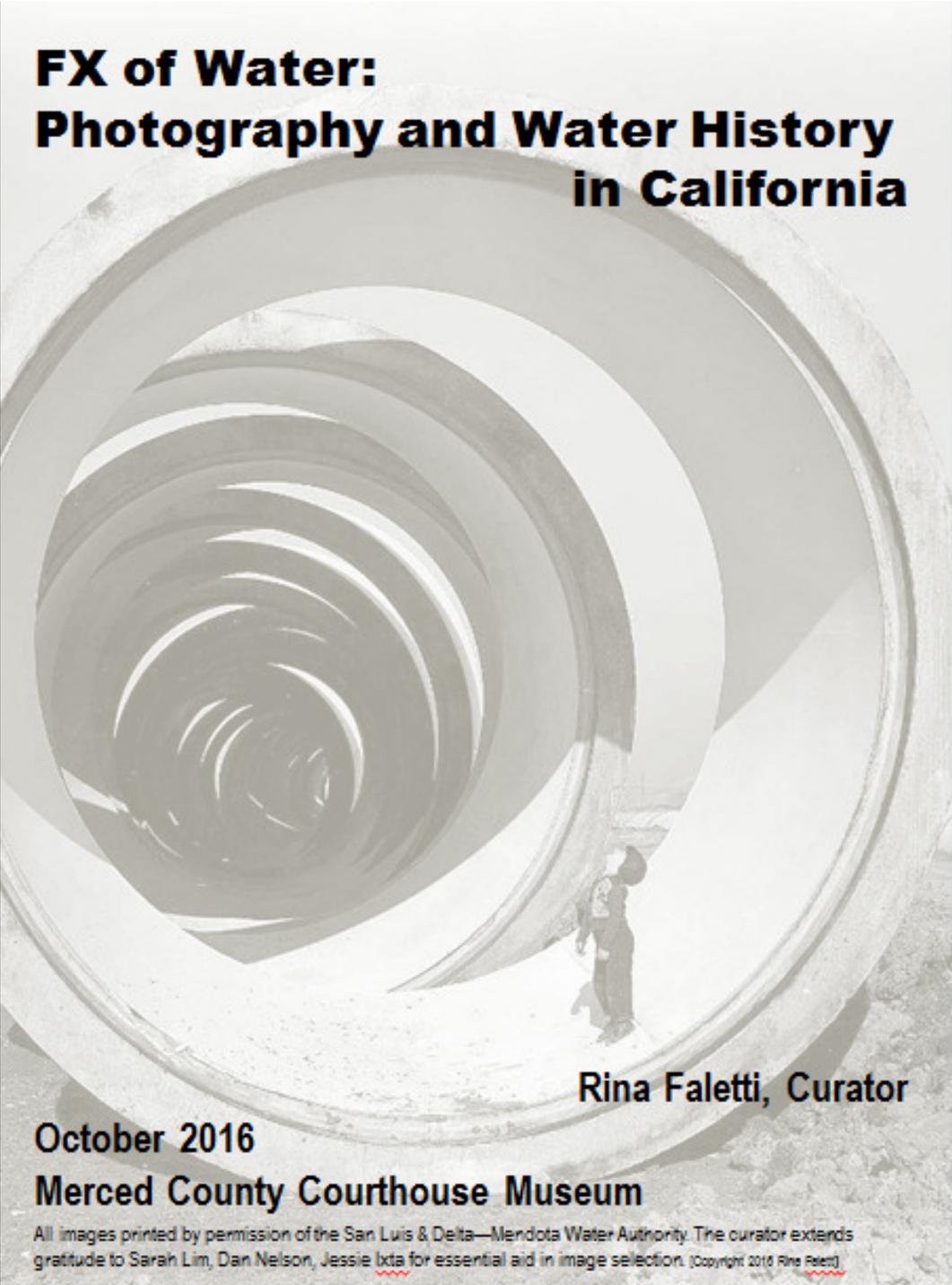
ALL EVENTS ARE OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC

PHOTO: In 1951, a man views the newly finished Delta-Mendota Canal, the main water conveyor for the Central Valley Project. Photo used by permission of the San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority.

October 15 – 16, 2016

Join the California water conversation. This public conference and museum exhibition event invites the public to engage with interdisciplinary water scholars and experts about water history in the Central Valley, in California and around the globe.





**FX of Water:
Photography and Water History
in California**

Rina Faletti, Curator

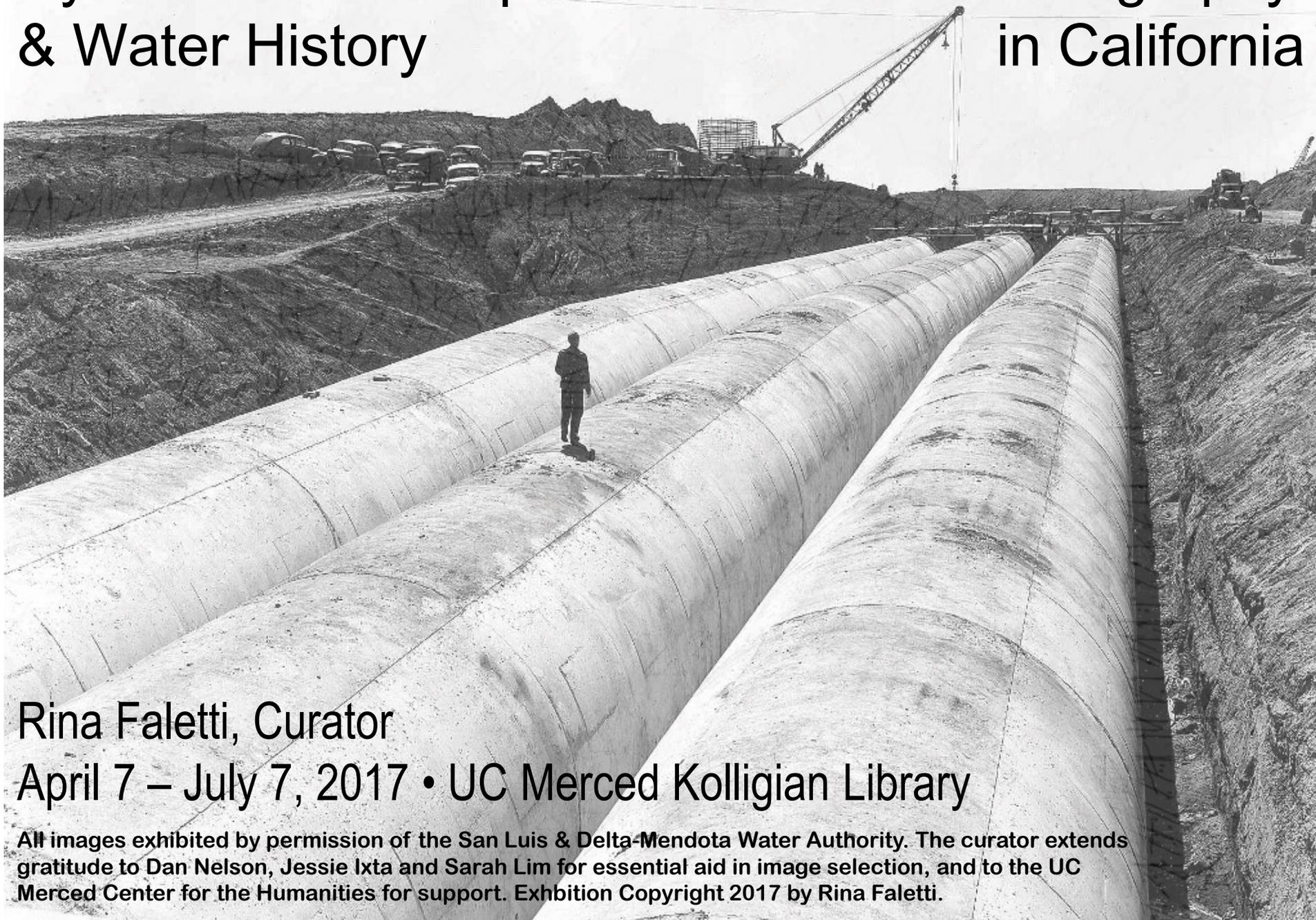
October 2016

Merced County Courthouse Museum

All images printed by permission of the San Luis & Delta—Mendota Water Authority. The curator extends gratitude to Sarah Lim, Dan Nelson, Jessie [bxta](#) for essential aid in image selection. (Copyright 2016 Rina Faletti)

Hydraulic Landscapes: & Water History

Industrial Photography in California



Rina Faletti, Curator

April 7 – July 7, 2017 • UC Merced Kolligian Library

All images exhibited by permission of the San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority. The curator extends gratitude to Dan Nelson, Jessie Ixta and Sarah Lim for essential aid in image selection, and to the UC Merced Center for the Humanities for support. Exhibition Copyright 2017 by Rina Faletti.

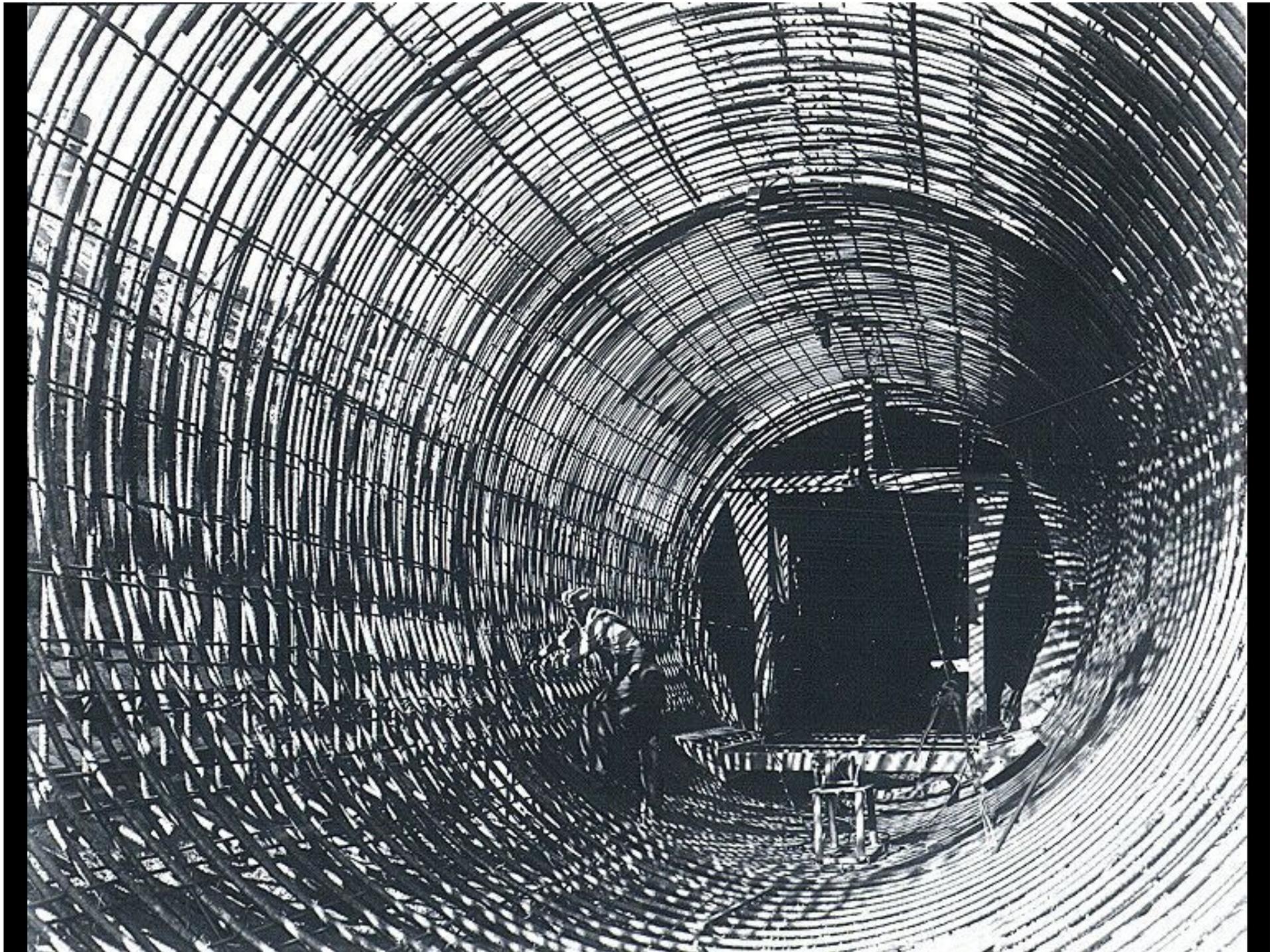
California's Central Valley Project (1951)

and

The State Water Project's
California Aqueduct (1963)

Black and white images in this section, permission of San Luis & Delta Mendota Authority
Color images in this section copyright Rina Faletti, author

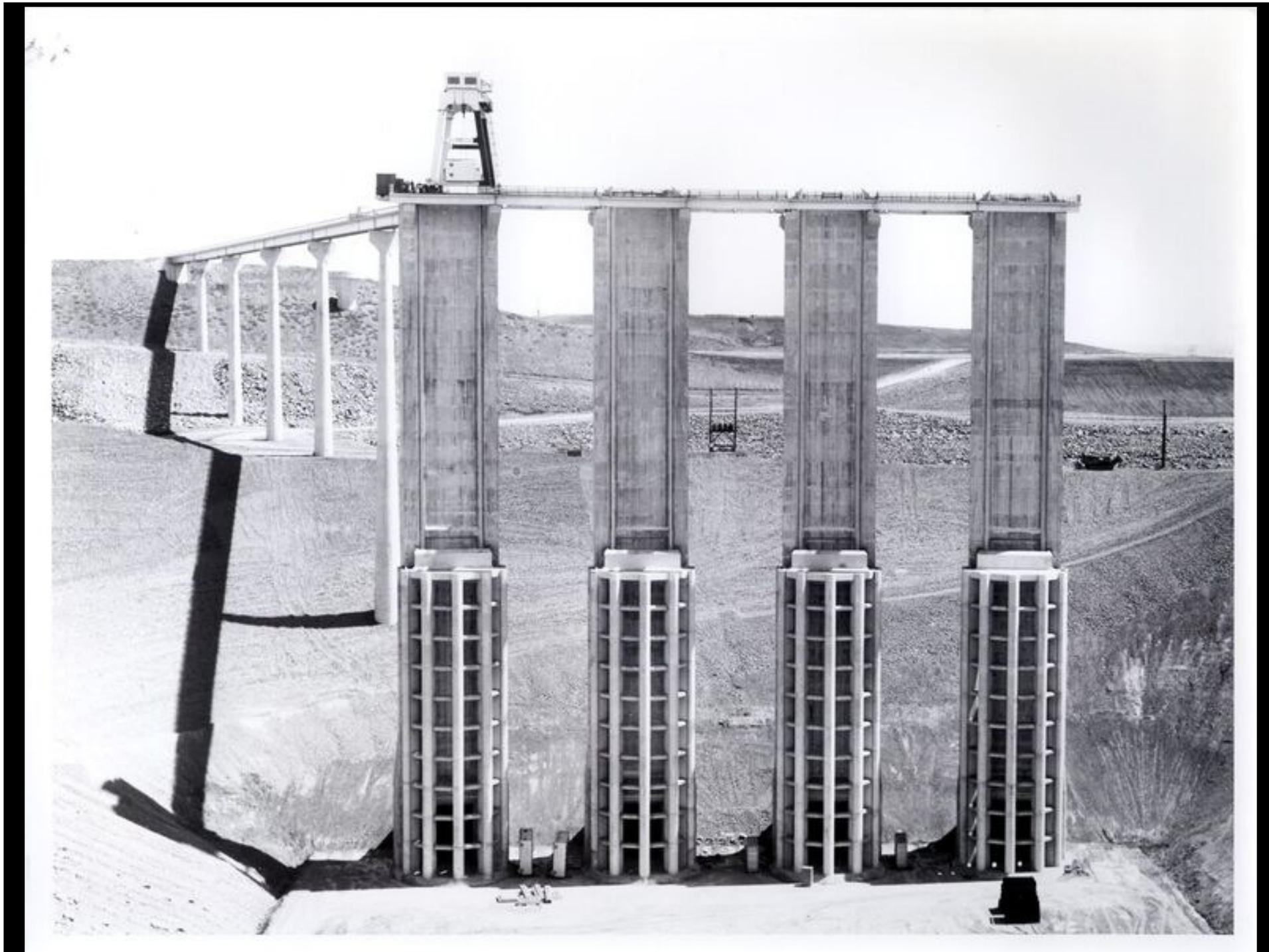
















San Luis Dam, copyright Rina Faletti



San Luis Dam, copyright Rina Faletti

Wildfire in the Urban Watershed

The 2017 Wine Country Fires

Art Responds to Fire

Making Artistic Sense of Wildfire in the Watershed

Photograph permission of Jeff Frost



ART RESPONDS:
THE WINE
COUNTRY **FIRES**

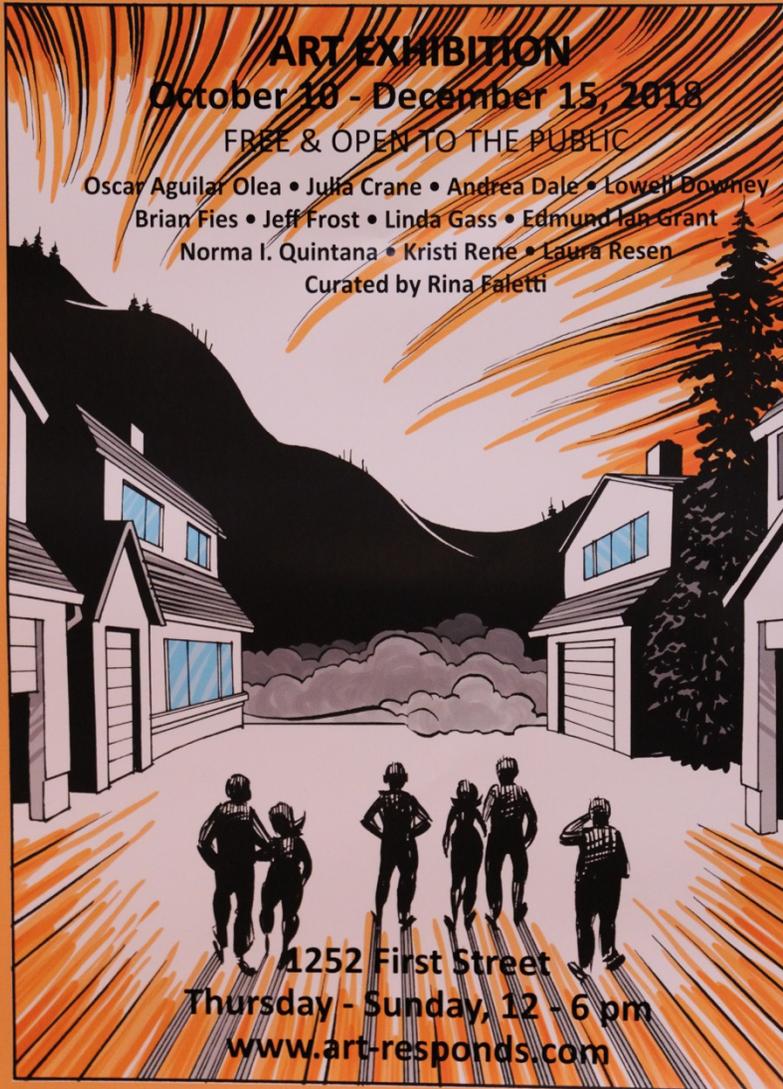
FIRST STREET
NAPA

ART EXHIBITION

October 10 - December 15, 2018

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Oscar Aguilar Olea • Julia Crane • Andrea Dale • Lowell Downey
Brian Fies • Jeff Frost • Linda Gass • Edmund Ian Grant
Norma I. Quintana • Kristi Rene • Laura Resen
Curated by Rina Faletti



1252 First Street

Thursday - Sunday, 12 - 6 pm

www.art-responds.com

Linda Gass
Stitched Paintings



Image copyright Linda Gass



Image copyright Linda Gass

“Severely Burned”

Linda Gass stitched painting

The Rim Fire

Tuolumne River Watershed in
Yosemite at Hetch Hetchy







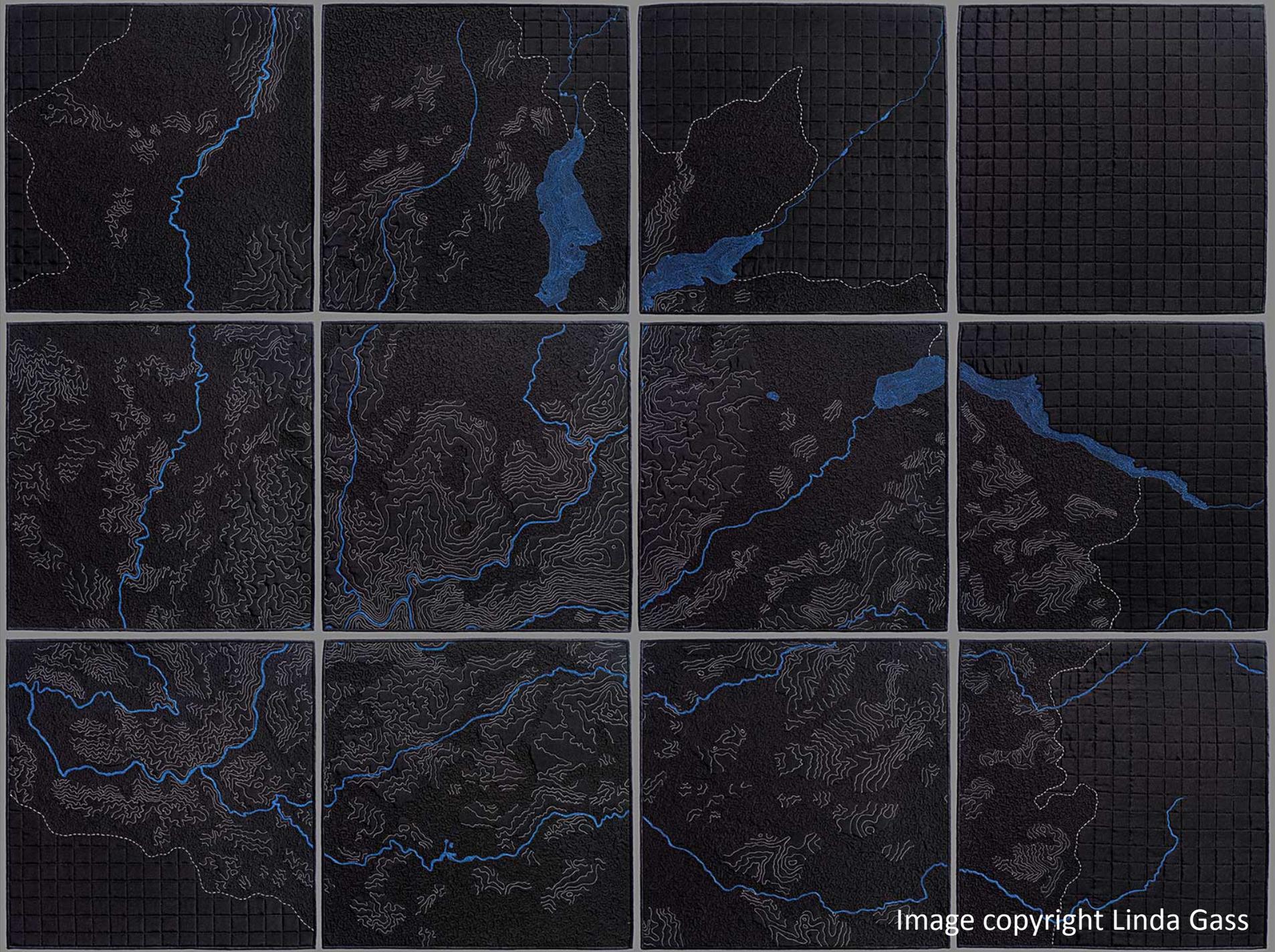


Image copyright Linda Gass



Image copyright Linda Gass

Jeff Frost
High Resolution Time-Lapse
Photography



Image copyright Jeff Frost



Image copyright Jeff Frost





Image copyright Jeff Frost



Image copyright Jeff Frost



Image copyright Jeff Frost

Lowell Downey
Aerial Landscape Photography



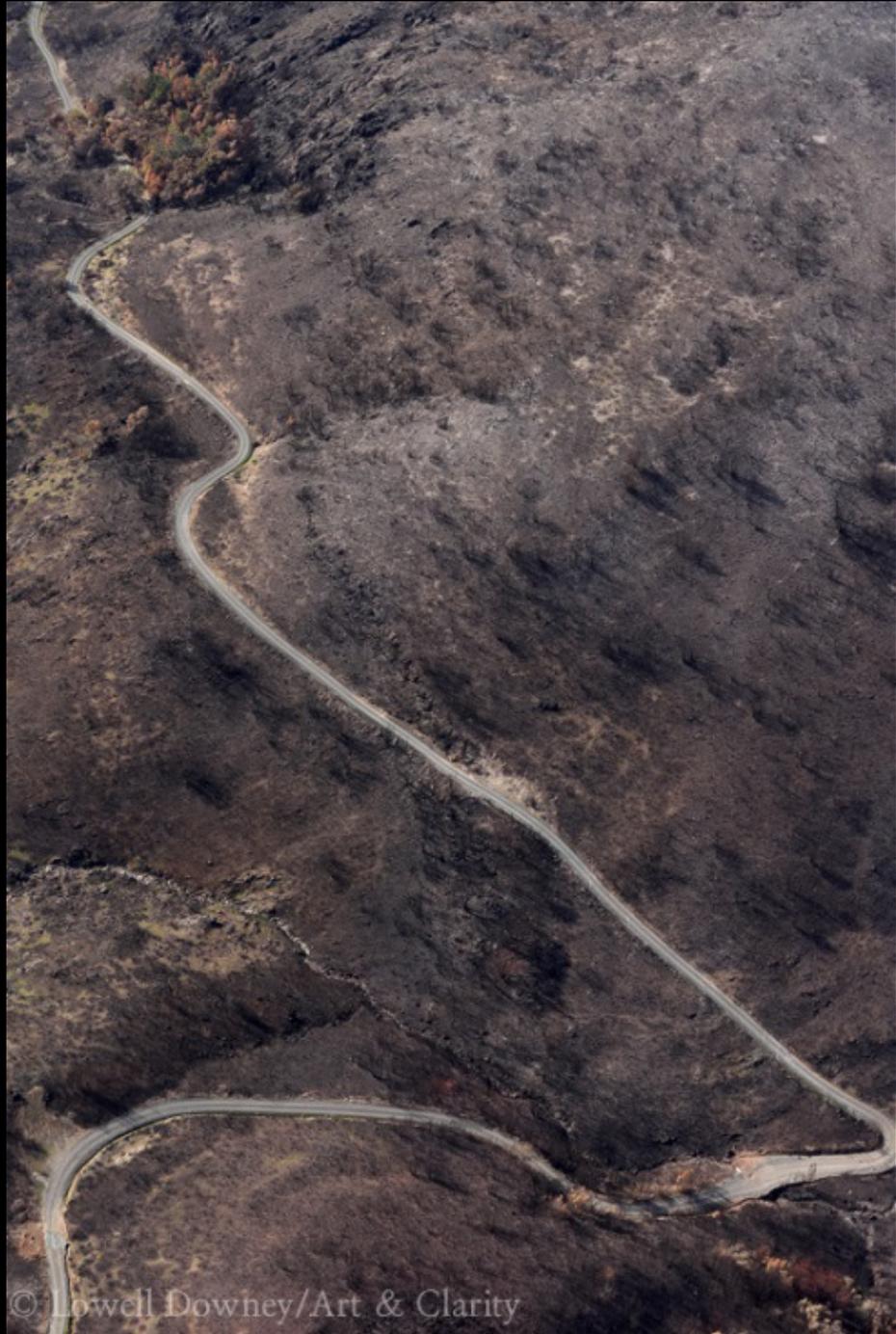
© Lowell Downey/Am. & Clarify



lowell downey ©2017



© Lowell Downey / Art & Clarity



© Lowell Downey/Art & Clarity



© Lowell Downey/Art & Clarity

Julia Crane
Site-Inspired Installation



Image copyright Julia Crane



Image copyright Julia Crane



Image copyright Julia Crane



Image copyright Julia Crane



Image copyright Julia Crane



Image copyright Julia Crane



Image copyright Julia Crane

Andrea Dale
Resin Suspension Painting

Image copyright Andrea Dale



Norma Quintana
Portrait Photography



 normaiquintana • Following

normaiquintana More camera parts found in the rubble! FORAGE FROM FIRE #47 #iphonex #iphonexphotography #analog #lens #lensculture #artbook darmova 🐼

71 likes

MARCH 5

Add a comment... 



Image copyright Norma Quintana

Brian Fies
Graphic Illustrator

WE LOADED THE CAR.



ENORMOUS MASSES OF HOT AIR MOVING AT HURRICANE SPEED RAISED A HOARSE WHISPERED ROAR, PUNCTUATED BY THE MUFFLED CRACKS AND THUMPS OF DISTANT EXPLOSIONS.

Image ©Brian Fies

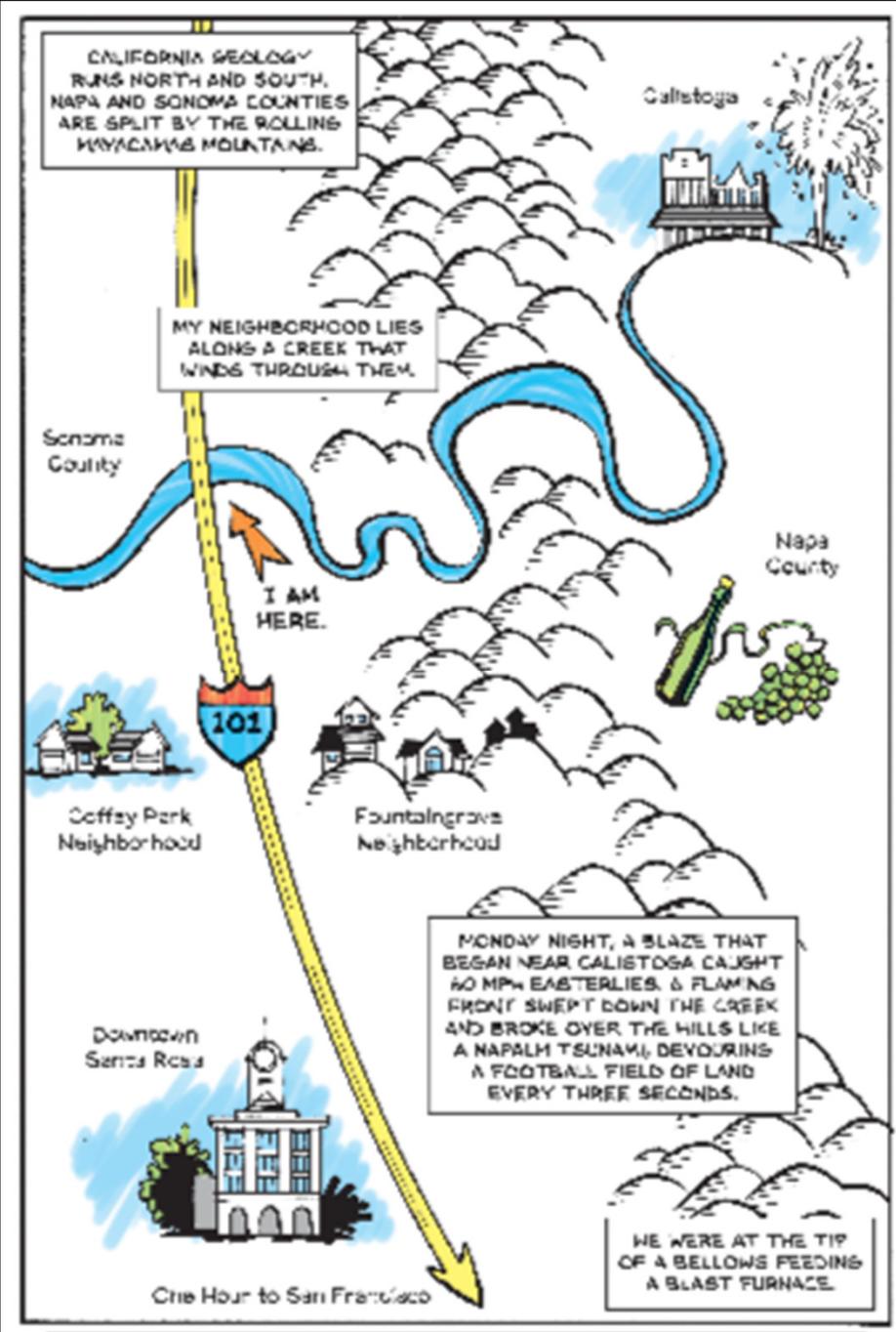


Image ©Brian Fies

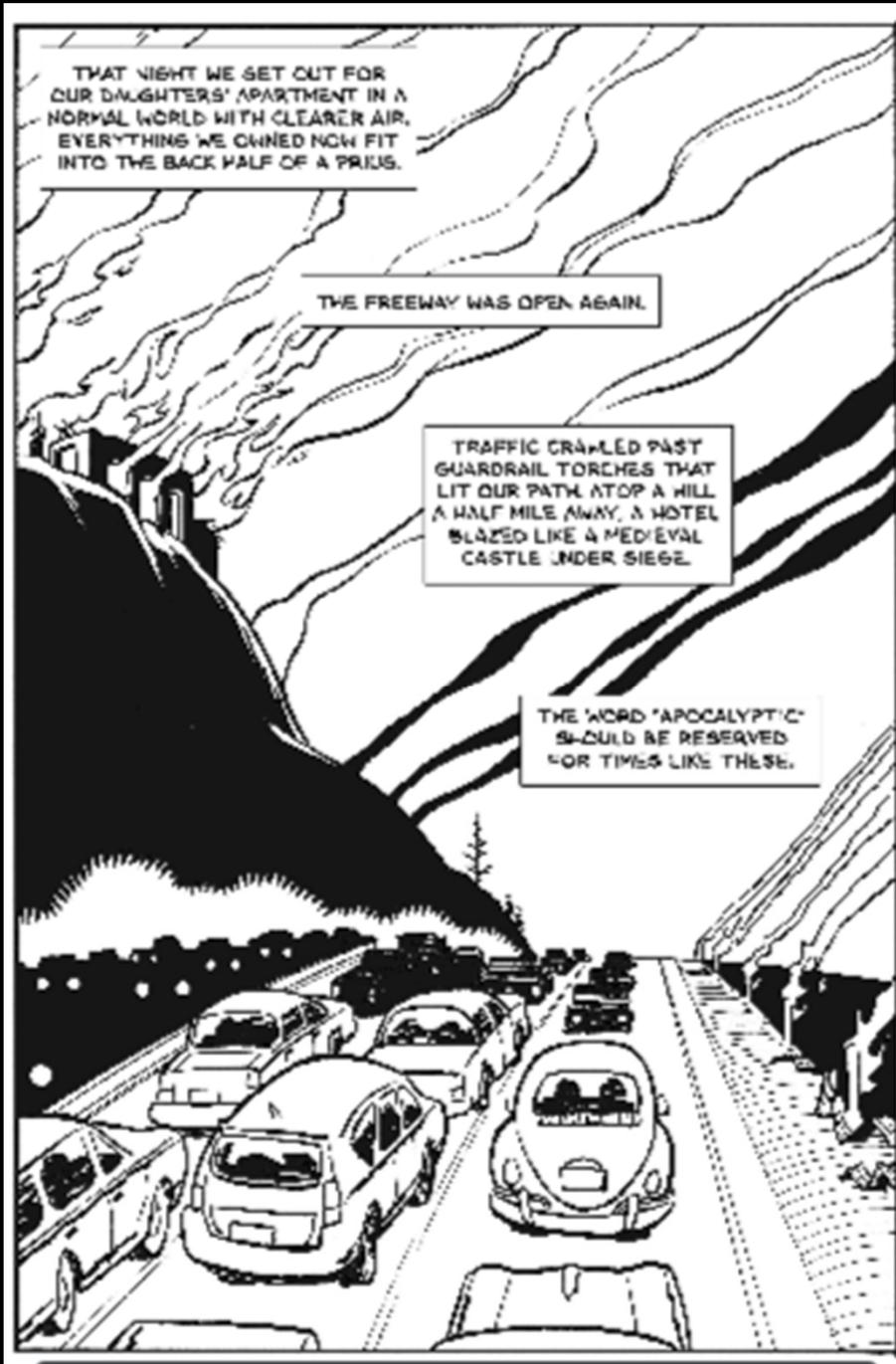


Image ©Brian Fies



Image ©Brian Fies

- Environmental artists and curators highlight need for ethical and practical challenges of global issue of sound access to water and thriving watershed ecosystems
- for all purposes:
 - Utilitarian ↔ Aesthetic
 - Social ↔ Cultural
 - Quantitative ↔ Qualitative
 - Scientific ↔ Artistic
 - Technological ↔ Cultural
 - Utilitarian ↔ Beautiful



Connecting, Communicating, & Engaging Communities in Our Watersheds: Public Art Exhibitions in Environmental Crisis

© Rina Faletti

UC Merced • International Water History Association
Art Responds (www.art-responds.com)
Napa County Watershed Symposium
May 16, 2019