

HYPERALLERGIC

FotoFocus Biennial Sets Its Sights on World Records

The sixth edition of the largest photography biennial in the US will consider lens-based art's documentation of life on earth, and the notion of breaking records.

September 15, 2022



John Edmonds, "Refuge" (2022), pigment inkjet print, 40 x 60 inches, commissioned by the Cincinnati Art Museum (image courtesy the artist)

FotoFocus — the Cincinnati-based nonprofit arts organization that champions photography and lens-based art — will kick off the sixth FotoFocus Biennial this September 29 with a month-long series of exhibitions, art installations, and events across 90 venues throughout greater Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus.

This year's theme, *World Record*, gives hundreds of curators, artists, and venues the opportunity to explore the various nuances of the phrase. Since its invention, photography has recorded animal species and behaviors, weather conditions, and things beyond what the human eye can see. This form of documentation has created a massive scientific record that has enriched our understanding of life, as well as led to the destruction of many of those natural resources.

While *World Record* also refers to records we associate with positive achievements, in unprecedented times, they've come to represent largely disastrous extremes — records on the climate, disease, animal extinctions, air pollution, and rising sea levels.

Some of the biennial's exhibitions include *On the Line*, a group show addressing climate change, colonialism, and other pressing issues; *Images on which to build, 1970s–1990s*, a look at LGBTQ+ grassroots organizing; a new site-specific installation and exhibition from artist Ian Strange at Art Academy of Cincinnati; Tony Oursler's photographic exploration of water; and a reappraisal of pioneering female photographer Nancy Ford Cones.

Sun Dogs, a collaboration with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, pairs composers and filmmakers; Baseera Khan's *Weight on History* features monumental new works; *'Free as they want to be'* at National Underground Railroad Freedom Center provides a close look at the role photography has played in remembering legacies of slavery; and the Cincinnati Art Museum presents *Natural World*, a special commission exploring nature and naturalness through history and institutions.

The Biennial Program Week will also include events with artists and luminaries Makeda Best, Xaviera Simmons, Mitch Epstein, Jason Allen-Paisant, John Edmonds, David Hartt, Joan E. Biren (JEB), and more.

For more information, visit fotofocus.org