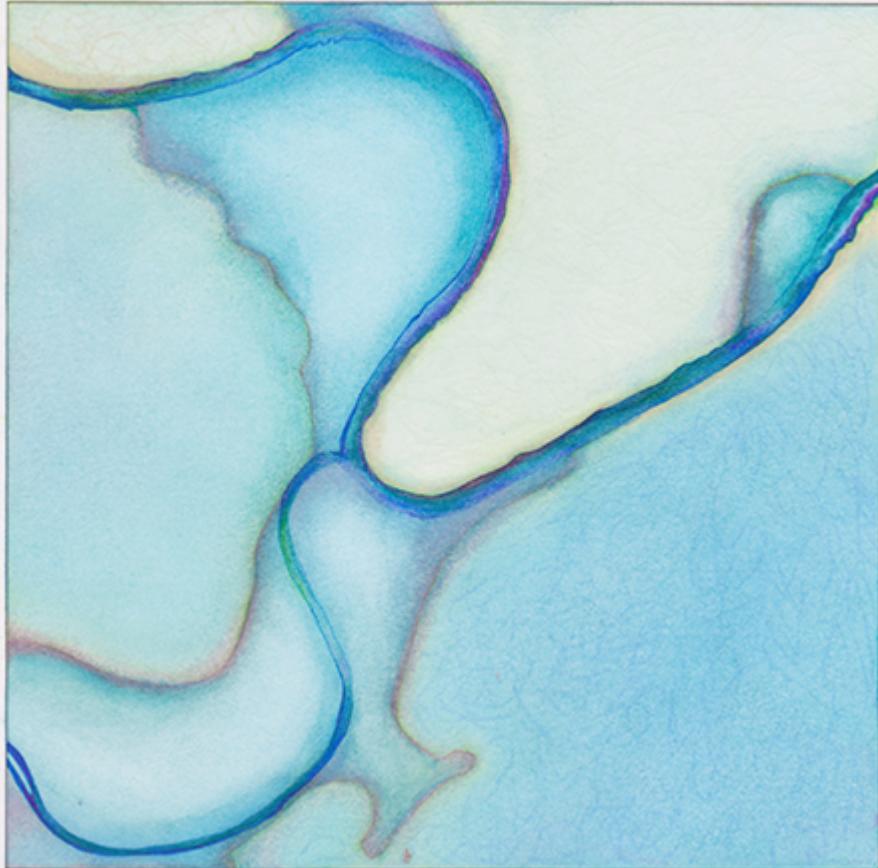


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K-State News

Use and misuse of water featured in artist Lynn Benson's exhibition at Beach Museum of Art

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2018



Artist Lynn Benson's "Kansas City 1951" is from the series "Waterplaces," created from 2012-2015, and is part of the exhibition "Water Stories: Lynn Benson," on display Feb. 13-May 26 at Kansas State University's Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art. The work is colored pencil on vellum and is 8 15/16 by 9 1/16 inches. Photo courtesy of Lynn Benson. | [Download this photo.](#)

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MANHATTAN — Water and the impact of human activity on this vital resource are the subjects of artist Lynn Benson's work featured in the newest exhibition at Kansas State University's [Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art](http://beach.k-state.edu/) (<http://beach.k-state.edu/>). Benson is the 2018 Friends of the Beach Museum of Art gift print artist.

"Water Stories by Lynn Benson," which opens Feb. 13 and runs through May 26 in the museum's Ruth Ann Wefald Gallery, showcases Benson's representation of bodies of water, in a range of mediums, at the center of environmental and political struggles. The exhibition includes the unveiling of a new acquisition by the museum, a suite of 101 drawings by Benson on paper vellum called "Waterplaces."

To create her compositions, Benson draws from satellite images and printed maps. Each drawing is mounted on a paper vellum frame she constructs. A collection of texts written by the artist accompanies the suite of drawings and describes how each particular body of water is affected by human activity. Also included in "Water Stories by Lynn Benson" is "Drops," a more recent series in which drawings replace culture specimens in petri dishes.

"The amazing meandering lines captured by satellite views of rivers and shorelines provide inspiration for many of my recent works," Benson said. "I play upon the botanical and anatomical similarities in paths of fluids and patterns of growth, relishing opportunities to push paint through layers while exploring fluid dynamics in liquid media."

Benson's choice to use the properties of paper vellum — with its inherent translucence and brittle texture — for these works creates the effect of a delicate, fragile skin on which water rests. The colors' richness imparts a jewel-like quality to the artworks, emphasizing water's preciousness, according to Aileen June Wang, Beach Museum of Art curator.

Benson traces her longtime attraction to an interest in water — whether oceans, river deltas and aquifers, or atmospheric dynamics of drought and rain — to her proximity to the ocean as a toddler and awareness of the burning Cuyahoga River in the late 1960s. She recalls a conversation, overheard long ago, between her father and uncle, both chemical engineers, regarding pollution in the San Francisco Bay from her uncle's chemical plant.

"I am drawn to forces within the natural world and I watch how we humans perceive and impact these delicate balances," Benson said. "My subject matter is within that dynamic realm. Working with paint, printmaking, fabric, collage, photography, installation and more, I look for core essences and universals, surprises, fragility and reverence, in balance with specific issues surfacing in the politically and environmentally challenged world we inhabit."

Water as a precious resource is also the subject of Benson's "Dancing on the Table," the 2018 Friends of the Beach Museum of Art gift print. The work reflects the artist's interest in water sources that flow under the ground, such as the dwindling Ogallala Aquifer, which helps farmers in the Great Plains produce one-fifth of the annual U.S. agricultural harvest.

"Dancing on the Table" was produced in collaboration with master printer Aaron Shipps at Bedrock Art Editions in Kansas City. Each print is composed of seven layers of paper and incorporates several artistic processes: lithography, chine collé, hand-coloring with colored pencil, gold leaf application and paper cutting. For information on how to purchase the print, call 785-532-7718 or go to beach.k-state.edu ([http://beach.k-state.edu/](http://beach.k-state.edu)).

The Beach Museum of Art is offering several events related to "Water Stories by Lynn Benson":

- "Telling Water's Story: Art, Science and Narrative," at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 8, at the museum. The program includes a presentation by Cynthia Barnett, environmental journalist and author, followed by a conversation on how the visual arts, scientific practice and journalism intersect in tackling environmental challenges. Panelists include Peter Dorhout, K-State vice president for research and a professor of chemistry,

and Benson. Linda Duke, director of the Beach Museum of Art, will moderate. The event is offered in partnership with K-State Libraries, The Collegian Media Group, Global Foods Systems, and the Prairie Studies Initiative — all at K-State — and the Volland Store Gallery near **Alma**.

- Artist's Talk by Lynn Benson at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, April 5, at the museum. Benson will share details about making the 2018 Beach Museum of Art gift print and her other recent projects. Light refreshments will be served.

- "Water Stories" School Tour gives students the chance to investigate works from the Beach Museum of Art's permanent collection related to water by various artists, including Benson and Herschel Logan, and photographer Jim Richardson. Students will think about Kansas water issues and the environment and learn more about Kansas waterways above and below ground. For more information, call the museum at 785-532-7718.

In addition to Benson's exhibition at the Beach Museum of Art, her work will be on display in the exhibition "River Compositions" at The Volland Story Gallery, 24098 Volland Road, Alma, from May 5 to July 15. Related activities at this exhibition are available at the gallery's website, [thevollandstore.com](http://www.thevollandstore.com/) (<http://www.thevollandstore.com/>), or by calling 785-499-3616.

Source

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News tip

Alma

Website

[Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art](http://beach.k-state.edu) (<http://beach.k-state.edu>)

Photo

[Download the following photo.](/media/images/feb18/dancing.jpg) (</media/images/feb18/dancing.jpg>)



Lynn Benson's "Dancing on the Table," created in 2017, is the 2018 Friends of the Beach Museum of Art gift print. It is a lithograph with chine collé, gold leaf and hand-drawing. The edition of 13 is 10 3/4 x 10 15/16 inches and produced in collaboration with Bedrock Art Editions. Photo courtesy of Lynn Benson.

At a glance

An exhibition of work by Lynn Benson, the 2018 Friends of the Beach Museum of Art gift print artist, runs Feb. 13-May 26 at Kansas State University's Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art.