



For Immediate Release:

FotoFest Announces Theme and Dates for 2016 International Biennial



FOTOFEST 2016 BIENNIAL CURATORS

(left to right)
Steven Evans
Wendy Watriss
Frederick Baldwin

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES ***Looking at the Future of the Planet***

March 12 - April 24, 2016
Houston, Texas USA

HOUSTON, TEXAS - OCTOBER 8, 2014 - FotoFest International, and its new Executive Director Steven Evans, announce the theme and dates for the **FOTOFEST 2016 BIENNIAL**. Mr. Evans, with FotoFest Co-founders Frederick Baldwin and Wendy Watriss, will curate the central exhibitions for the 2016 Biennial, entitled ***CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES: Looking at the Future of the Planet***.

The FotoFest 2016 Biennial, **the Sixteenth International Biennial of Photography and Photo-related Arts, takes place March 12 – April 24, 2016, in Houston, Texas**. The FotoFest Biennials draw over 250,000 visitors during the course of their six-week run. They attract visitors and participants from over 35 countries. They are **one of the world's longest-running, largest, and most respected international photographic art events**.

Across the globe, millions of people are acting on the crises affecting the sustainability of life as we know it on this planet. As an estimated 400,000 people recently participated in international demonstrations concerning the issues of environmental change, thousands of others are responding, with small and large projects, to the challenges of protecting, preserving and developing the resources of the planet in sustainable ways.

How is art playing a role in these processes of change? How are artists addressing the issues of global change as they affect the planet?

No other species in the history of the planet has affected global change with such dramatic speed and breadth than our own. Since the dawn of the Industrial Age, the speed of change has increased at break-neck pace, growing exponentially over the past one hundred years. As the global population of human beings has tripled over the last century, its demands have put unprecedented pressure on the resources necessary to sustain human life on the planet. Human society has shaped the environment to its own needs without a clear understanding of its impact on the earth.

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES will present artists, experts, scientists, writers, and policy makers looking at the interconnected **issues of climate change, population growth and migration, globalized use of natural resources, capital, and the impact of new technologies.** The exhibitions and other programs will focus on the future of the Earth by **examining challenges, and by proposing new ideas and solutions.**

“We are addressing the challenges we face as inhabitants of a swiftly changing Earth” says Mr. Evans, who joined FotoFest in February 2014. “We are exploring the intersections of science and art, of new technologies and new realities.”

In developing the programs for the sixteenth Biennial, the 2016 Curatorial Team is looking at projects and **consulting with a range of international artists, scientists, media experts, corporate entrepreneurs, military analysts and government policymakers.**

“There are paradigm shifts in the ways people interact with and understand the environment and the natural world,” says Wendy Watriss. “What role are artists and other creative thinkers playing relative to these changes? How are they addressing the way we visualize the world, these changes and a new future?”

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES: Looking at the Future of the Planet will include exhibitions at multiple venues; conferences, forums, and panel discussions; commissioned projects; a film program; a performing arts program; and artist workshops. FotoFest is planning a hardcover book to accompany the exhibitions.

FotoFest has a long history of commissioning new artwork addressing environmental, cultural and political issues. For the FotoFest 1994 Biennial, among three main themes, FotoFest presented *The Global Environment* with works by 25 U.S. and international artists in a three-part presentation of photography, sculpture, a newly commissioned three-dimensional installation of globes, and six-station computer program, *The Earth Forum*, which became a study center at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. In 2004, the FotoFest Biennial focused on water, *Celebrating Water: Looking at the Global Crisis*, with newly commissioned international artworks and a global conference on water in partnership with Rice University. For the 2006 Biennial, one of FotoFest’s main themes was *The Earth*, featuring a new multi-media installation by Doug and Mike Starn among works by other artists.

ADDITIONAL BIENNIAL PROGRAMS

The 2016 exhibitions will be accompanied by the non-thematic, biennial **Discoveries of the Meeting Place** exhibition of works by 10 artists selected by multiple curators from the FotoFest 2014 Meeting Place Portfolio Review for artists.

The 2016 edition of the **Meeting Place**, a 16-day event with participants from over 30 countries, takes place March 12-30, 2016. Registration begins in Summer 2015.

FotoFest’s International **Fine Print Auction** is scheduled for Monday, March 21, 2016, in conjunction with a special program for collectors.

Over 100 independent museums, art galleries, non-profit art centers and corporate spaces will participate in the FotoFest 2016 Biennial by presenting photography and photography events during the festival’s six weeks.

For further questions please contact:

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FOTOFEST 2016 BIENNIAL SPONSORS

Early supporters of the FotoFest 2016 Biennial are the FotoFest Board of Directors, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, Houston Endowment, Inc., The Wortham Foundation and Texas Commission on the Arts.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

STEVEN EVANS was appointed FotoFest Executive Director in February 2014. He studied photography at the Atlanta College of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, graduating with a B.F.A. in 1987. He earned his M.F.A from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1989. He began his organizational career at Dia Art Foundation in 1990 in visitor services; became Operations Deputy in 1996, and in 2000 began work on the Dia Beacon project, eventually becoming Managing Director. At Linda Pace Foundation, Mr. Evans worked in philanthropy, planning, and programming, organizing projects with artists Isaac Julien and Shazia Sikander, while commissioning a photographic project from Adam Schrieber and initiating a video commission from artist duo Hubbard / Birchler.

Following his work at the Linda Pace Foundation, Mr. Evans was interim director for San Antonio's Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum. Most recently, he organized an exhibition of photographic work by the artist Chris Sauter. He has served as a panelist for the National Endowment of Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and the Dutchess County Arts Council. Throughout his career, Mr. Evans has worked successfully with arts organizations, artists, and civic associations. In addition, Mr. Evans is an artist who works in a range of media, including photography, and has participated in solo and group exhibitions in New York City, Los Angeles, Paris, Berlin and elsewhere.

WENDY WATRISS is a Co-founder of FotoFest and served as Artistic Director and Senior Curator from 1991-2014. She has developed over 60 international exhibits for FotoFest, including path-breaking exhibits on Photography from China 1934-2008; AMERICAN VOICES - Latino photographers in the U.S., Photography from Latin America 1865-1994; photography from Central Europe; contemporary Mexican photography; the visual history of Kurdistan with Susan Meiselas; contemporary Korean photography; early 20th century and contemporary Russian photography; multi-media/new technology installations; and subjects such as the Global Water Crisis, The Global Environment, Guantanamo; Artists Responding to Violence; and Contemporary U.S. Photography. In 2009, she was the invited curator for international exhibitions of the Guangzhou 2009 Photo Biennial at the Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China. From 1970-1991, She is the senior producer and editor of ten FotoFest Biennial catalogues and two hardcover books, *IMAGE AND MEMORY, Photography from Latin America, 1966-1994* (University of Texas Press, 1998) and *VIEW FROM INSIDE, Contemporary Photography, Video and Mixed-media Art* (Schilt Publishing, 2014). From 1970-1992, Wendy Watriss worked as an award-winning international photojournalist and independent documentary photographer. She won the World Press Photo Award for Feature Stories and the Oskar Barnack Award - Leica in 1982; Interpress Photo in 1983; and Mid America Arts/National Endowment for the Arts in 1985.

FREDERICK BALDWIN co-founded FotoFest in 1983 and served as the organization's President from 1984-2001. In 2001, he became Chairman of FotoFest's Board of Directors. From 1991-2004, he shared responsibility for FotoFest's artistic programming as well as administration and development with FotoFest Artistic Director and Co-founder Wendy Watriss. Mr. Baldwin inaugurated FotoFest's school-based education program, Literacy Through Photography in 1990. In 1994, he started an international collaboration of 22 photography festivals, an ongoing international network, Festival of Light, www.festivaloflight.net

Fred Baldwin has had an extensive career in photography as a professional photographer and professor of photography. From 1957 to 1982, he worked as a photographer on international commissions for magazines such as LIFE, National Geographic, GEO, STERN, Time and the New York Times. In 1971, he began a photographic documentary and oral history project in Texas with Wendy Watriss which resulted in numerous exhibitions, fellowships, and the book *Coming To Terms, The German Hill Country of Texas* (Texas A&M Press, 1991). In 2008, Fred Baldwin's photography on the Civil Rights

Movement in Savannah Georgia was the subject of a book and exhibition by the Telfair Museum of Art, *Freedom's March*, (University of Georgia Press, 2008). In 2009, the photography of Fred Baldwin and Wendy Watriss was the subject of a large exhibition by the Musée de la Photographie in Charleroi, Belgium and the book, *Looking at the U.S., 1957-1986*, (Mets & Schilt, Amsterdam, 2009).

From 1964-66, Fred Baldwin was director of the Peace Corps in Borneo. From 1950-51, he was a Marine infantryman in Korea and was wounded and decorated numerous times. He is a member of the American Leadership Forum.

FOTOFEST INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1983, FotoFest International was established to promote international awareness of museum-quality photo-based art from around the world. FotoFest is a non-profit photographic arts and education organization based in Houston, Texas. The first FotoFest Biennial was held in 1986. It is the first and longest running photographic arts festival in the United States. It is considered as one of the leading international photography Biennials in the world.

As an international platform for serious photographic arts exhibitions, the FotoFest Biennial has become known as a showcase for the discovery and presentation of important new work and new talent from around the world. The Biennial takes place citywide in Houston with participation from the leading art museums, art galleries, non-profit art spaces, universities and civic spaces. The Biennial has an audience of 275,000 people from 34 countries. This audience includes a select group of 150 museum curators, gallerists, publishers, editors, photography collectors, directors of non-profit art spaces and international festivals from Asia, Europe, Latin America, Canada and the United States.