

Joseph Orr



Low Tide

acrylic on canvas

12 x 24 inches


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City of Charleston, SC, Offers Works by Mary Edna Fraser

The City of Charleston, SC's Office of Cultural Affairs presents *Above, Between, Below*, featuring batiks on silk by Mary Edna Fraser, curated by Michael Haga, on view at the City Gallery at Waterfront Park, on view from Mar. 21 through May 3, 2015. A reception will be held on Mar. 20, from 5-7pm. In addition, the public is invited to attend an artist's talk by Fraser on Saturday, Apr. 18 at 2pm.

Above, Between, Below is an ambitious exhibition of work by Lowcountry artist Fraser, depicting through her signature batiks on silk breathtaking perspectives on space, earth, and deep sea. Developed with leading scientists in the fields of planetary science, coastal geology, and oceanography, the exhibit bridges cutting-edge science and the living, ancient art of batik to afford a vantage point the human eye and traditional cameras cannot reveal.

Collaborators Ted Maxwell (Planetary Scientist Emeritus at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum), Orrin H. Pilkey (James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of Geology at the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University) and Cindy Lee Van Dover (Director of the Duke University Marine Lab) assisted Fraser in developing batiks as a vehicle to share scientific information, to educate, and to inspire. Working closely with these scientists, the artist has drawn upon their scholarship and insights to develop images that can emphasize the fragility of ecosystems or bring the grandeur of distant spaces near to us. Fraser refers to her pieces as "snapshots" in geologic or galactic time and asserts that artists can condense and interpret scientific observations so that viewers may develop a greater understanding of the world that we inhabit as well as other realms.

Mary Edna Fraser is an artist who highlights environmental concerns in large silk batiks, which are often based on maps, satellite images, and the photographs that

she takes while flying her family's 1946 propeller plane. Deemed a "pilot with a palette" by Michael Kilian of the *Chicago Tribune*, Fraser has exhibited widely, including at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

Reviewing that show, Hank Burchard of the *Washington Post* declared that "the batiks amount to visual poetry." The National Science Foundation and National Academy of Science have featured Fraser's collaborations.

Fraser has created over 500 batiks on silk and had more than 100 one woman exhibitions, including with affiliates such as NASA, Smithsonian Institution, and National Geographic. Collaboration since 1993 with Dr. Orrin Pilkey, Professor Emeritus of Geology at Duke University, has produced two critically-acclaimed texts and exhibits: *A Celebration of the World's Barrier Islands*, Columbia University Press, 2003 and *Global Climate Change: A Primer*, Duke University Press, 2011. She also collaborates with scientists researching outer space and the deep sea. In 1994-95, she was the first woman to be honored with a one-person exhibition at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.

Fraser has completed numerous public commissions including batiks for the American Embassy in Thailand and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Publications reviewing her work include *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Air and Space*, *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *National Geographic*, and *New Yorker*.

Fraser combines modern chemical Procion dyes, beeswax, and parafin on silk to express a sense of place inherent in each scene. Her fascination with the distinctive features of various regions has led her to examine barrier islands, river deltas, mountains, glaciers, and threatened landscapes

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"Flying North," by Mary Edna Fraser, 93"x44", batik on silk, 2004

around the world. She works from her own aerial photographs and memories of flight, gains technical precision as she examines maps and charts, and paints studies on location to develop potential color palettes for her batiks. Satellite and space imagery have further expanded her range of content.

The City Gallery at Waterfront Park, owned by the City of Charleston and operated by the City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs, presents an annual program of exhibitions and events featuring the finest contemporary art from local, regional, national and international artists, stimulating discussion and dialogue among

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