

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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HELEN MAYER HARRISON & NEWTON HARRISON

GLOBAL WARMING

January 10 – February 7, 2009

There is a gentle beauty in their work, and much charisma in the otherworldly maps and text panels that are poetic and personal rather than dryly official. The exhibition is, of course, a call to action, but it is foremost a lyrical meditation on what ecological disaster and collective recovery might one day look like.

Elizabeth Mahoney, **The Guardian**, 2008

Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison will exhibit a new multimedia installation, *Greenhouse Britain*, and other works from 1974 to 2009 that relate to global warming, a topic they have addressed throughout their career. The Harrisons, whose proposals have influenced long-term public policy planning, are internationally recognized for their visionary works grounded in the natural sciences.

Greenhouse Britain (2006-09) consists of five inter-related pieces and includes video, large panels comprised of mapping, photography, and text, and sound elements.

1. *On the Island of Britain: The Rising of Waters*. This is a model of the Island of Britain, resting on the floor, measuring 7 ½ x 13 feet. Six overhead projectors show the rising waters, storm surges, and the redrawn coastline, with a 10-minute soundtrack of three voices.
2. *On the Upward Movement of People: A New Pennine Village*. Made in collaboration with the Land Planning Group at Sheffield University, the design proposes a 9,000-person village where the land around it is ecosystemically redesigned to absorb the local carbon footprint of the village through the use of forest and meadow.
3. *In Defense of the city of Bristol*. A three-minute video that proposes a defense and salvation for the city of Bristol through unusual use of the Avon River and the Avon Gorge.
4. *The Lea Valley: On the Upward Movement of Planning* (in collaboration with APG architects) takes issue with the existing development of the Thames estuary, which the model shows is covered by water, and proposes redesigning the 1,000-square mile Lea Valley watershed, while at the same time suggesting how approximately one million people might be housed in ecologically provident high-rise structures with solar power, stilts, and hanging gardens, while enhancing the water supplies of London.
5. *On Eco-civility: The Vertical Promenade* (in collaboration with ATOPIA). Wherein the civil, social, and economic virtues embedded in a small town main street become the basis of design for a 150-story, 10,000-person, vertically-designed town, based on the concept of settlement, where ecosystemic thinking drives design as opposed to typical development models.

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Other works from 1974 to 2009 provide a history of the Harrisons' engagement with the topic of global warming.

1. *San Diego is the Center of the World*, 1974. Documentation of a work in the Powers Gallery of Contemporary Art Collection in Australia that includes images from a book published in 1977 by The New Wilderness Press. The first of the Harrisons' global warming works plays with the then current arguments about global warming and cooling.
2. *From the 7th Lagoon. The Ring of Fire, the Ring of Water*, 1978. A projection of a work in the collection of the Centre Pompidou. A prescient work that re-draws the world with a 100 meter ocean rise.
3. *The Garden of Hot Winds and Warm Rains*, 1994-95. A 24 foot x 36 inch drawing commissioned by the Kunst und Ausstellungshalle, Bonn, Germany where two small ecosystems are designed, based on a predicted temperature rise of three Centigrade in middle Europe.
4. *The Mountain in the Greenhouse*, 1999. A four-minute video that relates to the upward movement of species as the glaciers melt and the high ground warms, and extinctions are imminent.
5. *Peninsula Europe: The Force Majeur*, 2007-08. 80 x 92 inches. Two large images that distill the problem that Peninsula Europe faces as the drought covers a third of the Peninsula and glaciers melt: a counter-proposal.
6. *The 10th Meditation on the Sacramento River, the Delta and the Bays at San Francisco*, 2009. A drawing, text, and map, 80 x 42 inches, that expresses a three-meter water rise that changes the shape of the bays at San Francisco, reaching far inland to the city of Sacramento, suggesting that the change of climate calls for a new form of governance.
7. *Tibet is the High Ground, Part II: The Force Majeur*, 2009. A 7 x 7 foot azimuthally-equidistant projection map of the Tibetan plateau with color and text shows that the seven rivers flowing from the plateau and nourishing 1.2 billion people in ten countries are endangered by the rapid melting of glaciers in the plateau.

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Greenhouse Britain (greenhousebritain.greenmuseum.org/) has been produced as an artist-led project by Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison and principles of the Harrison Studio and Associates (Britain) in collaboration with Tyndall Climate Center, Great Britain, designed by Westergaard & Harrison, and funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Exhibited at the Rotunda at London City Hall, *Greenhouse Britain* toured across England in 2007-08).

Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, who have collaborated since 1971, are Professors Emeritus at the University of California San Diego and have exhibited at the Feldman Gallery since 1974. Their work will be included in *Art and Architecture for a Changing Planet 1969-2009* at the Barbican Art Gallery in London in 2009.

www.theharrisonstudio.net

Reception: January 10, 6-8pm. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am-6pm. Monday by appointment. For information about the exhibition, contact Sarah Paulson at (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.