

“Over the ... years I have learned a few things about water. When disrupted from its natural course there are always winners and losers.”

The moment water cannot find its own way back to the ocean or be absorbed by the ground, we are changing the landscape. When a stream or river is diverted, all life downstream is affected and remains altered until water returns. Insects, plants, frogs, the salamanders and countless other creatures, including people, have paid an enormous price because of our voracious appetite for water—and what we do to the earth while getting it.

Human ingenuity and the development of its industries have allowed us to control the Earth's water in ways that were unimaginable even just a century ago. While trying to accommodate the growing needs of an expanding, and very thirsty civilization, we are reshaping the Earth in colossal ways. In this new and powerful role over the planet, we are also capable of engineering our own demise. We have to learn to think more long-term about the consequences of what we are doing, while we are doing it. My hope is that these pictures will stimulate a process of thinking about something essential to our survival; something we often take for granted—until it's gone.

Edward Burtynsky
Water (2013)

EDWARD BURTYNSKY is regarded as one of the world's most accomplished contemporary photographers. His remarkable photographic depictions of global industrial landscapes are included in the collections of over sixty major museums around the world, including the Guggenheim Museum (New York), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art (New York), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Reina Sofía Museum (Madrid), and Tate Modern (London).

Burtynsky was born in 1955 of Ukrainian heritage in St. Catharines, Ontario. He received his BAA in Photography/Media Studies from Ryerson University in 1982, and in 1985 founded Toronto Image Works, a darkroom rental facility, custom photo laboratory, digital imaging, and new media computer-training center catering to all levels of Toronto's art community.

Early exposure to the sites and images of the General Motors plant in his hometown helped to formulate the development of his photographic work. His imagery explores the collective impact we as a species are having on the surface of the planet; an inspection of the human systems we have imposed onto natural landscapes.

Burtynsky's distinctions include the TED Prize, the Governor General's Awards in Visual and Media Arts, The Outreach award at the Rencontres d'Arles, the Roloff Beny Book award, and the Rogers Best Canadian Film Award. In 2006 he was awarded the title of Officer of the Order of Canada and in 2008 he was awarded the ICP Infinity Award for Art. In 2018 he was named Photo London's Master of Photography and the Mosaic Institute's Peace Patron. Most recently he was honored with the Arts & Letters Award at the Canadian Association of New York's annual Maple Leaf Ball.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Edward Burtynsky: *Water* is organized by the New Orleans Museum of Art.

1. *Mount Edziza Provincial Park #1, Northern British Columbia, Canada, 2012*
2. *Glacial Runoff, Skeidararsandur, Iceland, 2012*
3. *Markarfljót River #1, Erosion Control, Iceland, 2012*
4. *Ölfusá River #1, Iceland, 2012*
5. *Dyralaekir River on Myrdalssandur, Iceland, 2012*
6. *Pivot Irrigation #4, High Plains, Texas Panhandle, USA, 2011*
7. *Pivot Irrigation #11, High Plains, Texas Panhandle, USA, 2011*
8. *Marine Aquaculture #1, Luoyuan Bay, Fujian Province, China, 2012*
9. *Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Reservation / Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, 2011*
10. *Xiluodu Dam #1, Yangtze River, Yunnan Province, China, 2012*
11. *Step-well #2, Panna Meena, Amber, Rajasthan, India, 2010*
12. *Verona Walk, Naples, Florida, USA, 2012*
13. *Manikarnika Ghat, Varanasi, India, 2013*
14. *Oil Spill #2, Discoverer Enterprise, Gulf of Mexico, USA, 2010*
15. *Salton Sea #1, Eastern Shore, California, USA, 2009*
16. *Phosphor Tailings Pond #2, Polk County, Florida, USA, 2012*

FURTHER READING

Burtynsky, Edward, Wade Davis, Russell Lord, and Marcus Schubert. *Burtynsky: Water*. Göttingen: Steidl, 2013.

Burtynsky, Edward and Michael Mitchell. *Oil*. Göttingen: Steidl, 2009.

Burtynsky, Edward and Michael Mitchell. *Quarries: The Quarry Photographs of Edward Burtynsky*. Göttingen: Steidl, 2007.

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THE TROUT GALLERY

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EDWARD BURTYNSKY WATER

JUNE 1
OCTOBER 19

THE TROUT GALLERY
THE ART MUSEUM OF DICKINSON COLLEGE



Ölfusá River #1, Iceland, 2012

I. SOURCE draws from Burtynsky's journey to British Columbia and Iceland, places where a critical stage in the hydrological cycle takes place: the mountains, containing glaciers and snow. They are the first landscapes in over thirty years Burtynsky took focusing specifically on pristine wilderness, instead of the imposition of human systems upon it.



Pivot Irrigation #11, High Plains, Texas Panhandle, USA, 2011

II. AGRICULTURE represents—by far—the largest human activity upon the planet. Approximately seventy percent of all fresh water under our control is dedicated to this activity.



Marine Aquaculture #1, Luoyuan Bay, Fujian Province, China, 2012

III. AQUACULTURE provides a glimpse into this quickly growing and increasingly important food source. It looks as those places where land and sea has been shaped to serve the purposes of growing and harvesting water-based crops such as salt, fish, shrimp, seaweed, and rice.



Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Reservation / Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, 2011

IV. CONTROL examines large-scale incursions imposed upon the earth to harness and divert the power of water; from the ancient stepwells of India, to the modern canals that feed precious water to millions in California, and gigantic hydroelectric dam projects of China.



Verona Walk, Naples, Florida, USA, 2012

V. WATERFRONT looks at the way we shape land to create manufactured waterfront properties, and speaks about the human need and desire to be near water—even if it is artificial. Burtynsky also takes us to India, to witness the largest pilgrimage on the planet with 35 million people arriving to bathe in the Ganges to release them of their sins—an ancient spiritual belief in the cleansing power and sacredness of water.



Oil Spill #2, Discoverer Enterprise, Gulf of Mexico, USA, 2010

VI. DISTRESSED presents landscapes where water is scarce or forever compromised, such as the Salton Sea, the Colorado River Delta, that has not seen a drop of water from that river in over forty years, and is now a desert; or Owens Lake, that saw its water diverted to Los Angeles in 1913 and is now a dry, toxic lakebed.