

# Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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## HELEN MAYER HARRISON & NEWTON HARRISON

### *Sierra Nevada: An Adaptation*

In collaboration with the Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art

February 10 - March 26

... 'Greenhouse Britain' [by the Harrisons] recapitulates the convergence of the aesthetic and the ethical, best described by Heidegger when he writes, 'The first step to vigilance is the step back from the thinking that merely represents...to the thinking that responds and recalls.' Amanda Boetzkes, *The Ethics of Earth Art*, 2010

Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, pioneers of ecologically-oriented art whose proposals have often influenced long-term public policy planning, will exhibit a multi-media installation that addresses the effects of global warming on one of the world's great mountain chains covering 28,000 square miles. The project, *Sierra Nevada: An Adaptation*, is commissioned by the Center for Art + Environment (CA+E) at the Nevada Museum of Art whose fifty-year commitment to the evolution of the work is unprecedented. This latest project is part of *Force Majeure*, a series that has evolved over the last five years in which the Harrisons propose ecological adaptation on a large-scale.

The exhibition features a forty-foot aerial image enhanced with drawing and text that rests on the floor, allowing the viewer to "walk" the mountain range. Wall panels of watershed maps and photographs express current and future ecosystems visually; text panels include narrative and Socratic questioning to encourage public discourse. Two animated projections contemplate contrasting futures over the next fifty years: a landscape that has been overgrazed and overcut with minimum intervention versus assisted migration of beneficial species with the object to regenerate top soil. The Harrisons place themselves on the side of the debate within the reclamation/restoration world that calls for human intervention, albeit not in all cases, rather than allowing nature to run its course.

The exhibition at the Feldman Gallery is the premiere showing of *Sierra Nevada: An Adaptation*, which will travel to the Nevada Museum of Art's Art + Environment Conference in September 2011. New materials will be developed for a larger exhibition at the Museum in several years, and all project materials are being collected by the CA+E for its archives. The Nevada-based Desert Research Institute (DRI) has generated imagery for much of the mapwork.

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Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison, Professors Emeriti at the University of California at San Diego and currently research professors at University of California at Santa Cruz, have been represented by the Feldman Gallery since 1974 when their early works addressing global warming were shown. A major exhibition, *Greenhouse Britain and the Force Majeure*, was mounted by The Kala Art Institute in Berkeley in 2010; they were awarded the prestigious 2010 CIWEM (The Chartered Institution of Water & Environment Management) prize. The Harrisons will deliver the convocation address, *On Tibet, Peninsula Europe, and the Sierra Nevada: Adaptation at Scale*, at the College Art Association Annual Conference on Wednesday, February 9, from 5:30-7PM in the East Ballroom, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, of the Hilton New York. The event is free and open to the public.

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**Opening Reception: Thursday, February 10, 5- 8PM.** From 5-6PM, there will be a preview and reception announcing the Nevada Museum of Art's 2011 Art + Environment Conference speakers and program. Major sponsorship by the Wilhelm Hoppe Family Trust and the Elke Hoppe Youth Advancement Trust. Additional support provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

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

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