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Buffalo Arts Studio Presents:

Terrakwa: An Investigation of the Erie Canal Across Time and Geography, by Bartow+Metzgar+Werberig

January 24 to March 8, 2025

Buffalo, NY — Buffalo Arts Studio is thrilled to present *Terrakwa: An Investigation of the Erie Canal Across Time and Geography*, an innovative exhibition by the collaborative artist team Bartow+Metzgar+Werberig. The exhibition will run from January 24 to March 8, 2025, with an Opening Reception on Friday, January 24, 2025, from 5:00–8:00 PM.

This exhibition is the culmination of a multi-year experimental drawing project investigating the expression of time through a human-nonhuman collaboration with trees. Inspired by a profound question—*What is a nonhuman expression of time as it relates to the Erie Canal?*—the artists used a simple drawing apparatus to record atmospheric forces acting on trees over time. This project aims to shift the narrative surrounding the Erie Canal from its historical associations with human activity—such as packet boats and mules—to a focus on the silent, yet significant, presence of the trees that line its banks. The trees, as silent stewards of the canal, embody stories and histories that are often overlooked. By focusing on these living participants, the project aims to illuminate the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman experiences within this shared space.

The installation serves as a small yet significant step toward understanding the nonhuman entities that inhabit our environment. By situating their work within the commons, B+M+W emphasizes the importance of accessible spaces for experimentation, free from the constraints often imposed by privately owned areas. This approach not only enriches the dialogue around the Erie Canal but also invites viewers to reconsider their relationship with the natural world and the myriad stories it holds.

The exhibition includes 40 small tree drawings representing the entirety of the Erie Canal project. The artists assigned parametrics to the process including drawing time durations based on geographic distances from Albany and Buffalo. For example, a location 220 miles from Albany translated into 220 minutes of drawing time. Two tree drawings were created for each location—one reflecting the distance from Albany and the other from Buffalo.

The artists also curated ten prints from the collection, representing ten locations along the Erie Canal, including the Niagara River and Hudson River, where the canal intersects each. The prints were made during a week-long residency at Mirabo Press. These prints serve as direct records of time-event phenomena, akin to a seismograph or heart monitor, capturing specific moments involving a tree, its geography, and atmospheric conditions.

The exhibition also features two composite prints, each layering ten tree drawings sequentially: The first begins with the Hudson River location and ends with the Niagara River, stacking other locations in between. The second starts with the Niagara River and ends with the Hudson River. These composites utilize a unique conversion method for tonal values. Distances from Albany or Buffalo were translated into opacity levels: shorter distances yield lighter tones, while longer distances produce darker tones.

About the Artists:

Paul Bartow (MFA, Rochester Institute of Technology) is a practicing artist, teacher, and fabricator based in Watkins Glen, NY.

Richard Metzgar (MFA, Rochester Institute of Technology) is a practicing artist and professor in the Department of Art and Design at SUNY Oswego, based in Fulton, NY.

David Werberig (MFA, Rochester Institute of Technology) is the creator of Digital Fold-Ups and Director of Marketing and Sales, based in Victor, NY.

About Buffalo Arts Studio

Buffalo Arts Studio (BAS) connects diverse communities through visual arts, offering inclusive exhibitions, educational programs, mentorships, and public art initiatives. BAS provides vital resources for visual artists, including affordable studio space and paid opportunities. Through its programs, BAS serves as a catalyst for self-empowerment, innovation, and regional enhancement.

Buffalo Arts Studio remains committed to supporting individual artists and collaboratives like B+M+W, whose work critically engages contemporary issues of social, economic, and environmental justice. By presenting exhibitions that inspire dialogue, Buffalo Arts Studio fosters cultural connections that drive meaningful change.

Buffalo Arts Studio is located in Suite 500 of the Tri-Main Center at 2495 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214.

This exhibition is supported by The Cameron and Jane Baird Foundation, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Erie County Cultural Funds, John R. Oishei Foundation, M&T Bank, National Endowment for the Arts, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Arts & Culture Initiative, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the New York State Council for the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature, and through Arts Services Inc.'s Creative Impact Fund program thanks to a New York State Senate Initiative supported by the NYS Legislature and the Office of the Governor, and administered by the New York State Council on the Arts.

Join Buffalo Arts Studio and Bartow+Metzgar+Werberig for this exploration of the Erie Canal's history and its interplay with nature, time, and human experience, captured through their one-of-a-kind tree drawings. For more information, please visit www.buffaloartsstudio.org or contact us at sydney@buffaloartsstudio.org.