

MEDIA RELEASE

Exhibition

University Galleries of Illinois State University is pleased to present *Alice Hargrave: The Canary in the Lake* from March 4 through May 16, 2021. In accordance with public health guidance, attendance at University Galleries will be kept under 25 at all times and visitors must [book an appointment](#). Please see additional information below.

The Canary in the Lake presents more than 40 new photographic, video, and audio works by Chicago-based artist [Alice Hargrave](#). The exhibition centers on two new series relating to birds and lakes that continue her exploration of climate change-related loss of biodiversity and habitat. The exhibition title references both new bodies of work and alludes to the “canary in the coal mine,” because freshwater lakes function as sentinels of climate change.

This exhibition premieres *The Conference of the Lakes, After Farid Attar*, Hargrave’s collaboration with [Dr. Catherine O’Reilly](#), professor of geology at Illinois State University. O’Reilly’s research focuses on freshwater environments, with an interest in how lakes and rivers are impacted by human activities and climate change. The idea for this series began at University Galleries in 2017, following a panel discussion organized for Hargrave’s solo exhibition, [Paradise Wavering](#). As an extension of Hargrave’s works that incorporate the wavelengths of the songs of endangered and extinct bird species, the artist and O’Reilly began collaborating to collect and revisualize climate-related data from freshwater lakes on all seven continents.

Hargrave utilized these data—much of it gathered through connections with GLEON (Global Lake Ecological Observatory Network)—to generate new patterns, which she combined with photographs, references to lake lore, and the surprisingly vast array of lake colors to create 20 self-described “lake portraits.” In the artist’s words, “those patterns create an image of something invisible, whether that be experiential or climate shifts that one can’t see.” For example, in *Lake Baikal, Russia, warming*, zooplankton data are layered into a vintage photograph of the Siberian lake, while *Lake Tovel, Italy, clarity and red algae* includes histograms of depth of visibility and color sampled from magenta algal blooms. These photographic prints on fabric soar ten feet into the air and are hung in a multi-layered installation to evoke a “conference,” in reference to Farid ud-Din Attar’s 12th-century poem, “The Conference of the Birds.” Hargrave and O’Reilly similarly collaborated for *Beyond the Blue*, an accompanying installation of photographs pinned to the wall like specimens, and an audio work featuring sounds, voices, stories, and species from many of the lakes.

Hargrave’s other new project, *Tracing Audubon—1832 / 2021 (last calls)*, is on view in an adjacent gallery. Consisting of an audio piece, framed photographs, and a wallpaper installation, the works were inspired by ornithologist and artist John James Audubon’s 1832 trip to the Florida Keys and the Dry Tortugas. During that visit, he observed and painted 22 birds to create his iconic “Birds of the Florida Keys” portfolio. Hargrave similarly completed an artist residency at the Studios at Key West, Florida, and traveled to the Dry Tortugas to re-imagine the original 22 species in that portfolio. Rather than making illustrations of the Roseate Spoonbill, Great Blue Heron, Anhinga, American Flamingo, and Great Egret, she uses images and sound to convey how it feels to search for the birds in their natural settings. She explains, there is “the mystery of finding them hidden in lush foliage,” and through her dense green-tinged landscapes, we experience a degree of that search. *Roseate Spoonbill, calls*—a pink wallpaper installation spanning 21.5 feet—fills the space with images of the soundwaves created by the bird’s call (rendered in the startlingly bright fuchsia of its own feathers), while a new audio work plays vocalizations of the original 22 avian species interspersed with field recordings of the most invasive species, ourselves.

This exhibition is the focus of multiple educational programs. (See below for details.) Free virtual curator-led tours are available by appointment for the duration of the exhibition. University Galleries continues collaborating with the Children’s Discovery Museum for Art Around You, a series of virtual exhibition tours and workshops for children ages 7 through 10. Kendra Paitz, director and chief curator, and Tanya Scott, curator of education, are collaborating with Stefen Robinson, sociology and history teacher at Normal Community High School, to create a program for sociology students. After learning about Hargrave’s work, the students will work collaboratively to create their own artworks that will be exhibited at University Galleries in the summer. Additionally, Hargrave, O’Reilly, and Paitz will conduct virtual visits with Illinois State University classes.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 15, 2021

Alice Hargrave: The Canary in the Lake is curated by [Kendra Paitz](#), University Galleries' director and chief curator. This exhibition is supported by University Galleries' grants from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Illinois Arts Council Agency, and Alice and Fannie Fell Trust. The collaborative project with Normal Community High School is supported by the Town of Normal Harmon Arts Grant Program. An exhibition catalogue, which is also supported by a grant from The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, is forthcoming. Hargrave received an Illinois Arts Council Agency Individual Artist Grant for this project.

Biographies

Alice Hargrave's work has been exhibited at Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; Tweed Museum of Art, Duluth, Minnesota; Newspace Center for Photography, Portland, Oregon; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Filter Photo, Chicago; Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago; Center for Fine Art Photography, Fort Collins, Colorado; and Lianzhou Photo Festival, Lianzhou, China; among many others. Her work is included in several collections: Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Willis Tower, Chicago; and the Hyatt corporation. Hargrave has recently been awarded fellowships by the Illinois Arts Council Agency and Ragdale, and residencies by Flathead Lake Biological Station, Missoula, Montana; Studios at Key West, Key West, Florida; and Trout Lake Station of Limnology, Boulder Junction, Wisconsin. Her first monograph, *Paradise Wavering*, was published by Daylight Books in 2016. Hargrave has an M.F.A. from University of Illinois at Chicago and a B.A. from Tulane University. She lives in Chicago, where she teaches at Columbia College.

Dr. Catherine O'Reilly is a professor in the Department of Geography, Geology, and the Environment at Illinois State University. As previously noted, her research focuses on freshwater environments, with an interest in how lakes and rivers are impacted by human activities and climate change. She has been involved in several large-scale collaborative projects through the Global Lake Ecological Observatory Network (GLEON), as well as through over a decade of research on Lake Tanganyika, East Africa. Her work has been reported in media such as BBC, *The New York Times*, and *National Geographic*. O'Reilly is also one of the leaders of Project EDDIE (Environmental Data-Driven Inquiry and Exploration), which provides curricular materials and support for instructors to engage their students using large publicly accessible datasets in the classroom. She has a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona and a B.A. from Carleton College. As part of the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, O'Reilly shares the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore and 2000 other scientists.

Events and programming

- Virtual exhibition tours are available for classes, community groups, and individuals by appointment. Contact galler@IllinoisState.edu or (309) 438-5487 to schedule.
- Alice Hargrave, Dr. Catherine O'Reilly, and Kendra Paitz will conduct virtual class visits during the exhibition. Contact galler@IllinoisState.edu to request a visit.
- Educator resources, activities for children and youth, and art lesson videos will be available on the exhibition web page.
- March 13 at 1:00 p.m.: Art Around You, a virtual exhibition tour and workshop co-presented with the Children's Discovery Museum. Participants (ages 7-10) can register for this free program at childrensdiscoverymuseum.net. This program is made possible by an Illinois Prairie Community Foundation—Mirza Arts and Culture grant awarded to the CDM.
- An online panel discussion and reading lists will be announced via University Galleries' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) response

Please note the following updates as University Galleries reopens to the public.

- In accordance with Illinois Board of Higher Education and Restore Illinois guidelines, attendance will be kept under 25 at all times.
- University Galleries remains free and open to the public, but visitors must book an appointment through the Bookings link on University Galleries' [website](#).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 15, 2021

- Visitors to University Galleries will be required to wear a face covering and practice physical distancing.
- University Galleries' main entrance will function as the "in-door" and the emergency exit in our east gallery will function as the "out-door" to reduce congestion in the entry vestibule and lobby.
- Hand sanitizer stations, physical distancing decals, and directional arrows will be located throughout the gallery spaces.
- There will be additional cleaning of high-contact points and restrooms.

For information on Illinois State University's Coronavirus (COVID-19) response, please see <https://coronavirus.illinoisstate.edu/>.

University Galleries

University Galleries, a unit in the [Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts](#), is located at 11 Uptown Circle, Suite 103, at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available in the Uptown Station parking deck located directly above University Galleries.

You can find [University Galleries](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#), and sign up to receive email updates through the [newsletter](#). Please contact gallery@IllinoisState.edu or call (309) 438-5487 if you need to arrange an accommodation to participate in any events related to these exhibitions.