

12-15-2021

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Repository Citation

Kennedy, Amber, "ODU Research is Showcased in 'Waters Rising' Exhibition at the Chrysler Museum of Art" (2021). *News Items*. 94.

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ODU Research is Showcased in 'Waters Rising' Exhibition at the Chrysler Museum of Art

December 15, 2021

[By Amber Kennedy](#)

Researchers at Old Dominion University's [Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience](#) (ICAR) have shared their findings in all the usual places - conferences, journals and media interviews. Beginning Dec. 24, ICAR's research will be showcased in an unexpected spot: the Chrysler Museum of Art.

For more than a year, ICAR has worked with Allison Taylor, director of education at the Chrysler Museum in downtown Norfolk, to curate an exhibition designed to share research about flooding and sea level rise. The resulting show, "[Waters Rising: A View From Our Backyard](#)," features visual interpretations of how climate change affects Hampton Roads, including modeling and maps alongside artwork by professors Greta Pratt and Brendan Baylor.

Taylor, together with Liz Smith, director of Interdisciplinary Initiatives at ODU, conceived the exhibition to complement "[FloodZone](#)," the Museum's keynote exhibition featuring photography by Anastasia Samoylova, a Miami-based artist who photographs the effects of sea level rise along South Florida's coast. Taylor approached Curator of Exhibitions and Curator of Photography Seth Feman about using the Museum's Focus Gallery to showcase ICAR's work.

"The science in 'Waters Rising' is presented in a visual way, which I think will appeal to an art museum audience," Taylor said. "Often, museums are seen as safe zones where difficult issues can be discussed and debated in a civilized manner, and I'm hoping 'Waters Rising' will do just that."

Wie Yusuf, assistant director of education for ICAR and a professor in the School of Public Service in the Strome College of Business, saw the exhibition as a creative way to engage with a new audience, including communities hardest hit by flooding.

"This is an opportunity for us to use different mediums to get people's attention and help this resonate with them," she said. "We want to recognize and celebrate that people in our University, right in their hometown, are studying what we can do and the tools we can develop so that we can be more proactive."



Greta Pratt's "Chairs on Dock," from the series Tidewater, 2020, will be on display at the "Waters Rising" presentation. This exhibition is organized by the Chrysler Museum of Art

"Sea level rise is an issue that affects all of us," said Erik Neil, director and CEO of the Chrysler Museum. "As these exhibitions show, artists are often able to convey the impact of this environmental threat in a way that is more compelling and powerful than a news report or scientific presentation."

Visitors to the exhibition will see photography and maps of waters rising around Hampton Roads, including encroachment and impacts near the region's most recognizable landmarks. They'll see ODU geographer Tom Allen's work on the [Blue Line Project](#), which used blue paint to indicate where high waters will be in 2050, 2080 and 2100 to help residents envision how sea level rise could change the landscape. The Chrysler Museum, located in Norfolk's commonly flooded Hague neighborhood, was included in the project.

In addition, photos in the exhibition will document "Measure the Muck," an initiative developed by Margaret Mulholland, a biological oceanographer at ODU with graduate student Alfonso Macias Tapia. During King Tides, students and volunteers gather to collect water samples along the Lafayette River, demonstrating how tidal flooding can be a significant source of nutrient enrichment and contamination in local waterways - posing a serious public health concern.

Maps rendered by George McLeod, ODU's director of Geospatial and Visual Systems, will be displayed as lenticular prints, specially designed graphics interlacing multiple images to create an illusion of movement on a flat printed surface. In each panel, many images are combined to show the progression of flooding from present day to 2080. Viewers, moving left to right, will see how familiar buildings, streets and neighborhoods will increasingly succumb to the effects of sea level rise, storm surge and coastal flooding.

Yusuf worked with the museum to visualize her own research exploring how drivers respond when they encounter flooded roads. Quotes from her interviews will be displayed alongside photos of flooding.

She hopes the museum's visitors will walk away with a better understanding not only of the threat of sea level rise, but the tools and solutions that can help communities become more resilient.

"This show is hopeful. It's realism coupled with optimism that we are taking steps today for our future," Yusuf said. "We are not powerless."

The exhibition is dedicated to Larry P. Atkinson (1941-2020), a pioneering oceanographer and ODU professor who brought people together around climate change issues and was the first to lead the University's sea level rise initiatives.

"Waters Rising: A View From Our Backyard" will be on view at the Chrysler Museum through May 29, 2022. Admission is free. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. The museum is located at One Memorial Place in Norfolk. For more information, visit [Chrysler.org](#).

https://www.odu.edu/news/2021/12/icar_exhibit_at_chrys#.YhVMvorMKUk