

EDWARD BURTYNSKY

SALT PANS

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

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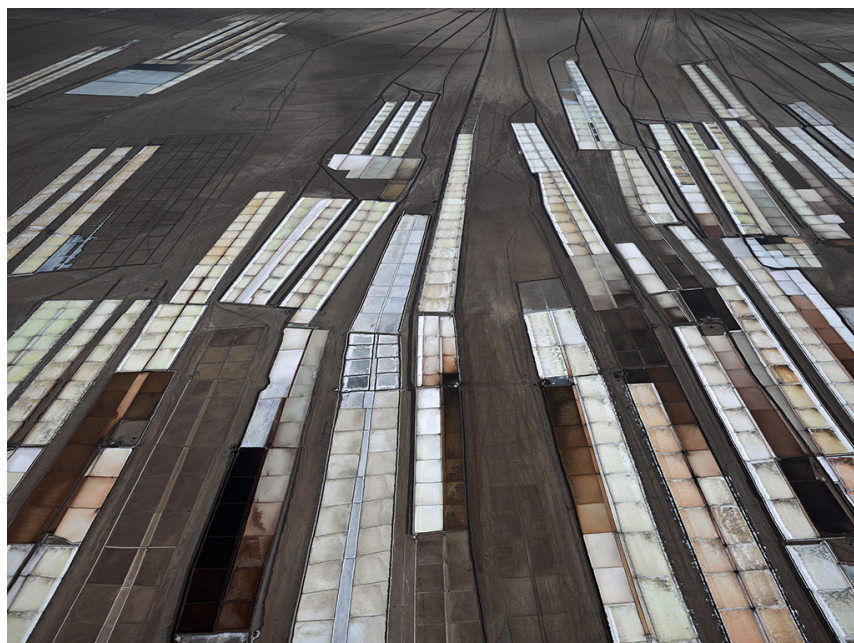
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Private View and Book Signing Thursday 15th September, 6-8pm
16 September - 29 October, 2016

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Flowers Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition featuring a new series of abstracted aerial photographs by Canadian artist Edward Burtynsky. In **Salt Pans**, Burtynsky conveys both the sublime aesthetic qualities of the industrialised landscape and the unsettling reality of depleting resources on the planet, through a series of geometric compositions photographed from the air above the Little Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, India.

The Little Rann of Kutch is home to more than 100,000 salt workers, presently extracting around one million tonnes of salt a year from the floodwaters of the nearby Arabian Sea. With a future currently under threat from receding groundwater levels and declining market values, the salt pans are likely to disappear without trace, along with a traditional way of life that has been sustained for the past four hundred years.



Salt Pans #18, Little Rann of Kutch, India, 2016

Burtynsky's images of the salt pans are composed from a topographical perspective, with a dizzying frontal aspect that flattens the grid-like network of wells, pans and vehicle tracks into equally weighted pictorial elements of line, form and space. Burtynsky refers to this abstracted all-over composition as *"the democratic distribution of light and space across the whole field"*, drawing the eye to the surface, and immersing the viewer in its detail. Possessing distinctly painterly qualities, the photographs explore subtle modulations of tone and compositional balance, structured by a calligraphic network of vehicle tracks running across the horizontal and vertical aspects of the picture plane. Through their documentation of a disappearing landscape, the photographs are palimpsests, tracing evidence of former pans as they eventually dry out and leave fading scars. Both formalist and elegiac, they explore, as Burtynsky sees it, an *"ancient method of providing one of the most basic elements of our diet; as primitive industry and as abstract two-dimensional human marks upon the landscape."*

Mounted in the upper gallery **Essential Elements** comprises of a selection of photographs weaving an evocative journey through Burtynsky's past projects, *China*, *Manufactured Landscapes*, *Quarries*, *Oil* and *Water*, drawing together the visual and thematic threads that connect throughout his oeuvre. The exhibition will coincide with the publication of a major new monograph, *Edward Burtynsky: Essential Elements*, edited and curated by William A. Ewing. The book provides an overview of Burtynsky's work across four decades, including iconic images and many previously unpublished photographs.

Taking a free-flowing approach across geographical borders and over an extended period of time, the exhibition reveals the development of an expansive formal language, from early examples of his disorienting manipulation of perspective and scale in *Railcuts* (1985), to the rich organic patterns of Burtynsky's first major aerial photography project, *Silver Lake Operations* in Australia (2007). Mapping the human transformation of the landscape, and documenting the residual destruction stemming from industrial processes and manufacturing, Burtynsky's photographs present a contradiction of aesthetic seduction and ecological concerns, functioning, as he sees it, as *"reflecting pools of our times"*.

SALT PANS



Salt Pans #25, Little Rann of Kutch, India, 2016



Salt Pans #10, Little Rann of Kutch, India, 2016

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS



Silver Lake Operations #16, Lake Lefroy, Western Australia, 2007



Dryland Farming #24, Monegros County, Aragon, Spain, 2010

ABOUT EDWARD BURTYNSKY

Edward Burtynsky's works are in the collections of over sixty museums worldwide, including Museum of Modern Art and Guggenheim, New York; Tate, London; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and the National Gallery of Canada. Burtynsky is the subject of Jennifer Baichwal's 2006 film *Manufactured Landscapes*, and the 2014 film *Watermark*, co-directed by Burtynsky and Baichwal. Burtynsky received the inaugural TED Prize in 2005; and won the Tiffany Mark award in 2012. In 2006, he was named an Officer of the Order of Canada; and in 2016 he received the Governor General's Award for Visual Arts. He holds six honorary doctorate degrees. His distinctions also include the National Magazine Award; MOCCA award; Outreach Award at Rencontres d'Arles; ICP Infinity Award; and the Kraszna Krausz Book Award.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Exhibition Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - Hannah@flowersgallery.com / +44 (0)207 920 7777

Edward Burtynsky: Essential Elements, edited and curated by William A. Ewing is published by Thames & Hudson, 15 September 2016, £45.00 hardback.

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