

The Whole World In One Exhibit



The world can be a big place - and the scale of it and its natural wonders carries a big impact at an art exhibit that could probably only be displayed at a few locations in Providence. Currently, it's creating a mind-blowing experience at the Waterfire Arts Center (475 Valley St, PVD).

Featuring a giant globe hanging from the cavernous ceiling of this former train yard building, the globe is lit from within, and creates an interesting perspective when viewed from below - you can, in fact, go directly beneath the south pole - unlike traditional mercator maps, you have a sense of how small America is on the big blue marble.

The sense of impressive scale is also a driver for numerous exhibits in *Planet Earth, the Environment and Our Future*. These include works by Joan Hall from fabric and materials that look both threatening and ephemeral (although they include metal sculpture that is quite heavy). They recreate the shapes of natural phenomena that led to disasters — a 21-foot tall recreation of a tornado, tsunamis, mid-strike, of equal scale.

On the other end of the spectrum, a Rhode Island-themed break-out room centers things on the scale of our smallest state, including a collaborative puzzle of eco-friendly art and explorations of Little Rhody's

eco history, from quahogs to spongy moths. You probably know the latter by their previous, less politically correct name, gypsy moths. But did you know they were an RI-based lab experiment that escaped to become a plague endangering the foliage eco system throughout New England?

The exhibit also features amazing prints from medieval Japan and work from a spectrum of naturalist and nature-conscious artists and craftspeople, some where climate awareness is the subject of the art, and some where it informs the often ancient techniques used to create it. An extinction bell, for example, specially constructed using a classic fire truck bell from a Providence Company of 100 years ago, rings every time a species goes extinct somewhere in the world. It goes off alarmingly often.

If you're fortunate enough to happen into a tour of the exhibit by curator (and WaterFire founder) Barnaby Evans, take it! He's given tours on Gallery Nights, after April's PechaKucha event and on other special occasions, and his depth of knowledge about each and every piece is eloquently presented, successfully competing with the giant glowing globe and towering tornadoes and tsunamis for your attention.

The exhibit concludes in the first week of May at the WaterFire Arts Center, 475 Valley St, PVD.