

## Gallery Guide

### The National Park Project

The National Park Project was formally begun in 2018 by artist and Gallery Director Beth Shadur as a project to explore the impact of man's footprint on our most unspoiled and untouched natural environments, protected by the federal government since the origin of the National Park System in 1916. Shadur had visited several national parks in summer of 2017 after doing artwork in (as an Artist in Residence) and on various international pristine natural environments, including Banff Provincial Park in Canada, and Iceland. The National Parks in the United States face many challenges related to the nearness of industry, growth in tourism, pollution of the air and water, and climate change. Each national park faces its own challenges and concerns.

Shadur undertakes exploration of how the Native American community was impacted with the development of the park; how the current community is affected by the park; and how humans and their activities affect the natural environment of each park. Some parks are being threatened by industry in terms of industrial waste, light and sound pollution and actual impact on plants, animals and the land. Fracking has caused problems by the proximity to natural lands, with its increased human presence, and the actual impact of the system of extraction being used. Increased tourism can impact the presence of various species, and mar the environment when visitors don't stay within trails for hiking, or impact the land by automobile use.

The exhibition here includes four large paintings and five smaller works from the first nine months of The National Project. The first work undertaken was **Warming Peril** (Glacier National Park), including images from hikes, as well as several historical images. The painting itself is shaped by the park map, and then smaller images are collaged onto a background that shows cool colors blending to hot oranges, reds and yellows. This represents the intensive fire season last year that saw longer and more fires than ever in history. Shadur was there when the Sperry Chalet burned and she hiked while there through smoke and haze, breaking her heart because she never got to see an actual glacier there, a long-time dream of hers.

The second work of the series, **At Attention**, is from Bryce Canyon, and depicts the many wonders of Bryce, a land sacred to Native American cultures (as are many of the lands absorbed by the National Park System). This land is currently threatened by our current administration's desire to restore and expand fossil fuel development, and its closest neighbor is an expanding massive coal mine. It is a region known for its night skies, allowing for unfettered viewing of many thousands of stars at night. Bryce is an unusual, spectacular landscape of hoodoos and canyon formations that cannot truly be imagined without the experience of being there.

Other National Park Project works include **Sanctum** based on Zion National Park, and **The Hidden Spirit**, from Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

The exhibition is rounded out by works created during Shadur's residency in Iceland, where she explored the land of fire and ice, and considered the impact of the human footprint on that most pristine of environments. All of natural Iceland was created either through volcanic eruptions (fire) or by movement of ice. The area is strongly impacted by being the meeting ground of the North American and European tectonic plates, which has created a natural environment sensitive to strong geological forces. Iceland's physical landscape is unique and sensational, and Shadur found a rich source for her paintings.