



THE EBB OF FLOES

ARTIST ZARIA FORMAN'S LARGE-SCALE PASTELS DESCRIBE A VANISHING ANTARCTIC.

BY LAUREN MANDEL, ASLA

The Brooklyn-based artist Zaria Forman draws in fine detail to capture expansive corners of the Earth. Her large-scale, hyperrealistic pastel works feature, most recently, Antarctic landscapes affected by climate change. "I'm trying to offer people a time and a place to connect with these very far-flung places," Forman says. "If they can fall in love with [these places] in a similar way that I have, then that will lead them to want to protect and preserve them." Forman has been completing a drawing series and video installation for an upcoming solo exhibition, *Antarctica*, inspired by her first trip to the polar continent as an artist in residence aboard the *National Geographic Explorer* in winter 2015.

Whale Bay, Antarctica no. 4 captures the fragility of a remote harbor off the Antarctic Peninsula that is filled with melting icebergs that calved, drifted, and ran aground on the shallow seafloor. Forman says that as the icebergs melt, "it's like the

wind and the water are just hands, just making these most incredible shapes that you can't even conceive of until you're there." Bays that enclose icebergs like these are called iceberg graveyards, a term that "captures the eerie solemnity of the site," Forman says, "but to me serves as a metaphor for the bigger picture." According to NASA's Global Ice Viewer application, the ice that covers 10 percent of the Earth's surface is rapidly melting, with roughly 118 billion metric tons lost annually in Antarctica alone.

Forman took thousands of photos during the expedition, "collecting information and documenting as much as I can on camera so that I can then construct and compose the drawing compositions when I get home," she says. For *Whale Bay*, Forman stitched several photos together, combining features within adjacent photographs. Once the project was on paper, she delicately sketched the composition's main

objects in pencil. "I jump in pretty quickly with color," Forman explains, "layering pigments onto the paper, using my fingers and palms to smudge everything." She then breaks the pastel into tiny shards to overlay fine detail. Forman completes one area of the drawing before moving to the next, always from left to right and top to bottom. "It's just the way my brain works," she explains, adding the practicalities of avoiding smudges and gravity-laden pastel dust atop lighter-colored pigment. "I think I enjoy that simplicity because I get so lost in the tiny details that I think otherwise I'd never know when to stop." •

Antarctica will be at Winston Wächter Fine Art in Seattle from September 7 to November 4, 2017. See zariaforman.com for more information.

LAUREN MANDEL, ASLA, IS A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND RESEARCHER AT ANDROPOGON AND THE AUTHOR OF *EAT UP: THE INSIDE SCOOP ON ROOFTOP AGRICULTURE* (NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS, 2013).