

Salton Sea: lost lakes and salt dreams

Exhibit dates: February 11—June 18, 2006 • Contact: Jennifer Reynolds, media specialist, (909) 307-2669 ext. 278

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Salt Dreams: Reflections of the Downstream West

Based on the critically acclaimed book of the same title, the traveling exhibition “Salt Dreams: Reflections of the Downstream West” looks at the troubled history of the Salton Sea, the largest lake in California. It provides the viewer a bottom-up examination of the story of the American West.

The exhibition is presented by the San Bernardino County Museum and the California Exhibition Resources Alliance as part of a larger museum special exhibit: “Salton Sea: lost lakes and salt dreams.” The exhibit opens on February 11 and runs until June 18.

Beginning in 1986, photographer Joan Myers, along with author William deBuys, made repeated trips to the Salton Sea to photograph images of the area including drained gardens, mud volcanoes, an abandoned yacht club and ghost town motels.

Themes of this western saga include water issues, the border, Native rights, huge development schemes, and dire environmental problems. The legend is told through Joan Myers’ hauntingly beautiful images. The 30 platinum-palladium photographs, most of which feature a light watercolor wash, eerily tell how humans shaped this landscape and of the dreams that caused people to migrate to the Salton Sea. Text by deBuys illuminates the images.

The “Salt Dreams” exhibition tour was organized by the California Exhibition Resources Alliance (CERA) in concert with the Museum of History and Art, Ontario Associates. CERA is a network of professionally operated museums and cultural organizations that collaborate to create and tour smaller, affordable, high quality exhibitions that enhance civic engagement and human understanding. CERA is supported by generous grants from The James Irvine Foundation and The William Randolph Hearst Foundation. The traveling exhibition was made possible in part by a generous gift from the California Council for the Humanities.

San Bernardino County Museum

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