

Art and Climate Change: Zaria Forman

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It is a warm, sunny day when GreenbyBlue visits Brooklyn-based artist Zaria Forman at her show at the [Winston Wächter Fine Art Gallery in New York](#). Inside the gallery, is a contrasting coolness. The room is overshadowed by the imposing photo-realistic pastel drawings depicting the sky, sea and ice of Greenland, that hang from the walls.

Zaria is an artist who documents climate change. Her works have, to date, focused on Greenland and the Maldives: two places on the globe where the impact of climate change is most clearly visible. Her work follows the melt-water from the Arctic to the Equator.

There are no idealised tourist-destination representations here. The seascapes depicted on the large canvases are convey the power and fragility of the landscape, whilst capturing the threat of the rising sea-levels.

Zaria believes that artists can play an important role in speeding up action on climate change. Artists, she says, can translate scientists' warnings on climate change into images that have an impact at an emotional level with viewers. Emotions can lead to action

Zaria has seen first hand the affects of climate change, and it worries her. In Greenland, she witnessed the fast retreating ice that is negatively impacting entire communities and their way of life. The Inuit hunting communities are seeing their hunting grounds disappear before their eyes. They need the ice to cross the fjords and hunt.

On the other side of the planet, the melted ice of the Arctic is threatening to submerge the lowest and flattest country on earth: the Maldives. Most tourists who visit this popular island paradise are blissfully unaware of this threat. Zaria witnessed what the foreign tourist does not: the Maldives outside of the resorts. In a few decades it is very likely that the inhabitants, may have to immigrate en masse because home has been engulfed by the ocean.

Zaria first became aware of the urgency of climate change on a trip to Greenland in 2006. She returned to the Arctic nation in 2012, leading an expedition called *Chasing the Light* along its North Western Coast. The expedition echoed a similar journey by American artist William Bradford in 1869. The journey was also a very personal one for Zaria, as it was in honour of her mother who passed away the year before. This year, Zaria has been invited aboard the National Geographic Explorer as artist in residence, to document its voyage to the Antarctic.

A film is currently in production called *Ice to Islands*, which documents her voyages to Greenland and the Maldives with fellow artists Drew Denny and Lisa Lebofsky to highlight the impact of rising sea levels.

Zaria Forman's works gained attention on the internet in 2014, and have since gathered world-we interest. Her pieces have been featured in the American television series House of Cards. Her next solo exhibition will be place at Winston Wächter Fine Art's Seattle gallery, in Spring 2017.

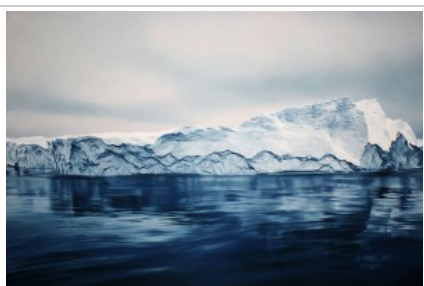
You can read more about Zaria and see her work [here](#).



Maldives no. 09 by Zaria Forman. Soft pastel on Paper



Greenland No. 63 by Zaria Forman. Soft pastel on Paper



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Greenland No.54 by Zaria Forman. Soft pastel on Paper



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