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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT theifp.ca



The solo photography exhibit of Acton-area native J.R. Bernstein has been on display for the month of February at the Milton Centre for the Arts and he was on hand for a Meet the Artist reception last week. Here, he poses with the carbon print named Longyeardalen, one of several images in the exhibit, which closes out this Sunday.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Photographer captures the impact of carbon

Local native J.R. Bernstein's solo photography exhibit named Carbon Manifest will be on display until Sunday (Feb. 26) in the Holcim Gallery at the Milton Centre for the Arts, located at Main St. and Thompson Rd.

The 38-year-old Bernstein, an Acton High School graduate who grew up on an escarpment farm in Nassagaweya, spent a month in the Arctic above Norway in October 2014 taking pictures of the landscape that he describes as fraught with environmental disruption and the mass slaughter of whales beginning in the 17th century.

Captured in several massive carbon black-and-white prints that require a large sofa-sized machine to produce, Carbon Manifest shows the effects of climate change in that region in monochromatic images on prints that will last at least 1,000 years.

Bernstein explained that the theme of Carbon Manifest is multi-faceted in the creation of the exhibit photographs even using an environmentally friendly Japanese technique himself to flame-burn the frames and without paint.

I look at it as an entire piece, not just a

print and frame, he said last week at a Meet the Artist reception.

The pristine lands of that Arctic region, sculpted for centuries by glaciers, began to show the damaging effects of carbon pollution with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and whaling in that area, followed by the depletion of walrus and then coal mining.

With climate change happening so quickly and it being so closely related to carbon and the permanence of these prints juxtaposed against the rapid changing of the actual landscapes themselves it all came together, added Bernstein, noting that there is now a university campus there devoted to climate research and it's the home of the Global Seed Vault.

Fortunately today, it's moving more and more towards environmental research, which still has a carbon element to it, but it's coming from a different more positive perspective now.

Viewing hours for Carbon Manifest are 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. on Thursday, Friday from 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-5 p.m.

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