



THE LABORATORY OF TREE-RING RESEARCH

presents a talk by

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Ashes to Ashes

Wednesday, November 2, 2016 - 12:00pm to 1:00pm

Room: Bannister 110

Ashes to Ashes is a series of drawings depicting recent Arizona wildfires, rendered with charcoal samples personally collected from each fire site. Each drawing is displayed with its corresponding charcoal sample. The collection represents fourteen significant wildfires from 1990 to the present, with archived photographs used as references. This project was created for the occasion of [Fires of Change](#): a partnership between the arts and sciences, sponsored by the Southwest Fire Science Consortium, Landscape Conservation Initiative, and Flagstaff Arts Council with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. While regular wildfire cycles are essential for the health of the ecosystem, they are frequently accompanied by negative public perception of wilderness devastation and human disaster. The increased size and severity of recent fires—due to suppression strategies that began over a century ago, and the continual drought and warming trends resulting from climate change—have taken toll on the environment and humans alike. The use of charcoal, as an art medium, dates back to the earliest Paleolithic cave paintings. That it still prevails today (in a refined and compressed form) attests to charcoal's variety of applications and archival nature. Working with the unrefined, burnt remnants of Ponderosa Pine or Manzanita found at each wildfire site presented creative challenges such as achieving tonal range and detail on a small scale, and meeting contemporary expectations with an archaic medium. The objective of these drawings is to reverse the public perception trajectory as viewers gain a renewed appreciation for the necessity of wildfire toward sustaining the longevity of our shared landscape.